

## Metaphysical School of Poetry

Metaphysical poetry is the richest and most wide ranging in English literature. The features of metaphysical poetry are well known: analytic and self conscious, colloquial in tone, dramatic in emphasis. It is also marked by wild imagery, hyperbole and scrupulous intellectual construction. John Donne was the leader of this school of poetry. The other important poets of this school of poetry were Andrew Marvell, Henry Vaughan, Richard Crashaw, and George Herbert and Abraham Cowley. The term 'Metaphysical' as applied to the poetry of these early 17th century poets, was first used by Dr. Johnson, who borrowed it from Dryden's phrase about Donne "He affects the metaphysics". Dr. Johnson had applied this term to point out their 'learned' way of poetic expression. But he failed to appreciate the merit of such experiment by these poets. The metaphysical poets simply attempted to express faithfully even the most subtle emotions with the help of their extraordinary wide learning and experience.

The metaphysical poetry was a revolt against the copious, formal and rhetorical Elizabethan lyric. The Elizabethan tradition was no longer able to suit the expression of the changing sensibility of the age. Thus they developed a new mode of poetic expression. The most characteristic feature of this new <sup>poetic</sup> style was the fusion of thought and feeling. They looked for a connection between their emotion and mental concepts. The term 'metaphysical' refers to style, rather than subject matter and their style reflects an attitude to experience. To metaphysical poets a poetic experience was as much a matter of sensibility.