

Donne and W;t Study Notes

Idea	Donne	W;t
<p>Religion: Religion will always be an underlying and connecting value between many texts however it will be explored differently depending on the context that shapes the text.</p>	<p>Wrestling with Religion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Holy Sonnet: “If Poysonous Minerals” explores Donne’s relationship with God and religion- his intellect causes his to challenge god- sin of Pride ● “Why should intent or reason born in mee make sins else equall in mee more heinous”- <u>questioning tone</u> – why should his sins be compared to others – his intellect pushes his religious boundaries ● After the <u>Volta</u> “But who am I, that dare dispute with thee?”- 	<p>God’s protection: in W;t there are underlining themes of religion, although they are not explicitly mentioned such as in Donne’s poetry. However the same ideas are implicitly discussed through out the play.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Professor E, M. Ashford’s book “The Runaway Bunny” is a <u>dramatic feature</u> to inform Vivian and the audience that God will always find/protect Vivian and deliver her from suffering. “I will run after you. For you are my little Bunny”- <u>strong religious references</u> to Jesus and God being the shepherds that guard and protect the sheep.

realises he has committed the sin of pride. Joyful allegiance to God comes only after self centered pride had been conquered

Acceptance of Religion as a mechanism to comfort himself when fearing death:

- Hymne to God my God, in my sickness
- Last stanza presents a greater sense of closure and acceptance. **“Therefore that he may rise the Lord throws down”**. Through his suffering (fever) leading to death he finds redemption, acceptance and forgiveness- circular focus on

Salvation:

- Vivian calls for God during the toughest times of the treatment as her only reassurance of the deliverance from suffering is dying and going to heaven **“moving slowly toward the light”**- stage directions
- Vivian’s constant expressions of **“oh, God”** is not only the colloquial expression but a call to god to end her suffering.
- From studying donne’s poetry and experiencing the cancer treatment, Vivian now understands God’s salvation and her being **“Do not resuscitate”** code represents her willingness to join god.

	<p><u>religion</u> as it comes to acceptance in the end.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptance of death in “This is my playes last scene” through the <u>imagery</u> of “My pilgrimages last mile” 	
<p>Knowledge: Vivian and Donne both excel in their areas of expertise due to their intelligence and constant search for knowledge (parallel stories)</p>	<p>His work being published</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning” He uses a <u>conceit</u> comparing two lovers to a mathematical compass “Twin compasses are two, thy soule the fixt foot” • Condescending complex and details ideas into structured and constricting sonnet forms. Really showing his intelligence and how 	<p>Her work being published: showing off her intelligence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Her quick wit and intelligence is shown through her papers and academic work which were published just as Donne’s were - Academic work- publish or perish • “made an <u>immeasurable contribution to the discipline of English literature</u>” by being published in the “Ejaculations in

he wanted to show other people it by sending the poems off in letters.

Being research in his last Holy Sonnet: Hymne to God my God, in my sickness.

- He is laying in bed like a map “**Cosmographers, and I their Mapp**” (link to w;t). Charting his body and looking for physical features and physical sings → not interested in physical salvation or his intelligence.
- They are studying him and researching him as a way to show their intelligence by treating him.

Seventeenth- Century manuscript and printed editions of the Holy Sonnets: a Comparison.

“- the diction of immeasurable present to the audience Vivian’s superior attitude. The title of her book is also uninteresting and confusing to the general public as Donne’s work was.

- **“I’ve got less than two hours. Then Curtain.”** – double meaning of curtain shows her w;t and intelligence as

Becoming the research for other people because of her cancer.

- “I survived eight treatments” - repeated to offer some praise to what she has done. Now as she is the research she wants the praise

		<p>rather than just being treated like research</p>
<p>Human Existence: The need for a emotional or spiritual connections throughout life is a key idea that connections Donne’s Holy Sonnets and W;t together</p>	<p>Donne: A Valediction: Forbidding mourning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental exploration of how the couple’s love transcends just physical connection. Believes that a spiritual connection is superior to those who just have physical ones • Uses a series of <u>conceits</u>, comparing their love to earthquakes, the stars, gold and a mathematical compass. • “<u>Twin compasses are two, thy soule the fixt foot</u>” describes that how ever far he may travel, she will be the fixed foot that will 	<p>Vivian Bearing is the opposite of Donne:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vivian seeks a emotional connection with anyone once she realises she never had one • Post modern play; “How are you feeling today?” <u>attempt to break the forth wall</u> by Edson and create a connection to the audience by asking a personal question that attempts to <u>create an emotional bond</u>. • Use of <u>narrator Vivian-</u> and <u>flashbacks</u> In the play, Vivian is voluntarily lonely, unlike Donne- she has no human connection but acknowledges at the end of her life

	<p>always connect them and take him back to her. Their spiritual connection holds their love together.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donne uses his wit and intellect to describe the superiority of a relationship that transcends just the physical connection and has a strong emotional connection. 	<p>she needs them now- “now is a time for, dare I say it, kindness” and that compared with now she never gave the “touch of human kindness she now seeks”.</p>
<p>Death: The innate fear of death is prominent in both texts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Holy Sonnet, Death Be Not Proud”: reflect fear of death and instead of hiding from death he exercises power over it. • Indirectly and directly referenced throughout <i>W;t</i>. • Uses <u>apostrophe</u> to command power over death by personifying 	<p>Although <i>W;t</i> is a post modern play the theme of death is prevalent as the ever-present notion intertextually connects with Donne’s Holy Sonnets and <i>W;t</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Death be not proud” is directly referenced as Vivian struggles to understand the importance of life

	<p>him as “Poore Death” and comparing him to sleep.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sleep- the comparison makes death a transition and the comma in “Death shall be no more, Death tho shalt die” represent the notion of death being a pause between the two worlds• “As West and East in all flatt Maps (and I am one) are one” represents there is no physical divide between east and west similar to no physical divide between life and death- death is just a moment between. Circular birth and death cycle.	<p>when faced with death and the role of the comma.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• She discovers the fear of death is still prevalent as she “just wants to curl up in a little ball” and hide-showing her weak and fragile body and state of mind as the fear of death takes over• Her fears turn to acceptance (power) as she is released from the pain through death. This is show through the <u>dramatic feature</u> of the “Do not resuscitate” code which expresses her willingness to die
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Gluttonous death, will instantly unjoynt my body and soule”- sins tied to body on earth 	
<p>Salvation: The reassurance of the deliverance from harm comforts many who fear death and connects both Donne’s poetry and Edson’s play together.</p>	<p>Donne’s</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last Holy Sonnet, “Hymne to God my God, in my sickness” explores his acceptance of death and calls to god for salvation • His <u>metaphor</u> of the “Cosmographer and I their map” describes the doctors searching his body for physical features during his sickness, ignoring his pain and suffering. • In the 4th stanza, Donne focuses on his internal suffering and accept that to reach salvation he must go through his pain to get to God (similar to <i>W;t</i>). Donne 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In <u><i>W;t</i></u>, Vivian experiences similar events as Donne did as her doctors see her as research and place her onto a rigorous treatment cycle that will kill her- she needs to focus on her internal suffering • Vivian experiences salvation twice. • Kelekian viewed her as a research project and told her to “keep pushing the fluids”. However Kelekian’s character develops like Vivians and realises the importance of emotional kindness and love and at the end of the play he believes “she earned a rest”. The <u>diction</u> of “earned” present Vivian treatment

calls for God to end his physical and emotional suffering through the religious metaphor of “ **the first adams sweat surrounds my face, May the last Adams blood my soule embrace**”. His suffering is the pathway to salvation and he must continue the cycle of life to death.

as a rigorous and horrible pathway to death

- Death provides Vivian the final salvation as she leaves the cancer on the physical earth and transcend into heaven with the stage direction of “**moving slowing toward the light... The instant she is naked and beautiful**” with no suffering. Light represents purity and God.

Techniques:

- Volta: change in idea/tone in the middle of the poem
- Conceits
- Metaphors
- Religious imagery
- Breaking of the fourth wall
- Medical Language
- Stage directions
- Quoting the poems
- Flashbacks
- Donne's language is simple, colloquial, direct and forceful- the language of logic and reasoning.
- Donne's concrete images evoke abstract ideas.
- He uses of short monosyllabic words to create a punchy argumentative voice.
- Other alienating devices include the rapid
- change of scenes, flash backs, and the use of irony.
- Narrator Vivian and Character Vivian

Intertextual Connection	Meaning
Death be not proud	Indirectly and directly referenced through out W;t. Directly referenced in the middle of the play to act as a “volta” as Vivian and the audience attempt to use Donne’s poetry to come to terms with Death. Shows how a post modern audience can relate to it.
Present same ideas	But in a different environment Donne- strict religious environment suffering from the turmoil of the creation of the Church of England. Very conservative W;t- a post modern scientific environment with limited emotional connection and religious presence
Exercising power over death- the comma and comparing it to sleep and the do not resuscitate code.	Parallel with each other as they both attempt to belittle and exercise power over death in a way to come to terms with the grief. Vivian’s do not resuscitate code shows her willingness to transition and ascent to heaven, like Donne did in his religious metaphor in Hymne to god my god, in my sickness.

Parallel story line	Vivian has a parallel story line to John Donne, an important intertextual connection as she was originally the one that studied Donne's poetry and English literature and now she is being research for intellectual (like Donne was when he was dying)
Both have incredible knowledge and intellect	Like Donne, her knowledge and publications would not have been understood by the general public as even the title of her body work is disinteresting and complicated Like Donne, in Vivian's final moments, she is regretful that she is the research and realises that all her work on Donne's work never let her show human emotions.

Phrases:

- Cerebral people often neglect the emotional aspect of their lives and Edson attempts to illustrate how sterile life can become if we don't live a full holistic life.
- In an age of change, doubt and uncertainty, we require something stable to believe in. Personal experience is one of the few certainties left. All experience is personal, emotional and subjective - but Donne and the other Metaphysicals used their poetic talents to define emotional experiences by a series of intellectual parallels. They tried to objectify subjective emotions.
- Donne's creates a distinctive dramatic voice that appears authentic and real. Edson adopts an objective approach rather than the Aristotelian empathetic one. The initial alienating device of Vivian Bearing addressing the audience directly destroys any illusions of empathetic theatre. "It is not my intention to give away the plot; but I think I die at the end."