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شبكة المعلومات الجامعية



شبكة المعلومات الجامعية

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Ain Shams University
Women's College for Arts,
Science and Education

METAPHYSICAL ASPECTS IN THREE MODERN POETS
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THEIR
THEMES, STYLE AND TECHNIQUE

A Thesis Submitted to
The Department of English Language and Literature,
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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

There has been, in recent years, an increasing interest in the poetry of the Metaphysical poets and many Modern literary critics have called for a revival of their work. In an attempt to find out the reason behind this growing current of interest in the Metaphysical poets, the researcher was struck by the many points of resemblances between them and some outstanding recent and Modern poets. Hence, this thesis will attempt to show and apply some of the most prominent aspects inherent in the Metaphysical school of poetry of the seventeenth century in England to three different poets, namely T. S. Eliot, Emily Dickinson, and Walt Whitman. However, in the process of stressing the affinity between the Metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century (especially John Donne, Andrew Marvell, and Henry Vaughan), and the poets of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the researcher proposes to employ the comparative method, putting each poet under investigation side by side with one or more of the older Metaphysical poets. Yet, that is not to say that all Metaphysical poets were identical but that each had his own unique qualities which will be pointed out when compared to the later, more Modern poets.

In an attempt to show this special interest or revival in the poetry of the Metaphysicals in the Modern age, Chapter One of this thesis attempts to relate the two eras, the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries on the one hand and the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries on the other, focusing on the similar social, political, economic and religious elements that could link these eras together. The significance of this method is to show that although these conditions are conflicting and contradicting, yet they have helped to create a poetry that is characterized by its dichotomy,

duality and philosophical abstract notions and that these poets needed a similar revolutionary style that was able to convince the reader or listener of the poets' new ideas. In other words, there was an unmistakable common aesthetic phenomenon and aesthetic tools shared by both the poets of the seventeenth century in England and their more Modern fellow-poets of the present study.

This common aesthetic phenomenon with its particular tools which created Metaphysical poetry are dealt with in Chapter Two. Hence, Chapter Two will attempt to examine the principal thematic and technical features of the Metaphysical school that could be applied to the poetry of the three above mentioned Modern poets under investigation. The first part of the chapter will define Metaphysical poetry, depending on the views of T. S. Eliot, Thomas Carew and W. Bradford Smith, in addition to the views of Dr. Samuel Johnson who is considered responsible for giving the label "Metaphysical" to Donne and his followers. The result of the investigation shows clearly that most of the Metaphysical poets deal with certain principal common themes: like man and his place in the universe, belief and disbelief in religion, physical and spiritual love, Nature and its relation to man, and death and immortality: subjects that are mostly abstract and apparently contradicting. These themes, however, are interpreted by each poet according to his own personal reactions and individual beliefs but they all reflect a rebellious spirit against old conventions and an enthusiastic attempt on the part of each poet to convince his readers of his new insight or vision. To do so, each Metaphysical poet uses a particular style that has the ability to argue and convince his receiver. Consequently, this part of the chapter is devoted to demonstrate the common style and the familiar techniques that characterize them all: the dramatic style, extended