

The Metaphysical Elements employed in *To His Coy Mistress*, vis-à-vis Moral and Aesthetic Values

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Abstract

Celebrated as one of the best carpe diem poems, Andrew Marvell's *To His Coy Mistress* is found to rule out the literalness of the Superficial elements of 'sexual obscenity' that prevails throughout the poem, but treated as one, which serves the purpose of moral life. And albeit sketched with the figures and playfulness of erotica, this poem is marked as one, which paints the theme of the Transience of life, in its deeper layers. In general, the metaphysical poetry is observed as a blend of emotional and intellectual ingenuity, characterized by far-fetched conceits, sometimes by the violent, (compelled) yoking of unconnected things and ideas, which in turn lead the readers startle out and forces them to think through the argument of the poem but unlike this selected work, which when analysed by the academicians garners the privilege as one of the best themed poems—but the case could be otherwise, when read by the innocent readers who have zero knowledge of metaphysical poetry and its characteristics. Thus, this paper is an attempt to explore and to re-research the characters and reactions that helped combine the moralistic and aesthetic judgements, in order to give transcendental understanding of this time-bound life.

Introduction

1.1 The Metaphysical Poetry

For several decades, notwithstanding the establishment of a certain group of individuals (school of metaphysical poets), whose works are characterized by philosophical exploration, colloquial diction and metrically flexible lines, this school of poets were criticized harshly, for their works were completely in contrast with their predecessors. Amidst those chaotic conceptions on the metaphysical poetry, it was Grierson followed by T.S. Eliot, who holds the fame of identifying the wit and intention of metaphysical poets, rather than accusing them as *unnatural poets*, as Samuel Johnson and many other critics did.

“... above all the peculiar blend of passion and thought, feeling and ratiocination which is their greatest achievement”
(Grierson)

Howbeit the metaphysical poetry is now amply discussed as in the past, it is only vaguely defined. So, where are we to look for metaphysical poetry? what are the outstanding characteristics of their poetry as it distinguishes itself from other verse? Before moving on to the hunt for a clear definition of what a metaphysical poem is, let us heed to the

most familiar comments passed on the school of metaphysical poets, which were predominantly derogatory. William Drummond of Hawthornden, who probably first used the term, reviews of metaphysical poets as men of late, transformers of everything, who endeavoured to abstract poesy to metaphysical ideas and scholastic ideas which have forsaken the classical models, and are therefore damned. Dryden criticizes metaphysical poetry as an instrument that perplexes the minds of the fair sex with sugar-coated speculations of philosophy that are opposed to nature. Johnson, though prejudiced by his age, offers a reasonable criticism by attacking the linking of 'heterogeneous ideas, the slender conceits and laboured particularities' in his essay on Abraham Cowley. On the works of metaphysical poets, Hudson notes that "their work is packed with affectations and conceits; ... they cultivate ingenuity at any cost; substitute philosophical subtleties and logical hair-splitting for the natural expression of feeling; and employ their vast out-of-the-way learning without the slightest regard to propriety. As a result, they are in general violent, harsh, cold and obscure" (WB Smith 108). And this revolt against metaphysical poetry was not a silent one but articulated in criticism as well as in poetry.

The word *metaphysical* is in all probability seen in the philosophical contexts than the literary one. Metaphysics roots out from philosophical inquiry and discourse, which is beyond the physical and is highly unsurpassed. Those are focused on philosophical questions that are hypothetical in nature that cannot be weighed or even proved to exist. Metaphysics, therefore, matters with the idea of the divine and divinity, and of the makeup of what is called reality. Accordingly, poetry that is metaphysical concerns itself with those kinds of issues and concerns as well.

In the first place, metaphysical poetry is a consequence of the double motive, "the desire to startle and the desire to approximate poetic to direct, unconventional, colloquial speech" (Grierson xxii). It is not confined to an age, but is recurrent throughout all poetry. The philosophy which postulates an orderly view of the universe, is inimical to the metaphysical muse, for her tortuous wonderings are born of unresolved complexity. The learned critics feel that the metaphysical poetry is inspired by the role assigned to the human spirit in the great drama of existence. T.S. Eliot in his essay *The Metaphysical Poets* notes that "a degree of heterogeneity of material compelled into the unity of operation of the poet's mind is omnipresent in [their] poetry". Metaphysical poetry is indeed not afraid of any particular ideas and concepts but is predominantly concerned with life, love, and death, and it is highly metaphorical. Metaphysical poetry sometimes uses the ideas from all (any) branches as the main part of the argument, but when scrutinized keenly, they would have been used as a source of imagery, to illustrate a point. Intellect controls their poetry and the Imagery is used, not because it is pretty but because it fits the idea. The metaphysical poet uniquely handles his images and will make that to be one with his idea, 'the image an explanation rather than an embellishment', for his passion is examined and probed, not eulogized.

Metaphysical poetry is a paradoxical inquiry, imaginative and intellectual, which exhausts by its use of antithesis and contradiction and unusual imagery, all the possibilities in a given idea. This idea will predominantly be a psychological probing of love, death, or religion as the more important matters of experience in the life of a poet, and will be embodied in striking metaphorical utterance or in the use of the common (familiar) or the scientific word (WB Smith 263).

The early writers of metaphysical poetry sought to refine poetry by deepening its moods, intellectualizing its images, and by making use of contemporary philosophy and sciences and as William Henry Hudson puts it, they indulge in an earnest effort to surprise the readers with boldness and novelty of extravagant images with far-fetched similes and complicated metaphors. And this “telescoping of images and multiplied association is one of the sources of vitality of the language to be found in metaphysical poetry” (T.S. Eliot). Metaphysical poetry most clearly represents an attempt to boost up the poetic style and to bring it up-to-date mirroring an advanced sensibility. The metaphysical poets attempted to get rid of the poetic style of their predecessors which were rich in ‘servile weeds- imitative moods and phrases, superficiality and that sensuousness’ of Petrarchized-Elizabethan ideals of noble poetry, which is sometimes antithetical to the intellectual content. So, these poets, like other artists, find it necessary to rework the aesthetic principles of their predecessors by overthrowing the flowery language of the 16th century poetry and made up a unique style that is energetic, uneven and rigorous. Also, they sought to shock the readers and wake them up from their normal existence in order to question the unquestionable. Their obscurity, rising from their thoughts and images, “are not the result of the poetic ambition which sought expression not for the inexpressible but for the untraditional” (Robert Lathrop Sharp 503). Just because they are interested in the interplay between the world of the psyche and the physical world, metaphysical poets often provide concrete view to abstract ideas through their unusual comparisons and images.

Metaphysical poetry is neither not entirely concerned with the romantic feelings for nature nor the expressions of philosophical creeds. And it is not untrue to say that sincerity is a hallmark of good metaphysical verse. Determined than any other poetic groups, metaphysical poets have pulled out all the stops in an attempt to furnish their proposals of life in all their works. Their sole aim is not seen in the technique, but in writing with all the perception and thought. The metaphysical poet is interested first in his own life and next in the life and actions of others and the careful analysis of these things lead to a transcendental understanding of far great universal. This deeply probing finger of the metaphysical poets seems to uncover personal truths and strike out the unexpected universal truths, which was not dared to be spoken by other artists. Roughness or harshness is a part of their art, and it is without a second thought, ‘conscious and deliberate’ and to fail to realize the intentions behind their harshness is to refuse them their recompense. The metaphysical poets thought that literature must be intellectually flavoursome and that it should wrestle and tussle with big, unexpressed ideas.

1.1.1 The Lead Metaphysical Poets

The metaphysical poets continue to be studied and revered for their intricacy and originality by investigating the world through rationality rather than by being mystical. Nonetheless, labeling them under a hypernym of ‘school of metaphysical poets’ is always problematic, for they share similar but distinct characteristics, especially of wit and elaborate styles; and were not self-consciously adhering to metaphysical guidelines. They were known for using paradoxical images, implicit argument, imaginative syntax, and imagery from literature, philosophy, and religion in an extended metaphor to startle the reader and coax new perspectives.

Without a question, John Donne is the most influential of all metaphysical poets and to put exactly, it is with him that the doors of a new perspective in understanding poetry was wide open. And when we begin exploring his verse, the description of him as a metaphysical poet is inescapable. Revolting against the mere imitators of Greek modelled poetry, he paints a revolutionary picture of enigmatic poetry. Dryden on Donne, said that he was affecting the metaphysics too much which implies that he owes a lot to intellectual analysis rather than explicit literal meaning of the words. The poetry of Donne is characterised by the use of colloquial language coupled with abstruse terminology drawn from science. He uses puns and paradoxes in a perfectly serious contexts to attain a profound realisation of experience, but not humour. He expresses his own personal experience and definition of love in a special way that bears the imprint of his brilliance. Being the best and true of his kind, Donne seems to challenge the dogmatic principles and beliefs. He is dubious about religion and love in most of his poetry, which became the trait of metaphysical poetry (alone). In his *Holy Sonnet XVIII*, he requests God to guide him to seek out the true-church.

Show me dear Christ, thy spouse, so right and clear.
What! is it she, which on the other shore
Goes richly painted? or which robb'd and tore
Laments and mourns in Germany and here? (Donne)

He uses the metaphor of Christ's bride ('spouse'), also known as Christ's church in Christian lore. The search for the true church of Christ among the various conflicting denominations of Christianity is the theme of this sonnet. And so well is portrayed of the speculation on Love. "... And swear / Nowhere / Lives a woman true, and faire" (Donne, *Go and Catch a Falling Star*). The poet is no less suspicious, rather, hypothetical of true love and sincerity on the part of women. Another striking feature of metaphysical poetry is the use of conceit which highlights the genius of Donne by all means. One such best example of metaphysical conceit can be found in the last three stanzas of *A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning*, where he compares the souls of lovers with the two legs of a compass. Donne's poetry is exclusively psychological and it makes an appeal to the intellectuals. In short, he plays with thoughts and expressions in a unique manner by having no such predecessors before him. Similarly, were the other poets who followed and advocated the no less wit of Donne in their poetry. The representatives of metaphysical poetry who shares the fame and transcendental thoughts with John Donne are George Herbert, Henry Vaughan, Abraham Cowley, Richard Crashaw, Thomas Traherne and Andrew Marvell.

Now, having discussed all the above characteristics of metaphysical poetry, it is almost the perfect spot to establish the idea of this research by studying the author of the selected work in detail to have a clear-cut comprehension of this thesis.

1.2 Andrew Marvell

Marvell is regarded as an outlier in the literary landscape, with perhaps the most distinct poetic voice of any metaphysical poet. He was named by Collin Burrow, in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography as one of the 'central figures' of the metaphysical poetry. Although Andrew Marvell is now best known to us as a poet, in his time, he was

seen as a public servant, through his outstanding personal integrity and his commitment to public service. Though this political career dominated his poetic life in the contemporary era, he inevitably gained the status of one of the great metaphysical poets in the modern period. Marvell was brought up by his father Reverend Andrew Marvell (lecturer at Holy Trinity Church), master of the Charterhouse in the Yorkshire town of Hull. After pursuing his B.A., Marvell stayed on at Trinity to complete his M.A. degree, however his father's death in the Humber made him quit his studies. Marvell travelled sweepingly on the Continent, adding Dutch, French, Spanish, and Italian, to his Latin and Greek during the 1640s which struck him off from the English Civil War. As a renowned politician, Marvell took up a position in Cromwell's government and represented Hull to Parliament during the Restoration. Holding a public position which stood in the way of his publication nothing escaped Marvell's satirical eye, nonetheless. Both the court and parliament did not escape his criticism. Many of his outstanding poems, especially "Tom May's Death", an assault on the famous Cromwellian, would have made him unpopular with both Royalists and republicans if they had been published during his lifetime. Marvell died of a fever that struck him unexpectedly.

Andrew Marvell, widely regarded as one of the greatest poets of the seventeenth century, wrote very little of his witty political satire and complicated lyric verse during his lifetime, but posthumously published a handful of anthologies by his nephew, three years after his death. His writing encompasses a wide range of aspects. His poems in general, include biographical, historical, literary, critical, social and humanistic perspectives. His style of poetry is sharper and more satirical in its wit. Like every other metaphysical poet, he is straightforward and blunt when it comes to expressing the exact point of view. The majority of Marvell's style can be explained by his extensive scholarship and role as a mentor to the children of influential political figures. But observing the poise of his composition, the care with which individual words are chosen and placed in original combinations, offer safe territory from which we can claim him, for a distinctive and identifiable poetic voice, albeit one embedded in the culture of its time.

1.2.1 Marvell's Poetic style

Word ambiguity, complex metaphors, inconsistencies, allegorical meanings, twists and turns of opinion and argument, scientific terminology, and subtle language style are all metaphysical characteristics in Marvell's work. Marvell's ambiguity is an indication of his recognition of every aspect of an issue that kept him free from partiality. Marvell's writing style is characterised by a great deal of ambiguity in terms of context and vocabulary. In his introduction to *Andrew Marvell: A Collection of Critical Essays* in 1968, George de Forest Lord stated that uncertainty is not a feature of Andrew Marvell's writing style. In Marvell's human condition sensibility, it is rather a way of feeling and thought that is concealed. Marvell's complexity aids readers in comprehending all sides of a political or social problem. It's also a sign of Marvell's ability to see both sides of a problem, which enabled him to remain impartial. Marvell's poetry is characterised by an inherent complexity and a fundamental omnipresence concern.

Marvell's poetry is a delight to behold for students of cultural history and literature, as it represents the cultural currents of his time—stoicism, Christian Platonism,

antischolastic mysticism—as well as a nationalistic sense of the order and understanding of nature. His poetry is notable for its delicate combination of scathing wit and dramatic atmosphere, which harkens back to Donne.

The Use of Metaphysical Elements and Conceits in Andrew Marvell's Poetry vividly brings out the fundamental problems of the nature, of the universe and main place in the world. The body and the spirit are constantly at odds in Marvell's poetry. The distinction between the body and the soul is an ancient Western idea. Its origins can be traced back to the Socratic and Platonic traditions. The classics believed that the soul is eternal and the body is transient. During the Renaissance, this idea of soul permanence was resurrected. The main theme of Marvell's poems, such as "The Garden" and "The Definition of Love", is the clash of body and inner soul. There is always this pursuit, to reconcile materialistic pleasures with spiritualism. Marvell brilliantly establishes the spiritual themes of the human soul to the body, to this universe, and to the world beyond in many of his poems.

A soul hung up, as 'twere, in chains
Of nerves, and arteries, and veins;
Tortur'd, besides each other part,
In a vain head, and double heart.(Line 7 – 10)

In the above quoted lines from the poem, "A Dialogue between the Soul and the Body", there is a lot of physical conceit. The poem's philosophical theme is that the soul and body are "separate beings". The body perceives the spirit, while the soul perceives itself as a slave within the body. The way in which the soul and the body fight each other is really a treat (artistically).

But physic yet could never reach
The maladies thou me dost teach;
Whom first the cramp of hope does tear,
And then the palsy shakes of fear;(Line 31- 34)

The body definitely succeeds in making a solid argument for itself in the debate between the soul and the body, but the soul confidently claims its supremacy and sublime intent. This poem, which is quite metaphysical, also has a dramatic tone and style. The multiple speeches have a dramatic quality to them in that they elicit a wide range of intense emotions in us.

Without a doubt, Marvell is one of the most well-known metaphysical poets. It is because of his clever use of stretched conceits, the carpe diem theme, and refined wit. Marvell stretches the subjects of the shepherd weaving a crown and the discussion about the poem itself throughout his poem "The Coronet". In "The Definition of Love," Marvell wanders through various definitions of love in various stanzas prior and then integrates them.

Similarly, Marvell's poems depict contemporary social and political circumstances. "An Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland", for example, is a political poem in which Marvell sympathises with the demise of Charles I. It also tries to integrate the current political situation into a traditional ode. The type of poetry which followed by Marvell, was very common among Charles I's courtier poets. Recent criticism has revealed the poem's complexities and ambiguities. Most critics claim Marvell was using narrative irony and the poem's suspicious inappropriate imagery to obscure its true meaning. The inherent complexity of Marvell's poetry, which was discovered in other metaphysical poets, is now recognised as the key to understanding the majority of his work. Many critics claim that Marvell's use of ambiguities was a play on the essence of ambiguity occurrence itself, rather than just a clever device.

The use of everyday language in a dramatic tone is a common feature of metaphysical poetry, and Marvell's poetry is no exception. He effectively employs a conversational style of language that is both familiar and plain. The argumentative presentation of Marvell's philosophical poetry is another significant feature. Marvell has shown some argument in the following lines of 'The Definition of Love' to express their spiritual love that has split two lovers: 'As lines so loves oblique may well/Themselves in every Angle greet: But ours so truly parallel/Through infinite can never meet'. Marvell's poetry must bear witness to the convergence of emotion and intellect that is a central feature of metaphysical poetry. The emotion of love is reflected intellectually in 'The Definition of Love'. The following lines from the above mentioned are very much apt to this context:

Therefore the love which us doth bind
But Fate so enviously debars
Is the conjunction of the mind,
And opposition of the Stars' (Lines 29-32)

Marvell has demonstrated his mastery of fantastic imagery, wit, and conceits. The poem "The Definition of Love" is full of wit and cleverness. For example:

'It was begotten by Despair/Upon Impossibility'.

The Metaphysicals' poetic style is also evident in "The Definition of Love". Marvell, like Donne, is unconcerned with what his beloved looks like, sounds like, or tells. What matters is the romantic relationship and the state of being in love. And, like Donne, Marvell expresses his point of view through pictures, although images that are far removed from the typical imagery associated with poetry. And, like Donne, Marvell makes his case with pictures, some of which are so far from the traditional imagery associated with the subject that they are referred to as conceits. Here, Marvell uses mathematics and cosmology in the same way as Donne uses geography, theology, and research. Time and transience, love and its ephemeral passion and catastrophe have long been his themes in poetry, with Elizabethan sonneteers such as Spenser and Shakespeare advocating the idea that time's ravages or destruction of love and the beloved can be overcome by transcendent poetry. In comparison to the Elizabethans, Marvell would fail to recognise poetry as the sole means of speech. In comparison to the Elizabethans, Marvell rejects poetry as the only redeeming attribute, just as he rejects Keats' stoic resonance and quiescence and believes in vibrant human action. As a result, he

encourages the lover and the beloved to savour the brief period of youth bestowed upon him and to make the most of it.

Having discussed the style which is predominantly visible in metaphysical poetry particularly, in Andrew Marvell's poems, the main purpose of this thesis is to help understand the readers if there could any ethical thoughts birth out of metaphysical poetry, other than the numerous times, wherein the aesthetic elements peep out, though ornamentally. The notion of later said ecstasy found in metaphysical poetry may prove to be morally troublesome for traditional philosophies such as Stoicism, for the Stoics believe that the highest virtues are attained through self-control and avoidance of purely sensual and sensuous experiences. They have a strong notion that 'the truth and beauty' can be found through reason alone.

Without ambiguity, an interpretation is susceptible to being deconstructed, but complexity is necessarily similar to metaphysical poetry. Even with an infinitenonuniformity, a text should still say something, and there should be limits to what a critic will say. The decoding of the actual (metaphysical) poetic lines with regard to moralistic principles will remain the keynote to this study.

Thus, by the end of this research, the researcher would be in a position to answer to the question, "Do morality and aesthetics coalesce with regard to metaphysical poetry, (especially in the selected work) to establish (one of the) purpose of the poetic muse, like Horace claims, To Teach and to Delight".

"Poets desire either to improve or to please, or to unite the agreeable and the profitable...you will win every vote if you blend what is improving with what pleases, and at once delight and instruct the reader" (Horace).

Synthetic reaction of Moral and Aesthetic values

Can Morality and Aesthetics co-exist? Or at least can they have possible equivalent out-turn when incorporated within a single content? To have an overview of the tumultuous relationship between these two notions and to comprehend their existence, the simplest solution lies in dividing the doctrines involving them into three large families: the first, that suggests poetry should bow to morality; the second that would have aesthetics yield to poetry; and the last, which affirms that these two domains ought to remain dependent (although without much show off).

The first theory which is almost deemed to be full of vagueness places itself in the service of moral principles subjecting the aesthetics values only next to it. This positioning is expressed in Greek antiquity by Plato, who banished the category of poets from his ideal state of Republic, for they failed to satisfy the demands of morality; and accused them as the perverts of morality, imitators of non-reality, since he really had a definite view about the value of poetry. And as Daya Nandan in his poem, *The Importance of Morality* states an undeniable verity, which when put in a nutshell conveys that Morality is the very foundation of our humanity and the society will sink into insanity without it.

A man loses little when he loses his wealth,

A man loses more when he loses his health,

But there is one thing that if lost will make him fall,

Morality, for when he loses that he loses it all, (Daya Nandan)

As true to the fact, without a sense of morality, mankind would be lost and if we are unable to differentiate between wrong and right, how can mankind possibly achieve a future so bright? However, this moral-sensical point could not be genuinely accepted as a work of literary art, for it takes the place of the vital (yet the only) role of religious texts, which is devoid of materialistic, sensuous pleasure and this led to the development of Aesthetic Movement which advocates that there is no connection between morality and art. That is not to say, that poetry must be completely devoid of moral judgements, but like Mathew Arnold defines in his *Study of Poetry*, it must possess both the poetic truth and poetic beauty, which will be discussed in the third part of the classified family.

Moving on to the second part of the classification, which is crudely defined by the moralists as simply an action of flinging off the glitters on the face of the readers, that gives mere momentous delight but that does not provide anything for the welfare of state and the individual, it is primarily concerned with aesthetic beauty with an underlying moral theme. One could simply argue that there is no ethics discernible in this kind of poetry, but as said before, the modernist poetry which is devoid of typical taste and traditions of classics, entertains the complex interpretation and has the luxury of having tons of meaning within it. And, if any poem has a sensuous experience that questions morality and spirituality in its visible upper layer, one must be really careful in looking through the deeper layers of the text, for one could find atleast another set of meaning (although if that is not the one intended by the author actually), which might not have strike them initially. Kant believed that the purpose of art is to be “purposeless”, ignoring material, subject matter, and any other external demands. It should not be needed to explain its presence and worth for any reason other than the fact that it is art. But when we approach the art, (say any genre) practically, everything has a purpose and so does the art, but to add that the purpose need not be same for all; so is the case with understanding the meaning of any text - and this statement highlights and forms the third theory, which formulates aesthetics and morality can integrate to give a better understanding of this universe, and serves a double purpose — philosophical and imaginative treat. From the below imagistpoetic piece, we shall decode how the ordinary images devises the means to wide range of themes including the moralistic aspects.

I have eaten
the plums
that were in
the icebox
and which
you were probably
saving
for breakfast
Forgive me
they were delicious
so sweet
and so cold (Williams, *This Is Just To Say*)

The speaker admits that he/she has sneakily consumed the plums from an icebox (a kind of precursor to the modern refrigerator), in the poem. Some readers assume it was written as a note from Williams to his wife because of its informal tone. Although the poem can be interpreted as symbolic of wide thematic ideas such as temptation, shame, the Garden of Eden, and so on—it could also be interpreted as a lovely celebration of life's simple pleasures.

Imagine, if the speaker of the poem is a little labour from weaker class, working under a sophisticated yet cruel master, and confessing what he/she does (i.e., eating stealthily), it can convey nothing less than a philosophical judgement, with regard to societal class problems and many such. Similarly, is the case with metaphysical poetry. Critics may judge them and criticize their works as mere an act of showing off their learning skills, into a bundle of words in the form of far-fetched conceits to equate with the ordinary experience, also, there was this general misconception which claims that the poetic language (of metaphysical poets) after undergoing the long process of scholastic quiddities, lacks its original intent but conveys something else, which is seen just as a play of words and nothing much productive. The reader is often shocked out of his complacency and forced to think upon the poem's explicit claim due to the aggressive yoking together of seemingly unconnected ideas and things. And, this is the major issue with the metaphysical poems, for we are obliged to overlook the deeper meaning in general.

Likewise, Andrew Marvell's *To His Coy Mistress* nothing less than a typical metaphysical poem, which is supposed to deceive and play with the readers, when one just catches its literal meaning, leaving the deeper meaning aside. If the poem is just understood with its surface aspects or obvious features, the reader could see this poem but as a pornographic one, for it is concerned merely on the seductiveness and outward glamour that is not skin-deep and devoid of romantic attachment. Albeit there is this absence of explicit sexual obscenity in this poem, the idea it provokes and its attitude towards the carnal appetites dismays the sensual pleasure accompanied with the spiritual essence that commonly elicits in the erotic romance. And this prevalence of sexuality during the Renaissance period was seen as less evil still thought of as a sin, and was due to the thirst of acquisition of knowledge which devised the course to the exploration of Thought and Culture. But on the other hand, if one checks out for something in the poems of metaphysical poets, that can be useful for the welfare of the state and the individual, like Plato searches out in the poetry, in the surface level, he/she will be left out with nothing but disappointment. Thus, in the upcoming discussion, the researcher would explain how both the elements of morality and aesthetics merge together to have a transcendental understanding of life, through exploring the selected work of Andrew Marvell.

2.1 Discussion

A complex mixture of passion and thought can be noticed in many of Marvell's poems. The poems generally evoke a powerful emotional reaction while still maintaining an analytical tone. The poet offers a solution to what he and his beloved would do, effectively fusing intense emotion and intellectual thought in *To His Coy Mistress*. Instead of a simple lyric, Marvell utilises all of the metaphysical poetry's specific devices (in this

poem) to subvert the platonic conception of love through irony, wit, and humour, and then to present an overwhelming and graphic enjoyment of a sexual love that would be sufficient compensation for their love's transience.

To His Coy Mistress is a classic metaphysically convincing love poem, in which the lover attempts to persuade the inaccessible (coy) mistress to give up her virginity and embrace his courtship. The lover tried to convince his mistress to embrace his passionate love by reminding her that life is short and time passes, and after death, everything becomes meaningless. For the lover's convincing, the poet conceived a fair syllogistic pattern, in which each part was allied with ingenious conceits. There is no question that readers will find some amusing or conflicting details in this poem; however, they will not be able to deny that the presence of these details adds to the poem's brilliance, and it is Marvell's wit.

The short summary of the poem: The first stanza starts with a dramatic statement. In plain and pointed words, the poet tells his lady love, "the coy mistress", that if they could love forever, he would spend thousands of years only appreciating her physical beauty, as her beauty deserved. Obviously, while Marvell places a greater emphasis on physical attractiveness and the appeal of the flesh, he places a lesser emphasis on the spirit. In reality, Epicurean philosophy, also known as hedonistic philosophy, is prominent in the poet's focus on the enjoyment of sensual pleasures. Still, the hyperboles aren't unacceptable if we consider what Francis Bacon says in his essay *On Love*: "The eternal hyperbole is comely in nothing but love". Marvell is saved by Bacon just as we are about to laugh at his exaggerated comment.

While the first stanza poignantly emphasises life's brevity and the importance of making the most of the time one has, the second stanza reflects the poet's sense of impending death. If they waste their time and go to the grave without experiencing sensual pleasures, they will forever lose out because they will not be able to embrace each other in the private chambers of their graves. So, to use T.S. Eliot's words, the poet urges his lady love to hurry up as it's time please. The third stanza brings the argument to a close, and the poet begins it with the words "now, then...", which are used to end an argument. He encourages the mistress to have immediate communion because of the brevity of life and youth. They should not waste any time, and they should begin the love-sport as soon as the youthful hue on her skin reflects the burning passion of her soul through every pore. Rather than languishing in the slow-chapt chamber, they can eat the present hours like amorous birds of prey. They should band together to form a single ball, obliterating their individual identities in the process, and start it rolling, shattering the barriers in their path. They won't be able to make the sun disappear, but they can make it flee, preventing it from messing with their love sport.

The poem, which follows a deductive pattern of two hypotheses and a conclusion, also shows many other metaphysical poetry characteristics. The first is the ability to focus. The poet's insistence on his beloved to not waste time but to collect the rose buds while they are still available is the focal point of the poem from beginning to end. We are never able to waver or pause as this argument is argued out in three stanzas. References to the Biblical apocalypse or the Indian Ganges do not distract our focus for even a second. We can't stop ourselves from reading the poem in one breath. Ratiocination, or

argumentation embellished with pleasant philosophical speculations, is the second feature of metaphysical poetry. As we can see, the poem argues that because life is short, lovers can enjoy the pleasures of sex as soon as possible. The poet's argument that life is short and should not be wasted is bolstered by references to the Bible, rubies collected along the Indian Ganges, and hyperbolic utterances. The use of conceits is the third trait. Conceits are perplexing metaphors that compare objects that are more unlike than similar. The poet's suggestion is that they join together to form a ball is a bold idea. They'd go on making love incessantly until they were together, like a restless disc. 'The iron gates of life', which represent the roadblocks in their path, is also brilliant for its originality. The winged chariot of time is a familiar metaphor, but its application is unparalleled. When the poet suggests that they should devour time instead of languishing in his slow-chapter strength, like amorous birds of prey who don't care what's going on around them when they make love, our brains are jolted. Time devouring is a terrifying concept that man is still afraid of; however, the poet's proposal to devour time by not wasting a single moment outside of love-play is certainly unexpected. "These lines are the very essence of Marvell's poetry, the weird, sensuous, passionate Puritan", Emile Legouis says.

Coming to the point of analysis, the very eponymous term 'coy mistress' is a bizarre. If we identify a girl as coy, she is shy, but it is an affected shyness, not true shyness; 'the mistress' - it either means a girlfriend or a lover—except Mistress doesn't just mean a girlfriend or lover (for it has the connotation of a very excitingly dominant sexual partner), but also has a sadomasochistic aspect. And it's intriguing to ponder about how one can picture the mistress. Should one read her as a silly, shy, little girl who the speaker is trying to seduce? or does she take the role of a woman with affected shyness who knows exactly what she is doing? or at least the man (the speaker of this poem) suspects that she knows exactly what she's putting him through which devises the impression that he quite likes that affected behaviour. Then, comes the next fascination of this poem, which is, the way each of the stanzas is going to present a different strategy for wooing, seducing, inveigling himself to the affections of the mistress. 'Had we but...' (if we had)- this is one of those conceits which can embark anything really romantic with and one must have suspected the phrase "but", right at the start of next claim. "But at my back I always hear/Time's winged Chariot hurrying near", he means time is passing quickly and violently, and above them, there's nothing they can do about it—it's a winged chariot. So, what they've got is to look forward into the 'deserts of vast eternity' - a future of nothingness. Also, there is a certain beat to the rhythm, when he gets going in this stanza. It speeds the story up, as if he is becoming more aggressive (more desperate perhaps), in the way, the speaker presents his argument in this stanza. And then, he comes up with the new technique, "therefore". If the mistress doesn't fall for him, he reveals that her 'quaint' preserved virginity will turn into dust except for the worms in the burial chamber. The third stanza begins incidentally, with "Now therefore", and once again, there seems to be a different tact that he is moving with in order to attract the mistress. Instead of languishing around, doing nothing, and waiting to die, 'let us—the sentiment that he is getting here is that, although the time is preying us, let us eat the time itself and nourish ourselves.

"For the men of the Renaissance, time is a great discovery—the antagonist against which they plan and plot and war, and over which they hope to triumph" (R. J. Quinones

55). To seize the day was a common theme in Renaissance literature, and *To His Coy Mistress*' main theme simply demonstrates this. In the first stanza, time seemed to be so helpful and valuable that it could give the lover the strength to love in a vegetable way and the opportunity to experience this pure love while also assisting him in healing his heart injuries. In the second stanza, however, time took on a new face; it became cruel and heartless, bringing the lover and his mistress to death (to dust and ashes) and allowing the warm to test the beauty. The lover felt anxious and afraid as "Time's winged chariot hurrying", which contrasted with the time of kindness in the first stanza. Despite the fact that these two forms of time characteristics seemed to be at odds, the first line of the first stanza, 'had we had enough time', reconciled the disagreement, converting it into the accepted conflict between the ideal and the truth. And, by providing such a stark comparison between the ideal and fact, the mistress might unexpectedly understand that she should seize the day and stop being coy, implying that the lover had broken his mistress' first psychological defensive line and set the stage for the convincing proposal in the third stanza. The lover, on the other hand, convinced the mistress to consider his proposal of sporting and making love in the third stanza, while the sun (time) runs, instead of letting it to pause and to enjoy this moment with his mistress.

Plato, as a critic, consistently excluded poets from his Republic, believing poets to be the greatest enemies of youth. Poets, he claimed, depict women's bodies to arouse whims in the young. Because philosophy deals with purifying and refining our sins and sexual urges, he preferred to use philosophy to verse the poems. That is, rather than suppressing sexual desire and other distractions, we seek wisdom by refining and training that desire for a higher purpose. A feminist or a strict moralist would simply say that Marvell's purpose in writing this poem was to show the speaker's erotic desire toward his beloved, in order to follow his opinion about poetry and to confirm it. At first, he prepares to describe her eyes in order to demonstrate that he is not erotic, but he gradually progresses to describing his beloved's body. Even when he realises that he won't be able to persuade his beloved to spend at least one night with him, he adds to the pressure by making up false excuses. He claims that if they are in romantic relationships, the world will never end. When he is vexed, on the other hand, he threatens his beloved that if he does not touch her, the worms will take her virginity. Finally, the poem contains numerous connotations, each of which focuses on sexual desires and needs, and because they do not imply perpetual procreation, it supports Plato's theory that poetry can be immoral and unethical—this could be the realization of a strict moralist after reading this poem, but can this be the only way of interpreting it? By no means! if this was the only way, this poem would not have survived ages to be themed as one of the best subjects to be dealt in a poem- Carpe Diem.

But, when a feminist reading is given to this, Marvell's verse is not an account of a delightful romance but instead is an outright rape threat. He has woven his perversity into his verse slowly and deliberately, first with seductive platonic assurances and then with obscene sexual imagery. Marvell portrays his mistress' whole character in contrast to her sexual capacity, as if she has no other purpose in life than to please him sexually. In this poem, Marvell may have considered the possibility of procreation. The "iron gates of life" could refer to the path leading to the woman's womb, where life begins. The only way to make a woman useful (as per certain feminist critics would be), 'according to

Marvell, is to plant the seeds of life in her'. He only associates women with their role as mothers, which goes against the feminist ideal of liberating women from their reproductive function, which has put them at a disadvantage, and providing free abortion and contraception. Marvell, on the other hand, claims that women's sole function is to reproduce and give birth to a child for the man, after which she is no longer needed. "... thy willing soul transpires/ At every pore with instant fires", Marvell writes in the poem, believing the woman is as passionate and tempted as he is. His "vegetable love", which may be a reference to his penis and fertility, is capable of providing her with both sexual and social fulfilment. The idea of "vegetable love", which refers to a man's desire to multiply, and the woman is merely a conduit, a fertile ground, exemplifies male supremacy. She does not yield to his demands at any point in the poem. A feminist will see this as a win for women's sex and an unforgivable act of self-assertion.

But this research is not intended to prove or assert that this poem could or only interpret the verse in one particular manner, but to show and to prove, how the metaphysical (aesthetic) elements have yielded to morality, which is officially universal.

Had we but World enough, and Time,
This coyness, Lady, were no crime.
We would sit down, and think which way
To walk, and pass our long Loves Day.
Thou by the Indian Ganges side I would
Should'st Rubies find: I by the Tide
Of Humber would complain
Love you ten years before the flood,
And you should, if you please, refuse
Till the conversion of the Jews.
My vegetable Love should grow
Vaster than Empires, and more slow;

The poem's claim follows a quasi-syllogistic pattern. It starts by expecting an objection: she will once again deny, citing the inappropriateness of the time and place. Its exaggerated approval of her refusal's morality acts as a claim of absurdum. If the poet and his beloved had unlimited space and time, her contradictory rejection (coyness) would not be as it is, an act of fate, so he could wait a lifetime and cross the globe for her. There would be the rejection of objection then. Waiting for ideal circumstances means a perpetual desert in the endless future of death, whilst her beauty (and therefore his desire) is temporary. With such temporal abundance at their disposal, the speaker claims, he could spend a hundred years praising the lady's eyes (though fifty years per eye seems to leave even the most poetic of speakers at a loss for words, and both he and his lady suffering from a severe case of boredom). Perhaps more spectacularly, the speaker declares that he will spend two hundred years honouring each of his lady's breasts, and thirty thousand years honouring the rest of the world—undoubtedly including the regions he wants to visit before the end of time.

The first stanza builds on the wonderful opening's "but world enough and time" with a summary of how things would be if it weren't for the urgency of the situation. The world's temporality and continental geography may be the cause of their non-embrace, but the poetic persona's affection for her will continue, at least long enough to reach the heart, the final part of her beautiful body. Via her relentless refusals, the whole universe and everlasting ages unfold the amplitude of his desire to court her.

The inversion of the metaphor in the second stanza lends urgency to the claim by spatializing infinity as an infinite desert and temporalizing seclusion as the moment of a lost embrace in the enclosure of a tomb. But it's time, not separation, that poses the greatest danger to this love—her beauty and youth are inextricably linked, and his romantic idealisation of her is intimately linked to a frank confession of sexual desire.

But at my back I always hear
Time's winged Chariot hurrying near;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast Eternity
Thy Beauty shall no more be found;
Nor, in thy marble Vault, shall sound
My echoing Song: then Worms shall try
That long preserved Virginity:
And your quaint Honour turn to dust;
And into ashes all my Lust.

Only in the arms of the grave can unconditional love be infinite and eternal. The poem then restates its case after this clarification of words. It is preferable to act now, "while thy willing soul transpires / At every pore with instant fires", in the vigorously sexual form of "rough strife", rather than waiting for time to grind youthful passion to sand. The implication is that this isn't a declaration of affection, but rather a declaration of carnal union, that was already ambivalently rejected due to the risk of being discovered. Its fundamental concept is that the young lady has no lack of willpower, but rather a collection of traditional propriety norms, likely followed by some context worries about mortality. The sense of inescapable exposure isn't the poem's only subtle reservation. Some of the content deliberately mocks them ediaeval religion of love's poetic blazon, such that, for example, the iteration of the lady's attractiveness descends into an itemization of parts that ridicules via exaggeration. One might say that the poetic form only includes sexual content. If the poem's romantic ambiance were not the polar opposite of erotic (more peculiarly, sexual), the poem's closing lines would be more passionate. "All this talk about worms and graves, rough play and broken gates, seems calculated to dowse arousal rather than lubricate acceptance of a seduction gambit, as A. D. Hope captured amusingly in his poetic reply, *His Coy Mistress to Mister Marvell*". The poetic persona's sense of urgency stem from an impossible attempt to "make the sun

stand still”, to defy time, rather than from overwhelming desire. The horrifying sight of the lovers’ embrace in the grave could speculate the images of despair and desecration rather than delirious lust and sexual transportation. Finally, and most definitely, the ambivalent and unerotic vaginal imagery of the iron gates of life is not receptive to sexual tenderness. The speaker, on the other hand, is appealing to a more inclusive and persuasive value—completeness and wholeness, rather than the lady’s passion. Instead of the eternalization of the beloved or the consummation of a great love, these modulate the poem from romantic idealisation by de-sublimated sexuality to something akin to fierce desperation or desolate desire. Although the uncertain ending time cannot be stopped, ecstasy may help to delay the inevitable—implying the futility of the poem’s entire purpose. In a formulation that is both impressive for its theological dexterity and noteworthy for its blunt aggression, Mario D’Avanzo offers an early example of the majority view:

In his argument, the speaker would find fulfillment in vigorous sexual pleasure ‘through the iron gates of life’. An example of the use of irony and allusion in the poem, the gates can be understood when seen in relation to a biblical context. They refer to the gates through which Christ’s followers are led into ‘life’ that is immortal. In Matthew 7:13-14, Christ advises: ‘Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate and broad the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it’. Marvell has seen the broad way to destruction in the deserts of vast eternity and in the grave. He prefers the narrow way into ‘life’ and knows where to find it—through her iron gates that have been chastely closed to him for so long. The iron gates refer not only to her sexual disposition but also to the condition of life as the poet sees it. Using the Bible parodically, his argument is that sexual intensity is the righteous way that ushers us through life’s gates confining iron, because, first, it perpetuates life and is in a sense a triumph over mortality, and, secondly, in its ecstatic form, as Marvell describes it, it makes time go faster and effects a temporary eternity. It obliterates the awareness of time in reason’s self-consciousness. It is a truly supernal experience offering release and freedom. Therefore, the pleasures of ‘rough strife’ will be the lovers’ salvation; they can substitute intensity for eternity. Transport will be their temporary eternity in that they will make time stop as did Zeus and Alcmena. The concept is a brilliant adaptation of Christ’s words (D’Avanzo 19).

Happiness, according to Aristotle, is obtained by as perfect a performance of action on the part of the soul during one’s life, and the poem itself enables us to see the speaker’s argument in terms of Aristotelian ethics. Given the details given by the lover in the last two stanzas, it’s clear that the lover was attempting to convince his mistress that life is so fragile and fleeting that she should make the most of it (enjoy this moment). Marvell creates a vivid and energetic depiction of the speaker’s desired sexual consummation with this hesitant girl in the final stanza. ‘Instant fires’, ‘amorous birds of prey’, ‘at once our time devour’, ‘tear our pleasures’, say some critics, pointing out the quicker rhythms Marvell employs here. All of this, they say, gives the impression of speed and vitality. While the speaker’s inner desolations may be characterised by exuberance and

vitality, the speaker's inner desolations are not well characterised by exuberance and vitality, for he knows that time fleets. As a result, the lover's suggestion to make the sun run, seemed to be somewhat perplexing. However, after some careful consideration of the lover's wishes, the suggestion might be fair. The lover's wish had been to have eternal love with his mistress, and to reach eternity "through the iron gates of creation". When they reach eternity, they will be able to control time and allow it to 'run'. The tension between the lover's fears of time passing and his suggestion of making the *sun run* was thus resolved by the lover's higher pursuit. The tone of the poem, however, changed in the final stanza and became more serious. Since they didn't have much time, the lover claimed that they would lie in the gloomy cemetery, where his mistress's beauty and purity would be tested by creepy worms and no longer be enjoyable, and his vegetable love would turn into inorganic dust, implying that his love would have vanished. Furthermore, in the third stanza, the lover requests that his mistress engage in carnal sports with him while she is still young and attractive, as amorous animals do. There was a clear distinction between the lover's initial and final attitudes toward his mistress' lust. In this way, his platonic and vegetable love morphed into animal and sensual love. Love's innocence and nobility were abruptly degraded to a degree of profanity and frivolity. Though the lover's love for his mistress seemed to be solely carnal in the end, no one could deny that the lover still has his pure love for her. True, there were significant conflicts between these two types of love, as well as between the lover's levity and seriousness, but the tensions could be resolved by reconsidering the lover's ultimate desire for eternity. The lover suggested that the object of carnal sports was not only to tear their sensual pleasures but also to break through the "iron gate of life" and reach eternity, where the lover could enjoy love with his mistress indefinitely. Out of his pure and deep love for his mistress, the lover asked his mistress to participate in the carnal sports with him. While the lover used some light-hearted terms to persuade his mistress, the purpose of his proposal was to value loves absolute seriousness. As a result, the tensions were amicably resolved. *To His Coy Mistress's* beauty is largely due to its tension. Following a thorough analysis of tension in this poem, it is clear that tension is omnipresent in this masterpiece. The tension in this poem has transformed it into an organic whole in which no word can be overlooked or ignored. The poet's conflicting attitudes toward time, the various types of love, and those almost far-fetched metaphors can all be reconciled in this poem, and it is their presence that makes the poem perfect.

Marvell's poetic reality and rhetorical sophistication have been celebrated by some commentators, but his logic has been criticised. In this poem, Clarence H. Miller reveals Marvell's fallacy, but claims that despite the false logic, our experience of the poem's conclusion is poignantly and powerfully real. And John Hackett defends the poem by accepting the fallacy and saying that it was deliberate: "... Marvell knew exactly what he was doing. He constructed that fallacy as deliberately as he constructed the syllogism, to make a better poem" (Crider224).

This is not (just) a poem about Andrew Marvell's speaker, who is attempting to seduce a young woman, since it is obvious in the final stanza that what he is discussing in the poem is very blatant, as he emphasises in the final, "don't waste the moment

which is given to you". Thus, the poem's sentiment or moral isn't about sex; it is about every aspect in our lives where we are given the chance to try something different (except for certain situations that are correlated with typical immoral conduct, also including fleshly desires (carnal lust), unless it is the time of its actual intent [for it's a necessary evil to the god's plan of procreation]), sometimes through cowardice, timidity or coyness. To summarise, Andrew Marvell advocates for the use of opportunities or instances that provide small pleasures but not futile hedonisms, but the actual paradox here is, 'by using sexual (say, fleeting pleasures) content, he addresses all other productive experiences in life'. In general, the confusion for the poem's argument may seem to stem from the metaphysical thoughts of the author, but it is the highly sophisticated metaphysical language that perplexes us and not the metaphysical thought on this time-bound life.

Summation

Horace, the Latin poet, wasn't dealing with skydiving or other sensual or sensuous pleasures when he wrote *carpe diem* 2000 years ago. Instead, he was offering assistance about the pitfalls of trusting the future to take care of things and the value of appreciating the present. Horace's original phrase was "carpe diem quam minimum credula postero", which means "seize the day, trusting the next day as little as possible". When taken in context with the majority of his writings, this essentially means, 'don't puff off tomorrow what one can or should do today, because one never knows what the future will bring'. Similarly, is the case with Marvell's most renowned poem, *To His Coy Mistress*, for it might deceive the readers with its external sexual obscenity, although (possibly) it is sure that Marvell's intention was not to devise a corrupt idea of loving at lower rate.

A parents' petition was submitted at the University of North Carolina a few years ago, protesting the teaching of Marvell's *To His Coy Mistress* in that institution, because the poem was "unethical" in the petitioners' estimation. Any poem by Marvell should not be regarded in this light, and it must be noted inwardly that nothing so revealing could be simply immoral. Instead, *To His Coy Mistress* is an eminently moral poem, one that upholds rather than contradicts moral values. For, Marvell isn't satisfied with surface meanings; in this poem, he goes beyond the traditions and assumptions of *carpe diem* to offer moralistic insights, presenting evidence to support reading it as a moralistic poem. Thus, this work is clearly not just a lover's persuasion: it starts as a courtly and complimentary invitation to love in the cavalier mode and ends as a metaphysical speculation only tangentially related to love. It is in fact the metaphysical elements that paved the way for his verse to stand out till now and even forever ad to hold the fame of being one of the best themed poems.

The enigma that is present in the metaphysical elements deviates, indeed puzzles the readers to decide the tone and mood of this poem. Like Grierson pronounces, the desire to startle and the desire to deviate from the colloquial speech, this metaphysical verse (like every metaphysical poem does) confounds the main argument with the strange yet disturbing imagery. The popular first line, "Had we but world enough and time", suggests that if time were not an issue, the speaker and his (coy) lover might waste time doing whatever they wanted, but "time's winged

chariot” is “hurrying closer”. The lovers must survive in the present, according to Marvell’s poem. A healthy, time-taking ‘vegetable love’ from the first stanza that totally contrasts with the violent quick actions of ‘amorous birds of prey’, which entertains the luxury of picturizing the carnal union, right at the very moment in the penultimate stanza, stresses the significance of this life (which is restricted by time) and serves as an imagery of utilizing time by all means, at any expense. Though this poem can be interpreted innumerable ways, this work of research would have aided in understanding the quintessential essence of the metaphysical elements that led into a store of moralistic, precisely—utilitarian values to cope up with the swiftly moving time, rather than conceiving it in a masked way (which could actually be a created fallacy, by the consequence of the wit of the trained logician, Andrew Marvell).

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