Metaphysical poem: startling contrasts: abstract to concrete. Mockery of romantic poetry.

Gross exaggeration.

Personal feelings

Form: Lyric poem: short, non-narrative poem by single speaker who expresses a state of mind or process of thought and feeling.

Speaker may be an invented character different from the poet:

“his” mistress, not “my”. Marvell was a Puritan and this poem denies Christian morality and immortality of the soul

To his Coy Mistress

by Andrew Marvell

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

Space and time are motifs

Coyness: sense of artificial refusal

Crime because counter to laws of nature?

Subjunctive mood. **Conditiona**l: goes against time

We would sit down and think which way

Rhythm: 3 stresses slow lines down: lots of time

Spondee slows line. Lots of time to consider plans: can go anywhere

To walk, and pass our long love’s day;  
  
Thou by the Indian Ganges' side

Section is dominated by **enjambmen**t to reflect meandering conversational style: no forceful urgency

She could go to India to find rubies (protective of virginity)

Shouldst rubies find; I by the tide

Of Humber would complain. I would

“complain” and “refuse” = **lexicon of courtly love**

Biblical **allusion** from beginning to the end of the world = **hyperbole**

Again, courtly love motif of loving forevever

Love you ten years before the Flood,

And you should, if you please, refuse

Rhythm settles down, and lack of enjambment makes it sound more poetic and flowing, which runs counter to the subject matter which becomes mundane itemisation: contrast between form and content points up the ironic send up of courtly, romantic love notions.

Till the conversion of the Jews.

An hundred years should go to praise

Courtly love praise of all her parts becomes grossly exaggerated **hyperbole** and obviously **ironic.** More time spent on breasts and even more, implicitly below the waist, alluding slyly to the real sexual interest

Thine eyes and on thy forehead gaze

Two hundred to adore each breast,  
But thirty thousand to the rest;

He does come back to focus on the heart but this is undermined by what comes before and perhaps appears as an afterthought.

An age at least to every part,  
And the last age should show your heart.

For, lady, you deserve this state,  
Nor would I love at lower rate.

Big couplet finish on her value is undermined by the word “rate” which is mocking of the quantification of love and has crass monetary implications

Tone in the above section is heavily ironic but there is an underlying hint at seriousness in the point that if there was enough time they could indulge such fanciful notions. Perhaps the mockery of courtly love and the sexual innuendo is meant to belittle the mistress’ notions, but the sense of clever playfulness may imply that she may share the joke – while still maintaining her aloofness

But at my back I always hear  
 Time's winged chariot hurrying near;

Forceful **classical allusion** to the sun god: time is gaining on him. Made more powerful: heard and not seen + the vulnerability of behind the back. Also line is speeded up by the dactylic rhythm = adds sense of speed of time

“But” shows transition to the real argument of no time

And yonder all before us lie  
Deserts of vast eternity.

Image **contrasts** vastness of love in 1st stanza

**Metaphor/symbol** of barrenness of time beyond the grave.

Thy beauty shall no more be found,  
Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound  
My echoing song; then worms shall try  
That long preserv'd virginity,  
And your quaint honour turn to dust,And into ashes all my lust.

Honesty of his opinion of her honour as “quaint” and his feelings of “lust”: no point beating around the bush when facing truth of death

Personification of worms in **metaphysical conceit**: disturbing, shocking image contrasting the love language of 1st stanza

funeral lexicon: “ashes” “dust”

Contrasting vision of topics from first stanza: her beauty, his song, and her coyness = all gone

Contrasting images of restriction “vault” and “grave”. Enjambment extends the song like an echo = more plaintive

Whole stanza: honest directness or shock tactics to put fear into his mistress so she will agree?

The grave's a fine and private place,  
But none, I think, do there embrace.

Final couplet parallels end of 1st stanza in its mild ironic deflation. Does this make it more powerful by understatement or bring it back to the less serious joking ironic tone?

Now therefore, while the youthful hue

Stanza 3: Resolution of argument: **carpe diem**: repetition of “now” and “while” + “instant” stress the importance of the moment.

Use of language in this whole stanza is much more inventive and uses none of the traditional imagery apparent in the first two stanzas = therefore it is more personal and has more force. Also gone is the sense of irony – replaced by a sense of physical urgency

Youth in **simile** with morning dew: idea of beauty as ephemeral. “Sits” reminds of first stanza but here reflects opposite notion of having time

Sits on thy skin like morning due,

And while thy willing soul transpires  
At every pore with instant fires,

**Metaphysical conceit:** her desire is like a sweat of fire = she wants it too

Now let us sport us while we may;

**Simile** of birds of prey continues the natural imagery of worms, but gives them a sense of power, and freedom of flight (set against the winged chariot) – more inventive image

And now like amorous birds of prey,

Rather at once our time devour  
Than languish in his slow-chapp'd power.

Compete with time: **MC** of birds “devouring” time vs. personification of time slowly chewing them up

Let us roll all our strength, and all  
Our sweetness, up into one ball;  
And tear our pleasures with rough strife  
Thorough the iron gates of life.

**MC** power of both together in a ball of energy to rival the sun ( life +time).

Continues image of birds tearing pleasures. Iron gates of life confine them from what they want but they will take it.

Thus, though we cannot make our sun

Final couplet brings it all together: **personification of time and MC**: they cannot stop time but by living life full and fast they will not be controlled by it

Stand still, yet we will make him run.

Imagery of concentration vs space of empires(unreal) and grave (confining): this is small but full of life = pushes against confines. There is a sense at the end that although he logically accepts the power of time, somehow they can compete and be more powerful by seizing and exploiting life to the full. Sense at end that he has risen beyond just sex and is talking about life and real passion.