

To his coy mistress analysis essay sample

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



In this essay I will be analysing "To His Coy Mistress" written by Andrew Marvell in the 17th century and also "Party Piece", which was written by Brian Patten in the 20th Century. I will look to see how attitudes towards sex have changed through the years. "To His Coy Mistress" involves a man (possibly the writer) writing to a woman, trying to persuade her to have sex with him.

When the poem was written in the mid 1600's attitudes towards sex were very different to what they are today; sex then was frowned upon of someone if undertaken before marriage, and also men seemed to be "Dominant" over the woman, while it is more equal today. Men, who had sex before marriage in these times, took pride if they did, and with women it was quite opposite. Women who did would never be able to marry, because most men at this period of time wanted an "Untouched" woman to marry.

I am now going to analyse each poem separately and show what language skills and techniques the writers use, and try to compare how attitudes towards sex have changed between the 16th and 20th Century. "To His Coy Mistress" is an autobiographical poem and it is very persuasive but at the same time the writer is trying to explain how much he loves his "Mistress". It is split into three sections and it has regular rhythm and rhyme. Section one of the poems cut to a description is basically the writer, writing to his girlfriend or lover trying to persuade her to have sex with him.

The first few sentences he praises her and shows how much he loves her; "Had we but world enough, and time, This coyness, lady, were no crime." It also shows that his lover is sexually shy, or she could possibly be a virgin as

he uses the word "coyness". He continues praising her throughout, but at first he tries to give the impression to her that he only wants to spend time with her. "To walk, and pass out long loves day. Thou by the Indian Ganges' side". -Which in other words means that he wants to spend time with her by the India Ganges river edge.

He continues praise her by exaggerating his love, for the beginning to the end - "Love you ten years before the flood" The writer shows use of a sexual metaphor or innuendo, this would capture the reader's attention and give the impression to them that the sexual side of him has no be let out. "My Vegetable Love should grow" Some readers may assume that this means I should get an erection, but it could mean that his love for the woman will grow, it might not have any sexual intent at all, it may just have be said to express his love for her.

The writer then starts to exaggerate his love, just to show how passionate he is about her. He firstly explains to her that he doesn't want to touch her, he just wants to take time to look at her body; "A hundred years should go to praise Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze." But he then goes on to say the following; "Two hundred years to adore each breast: But thirty thousand to the rest." This could give the impression that the sexual side of him is out once again, but he uses a hyperbole to try and show that it was just a joke perhaps?

In the second section, the tone of the poem changes, this is because the writer starts a new paragraph with "But", this means that he is either taking back everything he has just said, or he his contradicting himself. Straight

away, he uses a metaphor to express that there isn't all the time in the world, and the end is getting near. "Time's Winged chariot hurrying near." This really shows that he is taking back what he said, because previously he had said that he had many years to look at her body.

The writer then uses another metaphor to express his change in opinion. "Desert of vast eternity" Which again expresses that they haven't got all the time in the world. The writer then even starts to make fun of his lover and gets quite aggressive towards her. He explains that when she dies her beauty will be lost and worms will go through her. "Thy beautiful shall no more be found; Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound My echoing song: then worms shall try" He is basically trying to break her down at these stages to really try and persuade her to have sex with him. He continues to insult her throughout the rest of section two.

More examples include; "That Long Preserved virginity" and "And your quaint honour turn to dust" In these two examples, the writer is insulting her virginity, I have highlighted "Quaint" in italics because it shows that he thinks virginity is pointless, some people may say he is "making fun" of her. Section three of the poem the tone has changed again, it starts with the word "Now", and some readers may notice it is repeated in this section, because the writer is trying to make a point. Also the writer is no longer insulting the woman, it is his final persuasion to make her have sex with him.

He uses a simile to compliment her. (Quite a change as he has just been insulting her on the previous section) "Now therefore, while the youthful hue" Sits on thy skin like morning dew" He is now saying she is very

beautiful to try and grasp her attention. He then continues to try and excite his lover; “ At every pore with instant fires, Now let us sport us while we may” These sentences are filled with passion, to really grab his loves attention, as he is trying to express that he wants sex right now.

The reader may also notice that “ Now” is used again, repetition, this would also help to get the reader’s attention. The writer then uses repetition once again to make sure he has still got his lover still connected to the letter. “ And Now, like amorous birds of prey” There is also a simile used here to make sure he maintains her interest. In the last part of the poem, the writer tries to think of different ways to have sex, to make sure that she takes notice. “ Through the iron gates of life” This could possibly mean a chastity belt. And he also personifies time, to express that they will enjoy themselves.