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From Śṛṅgāra to Śānta: Poetry of John Donne in Light of Indian Aesthetics

Man has not found eternal joy or transcendental bliss and fulfilment even after acquiring all his knowledge, wealth, advancement in the field of science and technology, progress in the field of medicine and art and the like. In spite of all this progress and development, the idea of true and unwavering happiness is still alien to him. He still is aspiring to attain a glimpse of that eternal or perpetual bliss, ecstatic joy, love and fulfilment which is unbound by the intricacies of human existence; in fact, this is the very driving force which makes human beings do everything which they do on earth; be it acquiring all wealth and means of comforts, or running in the mad pursuit of knowledge and so on. Indeed, desire for true, pure, virtuous, divine and fulfilling Love is an all-pervading desire deeply instilled into the consciousness of all of us and we cannot live or survive without striving for such love. But almost always we look for it at wrong places or in wrong people or things. This urge can be very well located and found in the poetry of John Donne; one of the greatest British metaphysical poet. His poetry, in different ways, shows us that true fulfilment lies not in pursuing the ordinary, worldly or human but the ultimate, the transcendental, the eternal, and therefore, his love poems attain a kind of universality which enables a kind of physico-spiritual experience of love where perception of beauty ultimately leads to the creation of infinity. The analysis of Donne's poetry from Rasa¹ Perspective reveals a significant potential in his poetry to move oneself from the music of Śṛṅgāra² to the Śānta³ by the way of movement and transformation of the earthly love into the divine; a love which is above all suffering even death. In this paper, I will try to establish how the poems of Donne when seen from the Rasa perspective reveal the potential of taking us from the ordinary gratification to the state of highest happiness and eternal bliss.

When we consider poetry of John Donne a significant fact that we notice is that his poems although chiefly about his personal experiences in love revealed in different moods or tones make the worldly love eternal. In his poems we find a movement from the ordinary love towards the extraordinary love, from worldly love towards the divine love. In his best poems, he mixes the discourses of the corporeal

Dr. Vandana Rajoriya: Assistant Professor of English in the Department of English and Other European Languages, School of Languages, Dr Hari Singh Gour Vishwavidyalaya, (A Central University) Sagar (M.P.) She has two reference books, two volumes of poems, eleven Chapters in books and anthologies and fourteen research papers in refereed Journals published till date. She has also presented papers in many National and International Seminars and conferences and delivered invited talks in many Seminars, Workshops and Training Programmes.

Contact: C-64, University Campus, Dr. HS Gaur University, SAGAR (MP) – 470 003.
Email: vandana Rajoriya@gmail.com; **Mobile:** 9755940147, 9826017827.

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