



New Doc 2020-04-24 18.55.05

1 message

Shailendra Kr Mukul <skmukul2002@yahoo.co.in>
 Reply-To: "skmukul2002@yahoo.co.in" <skmukul2002@yahoo.co.in>
 To: LANGAT SINGH COLLEGE <lscollegeprincipal@gmail.com>

Sun, May 24, 2020 at 6:46 PM

3

11) Metaphysical Poets · or Metaphysical Poetry · or Jacobean Poets.

→ The term "metaphysical" is composed of two Greek roots, 'meta' and 'physis' meaning 'beyond' and 'nature' respectively. In this wide sense, metaphysical poetry is one that deals with the ultimate reality and philosophical conception of the universe. Therefore, Lucretius, Goethe and Dante are metaphysical poets in this sense.

But the case is quite

different with a group of the 17th century English poets. The phrase "metaphysical poets" was applied as a term of abuse to John Donne and his followers, George Herbert, Richard Crashaw, Abraham Cowley, Henry Vaughan and Andrew Marvell by Dr. Johnson in his famous book Lives of the Poets. Dr. Johnson charged them with not copying life and nature and only showing off their knowledge. He described the metaphysical conceit as "a

kind of discordia concors, a combination of dissimilar images". Dr. Johnson further explained it:

"The most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together."

No doubt, the metaphysical conceit is the yoking of the "heterogeneous ideas" but this yoking is not an unnatural act of violence. Far fetched images drawn from the various fields of life and letters startle the mind on account of their unexpected analogy and combine together to form a new whole. John Donne in "A Valediction" makes excellent use of a metaphysical conceit when he compares two lovers to a pair of compasses.

This comparison is really startling:

"If they be two, they are two so
As stiff twin compasses are two."

The metaphysical poets were endowed with "unified sensibility" which means a blend of thought and feeling, emotion and intellect. They possessed "a mechanism of sensibility which could devour any kind of experience". They could "feel their thought as immediately as the odour of a rose". While describing the characteristics of the metaphysical poets, T.S. Eliot differentiates between a poet and an ordinary man. He argues that a poet has the power to amalgamate

as part of experiences of which an ordinary man is deprived. But the ordinary man's experience is chaotic, irregular and fragmentary.

Let us now consider a few metaphysical poets individually — John Donne, George Herbert, Richard Crashaw, Abraham Cowley, Henry Vaughan and Andrew Marvell. John Donne born in 1572 and educated at Oxford and Cambridge was a learned theologian of his time. He was appointed private secretary to Sir Thomas Egerton but was dismissed and imprisoned after sometime for his clandestine marriage with Anne More, the niece of Sir Thomas. He addressed a letter to his wife:

" John Donne, Anne Donne, undone!"

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android