

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The present writer has decided to analyse metaphysical poetry because she finds that this is a different kind of poetry. Metaphysical poetry is a 'term applied to writing that is highly intellectual and philosophical, that makes extensive use of ingenious conceits, and that usually combines intense emotion with mental ingenuity' (Shaw, 1972:236). Vaughan's poems consist not only of beauty and imaginative thinking, but also show philosophy of life. 'Metaphysical poets' is a name given to a group of English lyric poets of the 17th century, including John Donne, George Herbert, Henry Vaughan, Thomas Traherne, Abraham Cowley, Richard Crashaw and Andrew Marvell. 'The hallmark of their poetry is the metaphysical conceit (a figure of speech and paradoxical images), a reliance on intellectual wit and learned imagery' (<http://education.yahoo.com/reference/encyclopedia/entry?id=31221>).

The present writer finds that the four poems by Vaughan that the present writer chooses to analyse contain figures of speech and paradox.

The present writer chooses to analyse Henry Vaughan's works because he is a religious poet. His being religious influences his works. 'The characters of Vaughan's religious poems are colored by a mood of wistfulness induced by Vaughan's desire to reach some spiritual home' (The Cambridge Guide to Literature in English, 1993:976).

The present writer chooses four poems of Henry Vaughan, namely, The World, Man, The Incarnation and Passion and Christ's Nativity. These religious poems are chosen by the present writer because she wants to know further about the relationship between God and human beings as the most significant aspect of theme in the poems.

Thus, the present writer would like to analyse the theme of these four poems of Henry Vaughan. Theme is the most important literary aspect in poetry because theme is 'a central concept developed in a poem' (Reaske, 1966:42). Through theme, readers can learn and understand the meanings and the messages that are implied in a poem. The present writer analyses some of Henry Vaughan's diction and the use of figures of speech in these poems, namely, metaphor, personification, simile, allusion, symbolism, and paradox. Diction is 'the choice and use of words' (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English, 1995:321).

There are other figures of speech which the poet uses, but the present writer limits her analysis to these five figures of speech and paradox; they are:

1. Metaphor, which is ‘a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to a person, idea, or object to which it is not literally applicable’ (Shaw, 1966:235).
2. Simile, which is ‘a figure of speech which two things, essentially different but thought to be alike in one or more respect, are compared’ (Shaw, 1966:344).
3. Personification, which is ‘a figure of speech in which abstraction, animals, ideas and inanimate objects are endowed with human for, character, traits or sensibilities’ (Shaw, 1966, 283).
4. Symbolism, which is ‘something used for, or regarded as, representing something else’ (Shaw, 1966:376).
5. Allusion, which is ‘the process of referring to figures or events in life or in literature that are well known.’ (Shaw, 1966:26). We could also refer to the poet’s allusion to the Bible, called Biblical allusion.
6. Paradox, which is ‘a self-contradictory, false proposition’ (Shaw, 1966:275).

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

After reading Henry Vaughan’s The World, Man, The Incarnation and Passion and Christ’s Nativity, the present writer decides to find out the answer to the following questions:

1. What is the theme of these four poems by Henry Vaughan’s?
2. How does the poet use figures of speech, paradox and diction to reveal the theme in these four poems?

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Based on the statements of the problem above, the present writer states the purpose of the study below:

1. To show the theme of four of Henry Vaughan's poems.
2. To show how the poet uses figures of speech, paradox and diction to reveal the theme in these four poems.

1.4 METHOD OF RESEARCH

In writing this thesis, the present writer uses library research. Besides reading the chosen poems, she also reads books related to the poems about the relationship between God and man in the poems to help her in analysing the poems.

Moreover, she looks for more information about the poems and the poet's biography from the internet.

The present writer chooses the intrinsic method in analysing Vaughan's poems.

1.5 ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

The present writer divides her thesis into three chapters. Chapter One consists of the Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Method of Research and Organization of Thesis. Chapter Two is the Analysis of four poems of Henry Vaughan. Chapter Three is the Conclusion of the analysis. She ends her thesis with Bibliography and then Appendices, which contain Biography and the four poems of Henry Vaughan which the present writer analyses.