

”upon his leaving his  
mistress” and ”i am  
very bothered when i  
think” essay sampl...

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By vigorously studying the poems ' Upon his Leaving his Mistress' by John Wilmot and '[I am very bothered when I think]' created by Simon Armitage, a number of distinct formal features being used by these poets can be exposed. Each poet evidently uses a unique style, apparent from a first reading of the pair. It is valuable for scholars to consider the techniques used by the poets in order to structure their poems, and also why they chose to use them. They effectively enable the poet to convey their thoughts most effectively.

Each poem mentioned consists of 3 stanzas, yet the regularity of Wilmot's poem is clear, as it has three stanzas of equal length, each being 7 lines long. This serves to provide the poem with constancy, which places the poet's thoughts in a recognisably organised fashion. Comparatively, Armitage has created a poem with unequal stanzas; the first being the longest with 7 lines as in Wilmot's, this is followed by a quatrain and a final 3 line stanza. This irregularity can also be observed from other features of the poem which uses iambic pentameter for the majority, yet is interrupted with several lines of varying length. His poem, seemingly illustrating his inner feelings, comes across as a thought more effectively this way. It is clear that Wilmot's poem devises the use of tetrameter, where as Armitage uses an inconsistent metre.

The titles of the poems appear to use a similar technique, with the internal rhymes with in the title lines. The Earl of Rochester uses ' his' and ' mistress'. Armitage uses a slightly less obvious rhyme, with the same vowel sounds in ' very' and ' when'. This is further demonstrated; particularly with

the line containing 'slipped' and 'middle finger in' of Armitage's work. Armitage's title is placed in brackets, evoking the thoughts of the poet. Wilmot uses a further technique with the repetition of 'his' to add emphasis to the word. This word 'his', is important to the poem's identity in which circumstances of this 'his' are explored. Repetition is also used in other parts with the use of 'yours' in line two. End rhyme is used by Wilmot; his poem has an 'AABBCCC' rhyme scheme in each stanza. The two pairs of rhyming couplets and the group of three presents an effective linguistic feature. Armitage uses this technique only twice, 'burner' and 'over' being an case in point.

Wilmot appears to have paid attention to metre in his poem, as even the title is in tetrameter, unlike Armitage's which is uneven with nine syllables, and this occurs also in the proceeding poem of Armitage's. Metre is an important element in poetry as it is what provides an acoustic effect when read aloud. Wilmot's poem appears more measured, where as Armitage devises his metre in order to make his poem speech like and free flowing, it is not however not free verse. Both poets have lines that run into each other, in order to guide the reader through. They both in cases use enjambment, preventing lines from finishing on one line, allowing it to continue onto the next.

Alliteration is a formal feature devised by Wilmot, in instances towards the poems end, with the 'willing womb', 'mighty mind' and 'mistress of mankind'. Wilmot also uses capital letters for words such as "Face", "Mind" and "Sense", in the middle of lines. This is a feature, seemingly used to

make these particular words stay in the readers mind, being important words. Armitage appears to use a different technique for the same affect by structuring his lines in order to place important words at the end of lines; this can be illustrated by " life" and " blades", both essential parts to the poems depiction, and both at the end of lines. Armitage uses enjambment to connect all his lines, keeping them flowing into each other. This also gives the poem a speech-like affect, as though this is a passing thought inside the poets head.

Wilmot uses periphrasis in the line " being yours, and yours alone", using more words than necessary in the circumstance. This serves to emphasise this point and also maintains the structure of the poems metrical rhythm. Wilmot in one instance uses a rhetorical question with " To damn you to be only mine". Armitage doesn't use this feature, however uses commas in the middle of lines to allow the reader time to pause and perhaps contemplate. The line " the doctor said, for eternity" demonstrates this point.

John Wilmot uses metaphorical words, unlike Armitage. " Seed receiving earth" is a natural metaphor he deploys for effect. He also uses grandiose language, demonstrated in " Universal Influence". Armitage is far from grandiose, with the whole poem simplistic and clear of what is being said. Personification is used by the John Wilmot also when he describes the " willing womb", as though it is alive in itself. Armitage uses no imagery, he explains the events as they happened, also exploring reasons for the actions which are described.

Both poems develop progressively in their 3 stanzas. Wilmot firstly discusses his feelings upon his mistress; he then goes on to widen his thoughts onto all women by saying " Spirits of your Sex". At the end of the second stanza he begins talking in an even more grandiose fashion, continuing this into the last by saying " Mistress of Mankind". Armitage uses a similar technique in allowing the poem to develop stanza by stanza, allowing the poem to be sectioned into certain parts. He begins with his thoughts on an event, then explaining the consequences, and in the final stanza explains his actions in order to complete the sequence. Armitage and Wilmot, use this to structure their poems into divisions to be recognised by the reader.

In conclusion both Wilmot and Armitage in the poems discussed employ several formal features. These include repetition, sound patterning, different rhyme forms, stress on certain syllables to create particular metres and alliteration. Formal features are devised to provide meaning, acoustic effects and aesthetic effects to the poems.