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Answer to question no -2

“The Good Morrow” is a celebration of love, which it presents as an intense and unparalleled pleasure. All the joys that the two lovers

experienced before they found each other pale in comparison to the joy they experience together. Indeed, love is so powerful that the speaker describes it as an awakening of the soul: it is almost a religious experience. And like a religious experience, it reshapes the lovers' attitude to the world at large. Like monks or nuns who dedicate themselves to religious practice, the two lovers dedicate themselves to love above adventure and career success. "The Good Morrow" thus translates romantic—and erotic—love into a religious, even holy, experience. Love itself, the speaker suggests, is capable of producing the same insights as religion.

"The Good Morrow" separates the lives of the lovers into two parts: before they found each other, and after. The speaker describes the first part of their lives with disdain: the pleasures they enjoyed were "childish." Indeed, they were not even "weaned": they were like babies. Like children, they had a limited understanding of life. They were aware of only some of its "country" (or lowly) pleasures, going through the motions of life without knowing there could be something more.

But once they find each other, it feels as though their eyes have been opened. The speaker realizes that any "beauty" experienced before this love was really nothing more than a "dream"—a pale imitation—of the joy and pleasure the speaker has now. "Good-morrow to our waking souls," the speaker announces at the start of stanza 2, as though the lovers had been asleep and are just now glimpsing the light of day for the first time.

Since the sun is often associated with Jesus Christ in Christian religious traditions and light is often associated with enlightenment, the speaker's description of this experience is implicitly cast in religious terms. That is, the speaker makes waking up alongside a lover sound like a religious epiphany or a conversion experience. The consequences of this epiphany are also implicitly religious. Having tasted the intense pleasures of love, the lovers give up on adventure and exploration: instead they treat their "one little room" as "an everywhere." In this way, they become like monks or nuns: people who separate themselves from the world to dedicate themselves to their faith.

Further, the lovers' devotion to each other wins them immortality: "none can die," the speaker announces in the poem's final line. Immortality is more commonly taken to be the reward for dedicated religious faith, not earthly pleasures like romantic love. In describing this relationship in religious terms, the speaker breaks down the traditional distinctions between love and religion. Where many religious traditions treat erotic love as something potentially harmful to religious devotion, the speaker of "The Good Morrow" suggests that erotic love leads to the same devotion, insight, and immortality that religion promises.

However, the speaker doesn't specify the nature of the love in question. If the lovers are married, for instance, the reader doesn't hear anything about it. Instead, the speaker focuses on the perfection

of their love, noting the way the two lovers complement each other. Unlike other poems that argue for the holiness of married love specifically (like Anne Bradstreet's "To My Dear and Loving Husband"), "The Good Morrow" holds out an even more subversive possibility: that all love is capable of producing religious epiphany, whether or not it takes a form that the Church sanctions, like marriage.

Theme Exploration and Adventure

Exploration and Adventure

"The Good Morrow" was written during the Age of Discovery, the period of intense European sea exploration lasting roughly from the 15th to 17th centuries. This context informs the poem's second and third stanzas, with their focus on "sea-discoverers," "new worlds," "maps," and "hemispheres." The poem compares the desire to chart new lands with the pleasures of love itself, and finds the latter to be more powerful and exciting. Indeed, the speaker finds love so pleasurable that he or she proposes to withdraw from the world in order to dedicate him or herself entirely to that love. Instead of seeking adventure, the speaker proposes that the lovers "make one little room an everywhere." For the speaker, then, love creates its own world to explore.

Note how, in the poem's second stanza, the speaker proposes that the lovers renounce their worldly ambitions. The speaker says that instead of crossing the oceans or mapping foreign countries, they should stay in bed and gaze into each other's eyes. Indeed, the speaker argues in

stanza 3, they will not find better "hemispheres" out in the world than each others' eyes. This means that, for the speaker, giving up the outside world is not a sacrifice. Indeed, the speaker finds a better world in bed with this lover.

Importantly, however, this "lovers' world" is not totally separate from the wider world. Instead, it recreates it in miniature, essentially resulting in a microcosm that reproduces the entire world itself within the lovers' relationship. The poem thus argues that true love can be a way of experiencing the entirety of existence. Essentially, there's no need to, say, seek adventure on the high seas, because everything is already contained within the experience of love itself.

Line-by-Line Explanation & Analysis of “The Good-Morrow”

Lines 1-4

The first four lines of “The Good-Morrow” establish the poem’s broad concerns and hint at its unusual form. The speaker begins by asking a series of questions, directed at his or her lover. The speaker wants to know what the two lovers did before they fell in love. These questions are rhetorical in that the speaker isn’t actually interested in the lover’s response. In fact, the speaker has already made up his or her mind. Before they met each other, their pleasures were “childish.” The speaker characterizes these early, childish pleasures in a variety of ways: they were like babies, still nursing (and therefore “not weaned”). Or they were only interested in unsophisticated “country pleasures”—potentially an obscene pun on a word for women's genitalia . Finally,

the speaker alludes to an important tradition in Christianity and Islam: the myth of the seven sleepers, a group of young people who hid in a cave for 300 years to escape religious persecution. The speaker and the lover were thus like pious Christians; now that they've woken up, they are rewarded for their piety with a new life. This allusion sets up the poem's core argument that erotic love can have effects that are just as profound as the effects of religious practice.

Because the poem encourages the reader to imagine that the speaker is directly addressing his or her lover, the poem takes on the qualities of apostrophe in these lines: speaker talks to the lover, but the lover is unable to respond to the speaker or contest the speaker's account of their relationship. This establishes a pattern that will continue throughout of the speaker monopolizing the poem's descriptions of love.

These lines look like a fairly standard stanza of English poetry: they are in iambic pentameter and rhymed in a criss-cross pattern, ABAB. This is a widely used stanza form in English, but there are some details that are slightly askew. For instance, the speaker uses a slant rhyme in lines 1 and 3, “I” and “childishly.” As the poem progresses, there will be several such instances of formal sloppiness, such as loose meter and imperfect rhymes. The speaker’s attention is evidently focused elsewhere. Indeed, the speaker seems to pay closer attention to sound inside the lines. The first two lines of the poem contain an almost overwhelming quantity of alliteration, assonance, and consonance, on

/w/, /l/, /o/, and /ee/ sounds. The speaker’s enthusiasm and joy come through in the poem’s play of sound.

If this play of sound seems exuberant, even out of control, the speaker asserts control in other, subtler ways. Though the first line of the poem is enjambed, the next three are end-stopped, establishing a pattern that will persist through the poem. Overall, the poem is mostly end-stopped. The speaker is exuberant, but he or she is nonetheless able to carefully calibrate his or her thoughts to the length of the poem's lines.