

Brief Investigations Metaphysical poetry:

Donne: Searching for God: A Hymn to God the Father, Oh my blacke Soule, Satyre III: 'On Religion', Since She Whom I Lov'd

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A Hymn to God the Father

- Does Donne's sense of sin seem to have grown with age?
 - Look at some of his early poems
 - Compare them with *A Hymn to God the Father*
- Is this an over-dramatic re-enactment of guilt feelings or a quiet search for inner peace?
- Where does the real power of the poem come from?

Oh my blacke Soule

- In *Oh my blacke Soule*, look at the three colours mentioned
 - Several of them have more than one meaning. What do they symbolise?
- What is the difference between a herald and a champion?
- Examine the play on the word 'dyes' in the final couplet of *Oh my blacke Soule*
- How are fear and hope blended in Donne's religious experience?
 - Do we still see Donne's concerns reflected today?

Satyre III: 'On Religion'

- What factors might make some one feel they need to search out the truth about religion?
- Pick out some of the main strands of imagery in the poem
 - Which strike you as the most vivid?

Since She Whom I Lov'd

- Read through Donne's *Since She Whom I Lov'd*
 - Does the sestet back up the claim of the octave: 'Wholly on heavenly things my mind is sett'?
 - Do you find the use of human love language somewhat surprising in a sonnet of religious devotion?
 - How is it that the two spheres of experience can borrow images from one another?
 - Explain the image 'so streames do shew their head'