

## PRÁCTICA 5. JOHN DONNE

### BREAK OF DAY

STAY, O sweet, and do not rise;  
The light that shines comes from thine eyes;  
The day breaks not, it is my heart,  
Because that you and I must part.  
Stay, or else my joys will die,  
And perish in their infancy.

#### 5.1. Commentary of John Donne's *Break of Day* (with comments by your lecturer)

John Donne (pronounced as done, IPA: [/dʌn/](#); 1572 – 31 March 1631) was an [English Jacobean](#) poet, preacher and a major representative of the [metaphysical poets](#) of the period. His works are notable for their realistic and sensual style and include [sonnets](#), love poetry, religious poems, [Latin](#) translations, [epigrams](#), [elegies](#), songs, satires and sermons. His poetry is noted for its vibrancy of language and inventiveness of metaphor, especially as compared to those of his contemporaries.

Despite his great education and poetic talents he lived in [poverty](#) for several years, relying heavily on wealthy friends. In 1615 he became an Anglican [priest](#) and, in 1621, was appointed the [Dean of St Paul's](#) Cathedral in London. Some scholars believe that Donne's literary works reflect these trends, with [love poetry](#) and [satires](#) from his youth and religious [sermons](#) during his later years. Other scholars, such as [Helen Gardner](#), question the validity of this dating since most of his poems were published posthumously (1633). The exception to these is his Anniversaries which were published in 1612 and [Devotions upon Emergent Occasions](#) published in 1623. His sermons are also dated, sometimes quite specifically by date and year.

**Comentario [.1]:** All this has been taken from the Wikipedia

In [verse 1](#) the I voice says "STAY" to the lady, he doesn't want [she](#) wakes up because she is sweet. In verse 2 the I voice says that the light that comes from her eyes. In verse 3 he says his heart is breaking not the day like in the title. [It is](#)

**Comentario [.2]:** LINE

**Comentario [.3]:** Use of English

**Comentario [.4]:** This is a description of the poem

interesting this sonnet has a title, because normally they don't have a title, but this sonnet **yes**. In verse 4 he says that "you and I must part", because they are having an **illegal relation and so the husband of the lady can caught them**. **This** is happens in verse 5 when the husband arrived and wants to kill him. It is very **triste?** because he is very young and **don't** want to die very young.

**Comentario [.5]:** Use of English

**Comentario [.6]:** There are no textual evidences of this

**Comentario [.7]:** There are no textual evidences of this

**Comentario [.8]:** Spanish

**Comentario [.9]:** Use of English

The main concern of the poem is love and unrequited love. The I voice is a boy and the lady is the **adreseee**. There are many relevant linguistic features like "STAY" in line 1 and in line 5, that is repeated. Also the poem **is rhyming aabbcc** and is a sonnet. Sonnets were introduced in England by the earl of **Surey** and they are a tradition from the Petrarchan sonnets. **Shakespeare used very much sonnets, specially sonnet 18 that we have seen in class**. This sonnet belong to **John Donne sonnets, which have a religious and love theme and was very famous for the metaphysical poetry**. The main aspect of the metaphysical poetry of John Donne is **"the conceit", which we can see in this poem**, because the lady don't want have sex with him but he **yes**. **As conclusion**, I think this is a very beautiful poem y John Donne, about love and the problem of marriage sex.

**Comentario [.10]:** ADDRESS EE

**Comentario [.11]:** Use of English

**Comentario [.12]:** SURREY

**Comentario [.13]:** Theory is irrelevant at this stage in the commentary

**Comentario [.14]:** There are no conceits in this poem

**Comentario [.15]:** Use of English

**MARK: DISASTROUS FAIL**

## 5.2. Correct commentary of John Donne's *Break of Day* (Your aim to achieve at the end of this course!)

STAY, O sweet, and do not rise;  
The light that shines comes from thine eyes;  
The day breaks not, it is my heart,  
Because that you and I must part.  
Stay, or else my joys will die,  
And perish in their infancy.

**This is a poem by John Donne**, one of the most important metaphysical poets. He wrote an important collection of poems between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century, which deal with religious and love issues.

**The main concern of this poem is** love and the passing of time. More specifically, the key idea of this poem is that time should not impose a schedule to love, and should not rule the lovers' pleasure.

The title of the poem is significant in that, typically, the break of day puts an end to the lovers' night of passion. As the rising sun begins a new day, its beams awake the lovers and so they must depart.

This is an idea the I voice of the poem is not very happy with. **The I voice is probably a lover, who addresses the poem to his beloved.** It seems they both are in bed when the sun breaks, and the beloved, aware that the sun is shining, is about to rise and leave the bed. Upset that she wants to leave him, the I voice tries to persuade her to stay with him more time.

**The I voice structures his argumentation in three parts. As this poem is a sestet, each part can be said to appear in a couplet.**

**From line 1 to line 2,** the I voice introduces his argument. After the somewhat shocking command "Stay", directed to the beloved, the I voice softens his tone and addresses her as "O sweet". The flattering tone continues in the following line, for the I voice argues the light that is probably bathing their room comes from the Lady's eyes, not from the sun. This statement reflects a traditional convention about the description of a Lady's eyes, usually said to rival in brightness and beauty with the sun. The I voice is probably making use of this convention to convince the Lady to stay with him. It is, in my opinion, a somehow exaggerated declaration of love, used for the only purpose of praising and so persuading the beloved not to leave.

**From line 3 to line 4,** the I voice presents his second idea. The speaker argues the beloved has mistaken the breaking day with his breaking heart, here used as a metaphor for his self, which is grieving and in pain for her intended departure. Again, I think the I voice is exaggerating his feelings with the only purpose of convincing the beloved to stay with him.

**In the final couplet of this poem,** which goes from line 5 to line 6, The I voice insists again that she stay, using the same command which began the sestet—"Stay". The reason he now gives is that he would be unable to enjoy pleasure if she leaves him. I consider the I voice wants the lady to take pity on him, and so yield to his proposal of enjoying love further.

**In my opinion,** the motivation underlying the I voice's argument proves to be definitely selfish in the end, for, the ultimate reason she should stay is *him*. If, at the beginning of the poem, the I voice praised and flattered the lady, focusing on the light that came from her eyes, at the end he moves the focus of attention on to himself, stating *his* heart will break and *his* joys will die unless she stays.

There is, therefore, a development in the argumentation, whose logical conclusion, from the I voice's perspective, is that the lady must remain to give *him* pleasure— a proposal she may have accepted or refused. We may never know what she did in the end, but overall, I consider the tone and content of the poem to be rather one-sided, selfish and even childish- a resonance of which we find in the last line of the poem: "And perish in their infancy".

For me, the I voice has a striking resemblance with a spoiled child who loves to play and demands the object of his desire to be with him at all times to satisfy his needs. In the context of a love relationship, the I voice would thus appear as an egotist, manipulative and hypocritical lover.

The lady has been subjected to a process of objectification by which she is just a means to quench his lover's lust. It is relevant that she voices not a single word or opinion throughout the poem, and that her actions are described according to the impact they have on the masculine ego.

Since this poem is a sestet, there is not much room for **linguistic features**. The poet uses a clear and to the point language aimed to persuade the lady, therefore, the message appears without many rhetorical devices. There is an anaphora in lines 1 and 5 which shows the I voice urgency, and the rhyme of the sestet is aa bb cc.

Regarding the main topic of the poem, I would like to conclude by saying that John Donne was known to challenge the sun's power over lovers in **some of his poems** —in *The Sun Rising*, for example— and in this sestet, the poet develops, although briefly, the same idea: that the sun, with its light and beams, should not put an end to lovers' pleasure, or mark the rhythm of their passion. This is an interesting idea which resonates powerfully of the **classic topic** *amor omnia vincit*, which for me is subtly undermined by the selfish and carnal nature of the lover's desires: at the end, it's not pure love that has power enough to stop time (sun), but man's whimsical and unquenchable lust.