**A Valediction Forbidding Mourning by John Donne**

AS virtuous men pass mildly away,

And whisper to their souls to go,

Whilst some of their sad friends do say,

"Now his breath goes," and some say, "No."

So let us melt, and make no noise,

No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move ; '

Twere profanation of our joys

To tell the laity our love.

Moving of th' earth brings harms and fears ;

Men reckon what it did, and meant ;

But trepidation of the spheres,

Though greater far, is innocent.

Dull sublunary lovers' love

—Whose soul is sense—cannot admit

Of absence, 'cause it doth remove

The thing which elemented it.

But we by a love so much refined,

That ourselves know not what it is,

Inter-assuredиd of the mind,

Care less, eyes, lips and hands to miss.

Our two souls therefore, which are one,

Though I must go, endure not yet

A breach, but an expansion,

Like gold to aery thinness beat.

If they be two, they are two so

As stiff twin compasses are two ;

Thy soul, the fix'd foot, makes no show

To move, but doth, if th' other do.

And though it in the centre sit,

Yet, when the other far doth roam,

It leans, and hearkens after it,

And grows erect, as that comes home.

Such wilt thou be to me, who must,

Like th' other foot, obliquely run ;

Thy firmness makes my circle just,

And makes me end where I begun.

At the beginning of "A Valediction Forbidding Mourning," the poet, John Donne, engages in a didactic lesson to show the parallel between a positive way to meet death and a positive way to separate from a lover. When a virtuous man dies, he whispers for his soul to go while others await his parting. Such a man sets an example for lovers. The separation of the soul from the body, and the separation of lovers from each other, is not an ending but the beginning of a new cycle. The poem ends with the image of a circle, the symbol of perfection, representing the union of souls in a love relationship.

This perfection is attained by parting at the beginning of the circle and reuniting at the point where the curves reconnect. According to Helen Gardner, the metaphysical poem takes the reader down a certain path, a fixed line of argumentation. This valediction, an act of bidding farewell, proceeds in the guise of a monologue in which a speaker attempts to persuade a lover to remain faithful during his absence. The monologue is dramatic in the sense that the stay-behind lover is the implied listener. Donne's monologue is unique because he uses metaphysical comparisons to show the union of the lovers during their period of separation. Although the poem attempts to persuade the lover as an implied listener, it also speaks indirectly to the reader who is drawn into the argument.

The speaker's argument is supported by an implied reference to the authority of Greek philosophers and astronomers. According to Patricia Pinka, this use of esteemed authority to justify a view about love is a common unifying element throughout many of Donne's Songs and Sonnets. It is probable that Donne wrote this poem for his wife, Ann Donne, and gave it to her before leaving to go abroad in 1611. Ann, sick and pregnant at the time, protested being left behind as her husband began a European tour with his friend, Sir Robert Drury. The poem begins with a metaphysical comparison between virtuous dying men whispering to their souls to leave their bodies and two lovers saying goodbye before a journey. The poet says:

"Let us melt and make no noise....

'Twere profanation of our joys

To tell the laity of our love".

The word "melt" implies a change in physical state. The bond of the lovers will dissolve quietly like the soul of a dying man separating from his body. "Noise" refers to "tear floods" and "sigh tempests" that the speaker implores his love not to release. He continues by comparing natural phenomena to a love relationship, the "sigh tempests" relating to the element of air, and the "tear floods" to the element of water. He uses this hyperbole to demand that his lover remain stoic and resist any show of emotion upon his departure. Next, the element of earth is introduced. Earthquakes are perceived by everyone, and people often interpret them as omens of misfortune. It is understandable that an earthquake would be looked upon with fear because of its potential to ravage the land; whereas a trepidation affecting a celestial sphere would be viewed in a different light, especially one that is imperceptible and has no apparent meaning for the average person. In order to understand the meaning of the third quatrain in the poem, it is necessary to consider the Ptolemaic Universe and the symbolism of the sphere. During the Middle Ages and the Elizabethan Age, the circle and sphere were looked upon as perfect shapes. The main influence behind that thinking may have been Greek philosophers such as Aristotle, who believed that since, "The motion of the celestial bodies is not straight and finite, but circular, invariable and eternal. So they themselves must be eternal, unalterable, divine". The well-educated Donne, 1572-1631, certainly studied famous Greek thinkers such as Aristotle and Ptolemy, and their views concerning the universe. Donne lived during a time when many people accepted the Ptolemaic theory of the universe, which held that the spherical planets orbited the earth in concentric circles called deferents. 2 Writing this poem in 1611, Donne would most likely be influenced by his previous classical studies, and he chose to use the circle and the sphere to represent a perfect relationship based on reason and harmony. The "trepidation of the spheres" is another obsolete astronomical theory, used to support the speaker's point that great changes in the heavens may be imperceptible to the layman. The speaker presents this comparison between the earthquake and the "trepidation of the spheres" to suggest that matters beyond one's control should be approached rationally. In quatrains four and five, the speaker urges his love to remain stoic by making any change in their relationship as imperceptible to others as the "trepidation of the spheres," and again, he uses terms from astronomy to illustrate his point. The term "sublunary" refers to the surface below the moon. According to the Greek astronomers, this sublunary area, composed of the four elements, was imperfect. The sphere's surface, composed of quinta essenta, the perfect part, radiates light and heat. The dull sublunary lovers are imperfect human beings who do not practice mature love. The soul of their love is "sense", so they need physical contact to cement their relationship. However, the speaker suggests that reason can free itself from any connection with a sensory experience. Therefore, the lovers with fully developed souls "Care less, eyes, lips, and hands to miss", having developed rational souls, the third part of the Aristotelian model for the human soul, consisting of vegetative, sense and rational parts. In quatrain six, Donne echoes the traditional marriage ceremony in which two become one, so the "two souls" of the lovers are joined together. He describes separation as a stretching exercise in which the joined soul of the lovers is gold beat to an "airy thinness". According to Pinka, the comparison is "beautiful and pure" but "fragile" since there is "expansion without increase". The "airy thinness" emphasizes the stretching of the lovers' resources, in that the love continues to exist, but its strength is weakened by the circumstances. He urges the lover to look at the separation in a positive light, but he sends out undertones suggesting that he is aware of the fragility of the situation. The speaker then begins his closing argument, in which he changes his symbol of perfection from the sphere to the circle. One might argue that the circle and the sphere are slightly different objects and should not be considered one and the same; however, the Ptolemaic Universe consisted of both perfect spheres and perfect circular orbits, and so the concept of circle and sphere both represented perfection. Poets and songwriters have often used sphere and circle symbolism. In Dante Alighieri's Paradiso, a story of a pilgrim journeying through Paradise, Dante sees nine concentric circles in the eyes of Beatrice, his guide. Beatrice explains to him that each of nine circles represents an angelic order. The brightest circles are in the center nearest to God and represent the highest order of angels and the greatest good. According to Beatrice, each circle also corresponds to one of the nine spherical heavens consisting of the five planets, the sun, the moon, the fixed stars, and the Prime Mover. It does not seem unusual for Donne to include both the sphere and the circle in his poetry as symbols of perfection, since other writers had linked the circle and the sphere together in various ways throughout the history of science and literature. The speaker in the poem is unique in that he does not compare the perfection of his love to a traditional object such as a rock or a fortress; instead he chooses to compare the twin legs of a compass to the lovers' sense of union during absence. Such a comparison would be called metaphysical according to Gardner, who states that a metaphysical conceit must concern two things so dissimilar that we "feel an incongruity". Here, the poet must then proceed to persuade the reader that these things are alike in spite of their apparent differences. The speaker proves the point by drawing the circle with the compass. The lover who stays behind is the fixed point, and the speaker is the other leg of the instrument. Without the "firmness" of the fixed point, he would be unable to complete the journey and make the circle just (precise). The adverb "obliquely" (l. 34) may have several different meanings. John Freccero supports the interpretation that obliquely means a spiral motion, referred to by the Neoplatonic tradition as a movement of the soul. Obliquely may also indicate a slant. Either the drawing instrument can be interpreted to move in a spiral, or the motion may refer to the second foot's tilted position in relation to the fixed one in the center. Such a position would be required during the drawing of a circle. According to Freccero, "No matter how far Donne roams his thoughts will revolve around his love.... At the end of the circle, body and soul are one". In Donne's "Valediction," the human souls are described in the context of a joint soul that is stretched by the separation, or two souls joined within a circle of spiritual strength. Donne once stated in an elegy, "...perfect motions are all circular."5 The circle in the "Valediction" represents the journey during which two lovers endure the trial of separation, as they support each other spiritually, and eventually merge in a physically and spiritually perfect union.

**Список литературы**

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