

Symbolism of Angels:

- Metaphysical poem – angel as a long, ongoing metaphor
- A symbol of the divine-like status of lovers
- Ptolemaic astronomy – angels governed the spheres that surrounded the centre of the universe

Love as 'angelic':

- Love as a pure emotion, linked to the soul
- Love cannot be seen without the presence of a less pure medium, in the same way angels need air to manifest
- The speaker cannot fully grasp the idea of love, as a human can never fully understand angels/ the divine

Sexist Interpretation – Man as angel:

- Women's love isn't as pure (is the air) as men's (which is the angel)
- Physical love over spiritual – 'The Flea'
- Broken women's sense of ethereal pure love
- Male speaker – characteristic of Donne
- Or is it the opposite of this - is he the less pure one?

Other Interpretations:

- Love cannot exist unless both the man and the woman are mutually in love, need both air and angels to be 'real' or seen
- Without a woman to receive it, man's love doesn't exist (it is just an idea)
- Love governs the speaker as angels govern the spheres

Imagery – Ship:

- Ship represents woman's body – love needs women
- Too much weight/expectation so it's capsized
- Is the speaker using the wrong medium for love – physical body? It's not her body but her love itself

Structure:

- Two fourteen-lined stanzas
- Rhyming within each stanza follows the same pattern (ABBABACDCDDEEEE)