

## CHAPTER I

### I N T R O D U C T I O N

#### I.1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

English literature has produced numberless names with worldly reputation. To name some of them, there are Beowulf with his "The Ruin", Cynewulf, Geoffrey Arthur who has been called the Father of English Fiction, Chaucer, Spenser, Milton, etc. Especially in poetry, there are William Shakespeare, John Donne, Ben Johson, Robert Herrick, John Milton, Alexander Pope, William Blake, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Percy Bysshe Shelley, John Keats, and still many others.

Among those names there is Robert Herrick who is cleassified as the late seventeenth century poet. Robert Herrick, whose several poems are going to be analyzed in this thesis, is known as the greatest song writer English Literature has ever had. It is very suprising that Robert Herrick was less talked in his own period, but he started to be the favourable subject in the talk of literature, particularly of English songs, about a century after his death and he still does up till now.

The poet's reputation during his lifetime was not great but in the 19th century interest in his poetry led to the publication of his complete works in T.Mailtland's. edition (1823). While Swinburne's praise, 'the greatest song-writer ever born of English race', may sound extravagant now, Herrick's place in English potery is secure (George, 1959: 402).

To provide the reasons of the unlucky position of Robert Herrick in his own time, some modern critics consider his works are lack of difficulties. The opinions of the admirers of Robert Herrick's works, however, propose different facts. They admire his excellent talent in writing songs, his modesty, his precision in his detail and it seems that everything in his book seems to be there for a reason. Further more, he is very good in describing colours, smells, sounds, taste, etc. into poetic lines.

He is not only responsive to the colours, shapes, smells, sounds, tastes and textures of the world, but actually sensitive also to the properties and potentialities of language: the weight of words; the sensuous values of consonants and vowels; the melodic flow of verse; the varied shapes of metrical patterns; the way in which verbal rhythms can be adjusted to correspond with a shift of emotional mood;....(Press, 1961: 15).

In fact, Robert Herrick's extraordinary talent as said above brings him to a secure position in English literature approximately a century after his death.

Talking about theme, Robert Herrick implies so many varied message through his poems, such as religious spirit (regarding his being a priest), country life which he adores very much, love, youth and the transience of life. One of the favourite theme is 'carpe diem' which simply means 'seize the day'. He is even known as one of the English poets who wrote about 'carpe diem' as the theme.

The poetry of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester (1648-80), embodies all the contradictions of this time. He upholds many of the old traditions, and one aspect of his writing shows him as a decadent 'Cavalier' poet. He is indeed the last significant lyric writer in English for a century, and his most beautiful lyric is, like so many pieces by Lovelace, Sir John Suckling and Robert Herrick, a seduction poem on the ancient and familiar 'Carpe Diem' ('seize the day') theme (Wyne-Davies. 1989: 225).

To give a brief introduction to the term 'carpe diem' we may say that it is a Greek saying which views life as a very valuable thing. We are supposed to improve our lives to a better shape. 'Carpe Diem' also implies the idea that youth, which is as short as life itself, must not be wasted. Useful things or activities must be done that can be our saving for tomorrow when we are already imprisoned by oldness and its deterioration. Since no period of life happens twice and youth is the time in which we are given the potential for creating, it is reasonable that we make use of our youth widely. In short, 'carpe diem' implies an appreciation to life. Therefore, life is not exploited to mean the tendency of degradation, instead, life is filled up with constructive acts or deeds to achieve the serenity of spirit.

This thesis intends to put forward the talk about 'carpe diem' by means of analyzing some of Robert Herrick's poems which is assumed to convey the 'carpe diem' theme. There are five poems of Robert Herrick that are going to be analyzed namely Corinna's going a Maying. To

The Virgins, To Make Much Of Time, To Daffadills, To Blossoms, and To a Bed Of Tulips. It is expected that we will, finally, understand how Carpe Diem is used as the theme in Robert Herrick's works and what the essence of 'Carpe Diem' in those works is.

## I.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

How is 'carpe diem' reflected by Robert Herrick in five of his poems namely Corinna's Going a Maying, To The Virgins, To Make Much Of Time, To Daffadils, To Blossoms, and To A Bed Of Tulips ?

## I.3. KEY TERMS

### 1.3.1. CARPE DIEM :

A Latin saying which means 'seize the day' or 'pick up the day'. This saying was common in the sixteenth and seventeenth-century English love poetry. In this thesis, 'carpe diem' is connected with the consciousness to fill up life with positive deeds in order not to repent when oldness comes and the prime of youth is lost while nothing has been done..

### 1.3.2. IDEA :

A picture in the mind as the result of the process of thinking and reasoning.

### 1.3.3. THEME :

The central or dominating idea of a work. The theme of a literary work is the core of the whole work to which all of its elements refer.

### 1.3.4. SYMBOLISM :

The use of imagery so that one object represents something else. In literature, symbolism is the use of objects or actions to suggest ideas or emotions.

### 1.3.5. SYMBOL :

A symbol is something that exists in its own right and yet stands for or suggests something else.

### 1.3.6. IMAGERY :

The representation through language of the imagination of sense experience.

### 1.3.7. FIGURE OF SPEECH :

Anyway of saying something other than the ordinary way. The figures of speech are used to say something more vividly or forcefully.

## I.4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In order to effectively achieve the solution of the problem mentioned in the background of the study, certain limitations are needed. They are also meant to keep the talk within the given topic or context.

First of all, the objective of this study is actually implied in the title which is "The Reflection of

the Carpe Diem Idea as seen in some of Robert Herrick's poems". Consequently, the analysis will be about the idea of 'carpe diem', especially the one used in Robert Herrick's pieces. Furthermore, this thesis is going to characterize the 'carpe diem' of Herrick by clarifying the theme and finding the symbolism conveyed by words as symbols or even in the imagery. All of them are used to support the theme.

It is true that there is a general acceptance of the basic meaning of 'Carpe Diem'. Yet, each poet may have his own interpretation on the term, even though it will not too far from the first meaning as stated in the generally accepted definition. So, the term 'Carpe Diem' used in this thesis is the one which is frequently used and widely known by people. It will not refer to any particular study. Thus, the definition of 'carpe diem' used in this thesis is the one which is written in the reference books. Then, based on her own interpretation the writer tries to form an understanding, through the works, upon Robert Herrick's interpretation on the term.

#### I.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Herein, we may understand Robert Herrick's perception upon 'carpe diem', particularly in five of his poems which are Corinna's Going a Maving, To The Virgins, To Make Much Of Time, To Daffadils, To Blossoms, and To A Bed

Of Tulips'. Furthermore, we may also learn about 'carpe diem' itself.

The result of the study meant to be dedicated for the students of English Department, particularly those who are interested in English literature. It is expected that this thesis can be taken as an input in such studies. Hopefully, this can be useful for anybody who loves literature, and especially poetry.

#### I.6. THEORETICAL APPROACH

Life is so complex inasmuch as the romance of life never lacks of ups and downs. That makes life always interesting to talk about. The transfer of many varied events happened in real life to the forms of literature, therefore, often takes place in the cultivation of literature from time to time. What is involved in those transfers is not merely an imitating process, better than that it is a process of inner recreation.

Relevantly, Robert Herrick as a poet inevitably absorbs the experiences he undergoes in his life and represents them in to the forms of literature, in this case poetry, after getting them processed and intergrated with his own innermost feelings.

Due to this reason the mimetic theory of M.H. Abrams is applied, as the leading theory, to penetrate the problem of the thesis which is proving or finding the

reflection of the 'Carpe Diem' theme in some of Robert Herrick's poems.

To borrow M.H. Abrams's statements in The Mirror and The Lamp (Abrams, 1953):

The mimetic orientation - the explanation of art as essentially an imitation of aspects of the universe - was probably the most primitive aesthetic theory,.... 'imitation' is a relational term signifying two items and some correspondence between them (p.8).

The mimetic theory of Abrams is very useful to understand how Robert Herrick reflects the occasions, events, feelings, or anything else - including 'carpe diem' - in his poems. Further more, we may also understand how the 'carpe diem' theme is understood Robert Herrick's perception.

To have a better result of the analysis, another approach is needed. For this purpose the analytic approach is employed to enable me to analyze the theme through symbols inasmuch as the analytic approach covers the study of intrinsic elements which in fact are found in the literary piece itself.

The basic principles that form the background of the analytic approach are the assumptions that (1) a literary work is formed or constructed by certain elements, (2) each element has its own specific function and always has a correspondence with one another, though each has its own characteristics which differ with the other's,



(3) at first, those elements are analyzed separately, then the overall study will treat them as a unity (Aminuddin, 1987: 44).

#### I.7. METHOD OF RESEARCH

The method used in this analysis is hermeneutic method. The hermeneutic method is applied due to the essence of this method which is mainly the interpretation, as Newton said in the Twentieth Century Literary Theory 'Hermeneutics, the science of interpretation,....' (Newton, 1988: 103).

Through this method we may do an analysis which frees us to use our own interpretation one of hermeneutic points, to understand what the literary work really means to say. It is not a sole technic of comprehending the work though because, frequently, the real problem of many literary pieces is that they come from different times, mostly from the earlier times, while the analysis takes time at present. Hermeneutics has its way to apt with such problem as Schleiermacher said:....the purpose of hermeneutics was to reconstruct the original context so that the words of the text could be properly understood (Newton, 1988: 103).

While in another part of the book Wilhelm Dilthey uttered that:

In the 'human sciences', in contrast, interpretation was directed at what had been produced by human beings, so that 'understanding' had to operate in order to bring humanly produced objects, such as text written in the past, to life (Newton, 1988: 103).

There are two kinds of hermeneutics namely negative and positive hermeneutics. The negative hermeneutics has the purpose of understanding a literary piece written in the past by applying the modern concepts as explained by Newton:

.... that hermeneutics should not only reject the view that the purpose of hermeneutics is to restore a text's past meaning in its own terms but should use modern concepts to question and undermine that meaning (Newton, 1988: 192).

This is due to the fact that we cannot avoid the interference of our own comprehension upon modern concepts toward the text written in the earlier time.

While the positive hermeneutics encourages an analysis on a literary work within the concepts accepted at that time, meaning that the present concepts should not be used to penetrate the problem of the analysis.

On those grounds above the negative hermeneutics is taken since the interpretation upon Robert Herrick's work and also upon the 'Carpe Diem' theme is not apart from the modern or present time in which the thesis is written.

To support the operation of the theories and method a library research is done as an effort of gaining

data and descriptions needed for the intergrated analysis.

The data collection covers the theories, the method, reference books related with Robert Herrick, his work and also 'carpe diem'. The supporting refence books which are relevant with the subject are in use as well.

# **CHAPTER II**

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**