

**GENDER AND VOICE IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH POETRY: FROM
METAPHYSICAL TO POLITICAL EXPRESSION****G'ulomjonova Mo'mina Farruxovna**

FLL 23/2 Student, Chirchik State Pedagogical University

gulomjonovamumina@gmail.com**Scientific adviser: Akmalxonov Saidfozilxon A.**

A EFL teacher, Chirchik State Pedagogical University

akmalxonovsaidfozil@gmail.com

Abstract. This article examines the construction of gender and poetic voice in seventeenth-century English poetry, tracing a development from metaphysical introspection to overt political expression. Through close readings of John Donne, George Herbert, and Andrew Marvell, the study explores how poetic voice articulates individual subjectivity, religious tension, and philosophical inquiry. The article further situates poetic production within the political upheavals of the English Civil War and the Interregnum, highlighting the emergence of politically engaged voices. Particular attention is given to women poets such as Anne Bradstreet and Katherine Philips, whose works negotiate gender constraints while asserting authorial presence. The study argues that poetic voice in this period becomes a site where gendered identity, authority, and political consciousness intersect.

Keywords: gender, poetic voice, seventeenth-century poetry, metaphysical poets, political expression

**XVII ASR INGLIZ SHE'RIYATIDA JINS (GENDER) VA OVOZ: METAFIZIK IFODADAN
SIYOSIY IFODAGA QADAR**

Annotatsiya. Ushbu ilmiy maqola XVII asr ingliz she'riyatida jins (gender) tushunchasi va poetik ovoz (voice)ning shakllanishi hamda rivojlanishini tahlil qiladi. Metafizik she'riyat vakillari — Jon Donn, Jorj Herbert, Endryu Marvell kabi shoirlar ijodida ovozning shaxsiy, diniy va falsafiy qatlamlari o'rganiladi. Shu bilan birga, asr o'rtalaridan boshlab Angliyadagi fuqarolar urushi, respublika tajribasi va monarxiyaning qayta tiklanishi fonida she'riyatda siyosiy ovozning kuchayishi tahlil qilinadi. Ayniqsa, ayol shoirlar — Enn Bredstrit va Ketrin Filips ijodida genderga xos ovoz va uning ijtimoiy cheklovlar bilan munosabati ko'rsatib beriladi. Maqola poetik ovozning metafizik ichki kechinmalardan jamoaviy va siyosiy nutqqa aylanish jarayonini yoritadi.

Kalit so'zlar: gender, poetik ovoz, XVII asr ingliz she'riyati, metafizik she'riyat, siyosiy ifoda

**ГЕНДЕР И ПОЭТИЧЕСКИЙ ГОЛОС В АНГЛИЙСКОЙ ПОЭЗИИ XVII ВЕКА: ОТ
МЕТАФИЗИЧЕСКОГО К ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОМУ ВЫРАЖЕНИЮ**

Аннотация. В статье рассматривается проблема гендера и поэтического голоса в английской поэзии XVII века. Анализируются произведения поэтов-метафизиков, таких как Джон Донн, Джордж Герберт и Эндрю Марвелл, с точки зрения формирования субъективного и философского поэтического голоса. Особое внимание уделяется историко-политическому контексту Английской революции и его влиянию на трансформацию поэтического высказывания в сторону политической риторики. В статье также анализируется вклад женщин-поэтов — Энн Брэдстрит и Кэтрин Филлипс — в развитие гендерно маркированного поэтического голоса. Делается вывод о постепенном переходе от метафизической интроспекции к политически ангажированному поэтическому дискурсу.

Ключевые слова: гендер, поэтический голос, английская поэзия XVII века, метафизика, политическая поэзия

INTRODUCTION

The seventeenth century represents a period of profound transformation in English literary history, marked by religious conflict, political upheaval, and evolving conceptions of subjectivity. Poetry of this era reflects these tensions through increasingly complex constructions of voice and identity. Central to this development is the relationship between gender and poetic voice, which shapes both the form and content of poetic expression. Early seventeenth-century metaphysical poetry is characterized by intense introspection, intellectual wit, and a highly individualized speaker, often negotiating questions of faith, love, and mortality. However, as England moved toward civil war and republican experimentation, poetic voice expanded beyond private meditation to encompass public and political concerns.

Gender plays a crucial role in this shift. Male poets often assumed authoritative rhetorical positions rooted in classical learning and ecclesiastical or political power, while female poets had to navigate restrictive social norms that limited women's public speech. Despite these constraints, women poets developed distinctive strategies for articulating voice, often blending humility with assertive self-expression. The intersection of gender and voice thus provides a valuable lens for understanding how poetry functioned as both personal and political discourse in seventeenth-century England.

This article aims to explore how poetic voice evolves from metaphysical inwardness to political engagement, and how gender inflects this process. By examining canonical male poets alongside often-marginalized female voices, the study highlights the diversity of poetic strategies employed to negotiate authority, identity, and expression. Such an approach contributes to broader discussions in literary studies concerning authorship, power, and the historical construction of gendered subjectivity.

METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This study employs a qualitative, text-centered methodology grounded in close reading and historical contextualization. Selected poems are analyzed for rhetorical stance, pronoun usage, metaphoric structures, and tonal shifts that signal constructions of voice and authority. These textual analyses are situated within the socio-political and religious contexts of seventeenth-century England, drawing on recent scholarship published within the last five years to ensure contemporary critical relevance.

Recent studies in early modern literary criticism emphasize the importance of voice as a culturally constructed phenomenon rather than a purely aesthetic device. Scholars such as Susan Wiseman (2021) argue that poetic voice in the early modern period is inseparable from questions of political legitimacy and social hierarchy. Similarly, Erin Murphy (2020) highlights how metaphysical poetry constructs an authoritative speaking subject through intellectual mastery and theological discourse.

Gender-focused criticism has further reshaped understandings of seventeenth-century poetry. Studies by Michelle Dowd and Amanda Herbert (2019) underscore how women writers employed paratexts, manuscript circulation, and modesty tropes to legitimize their voices. More recent work by Rachel Willie (2022) examines how women poets subtly politicized domestic and devotional themes, thereby participating in broader ideological debates.

The political dimension of poetic voice has been extensively explored in relation to the English Civil War. David Norbrook's later scholarship, revisited and expanded in recent articles (2019–2023), demonstrates how poets such as Marvell adapted metaphysical techniques to republican and anti-monarchical arguments. This blending of lyric subjectivity with political rhetoric complicates traditional distinctions between private and public poetry.

By synthesizing these strands of scholarship, the present study adopts an interdisciplinary framework that integrates gender theory, historical poetics, and political criticism. This approach allows for a nuanced analysis of how poetic voice functions as a dynamic site of negotiation between individual identity and collective experience.

DISCUSSION

The analysis reveals that metaphysical poets initially construct voice as an intensely personal mode of inquiry. John Donne's speakers, for instance, often assert dominance through argumentative structures and metaphoric ingenuity, reinforcing masculine intellectual authority. Yet these voices are also marked by vulnerability, revealing anxieties about spiritual salvation and bodily mortality. Such tensions complicate simplistic readings of authoritative male voice.

As political conflict intensifies, poetic voice increasingly adopts a public orientation. Andrew Marvell's poetry exemplifies this transition, combining metaphysical wit with political critique. His speakers oscillate between private reflection and civic engagement, illustrating how voice becomes a mediator between self and state. Gender remains implicit in these constructions, as political authority is largely coded as masculine.

Women poets, by contrast, engage politics indirectly. Anne Bradstreet's meditative poems articulate a voice shaped by Puritan humility while subtly asserting intellectual competence. Katherine Philips employs the language of friendship and virtue to craft a moral authority that resists patriarchal limitations. Their voices demonstrate alternative modes of political expression grounded in relational and ethical discourse rather than overt polemic.

Overall, the discussion shows that gender significantly influences how poets negotiate voice, authority, and political engagement. Rather than existing at the margins, women's voices actively reshape the contours of seventeenth-century poetic discourse.

RESULTS

The findings of this study indicate that poetic voice in seventeenth-century English poetry undergoes a gradual but significant transformation. Initially centered on metaphysical introspection, voice expands to incorporate political consciousness as historical circumstances demand new modes of expression. Gender emerges as a critical factor shaping this evolution.

Male poets tend to assert voice through intellectual and rhetorical dominance, aligning poetic authority with social power. However, their works also reveal moments of instability that expose the fragility of such authority. Female poets, constrained by societal norms, develop innovative strategies for voicing agency, often blending humility with subtle assertion. These strategies enable participation in political and ideological debates without direct confrontation.

The results suggest that poetic voice functions as a flexible and adaptive construct, capable of responding to shifting cultural conditions. Gender does not merely limit expression but actively shapes the forms and possibilities of poetic speech.

CONCLUSION

Drawing on the analysis of metaphysical and politically engaged poetry, this article concludes that seventeenth-century English poetic voice is deeply intertwined with gender and historical context. The movement from metaphysical to political expression reflects broader transformations in conceptions of selfhood, authority, and public discourse. By foregrounding both male and female voices, the study challenges canonical narratives and underscores the importance of gender-aware readings in early modern literary studies.

REFERENCES

1. Bradstreet, A. (2019). *The Works of Anne Bradstreet*. Edited by J. Hensley. Harvard University Press, pp. 112–135.
2. Donne, J. (2020). *The Complete Poems*. Edited by R. Stringer. Oxford University Press, pp. 245–268.
3. Dowd, M., & Herbert, A. (2019). *Women, Writing, and Authority in Early Modern England*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 54–89.
4. Marvell, A. (2021). *The Poems of Andrew Marvell*. Edited by N. Smith. Longman, pp. 301–329.
5. Wiseman, S. (2021). "Political Voice and Lyric Authority in Seventeenth-Century England." *Journal of Early Modern Studies*, 10(2), pp. 77–101.