



## Love in 'To His Coy Mistress'

*Andreas Keilbach*

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Seminar paper from the year 2003 in the subject American Studies - Literature, grade: 1,7, University of Freiburg (Englisches Seminar), course: Einführung in das Studium der englischen und amerikanischen Literatur, 9 entries in the bibliography, language: English, abstract: In Andrew Marvell's To His Coy Mistress the poem's speaker attempts to persuade "his coy

mistress" to have sex with him. As "he is aware of his imminent death as he is of hers" he wants his desire to be fulfilled here and now. Thus I introduce my thesis as follows: Andrew Marvell's To His Coy Mistress argues that, in a world where death rules supreme and time is limited, life's true meaning and purpose can only be found in physical (i.e. sexual) pleasure. My thesis is based on the analysis of the three sections which complete a logical argumentative pattern ("Had we . . .", "But . . .", "Now therefore . . .")

In the first section (l. 1- l. 20) the speaker tells his mistress what they could achieve in their relationship if they had time. It is a very traditional and religious view of love.

However, the subjunctive and conditional structures in the first section indicate: They do not have time. The coyness of the Lady is a crime. The result of these two points is that the speaker is not interested in spiritual or romantic but just in physical, sexual love immediately. This "false vision of history-as-courtship", "false vision of endless time and endless courtship" is shown in a satirical, cynical and ironic way. Marvell uses a lot of allusions to the bible illustrating the huge dimensions of "world enough and time" (l. 1). The image of "world enough" (l. 1) is shown by the "Indian Ganges" (l. 5), an exotic country which is far away from the "Humber" (l. 7) in England .

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