
Monarchy and Dissent - The Fight For Democracy

Sir John Suckling's 'the siege' uses extended metaphors, with heaps of exaggeration and sarcasm, which all contribute to the satirical theme of the poem. The siege could be misconstrued and taken at face value could be read as a war poem regarding the siege of a fort. However, was read more closely it is clear that he uses these metaphors of 'forts', 'great cannons' and 'the enemy ay quiet' to describe the courting of a lady, which becomes a siege on a fort. This would have been a traditional metaphor for courtship during the 1600's.

The poem, like Herrick's, holds themes of Carpe Diem. It starts by saying if the speaker had all the time in the world he would woo her properly, however, time is short so they need to act quickly. This once again could be linked back to the turmoil of the country, with King Charles being exiled and the threat of Cromwell and his strict rules on the horizon, it was imminent to do all the enjoyable and pleasurable things possible whilst they still had a chance. Even after the King's restoration, the people may still have been dubious about how long the King's reign would last so the Carpe Diem still applied. However, in this particular poem, the speaker is rejected, it is clear he is a victim of pride, particularly when the speaker suggests he stops trying to win her over, he claims there are other conquests he can focus on. The speaker claims he 'hate a fool that starves her love, only to feed her pride, here he is suggesting that she does wish to let him advance on her, but she wont fold and give in. The word pride can be related back to he historical context of the time, perhaps it was not so much pride as the bitter speaker suggested but more of a worry about how others around her would then view her. Women who succumbed to their sexual desires without the security of marriage, were at that time not favoured by many. This once again can be attributed to the religion and ruling of the 17th century, men were allowed a much wider range of sexual promiscuity, yet women were supposed to remain loyal to their husbands and not be swayed into an unmarried bed.

Suckling, however, uses satire in the form of exaggeration, extended metaphors and nonchalance to convince women that they must put fear aside, follow their heart, preferably into his bed, and live for the moment. However, in the siege this does not work for him, yet he is so unsure why as he feels he has done everything he possibly could do yet is shunned by the prude women of the time. Andrew Marvell had a slightly different take on life. Living the life mostly as a republican, Marvell narrowly escaped punishment for his own co-operation in republicanism. Marvell wrote 'To his coy mistress' around 1650-1652, right in the midst of Cromwell's reign of power. Although slightly unclear on where Marvell's loyalties lay, it is abundantly clear that his work represents the transitional stage that England was going through, from the vastly Christian and still medieval culture into the modern society it became. Marvell wrote work that celebrated the birth of the children of King Charles 1 yet also wrote 'An Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's return from Ireland'. Once again the Carpe Diem theme is prevalent throughout Marvell's 'To his coy mistress'. The poem starts by exaggerating that if he, the speaker, had all the time in the word he would indeed take his time to woo her properly. However, with multiple wars going on and the uncertainty in leadership that ensued, time was of the essence. Marvell uses witty, far-fetched metaphors and similies, which hold a uniqueness unlike any other, which all contributes to the satirical theme.

For example, 'sits on they skin like morning dew', this not only paints a picture to the reader but

gives the impression that just like the dew, her beauty will too disappear in time. He also uses a strong metaphor to depict how short time really is, 'Time's winged chariot hurrying near' not only personifies time by making it something tangible. The use of the word hurrying only strengthens the argument and endears the reader to listen and consider what is being said. Marvell flatters the 'mistress' whilst also being sarcastic, all of which add to the satire in the poem. He states 'lady, you deserve this', shortly followed by the hyperbole that if she does not let him sway her and take her virginity, then when she dies the worms will. This emphasis shows that Marvell was anxious about the country's future and that he wanted to make the most of the time he had. In this part, Marvell is appealing to the women's vanity yet uses incredibly detailed and gruesome imagery to stress the urgency, and his point of Carpe Diem. Marvell uses his dramatic monologue to critique the gender bias of this period that he viewed as flawed. There is even biblical references in the poem which give it context and make it more believable to the reader, in the lines 'love you ten years before the flood', this alludes to Noah's ark, making the argument have an intellectual depth which helps to persuade. All four poets show signs of a metaphysical poet, using extended rhetorical devices and using greater emphasis on the spoken aspects of their work as opposed to the lyrical.

Each of the poets has used monologue to concisely put together an argument of almost sound logic. They have all used the dire and unpredictable state of the country, the monarchy and parliament, to create carpe diem poems, which would help them get their own way with women. However, women of that era were slightly more prude and in a way proud, too proud to just give their virginity away to anyone. To have intercourse without marriage in that era would have been frowned upon, so for the poets to try to convince women to do otherwise would have taken a lot of persuasion. The poets do put together comprehensive arguments, they use logic to make a point, however this just lets the reader have an insight into the poets own anxiety and ambivalences caused by the confusion and turmoil the wars caused. All four poets hold a huge fascination with time in their poetry, each of the four poems has an aspect of Carpe diem and time is mentioned in all of them. The idea that time is running out, time is precious and that the everyone, particularly the women the poems are aimed at, should forget the rules and do as they please.

Although the poems seem like they are aimed at the women, they may have also been read by close personal friends and for the entertainment of the court. They were not published poems but more for entertainment, yet the poets still had to be slightly conscious of what they wrote and how they wrote it so as not to anger the King or Cromwell. Nonetheless, all four poems show aspects of criticism of either society or the politics of that era, whether that is the double standards of the gendered bias and the misogynistic culture of society at time. The use of extended metaphors and sarcasm throughout all four poems contribute to the satirical themes and show the anxieties and ambivalences each individual during the confusing time of the interregnum and the restoration.