

"to his coy mistress" by andrew marvell essay sample

[Literature](#), [Poem](#)



' To His Coy Mistress', is a love poem written by Andrew Marvell, and the other poem, which it will be compared with, is a poem called ' Valentine', which is written by a poet named Coral Ann Duffy. Subject of the poem ' Valentine' seems to be a channel for the poet Duffy, in which she can express her interpretation of love, and let readers of the poem realise what the meaning of love is for her in her view. This is visible from the first line of her poem.

" Not a red rose or satin heart"

What the poet is saying here is that love are not these typical commercial symbols which are associated with love in modern times such as know.

Marvell's subject of his love poem is more of a personal one, compared to Duffy's, which is more about modern society regarding love on a whole. I think the subject Marvell was trying to get through this poem was the attempt to lure his coy mistress into eventually having sex with him.

" Let us sport while we may"

The structure of both of the ' love' poems is both different to each other. As in ' Valentine' the structure of the poem is laid as five verses and there are also two odd lines. Duffy has also repeated lines which contain practically the same meaning.

" Not a red rose or a satin heart"

This line is repeated by a line with similar meaning.

" Not a cute card or a kissogram"

Again this line is saying that cute cards and kissograms are commercial symbols of love and they're not love. Both of these lines contain symbols that society regards as representatives for love, and in both these lines Duffy is saying it's not true. She has also done this with some other lines; the main purpose behind the poet doing this is to emphasize the points further. Also some words are specifically placed as the first words of lines and verses, again for increased emphasis.

" Not a cute..."

The ' not' here emphasises upon rest of the lines.

Marvell's poem is structured as one long verse; there aren't any physical divides in the whole of the poem. Most of the poem ' To His Coy Mistress' consists mainly of rhyming couplets.

" But at my back I always hear

Times winged Charriot near"

Language is a very important device used in the poem ' Valentine' to present the theme of love in the poem. Duffy throughout the poem uses an extended metaphor, to get her point across. The point she is trying to express with the metaphor, is that if these commercial symbols such as ' satin hearts, and celebrations on Valentines day (cute cards)', represent love then an onion is a much better symbol of love than the ones just mentioned.

" I give you an onion"

Duffy at all times throughout the poem tries to relate everything she believes in love to an onion.

" A moon wrapped in brown paper"

This quote is saying that love is a moon wrapped in brown paper, and to get to the moon (love inside a partner/lover), you have to unwrap the brown paper first, or in a relationship you have to unwrap differences between each other and clear obstacles before two partners can start truly loving each other. Just like in an onion to get to the useful part of the onion, you have to unwrap the brown paper around it.

If we were to examine the poem we see that Marvell has split the poem into three distinct parts.

" Had we but ...

... love at lower rate"

All of this part in the poem is the first section of this poem, all the way through out this section the poet talks about things in the sense of ' if'. In other words what Marvell is saying in this section is that if things were like this, it would be no real problem for the ' mistress' being Coy.

" Had we but the World enough, and Time

This coyness Lady were no crime."

What Marvell is trying to say is if we lived forever you being Coy would be no problem.

" But at my back...

...do there embrace"

All of the poem that lies in section is part of the middle section of the poem ' To His Coy Mistress', is known as the middle section. This section becomes the ' but' section, because the poem at this point is presenting the problems there are because of her being so Coy.

" Thy Beauty shall no more be found"

" Now therefore, ...

...make him run"

This is the third and final section of the poem, this section is saying so this is the problem and lets do something about, and this is what we can do. It enables this section to become a sort of list of solutions.

" Let us sport while we may"

This is saying lets have sex now, whilst we can.

Duffy uses repetition as a device to build emphasis on certain points, so she repeats line with points she values.

" Not a cute card or a kissogram"

" Not a red rose or a satin heart"

Duffy's reasons for repeating these points are probably to get the readers of the poem to realise that these points are important, points such as red roses aren't symbols of love, they are schemes set by the commercial world to make money, even an onion is a better symbol of love than a red rose, and other commercial symbols of love.

" It will blind you with tears like a lover"

" I give you an onion"

This line is repeated further on in the poem.

" I give you an onion"

This is another example of repetition, used by the poet to emphasis that an onion is a better symbol of love, than what society thinks are symbols of love.

Coral Ann Duffy has also used alliteration in her poem again to create emphasis.

" Not a cute card or a kissogram"

The type of language used in ' Valentine' is very much modern English, as we can obviously can see from the style of the writing found in this poem.

" a wobbling photo of grief"

Duffy has also included similes in the poem, this should produce a greater effect on the reader.

" It will blind you with tears like a lover"

Another language tool used in the poem is an oxymoron,

" possessive and faithful"

Main differences in language that can be found in the two poems is that ' To His Coy Mistress', is written in older language. It also seems as if Marvell in this poem purposely is trying to make the meaning of the poem unclear for the reader.

" Stand still, yet we will make him run"

This quote's meaning isn't completely clear. A similarity in both poems is that both of them try to create emphasis upon certain points, Marvell does it by using capital letters on some words so they are emphasised more.

" Last Age should show your Heart"

In this quote Age and Heart both start with a capital letter, they are also the two most important lines in the sentence, and by the poet adding capital letters at the beginning of these words he has added extra emphasis to these words. Also Marvell has used alliteration in his poem, again for the effect of emphasis and in this case sound imagery as well.

" Sun Stand Still"

The time period in which 'Valentine' was written seems to be Post-1940's, this is shown because of what Duffy talks about in the poem.

"Not a red rose or a satin heart"

These are commercial symbols that have only be known and used as representatives of love in the modern period of time. She wouldn't be talking about love and these love stereotypes if she wrote this poem Pre-1940.

Time Period in which Marvell's poem 'To His Coy Mistress' was written, is much earlier than the time in which 'Valentine' was written was written, as 'To His Coy Mistress' seems to be written 400/500 years ago, in the Renaissance period.

Language used by the poet in this poem, shows it was written in that time period.

"Thou by the Indian Ganges side"

Phrases like these would really be said in present times, it isn't part of modern language.

Interpretation of the poem 'Valentine' is on the lines off the poet Duffy is attempting to explain what love isn't, and what she thinks of love.

"Not a cute card or a kissogram"

"I am trying to be truthful"

The last quote bringing the message that the poet is trying to express her point of love as truthfully and clearly as possible.

In the poem "To His Coy Mistress", the interpretation seems to be something such as Marvell is trying to persuade this Coy Mistress into having sex with him.

"And tear our Pleasures with rough strife"

In the poem "To His Coy Mistress", the response of a reader would probably be about the personality of the poet. A reader would get a picture of the poet as being selfish, and has no respect for women, and all that he wants is sex.

"last age should show your heart"

This quote is telling us if life was eternal he would never love or respect the 'Mistresses heart'. This is because it says in the last age he will show your heart, but the thing is there will be no last age, because life is eternal.

Where as if we look at the response of a reader of 'Valentine', they would get something such as the readers asking themselves what love is? A reader may also think, an onion can be used to symbolise love reasonably, but how do the other love symbols such as 'satin hearts and cute cards', symbolise love, they don't.

"Not a cute card or a kissogram

i give you an onion"

Intention behind Duffy writing 'Valentine', is most likely to be to express her point of view regarding love. The poet may also be finding herself annoyed from what people regard as symbols of love, such as 'satin hearts'. The poet also says that if these really are symbols of love, which they aren't, then an onion is a better representative of love. Poet also being female will have had a great influence upon the intention of this poem. The poet may also be indicating that she is in heart pain.

"Wobbling photo of grief"

When Duffy's and Marvell's poems are compared we find similarities and differences. The similarity being that both poets are trying to express their views at the best of their ability. It also seems as if Marvell is getting annoyed that his Mistress is Coy, and he had probably tried things before, and then decided to write a poem to persuade her into having sex.

"The Beauty shall no more be found"

This quote is saying that if I (poet), carry on waiting to have sex with you, there will be no beauty left in you, you will have wasted yourself.

Also both of these poets are different genders, one male and the other poet a female. This difference may account for differences they have in their poems and also in the interpretation and views of love they may have.