The Argument Of The Poem Essay, Research Paper

The Argument of the Poem

Andrew Marvell in ?To His Coy Mistress,? presents an argument of love to

readers. The argument comes from the speaker, a man to a woman, or to we the

audience. The first half of the poem is the speaker trying to woo her. Then the speaker

says that they are running out of time and death is upon them.

Marvell?s argument begins with if we had all the time in the world then we could

take the time to love:

Had we but world enough, and time, this coyness, lady, were no crime. We

would sit down, and think which way to walk, and pass our long love?s day. (1-4)

Then he tries to prove to this shy woman the amount of time he would spend admiring

her. He says that he would love her from the beginning of time until Judgment Day:

Love you ten years before the Flood, and you should, if you please, refuse till the

conversion of the Jews. (8-9)

He has a large, slow growing nature of affection, and he will spend all of his years

admiring all the parts of her body:

My vegetable love should grow vaster than empires, and more slow; and hundred

years should go to praise thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze; two hundred to

adore each breast, but thirty thousand to the rest; an age at least to every part, and

the last age should show your heart. (11-18)

He says that the length of time is all right due to her beauty:

For, lady, you deserve this state, nor would I love at lower rate. (19)

The argument now changes to its darker side. Marvell uses metaphors to say that

time is passing by quickly and death awaits them:

Time?s winged chariot hurrying near; and yonder all before us lie deserts of vast

eternity. (22-24)

He makes reference to a grave and a burial service saying that it is an unsuitable place for

lovers to embrace:

Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound my echoing song; then worms shall try that

long-preserved virginity, and your quaint honor turn to dust, and into ashes all my

lust: the grave?s is a fine a private place, but none, I think, do there

embrace. (26-32)

The final part of the poem gives reference to sex. He speaks of the youthful

freshness of her skin and of her passion. Next he uses a metaphor, which can be

translated into pouncing upon each other:

And now like enormous birds of prey, rather at once our time devour than

languish in his slow-chapped power. (38-40)

He is seemingly telling her what he wants, asking if he can enter into her womb:

Let us roll all our strength and all our sweetness up into a ball, and tear our

pleasures with rough strife thorough the iron gates of life: thus, though we cannot

make our sun stand still, yet we will make him run. (41-46)

The sun represents time, and man cannot move the sun, therefore, he cannot make time

stand still proving mans inability to live forever. The last line states that they can make

whatever they want out of life, or make their own sun run.

He went from trying to get her in his bed by displaying his utmost admiration of

her, to death is right around the corner. Marvell was saying that you cannot cheat death

or time, all you can do is make the most of it. He uses the word ?Now? to make a point

that life is now. Ironically, Marvell gave the image of light and the image of brightness,

with his use of the sun and the ?instant fires,? to give a luster and to show the idea of her

giving up her shyness or coyness. This contrasted with the darkness, and essential

remorse that life is not eternal, which is the key to getting what he wants from her.