

Write a critical note on the cavalier poetry or Amorous poetry or caroline poetry.

Introduction — The Age of Charles I is known as the Caroline period in the History of English literature. The poets of the middle of the 17th century belonged to two groups. The religious poets and the royalists the secular poets among the royalists are called cavalier or caroline poetry. The famous Cavalier poets were Thomas Carew, Robert Herrick, John Suckling and Richard Lovelace. Except Herrick, all the cavalier poets were courtiers. It is true that he composed both religious and secular poems. On the other hand the other cavalier poets dealt with secular ideas only.

Characteristics of Cavalier poetry:- The cavalier poets composed lyrics and short poems. Their poems are highly marked polished and elegant. It is fact that cavalier poetry demonstrates a great love for natural scenery. We find that there is a fantastic conversational flavour in it. It also display simplicity and real intensity of feelings. Its idioms and diction reflects the fluent aristocratic speech.

Influences of John Donne and Ben Jonson on the Cavalier poetry:- It is an undeniable fact that the Cavalier poets were highly influenced by John Donne and Ben Jonson. Donne was fond of lending drama to his poems. He gave a conversational note to the Cavalier poetry.

which imports a kind of dramatic quality. The Cavalier poets directly imitated his conceits. Lovelace's 'To Leucasta going beyond the seas and suckling's. To mistress Ciceley crafts Echo'. Donne's 'the extatic and a valediction forbidding mourning'.

Ben Jonson A classicist passed on lucidity. Control of emotions and felicity of phrases to the Cavalier poetry. Donne and Jonson both influenced the Cavalier poets in almost equal proportion. A famous critic Geoffrey quotes, in this connection "As the poetic master of these poets, Donne and Jonson formed an almost ideal partnership, at once stimulating and disciplining arousing exuberance feeling and ingenious elaboration of the fancy an exalting a dignified restraint and sensitive literary tact."

Major Cavalier poets and their contributions:-

Robert Herrick - Herrick is one of the Cavalier poets. A famous critic Herwin Craig observes. "Herrick became Jonson's greatest disciple and actually realised greatness in the field of the classical lyric superior to that of Jonson himself."

Herrick was perfectly convinced of his immortality as a poet. He composed religious and amorous poems. His famous poems are 'Litany', 'A daffodil to Julia', 'cherry Ripe' and 'To Anthea'. His moods and themes have variety but no complexity. He is a poet of moods and moments. He also exhibits a refreshing love for trees, plants and flowers.

Thomas Carew - It is perceived that Carew has blended the metaphysical conceits of Donne and the classical spirit of Jonson. His poetic masterpiece, entitled 'The Rapture' is very sensual. In this very poem the poet invites Celia to flout the giant honour and enjoy

forbidden pleasures. His another famous poem is 'Ask me no more' in which Carew narrates all the beauties of nature united in his mistress 'The Rose of June'.

Really Carew was superior to Herrick in his craftsmanship. His other famous poems are 'Maria went worth' and 'To celia' upon love's uniqueness.

Sir John Suckling - Suckling was a very popular and typical Cavalier poet. The central theme of his lyrics is love. He utterly attacks women in his poetry. His poems display a great ideal of tactful elegance as his chief attraction. His two best poems are 'A Ballad upon wedding' and 'Why so pale wan (weak) fond lover.' His soft sense of observation can be seen in the following lines from his poem.

A Ballad upon wedding Her feet beneath ~~his~~ feet,  
his peticote,

Like a little mice stole in and out, as if  
they feared the light.

His best known collection of poems is Aglauros.

Richard Lovelace - Lovelace was a very educated courtier. His 'Elinda's globe' is the best of his short poems. His other poems are 'Loucasta going to the wars' and 'To Althea' from prison. A famous critic Hardin Craig quotes, "Lovelace was not so skillful and sustained as Carew, perhaps not so forceful as Suckling, but has the greatness of having achieved a few immortal utterances."

Conclusions - It can be concluded that 'the cavalier poets have certainly more of polish, but they lack the spontaneity and emotional intensity of the Elizabethan.'