**COURTLY LOVE (FROM THE MIDDLE AGES)**

1. Love is regarded as the **noblest passion** this side of heaven
2. The courtly lover **idealises and idolises** **his beloved**, **and subjects himself to her every whim.**
3. **The lover suffers** agonies and sickness of body and spirit at the caprices of his imperious sweetheart but remains devoted to her
4. He manifests his honour by his **unswerving fidelity** and adherence to a **rigorous code of behaviour** in battles and in the ceremonies of **courtly speech and conduct**
5. **Goes back to a serious reading of Ovid’s mock-serious book** *The Remedies of Love*: The lover is a vassal and the lady and the god of love are his lords
6. There is an importation, by a kind of **serious parody, of Christian feeling and ritual:**
7. The lady is exalted and worshipped
8. The lover prays to the god of love
9. The lover sins and repents
10. If his faith is steadfast, he may be admitted at last into the lover’s heaven through the gift of his lady’s grace

Summary: This has affected literature into the 19th century and beyond in views of:

1. The intensity and ennobling power of love
2. The special sensibility and spiritual status of women
3. The complex decorum governing relations between the sexes

**METAPHYSICAL POETS (17TH CENTURY)**

Donne set the pattern by writing poetry sharply **opposed** **to** central traditions of Elizabethan poetry:

1. The rich mellifluousness of the language
2. The sense of human dignity
3. The idealised view of sexual love

Instead, Donne:

1. Wrote in a **diction and meter** modelled on the **rough give and take of actual speech**
2. **Organised** his poems in the **dramatic and rhetorical form of an urgent or heated argument** (with a reluctant mistress or…)
3. Employed a **subtle and often deliberately outrageous logic**
4. Was **realistic, ironic, and sometimes cynical** in his treatment of the complexity of human motives, especially in the sexual relation.
5. Was persistently **witty**, making ingenious use of **paradox, pun, and startling parallels and distinctions**

Some examples:

“For God’s sake hold your tongue, and let me love”

“Batter my heart, three-personed God”