

Edward taylor essay sample

[Literature](#), [Poetry](#)



Among the many types of poetry in early American literature, metaphysical poetry was a style in which Edward Taylor chose to write. Edward Taylor was born in 1642 in England into a Puritan background. Metaphysical poetry was first introduced in 1744 by Samuel Johnson. Before Edward Taylor was even born, other great poets such as John Donne, George Herbert, Henry Vaughn, and Andrew Marvell had already lived and died. Although all of these poets had already come before him, Edward Taylor became the only American metaphysical poet. Edward Taylor's poetry is metaphysical because it consisted of divine ideas, metaphors, and great imagery.

Puritanism was a way of life for Edward Taylor. He was a writer and minister truly dedicated to God. In the poem entitled, "Upon a Spider Catching a Fly", Taylor explains how a wasp, fly, spider, and a web represent a Puritan struggle between good and evil. These images are paralleled to Puritan beliefs of sin leading to man's entrapment by evil forces. Since man cannot be rescued by humans, it is the elect decision of God that chooses who will be taken to Heaven, and who will be destroyed. First off, the web symbolically represents a trap for all sinners. Everything outside of the web is intended for sinless humans. Sin leads mankind to death escaped only by a chosen elect from God. The spider in this poem represent the devil. Both the wasp and the fly are a symbols for mankind.

The fly on one hand represents a sinner and a non-believer of the Puritan religion. In contrast to the fly, the wasp is a symbol of a sinner that is a chosen elect from God to be saved. The wasp is a Puritan because of his willingness to fight against evil. Since the wasp is one of the chosen elect, he is not killed by the spider, but rather left on the web waiting for the day of

judgment. Taylor uses these insects and the web to show Puritan teachings through a metaphysical joining with God.

Taylor's metaphysical joining with God is explained throughout his poetry. In "Huswifery", Taylor's conceit for God is clearly evident. In "Huswifery", Taylor recites a direct prayer to God. Taylor expresses to God that he wants to be a spinning wheel to glorify God and his word. In this poem, Taylor uses a "spinning wheel" to describe his own body (1). He also uses a "holy spool" to describe his soul, and his conversation to be "Thy reel" (4-5). Here, Taylor explains to God that he wants to be transformed into something greater for the glory of God. In the last line, Taylor states, "That I am clothed in holy robes for glory" (18). Taylor is telling God that he wants to be chosen to join God and be one of the elect. Another metaphysical trait that this poem carries, is the imagery used. Taylor states, "Then dye the same in heavenly colors choice, all pinked with varnished flowers of paradise" (11-12). In this line, Taylor uses imagery with colors to explain how great the glory of God is. "Huswifery" shows different types of metaphysical techniques because of Taylor's prayer to God and his incredible imagery.

The metaphysical poetry of Taylor is evident through the manner in which he uses God, his thought out metaphors, and imaginative ideas. His poetry symbolized a prayer to God in which he followed his Puritan beliefs. He used his these metaphors and imagery to better express his glory for the Lord. Though Taylor's poetry was never published until 200 years after it was written, he is still looked at as one of the greatest metaphysical poets ever.