The Cavalier poets

Are a members of the aristocracy, wrote their poems in the 17th century and they supported the King Charles I, who was later executed as a result of a civil war. They were known as Royalists. Cavalier poetry mirrored the attitudes of courtiers. The meaning of cavalier is showing arrogant or offhand disregard, carefree and nonchalant. This describes the attitude of Cavalier poets.

The Cavalier poets were fond of a tight and chiseled form and practiced shorter lines, precise diction and a tight logical structure. The themes for their poetry included love, cynicism, pagan sensibility and conventional Petrarchism. Some of the Cavalier poets were also influenced by Donne’s Metaphysical poetry like Carew and Suckling. Unlike the Metaphysical poets, the Cavaliers did not engage in serious debates. In fact, Cavalier poetry is much simpler than that of the Metaphysical poetry. Wit and a lot of eroticism are visible in the Cavalier poetry. Cavalier poets were writers of witty and polished lyrics of courtship and gallantry.

Characteristics

Some of the most prominent Cavalier poets were Thomas Carew, Richard Lovelace, Robert Herrick, and John Suckling. They matched Ben Jonson, a contemporary of Shakespeare. These poets opposed metaphysical poetry, such as that of John Donne. While poets like John Donne wrote with a spiritual, scientific, and moral focus, the Cavalier poets concentrated on the pleasures of the moment. Metaphysical poets also wrote in figurative, lofty language, while the Cavaliers were simple, being more apt to say what they meant in clear terms. The Cavalier poet wrote short, refined verses, and the tone of Cavalier poetry was generally easy-going.