

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Robert Herrick is a 17th Century great English poet. He is considered to be “... the greatest song-writer ever born of English race” (Swinburne) and one of the famous Cavalier Poets. Cavalier poet is a group of Englishmen poets with loyalty to Charles I (1625–49). Their background as soldiers, courtiers, gallants, and wits influences their writing style in producing elegant lyrics. Unlike the other Cavalier Poets, Robert Herrick has a different background; yet, his style in writing his elegant lyrics and carpe diem philosophy have made him as one of them (“Cavalier poet”).

One of Cavalier Poets’ characteristics is they express Carpe diem concept in the most of their works. Carpe diem is a Latin phrase, which expresses a philosophy to appreciate living the life to the fullest. Carpe diem concept persuades people to live every moment in their lives fully and effectively because life is unpredictable and very short (“Literary History”).

In Herrick's poetic style, he focuses on the speed of time. When the other Cavalier Poets do not really show the haste to use the time but tend to convey that human should appreciate it, Herrick is the one who cares about that haste. The over-riding messages of Herrick's Carpe diem works show the urgency of time; thus, he always urges that time is very short and we have to make the most out of it. Herrick loves to use parts of nature and natural events in his works as the analogy to compare and support the concept of time which is very short and limited. For example, in several poems, Herrick uses the daily cycle of sun, flowers, the spring time, or the life of the lark to portray time through human life.

Throughout his life, Robert Herrick has written 1400 poems, which are divided into 2 volumes in a book, they are *Hesperides*, and *His Noble Numbers*. Like any other poets, Herrick's works are products of his age. The poems reflect biographical facts of his life and the times in which he lived. The topics of secular works that he has written are carpe diem concept, love, family, and his loyalty to Charles I and Ben Jonson in his *Hesperides*. He also wrote religious poems in *His Noble Numbers* which reflects his life as a country priest in Dean Prior, Devonshire (Dunagan).

Herrick's style in writing was strongly influenced by Ben Jonson, the classical Greek and Roman writers. The influence of Jonson goes beyond these poetic tributes. Most poets who admire Ben Jonson follow his recommendation for writing well. Jonson recommends reading the works of best authors, particularly the Ancient. This leads Herrick's style to be influenced by the writing style of classical writers, for example the writing style of legendary Greek poet, Anacreon, and with the writing style of Roman's poet such as the writing style of

Horace and Martial (“Robert Herrick 1591–1674”).

In Herrick’s *Hesperides*, Herrick addresses his poems mostly to women. It might be that Herrick is influenced by "platonic love, another characteristics of Cavalier poetry, where the man would show his divine love to a woman, where she would be worshipped as a creature of perfection" ("Cavalier poet"). Moreover, he often directly addresses his poems to specific names, for examples: Julia (like his mother’s name), Anthea, Electra, and Corrina (the names are originally from Greek). In this thesis, I analyze three Herrick’s works which represent the notion of carpe diem and all addressed to women. The titles are “To the Virgins to Make Much of Time,” “Upon a Delaying Lady,” and “To a Bed of Tulips.”

I am going to analyze Herrick’s poems through diction to reveal the theme. “Diction is the choice and the order of the words within a poem. Words can often serve multiple purposes When discussing dictions, the reader should consider the different meanings that the words may have and how their arrangement in the poem contributes to or alters those meanings” (Prudchenko). To understand the meaning of the poem, it is very appropriate to look further the word choice of the poem because “word choice conveys and emphasizes the meaning or theme of a poem through distinctions in sound, look, rhythm, syllable, letters, and definition” (“Literary Analysis: Using Elements of Literature”).

Statement of the Problem

The problems I would like to discuss are as follows:

1. What are the themes of the poems?
2. How do the dictions of the poems help revealing the themes?

Purpose of the Study

The purposes of writing this thesis are:

1. To show the theme of the poems.
2. To show how dictions help revealing the themes.

Method of Research

The method that I used was library research. I started by reading three Robert Herrick's poems entitled "To the Virgin to Make Much of Time," "To a Bed of Tulips," and "Upon a Delaying Lady," I searched the explanation about carpe diem concept and how that concept works in most of Robert Herrick works. Then, I analyzed the poems by using formalism approach. I chose the dictions and choice of words which reveal the theme in of each poem. I took some references and resources from the Internet and books to support the analysis and assist me to write the thesis. Finally, I drew a conclusion from my analysis.

Organization of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into three chapters. In Chapter One, I present the Introduction, which contains The Background of the Study, The Statement of the Problem, The Purpose of the Study, The Method of Research, and The Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two is analysis of theme through diction in Robert Herrick's Poems. Chapter Three is Conclusion. The thesis ends with Bibliography and Appendices, which include three Robert Herrick's poems and biography of Robert Herrick.