

Poetry
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Lecture 19
John Donne - 02

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John Donne (1572-1631)



- Historical and Literary Context
- John Donne
- “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning” (last 4 stanzas)
- “The Canonization”
- Analysis
- A New Critical Reading
- A Deconstructive Reading



Hello, how can there be a poetry course without Donne and his Compass? We have the compass here moving around. In this lecture, we will look at two poems: one “A Valediction Forbidding Mourning.” But we will see only the last four stanzas, where we have this compass. The next poem is “The Canonization.” As we did earlier, we will spend some time for the historical and literary context.

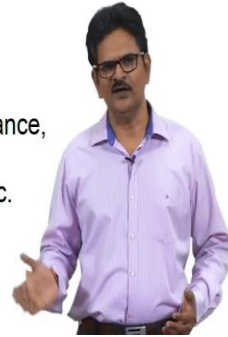
And also learn a little more about John Donne, and further go ahead with the analysis of the Canonization in depth. We will have two critical readings: one is a new critical reading and another a deconstructive reading and then conclude our presentation.

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Historical and Literary Context



- Elizabethan (1603), Jacobean (1625), Caroline (1649)
- Religious intolerance
- Expansion of the world, science, trade, life style
- Aspiration of the educated for courtly services
- Gradual disappearance of sonnet sequences
- Steady growth of masque, a fusion art form – dance, drama, song, spectacle
- Donne was writing songs, sonnets, sermons, etc.



Let us pay attention to the historical and literary context of John Donne from Elizabethan period to Jacobean period and Caroline period we have the life of John Donne spreading over. This period was characterized by religious intolerance between various groups, particularly Protestants and Catholics. At this time, we also find the world expanding geographically, in science, in trade, and also in lifestyle of people.

Educated young people had the aspiration to get into courtly service. They wanted to become courtiers, or government servants get some patronage for making their livelihood. When it comes to the literary context, we notice that, the sonnet sequence was slowly disappearing and a number of poetic forms were coming up.

And the most important art form that we have to notice is masque, a fusion of several art forms: dance, drama, song, and spectacle. King James the first encouraged it and many poets, dramatists came out with their best masque to entertain the king, the court and the public. Donne for his own part was writing songs, sonnets, sermons and pamphlet earring and many other things.

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John Donne (1572-1631)



- A scholar, a priest, a poet
- A man who loved and married Anne More
- A man who renounced the world for the sake of love
- A man who changed his 'religion' for the sake of job
- A man who preached the gospel of God as well the gospel of Mammon (his interest in Virginia Company)



As we saw earlier, John Donne was a scholar, a priest, and a poet, and a great lover. He loved Anne More and married her in secret that led to his suffering for nearly 15 years. He renounced the world for the sake of his own love for his sweet heart Anne More. He also changed his religion for the sake of his job. At that time Catholics were not entitled for government positions or important positions in Elizabethan society, or 17th century, early 17th century society.

When he got the job of preaching, he preached the word of God, the gospel of God, at the same time he was also aware of the gospel of Mammon, the God of wealth. Because most of the Protestants and other religious groups people from England and other European countries: they were after wealth, they were after money, they were after several conquests, they were after imperial power, colonizing power. They wanted to enrich themselves with the resources from the rest of the world.

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A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning



Our two souls therefore, which are one,
Though I must go, endure not yet
A breach, but an expansion,
Like gold to airy thinness beat.

If they be two, they are two so
As stiff twin compasses are two;
Thy soul, the fixed foot, makes no show
To move, but doth, if the other do.



Now, let us see the last four stanzas of, “A Valediction Forbidding Mourning.” we have the context of a lover separating from his beloved. A man had to go out from his home town to other places to earn money, to earn wealth, to see the world for various reasons. So, here is a valediction from the man to his beloved, that is, a farewell. But he says do not cry, do not feel bad about it. To describe how he is always together with his beloved, he uses this image of a compass with two legs. They are moving, both of them are moving but they are united, they are together always. So, this is one of the most famous conceits, metaphysical conceits, from John Donne. And we have a moving picture here to reveal to us, how the central leg is fixed in one place, but then it is also moving along with the peripheral leg, that is the man. Let us see the last four stanzas now;

“Our two souls therefore, which are one,
Though I must go, endure not yet,
A breach, but an expansion,
Like gold to airy thinness beat.”

Here we have a simile, we can call it gold simile, or golden simile. He says, he may go out but he will stretch himself in such a way like the gold. He has the malleability to extend himself from his beloved, he will never be separated from her. Then he comes out with this compass conceit.

“If they be two, they are too so
As stiff twin compasses are two;
Thy soul, thy fixed foot, makes no show,
To move, but doth, if the other do.”

Both of them are moving together.

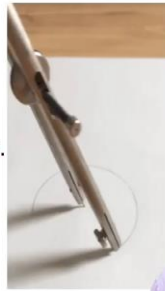
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A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning



And though it in the center sit,
Yet when the other far doth roam,
It leans and hearkens after it,
And grows erect, as that comes home.

Such wilt thou be to me, who must,
Like th' other foot, obliquely run;
Thy firmness makes my circle just,
And makes me end where I begun.



“And though it in the center sit,
Yet when the other far doth roam,
It leans and hearkens after it,
And grows erect, as that comes home.

Such will thou be to me, who must,
like th' other foot, obliquely run;
Thy firmness makes my circle just,

And makes me end where I begun.

So, the beginning and end is the same for the poet. He is not separated from his beloved.

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The Canonization, I



For God's sake hold your tongue, and let me **love**,
Or chide my palsy, or my gout,
My five gray hairs, or ruined fortune flout,
With wealth your state, your mind with arts improve,
Take you a course, get you a place,
Observe his honor, or his grace,
Or the king's real, or his stamped face
Contemplate; what you will, approve,
9] So you will let me **love**.

Rhyme
ABBA
CCC
AA



Now, let us discuss, “The Canonization” in detail. We have five stanzas. We will see them one after another. But discussion, we will have at the end. For every stanza, we have the rhyme scheme here. The same rhyme scheme will be found in all the stanzas. All the stanzas have love in the first line and also in the last line. This is highlighted. We will also notice the triplets, we have in place, grace, and face, and in all stanzas, we have the same similar structure.

In this particular stanza we have a chiasmic structure in the fourth line, that is where we have underlined it. Let us move forward now:

For god's sake hold your tongue, and let me love,

Or chide my palsy, or my gout,

My five gray hairs, or ruined fortune float,

With wealth your state, your mind with arts improve,

Take you a course, get you a place,

Observe his honor, or his grace,

Or the king's real, or his stamped face,
Contemplate; what you will, approve,
So, you will let me love.”

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The Canonization, II



Alas, alas, who's injured by my love?
What merchant's ships have my sighs drowned?
Who says my tears have overflowed his ground?
When did my colds a forward spring remove?
When did the heats which my veins fill
Add one more to the plaguy bill?
Soldiers find wars, and lawyers find out still
Litigious men, which quarrels move,
18] Though she and I do love.

Rhyme
ABBA
CCC
AA



Stanza two,

Alas, alas, who is injured by my love?
What merchant's ships have my sighs drowned?
Who says my tears have overflowed his ground?
When did my colds a forward spring remove?
When did the heats which my veins fill
Add one more to the plaguy bill?
Soldiers find wars, and lawyers find out still
litigious man, which quarrels move,
Though she and I do love.”

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The Canonization, III



Call us what you will, we are made such by love;
Call her one, me another fly,
We're tapers too, and at our own cost die,
And we in us find the eagle and the dove.
The phoenix riddle hath more wit
By us; we two being one, are it.
So, to one neutral thing both sexes fit.
We die and rise the same, and prove
27] Mysterious by this love.

Rhyme
ABBA
CCC
AA



Stanza three,

“Call us what you will, we are made such by love;

Call her one, me another fly,

We're tapers too, and at our own cost die,

And we in us find the eagle and the dove.

The phoenix riddle hath more wit,

By us; we two being one, are it.

So, to one neutral thing both sexes fit,

We die and rise the same, and prove

Mysterious by this love.

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The Canonization, IV



We can die by it, if not live by **love**,
And if unfit for tombs and hearse
Our legend be, it will be fit for verse;
And if no piece of chronicle we prove, AA
We'll build in **sonnets** pretty rooms;
As well a well-wrought urn becomes
The greatest ashes, as half-acre tombs,
And by these hymns, all shall approve
36] Us canonized for **Love**.

Rhyme

ABBA

CCC

AA



Stanza four,

“we can die by it, if not live by love,

And if unfit for tombs and hearse

Our legend be, it will be fit for verse;

And if no piece of chronicle we prove,

We'll build in sonnets pretty rooms,

As well a well-wrought urn becomes,

The greatest ashes, as half-acre tombs,

And by these hymns, all shall approve

Us canonized for love.”

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The Canonization, V



And thus invoke us: "You, whom reverend **love**
Made one another's hermitage;
You, to whom love was peace, that now is rage;
Who did the whole world's soul contract, and drove
Into the glasses of your eyes
(So made such mirrors, and such spies,
That they did all to you epitomize)
Countries, towns, courts: beg from above
45] A pattern of your **love**!"

Rhyme
ABBA
CCC
AA



Here is the last stanza,

"And thus invoke us: "You, whom reverend love
Made one another's hermitage;
You, to whom love was peace, that now is rage;
Who did the whole world's soul contract, and drove
Into the glasses of your eyes
(So made such mirrors, and such spies,
That they did all to you epitomize)
Countries, towns, courts; beg from above
A pattern of your love!"

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Questions for Thinking about the Poem



What does the title indicate?
How does the poem begin, progress, and end?
Who is the speaker?
Who is the listener?
Who/ What is spoken about?
What are the key words and images?
What are the structural/linguistic/poetic/technical devices?
Which words/ structures/ images are repeated?
What contrasting ideas/images are juxtaposed?
What does the poem achieve/convey?
What is love/the poem compared with?
How does the poet communicate the securing of love?



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We have a number of questions to think about the poem. These questions will guide us to understand the canonization much better. What does a title indicate? How does a poem begin, progress and end? Who is the speaker? The poet yes. There is a persona, yes. But this is a person of the lover. Who is the listener? The lady love, the world. Who is spoken about, or what is spoken about? What are the key words and images we have in this poem?

What are the structural, linguistic, poetic and technical devices, which have contributed to making this poem? Which words, structures, images are repeated in this poem? What contrasting ideas, images are juxtaposed? What does a poem achieve, or convey to the reader? What is the love, the poem compared with? How does a poet communicate the securing of his own love in this particular poem? These are the questions. We will discuss them in the next few minutes.

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The Title



- Canonization – the process of making somebody a saint
- “The canonization” – beatification of the lovers
- Spiritual miracle vs sexual spectacle
- Canon – priest
- Canonization – becoming/ making a priest of spiritual and sexual love
- Canon/cannon (pun) – a priest, a gun too
- Canonization – firing of love; firing of opponents of love



Let us begin with the title. ‘Canonization’ means the process of making somebody a saint. This is a practice in Christianity. If somebody is found to have some extraordinary powers, divine powers, that person is made a saint, like mother Teresa. Initially she was not a saint, but later on her contribution to the world was recognized, that, the contribution that she made with the divine grace was accepted and then she was canonized.

The canonization is in this poem, the beatification of lovers. That is, canonizing, making them saints. We have a spiritual miracle in the case of a saint and we have a sexual spectacle in the case of the poet, the speaker and his lady love. We have a pun with this word Canon, c a n o n, can also mean a priest. And this canonization can refer to becoming, or making a priest of both spiritual and sexual love. When we look at the pun a little more carefully, we can see that this cannon can also refer to a gun. What does a poet Donne do with his gun? He fires off his love, he fires off his opponents of love.

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Beginning, End, and Middle



- **Beginning** – a command to shut up the listener's mouth (S1)
- **Ending** – an invocation to make a pattern of love out of the lovers (S5)
- **Middle** – rhetorical questions (S2), answers (S3), and the alternatives (S4)
- Who is affected by my love? None
- We die as two birds and rise as one phoenix.
If unfit for **tombs** and **hearse**, fit for **verse**.
If unfit for **chronicles**, fit for **sonnets**.
- A well-wrought urn/ the poem/ hymns/ love/ canonized



Let us see the beginning, end and middle of this poem. At the beginning, we have a command to the world to shut up their mouth. The listener can refer to a large number of people, representing the whole society. At the end we have an invocation to make a pattern of love, out of the lovers. In the middle, we have a number of rhetorical questions and answers and the alternatives, in three stanzas, stanza 2, 3, and 4. The question, who is affected by my love? has that implicit answer none. None is affected by our love. Then why do they bother about us? That is the question that Donne ask. He describes himself in several images: 'We die as two birds and rise as one phoenix.' There is a mythical bird called phoenix, which dies and then rises in flame as a new bird. At this juncture, he tells us, if his love is unfit for tombs and hearse, at least it is fit for verse, that is poetry. If it is unfit for chronicles, histories, it may be fit for sonnets, that is his poems. Probably he refers to the sonnets in which many poets write about their love for their lady love. At the end we notice that, this poem is a well-wrought urn. This is a song of praise for love. Through this song, Donne is able to canonize the speaker and the beloved. And probably he is making this idea of love, a holly, a spiritual experience for all people.

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“Interlocutors” and Message



- The persona
- Opponents of love
- Love and lovers
- The poem and the urn



There is obviously a message in this poem and this message is conveyed in interaction with several interlocutors. The interlocutors may not be speaking in turn, but then he responds, the poet responds to different ideas from various sections of the people. There is a persona, that is the speaker who argues that love is a personal affair, nobody should interfere with that. And there are many opponents of love, they cannot keep quiet, they will say, or quote many authorities and say love is love. But it should be done in a prescribed way.

But these two people in our poem, the speaker and the lady love, they are unique and they are unique in such a way that they can become saints of love. And they have a pattern of love in this poem as the mythical bird phoenix. And also referring to the Grecian urn, or some artistic urn, which can represent love forever.

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Key words and images



- Love
- Approve
- Tapers, fly, eagle, dove, phoenix
- Prove
- Verse, sonnets, well-wrought urn, hymns hermitage
- Epitomize
- A pattern of love



There are a number of key words and images in this poem: love, approve, tapers, fly, eagle, dove, phoenix. Then we have ‘approve.’ After that we have verse, sonnets, well-wrought urn, hymns and hermitage. Finally, all these images together, words together, epitomize the love of the speaker and the lady love in a pattern of love, in a spiritual pattern of love, in a pattern of love which is admirable for people.

We have papers in this presentation and we have a picture. It refers to their self sacrifice, they grow and die within themselves. That is a whole idea that is connected with phoenix which rises from its own flame.

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Poetic Devices



- **Apostrophe:** Imperative
- **Alliteration:** let me love, fortune flout
- **Chiasmus:** With wealth your state, your mind with arts
- **Rhetorical questions:** Stanza 2

Alas, alas, who's injured by my love?

What merchant's ships have my sighs drowned?

- **Hyperbole:** sighs drowning merchant ships
- **Imagery:** Whirling of images in stanza 3
- **Dramatic Monologue:** Implied reader/ singer/ speaker
- **Epistrophe:** repetition of love at the end of first and last line in all stanzas



This is such a great poem, where we have a large number of poetic devices, starts from apostrophe, the whole poem is something like an address; “for god sake hold your tongue, do not talk about our love, or me, or my lady love.” And it has this alliteration, let me love, fortune flout. This chiasmic structure we have in with wealth your state, your mind with arts. Words are somewhat different, but structurally there is a chiasmus.

We have a number of questions in stanza 2, most of them are rhetorical questions. We have just two lines here,

“Alas, alas, who is injured by my love?

What merchant's ships have my sighs drowned?”

Then we have hyperbole, which we can find in the previous line, can we imagine tears of the lover, drowning the merchant ships in the sea? So, hyperbolically he is connecting the tears with the ship and he says none is affected. We have a number of images in stanza 3. We use the word Whirling of images, a number of images, circle around to focus on the love, the self-sacrificing love, which is immortal in the case of John Donne.

We mentioned this concept dramatic monologue, because there is a kind of implied listener, there is, an implied speaker. People are, that is why we use that expression interlocutors. This poem is an address, or a reply to many of those people who are asking questions.

Then we have Epistrophe. We know strophe, antistrophe, epistrophe in the context of the poetic form called Odd. This particular word epistrophe is also a figure of speech, in which we have repetition of the same word at the end of many lines. In this poem, we have the repetition of the word 'love' at the end of the first line and the last line in every stanza in all five stanzas.

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Diction, Syntax, Tone

- **Diction:** Ordinary and Latinate – contemplate, litigious, mysterious, canonized, pattern (Latin 'patronus')
- **Repetition:** words (love 10 times) and structures (rhetorical questions)
- **Conditional clause** – If in Stanza 4
- **Juxtaposition:** old and young, complain and commend, secular and spiritual
- **Capitalization:** "L" for Love in Stanza 4, line 36
- **Tone:** Conversational, Informal, angry, irritated, solemn



We pay attention to the diction, syntax, and tone. We noticed that Donne is able to use both Latinate words, and common words. Some Latinate words are here: contemplate, litigious, mysterious, canonized, even the word pattern is derived from Latin Patronus. As we noticed earlier, we have many repetitions, the word love is repeated 10 times. And we have many structures which are repeated particularly rhetorical questions.

We also have a conditional clause in stanza 4, if. And then we have this telescoping of images in the form of juxtaposition of dissimilar images. We have old and young people. We have complaining and commanding. We have secular and spiritual love. And in this poem, we have the letter 'L' is capitalized for the word 'Love' in stanza 4, in line 36.

The tone of this poem is conversational, informal. We also have some angry feeling and irritated feeling of this poet. But at the end we find the tone is very serious; he is solemn; he is making his love a great holy experience.

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Rhythm



For God's sake hold your tongue, and let me love,
Or chide my palsy, or my gout,
My five gray hairs, or ruined fortune flout,
With wealth your state, your mind with arts improve,
Take you a course, get you a place, (T, I, T, I)
Observe his honor, or his grace, (I, I, P, I)
Or the king's real, or his stamped face (P, S, P, S)
Contemplate; what you will, approve,
So you will let me love.
Iambic Penta, tetra, and tri-meter



The rhythm of this poem is also very interesting. We have the first stanza here. We have color coding for different kinds of metrical patterns that Donne has used. We have Iambic throughout the poem. But then we have different line lengths, Penta, with five feet, tetra with four feet, and tri with three feet.

So, 'for god's sake' that is all red colored lines, have three lines, have ten syllables and five feet. The green colored lines have eight syllables and four feet. And this blue colored line, last line has six syllables and three feet:

“For god's sake hold your tongue, and let me love,

Or chide my palsy, or my gout,

My five gray hairs, or ruined fortune flout,

With wealth your state, your mind with arts improve,

Take you a course, get you a place, (T, I, T, I)

Observe his honor, or his grace, (I, I, P, I)

Or the king's real, or his stamped face, (P, S, P, S)

Contemplate; what you will, approve.

So, you will let me love.

And we have indicated some kind of structure, pattern that the poet is creating within the first stanza itself. T, I, T, I means trochee Iam, that same pattern is maintained in that line “take you a course and get you a place.” In the next line we have a variation Iam, Iam peric and Iam. And in the next line, we have peric, spondee peric, spondee. Like this previous one T, I, T, I, P, S, P, S, the poet is making a pattern of love in rhythm as well, though the rhythm is varied not just monotonous it is divergent, dynamic.

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Rhyme and Meter



- **Rhyme:** ABBA(4) CCC(3) AA (2) ...1
a quatrain, a triplet, and a couplet
- **Rhyme:** love, gout, flout (couplet), improve, place, grace, face, (triplet) approve, love (couplet, **eye rhyme**)
- **Meter:** iambic; penta, tetra, and tri
- **Caesura:** by comma, colon, semicolon
- **Enjambment:** e.g., Stanza 3, wit/ by Love)
- **Rhythm:** dynamic and lovely and celestial



Let us pay attention to the rhyme and meter as well. The rhyme scheme, as we indicated is ABBA CCC and AAA. This pattern of reduction from progressively reducing, that is, from ABBA 4 to 3 CCC and then 2 AA and then finally 1, this first four lines are in the form of a quatrain, and the second three lines are in the form of a triplet, and the last two lines are in the form of a couplet.

And this rhyme structure is maintained throughout the poem. And probably what Donne tries to indicate is after these two, that is, to the lady and the lover they will become one. Then the words we have in stanza one are: love, gout, flout. And within this ABBA you can see BB making a couplet: improve, place, grace, face. Here we have place, grace, face, triplet and lastly approve, love, couplet.

But the last two, approve and love may not have exact rhyme, that is why we call it eye rhyme. The meter as we noticed earlier is iambic. And we also have some variation of peric and spondee. But then the major rhythm is Iambic. We have three variations pentameter, tetrameter, and trimester.

We have variation in Caesura, the way in which Donne is able to give pauses in his lines across the poem. In some places he uses comma, and some other places he uses colon, and in some other places he uses semicolon as well. Probably the editors also could have contributed to this kind of punctuation marks, but then they also contribute to making variety in rhythm in this poem.

We have enjambment as well, that is, lines move from one line to the next line. One example in stanza 3 is, one-line ends 'wit' and then it continues to the next line by 'love.' We have rhythm which is dynamic, lovely and to put it short celestial, heavenly rhythm.

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Comparison of Love with Tomb/ Verse; Chronicle/Sonnet



- Tombs/ hearse vs Verse – a vehicle/ conduit of love
- Chronicle vs Sonnets
- Ashes in an urn – essentialization – condensation into **ash** in an **urn**
- Hymns for Love
- Donne – a hymn writer for the Holy Father and Holy Love too



We have a comparison of love with tomb and verse, chronicle and sonnet. Tombs, hearse are opposed with verse. This verse is a vehicle or conduit of love. And similarly chronicles and sonnets are considered to be vehicles of love. In Donne's case, he finds ashes in an urn to essentialize his love to condense his love. So that, this condensed love can be expanded, or it can rise in the form of a phoenix.

So, this poem is essentially a hymn of love, we say hymns because it is a song in praise of love for God, love for human beings, love for life. Donne is also a writer of hymns for the holy father and holy love also.

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A New Critical Reading



- Cleanth Brooks's "The Language of Paradox"
- "The language of poetry is the language of paradox."
- Donne's "The Canonization": a test case
 - The paradox: profane love as divine love
 - The conflict between the material and spiritual worlds
 - Shift from a note of irritation to triumph at the end
 - From two birds to one phoenix: live and/or die by love
 - The well-wrought urn / the well-wrought poem
 - The paradox of the imagination; language/ poetry/ life



We have two readings; critical readings; one is a new critical reading. We have a new critic called Cleanth Brooks. He has an essay "The Language of Paradox" in his book, "The Well-Wrought Urn." There he says, 'The language of poetry is the language of paradox.' Brooks uses Donne's poem the canonization as a test case to prove his theory, that, the language of poetry is a language of paradox.

What is the paradox that we have in this poem? Donne presents profane love as divine love, that is a paradox. He argues and then at the end proves in poetry that his love is equal to holy love, spiritual love so it can be canonized. We have a conflict between the material world and the spiritual world.

What the world says, what the people say in on the one hand and what the scriptures, or the church says on the other hand; these two always conflict with each other. There is a shift from a note of irritation at the beginning to a note of triumph at the end of the poem. This triumph is presented to us in the form of two birds becoming one, that is phoenix.

The poet and the lady love, they live for each other and they die for each other. And this experience is presented in the form of a well-wrought urn, which is preserved for immortality. And this poem is similar to that urn which is immortal. At the end Cleanth Brooks argues that the language of poetry is a language of paradox and extends it to the paradox of the imagination. We can extend it to the paradox of language, the paradox of poetry and of course to life in general.

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A Deconstructive Reading



- Jonathan Culler, *On Deconstruction*
- Two worlds
- Private and public
- Donne valorizes the private world of love against the public world of norms.
- But the poem enacts the power of the public world loudly.
- Self-referentiality, Undecidability
- The poem about the urn
- The urn about the poem
- Future readings inscribed in the poem and the urn



Here is another interesting deconstructive reading by Jonathan Culler, in his book “On Deconstruction.” Culler notices two worlds, two separate worlds, the private world and the public world. According to Culler, Donne valorizes, that is, gives more importance to the private world of love, as against the public world of norms, or authority. Then Culler argues that the poem enacts the power of the public world loudly, because Donne spends so much time for engaging with the authority of the world.

So, Culler says the poem is self referential and the meaning of the poem is undecidable. Is the poem about the urn? Is the urn about the poem? what is it? It is not easy to decide. He says, future readings are inscribed in the poem and urn. The way in which we read the poem is inscribed that is embedded within the poem.

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Achievement of the poem/poet



- Life is short; Art is long.
- Lovers die; Love lives forever in poetry.
- Donne lives forever in his love poetry.
- Donne created a space for Brooks, Culler, Derrida, for you and me, etc., in time.
- He offers a pattern of love as well as of reading/ living.



What is the achievement of this poem, or this poet? We know very well, life is short; but art is long. The urn, the poem, the pattern of love, the tombs, the hearse, the chronicle, sonnets are all forms of art; art is long. Lovers may die but love lives forever in poetry in different artistic forms.

As a result, Donne who wrote a poem on love lives forever in poetry. Donne created a space for many readers including Cleanth Brooks, Jonathan Culler and probably all those who follow Derrida, for you and me in time he offers a pattern of love as well as of reading and I believe a pattern of living as well.

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Summary



- Historical and Literary Context
- John Donne
- “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning”
(last 4 stanzas)
- “The Canonization”
- Analysis
- A New Critical Reading
- A Deconstructive Reading



To conclude, we saw the historical and literary context which enabled John Donne to write poems with far-fetched comparisons about the human experience of love for God and also for human beings. We spent some time with “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning” and drew our attention to the compass conceit.

In canonization, Donne uses similar conceits. Canonization is a conceit that he uses throughout the poem. Normally canonization is restricted to a spiritual experience. But then, Donne brings it to the domestic world, private experience of love between two human beings. We paid attention to various poetic devices, rhythm, rhyme, meter and so on to indicate how Donne is able to achieve his artistic purpose through various linguistic rhetorical devices.

We looked into two critical readings offered by two great critics, Cleanth Brooks and Jonathan Culler. The new critical reading says it is a paradoxical poem, so it is the best poem or one of the best poems. Culler says it is a poem, it is an exemplary poem because it deconstructs itself by drawing attention to the way in which Donne has spent so much time for valorizing the world as against the private world. Some references will help you to understand this poem much more.

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References



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Here are many but you can read at least two: Brooks and Culler. If you want to read just one reference it will be good to read Dayton Haskin's 1993 essay "A History of Donne's 'Canonization' from Izaak Walton to Cleanth Brooks" to know about the opinions of various readers on this canonical poem called "The Canonization." Thank you.