

# From his Coy Mistress

- by Deryn Rees-Jones -

Please note that for assessment purposes it is not valid to compare 'To His Coy Mistress' and 'From his Coy Mistress'.

## Activities

### A

It will probably be necessary to devote at least one lesson to the Marvell poem so that the Deryn Rees-Jones poem can be understood. It may be useful to give some other examples of intertextuality, such as *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*, and/or U. A. Fanthorpe's 'Not My Best Side' based on Paolo Uccello's painting of St. George and the Dragon.

In notes, learners could use woman<sup>T</sup> referring to the woman as represented in 'To His Coy Mistress', and woman<sup>F</sup> referring to the woman as represented in 'From his Coy Mistress'. This notation should not be used in any essays, but they do need to specify precisely which poem any observation/interpretation is based on. The modern concept of 'mistress' does not make sense in the context of the Marvell poem, and this requires some discussion. See the Glossary.

### B

This clearly requires careful exploration of aspects of both poems. Another potential issue is how Andrew Marvell/the persona *chooses to present* the woman in 'To His Coy Mistress', rather than discussing her as if she is a real person, or taking the man's perspective as the sole perspective.

### C

The intention of this question is to highlight discrepancies between the potential vocation of a nun and the titles she would devise while lying on her narrow cot in a convent.

### D

Stanza 3 can be considered the most revealing stanza, clarifying her actual present thoughts.

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## E

The surreal image here matches a similar image in the Marvell poem. Detailed discussion of the choice of language in the last five lines can help explore the woman's thoughts and feelings.

## F

1. **will become** = (potential) future time
2. **(woul)d kneel** = conditional present aspect, referring to potential future time
3. One thing **(i)s** (for sure) = simple present tense
4. body **(i)s** still = simple present tense referring to future time
5. **(woul)d come upon** = conditional present aspect, referring to future time
6. **(woul)d burn** incense, **dance, sing, worship** = conditional present aspect, referring to future time

The naming of tenses and aspects is not nearly so important as the tracking of the timescale, from potential future as a nun to emotional present to hypothetical future time.

## G

This comparison of poems is clearly not acceptable as the pair of poems to compare for examination purposes. However, an appreciation of the Deryn Rees-Jones poem requires some cross-referencing to the textual features she is implicitly referring to in Andrew Marvell's poem.

## H

Learners could be asked to take particular note of tone of voice and intonation, and any differences evident between stanzas. For instance there could be a difference in tone between 'wanting to purge myself of men' and 'just think about your lovely mouth'. How 'worship in' is expressed can also hint at the poet's underlying sense of fun or seriousness here.