

Some Characteristics of Metaphysical Poetry

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- a tendency to **psychological analysis** of emotion of love and religion
- a penchant for **imagery** that is novel, "unpoetical" and sometimes shocking, drawn from the commonplace (actual life) or the remote (erudite sources), including the extended metaphor of the "[metaphysical conceit](#)"
- **simple diction** (compared to Elizabethan poetry) which echoes the cadences of everyday speech
- **form**: frequently an argument (with the poet's lover; with God; with oneself)
- **meter**: often rugged, not "sweet" or smooth like Elizabethan verse. This ruggedness goes naturally with the Metaphysical poets' attitude and purpose: a belief in the perplexity of life, a spirit of revolt, and the putting of an argument in speech rather than song.
- The best metaphysical poetry is honest, **unconventional**, and reveals the poet's sense of the complexities and contradictions of life. It is **intellectual, analytical, psychological, and bold**; frequently it is absorbed in thoughts of death, physical love, and religious devotion.