

John donne 'the sunne rising'



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Like 'The Good Morrow,' this poem is meant to convey the immensity of the love that exists between the poet and his beloved; however, also like in 'The Good Morrow' Donne wants to elaborate upon the same conceit he used previously, the microcosm of the lovers' world encapsulating the macrocosm of the entire globe. This poem is different from the previous poem, however, in that it takes a much more jocular tone and approach to the subject matter, personifying and addressing the Sun as a tiresome personage who attempts, vainly, to disrupt the lovers' embrace. The elaboration of the poem's main conceit begins in verse one when the poet protests to the sun 'Must to thy motions lovers' seasons run?' The poet goes on to answer his own question, declaring 'Love, all alike, no season knows nor clime,/Nor hours, days, months, which are the rags of time.' In other words, the poet is stating that love is impervious to temporal decay or climactic change; it stands above the sublunary world of change and decline.

In verse two, the poet goes on to explain why this is so; it is so because lovers are greater than the sun and the time which he imposes upon the world. The poet has the power to 'eclipse and cloud' the sun's beams; equally, his mistress's eyes have the power to '[blind]' the sun itself. Lest the sun doubt the greatness of these puny humans, the poet goes on to tell the sun that both East and West Indies, 'th' Indias of spice and mine' lie not upon the globe, where the sun 'left'st them' but 'lie here' with the poet in his bed; equally, 'those kings whom [the sun] saw'st yesterday' are not dispersed about the world but 'here in one bed lay. In short, the poet declares in verse three, 'She's all states, and all princes I;/Nothing else is.' What appears to be the real world outside the lovers' bed is but a phantasm

compared to their love, as princes in that world are but actors who 'but play us,' honour in that world is but a mime or 'mimic' and wealth in that world is but the acquisition of fool's gold, 'alchemy.' In short, the poet is informing the sun that the whole globe is contained within the lovers' bed - everything outside that is just a mere copy.

Finally, however, the poet takes pity upon the sun, who has clearly been living in a world of delusion for a long time. He says 'In that the world's contracted thus,' reduced to the size of one bed in one room, the aged sun need no longer worry about warming the physical globe; instead, since 'This bed thy center is, these walls thy sphere,' the sun need only worry about warming the room the two lovers lie in, 'Shine here to us, and thou art everywhere. Thus the argument of the poem consists in the elaboration of this one conceit: that the love between the lover and his mistress is so great that it becomes the entire world, beside which the external world pales and fades; given that this is so, the sun can halt its celestial movement and simply light and warm the bed the lovers lie in since in warming that he warms the whole globe. The immensity of love that the poet wishes to describe in the poem is also evident in the way he addresses the sun, here not a being who should be regarded as 'reverend, and strong,' but a bit of a nuisance, an old busybody.

Thus the sun is described, in the first line of the poem, using the noun 'fool,' and this noun is rendered further negative by double premodification, 'Busy old.' In this context, 'busy' becomes a negative modifier because, in conjunction with 'old,' it suggests the personage of an old busybody, with nothing better to do with their time than interfere in the affairs of others.

Further negativity is evoked by the use of the other premodifier in the line, ' unruly,' which implies that the sun is intrusive and out of order in rising in the morning, calling on the lovers ' Through windows, and through curtains. Indeed, the image created is that of a scurrilous old gossip, invading the privacy of others to engage in tales of tittle-tattle. This image is furthered in line five of the verse, where the sun is denominated as ' Saucy, pedantic wretch,' as rude in his intrusion, tedious in his moral lecturing, and in general a pathetic human being who has nothing better to do than interfere in the affairs of others and ' chide' them. In accordance with this image, the poet then instructs the sun to go and interfere in the affairs of others who might respect his moral intrusiveness, ' Late school-boys and sour prentices,' ' court-huntsmen' and ' country ants.

' In other words, the sun is personified as a human being who rather tediously lectures inferiors about their duty, as perhaps even a boring old schoolmaster; as such, he has nothing to do with the young, vital lovers. If the sun is a boring old pedantic schoolmaster who cannot stop lecturing and interfering outside of class, verse two turns the tables upon him, for he himself is now lectured by the poet, and taught a ' lesson. ' The lesson the sun receives is that he himself is not ' reverend, and strong' as the lovers are more powerful than he is, able to ' eclipse and cloud' him, even to leave him ' blinded. ' The sun is even set a sort of homework assignment, to ' Look, and to-morrow late tell me' where the East and West Indies really are, and to list ' those kings whom thou saw'st yesterday. The sun, it is suggested, has been learning his lessons wrongly as he does not know the true location of the Indies or the true location of the kings; thus he is taught the lesson correctly

by the poet and his beloved, that the Indies 'lie here' in the bed, and that the kings 'All here in one bed lay.

' Finally, however, in verse three, the poet takes pity on the sun. Driving home the lesson in the first four lines of the verse, to make it perfectly clear, the poet then tells the sun that he need not be unhappy at all that has occurred; rather, he can be 'half as happy as we. The poet closes his address to the sun by explaining, more gently this time, why this is so: as the sun's great 'age asks ease' the sun can now relax into easier 'duties' than running about warming the entire globe, as he had been doing; instead he need only 'Shine here to us. ' All in all, therefore, the poet and his mistress have a relationship with the sun that is that of superior to inferior: portrayed as a meddling old schoolmaster who has not learned his lessons well, pity is finally taken on the sun so he can retire a peaceful retirement.

This poem is also noted in that it displays the theories of Renaissance astronomy. In contrast to the 'modern' Copernican world view, that the earth rotates around the sun, this poem works around the older, Ptolemaic view of the cosmos, in which the sun rotates around the earth. As well as this, the poem works off the supposition of celestial spheres - or lines - along which the planets and sun supposedly rotated. This idea appears in the last line of the poem, where the poet asserts 'This bed thy center is (ie.

The earth), these walls thy sphere (ie. The celestial path of the sun's rotation). In short, this poem works in tandem with 'The Good Morrow' since both desire to assert the immensity and permanence of the poet's love, and both use the conceit of the human relationship, the microcosm, coming to

dominate over the whole created world, the macrocosm; in this regard, both also use images to do with Renaissance science. However, the difference between the two poems is one of tone: whereas 'The Good Morrow' takes a more serious attitude to the subject, 'The Sunne Rising' is much more jocular and playful.