



**CHRISTOPHER MARLOWEIE "CARP DIEM
POETRY"**

Erkaboyeva Sadoqatxon

E-mail: erkaboyevasadoqat035@gmail.com

*Chirchik State Pedagogical University Tourism faculty Foreign language and
literature 22/14-group, 2-course*

Supervisor: Nasiba Komil qizi Jumaeva

nasibajumayeva1@gmail.com

Chirchik State Pedagogical University English teacher

***Abstract.** The theme of love as resistance to authority is the centerpiece of a two-millennia-long tradition in Western poetry known as carpe diem (a phrase credited to the Latin poet Horace). This essay begins by analyzing one of the most famous later examples of carpe diem in English poetry (Andrew Marvell's 1681 "To His Coy Mistress"), emphasizing the carpe diem ethos' potential to illustrate both the consequences and the necessity of individual erotic choice—especially female choice—in defiance of authority. It then uses carpe diem's anti-authoritarian perspective to understand the contrast between the ambivalence of Mariam—torn between a tepid disobedience and regretful loyalty to her husband Herod—and the wholly defiant choices of Salome in Elizabeth Cary's earlier drama, *The Tragedy of Mariam* from 1613.*

***Keywords:** love; choice; carpe diem; resistance; authority; poetry.*

Introduction

Carpe diem poetry, a tradition dating back to the Augustan era in Rome, presents a worldview that seems filled with a sense of the fragility and shortness of life; but at its essence, it is concerned with individual choice in a world that often

attempts to circumscribe, or even eliminate, the possibility of such choice. It takes its name from a phrase by the “Latin poet Horace, who in Ode, I. xi, tells his mistress that life is short, so they must ‘enjoy the day,’ for they do not know if there will be a tomorrow”. Horace lives and works in an increasingly authoritarian Rome in which the passing of such laws as the Lex Iulia de Maritandis Ordinibus and the Lex Iulia de Adulteriis Coercendis represented an ongoing attempt to use the power of government to “reform Roman private morality.”¹ In such an environment, Horace’s line, “carpe diem quam minimum credula postero” Seize the day, trusting as little in the next as possible” has a political resonance, as it tells Leuconoe, and all who have followed since, to live now, and love now, despite the demands of authority, because each second of scruple, doubt, and delay brings men and women closer to a death that is non-negotiable, non-delayable, and everlasting. The carpe diem ethos informs works as diverse as the fourth-century (CE) Latin poetry of Ausonius,³ to the troubadour poems of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, to the plays of Shakespeare and the poetry of John Donne and Robert Herrick. It appears, perhaps most powerfully and famously in Andrew Marvell’s 1681 poem, “To His Coy Mistress,”⁴ where the idea of death becomes life’s and love’s greatest ally in the battle against the demands of authority, convention, and law.

A Fine and Private Place: Andrew Marvell and His Coy Mistress

Perhaps after Robert Herrick’s “Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,” the single line of carpe diem poetry most recognizable to English language readers is “If we had but world enough and time.” It is a line, like “To be or not to be, that is the question,” or “Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven,” that elicits a shock of recognition, each line an example of that “work of genius” Emerson describes, in which “we recognize our own rejected thoughts” coming back to us “with a certain alienated majesty”. We know, all of us at some level, that we have neither world enough nor time, despite the countless tasks with which we busy ourselves, the deadlines at work, the striving for success, the pursuits of love or knowledge (for academics, that latest paper that must be written), all of the hundreds and thousands of little ways we distract ourselves from the onrush of our mortality. Still, we know,

and a line like that which opens Andrew Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress" brings that knowledge right up close, forcing us to pay attention. Our defensive refusals to deal with the reality of the absurd and ultimately fatal disease from which all of us suffer; we wish to think (or more precisely "not-think") that we have, if not endless tomorrows, at least so many as allow us to indulge in the time-wasting and death-hastening scruples of our island and tribe and time⁶, throwing off until tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow the choices necessary to live as fully as possible in worlds that will, if we let them, lead us like fools to dusty death, worlds that would deny us the chance ever to discover who we really were, and who we might have become.

Conclusions

There is sometimes a tendency among literary critics to downplay the subversive elements in such work as Marvell's and Cary's. Marvell's poem, as Nigel Smith argues, "is a parody of the Christian doctrine of resurrection: death is overcome not by resurrection in the afterlife but by life" However, Smith quickly retreats into the more orthodox suggestion that Marvell is merely being ironic: "the speaker thinks that lust will be rewarded with more pleasure in life; the Christian knows that the wages of sin (i.e., lust) are death". Perhaps. But what the *carpe diem* ethos has asked of readers since the time of Horace is to see that the wages of life are death, and no amount of obedient dismissal of one's own desires, no quantity of choice given over to those in authority, will lessen the payment when it finally comes due to reject the subversive message of Marvell's poem is to miss the extent of its power. To vilify the voice of Cary's character Salome—merely giving it a kind of "devil's due" while burying that voice and its claims inside the critical rhetoric of wickedness and claims about what "most readers of the age" would have thought of her—is to miss the depth and vigor of its critique. This is akin to the reductive gesture Lawrence Stone makes with Shakespeare—treating a literary artifact as limited by the conditions of its time and place, while regarding those conditions as monolithic and without exceptions or currents of resistance.

REFERENCES

1. Anderson, Linda. 1991. The Nature of Marvell's Mower. *Studies in English Literature* 31: 131–46. [Google Scholar] [CrossRef]
2. Ausonius. 2001. *Ausonius: Epigrams. Text with Introduction and Commentary*. Edited by Nigel M. Kay. London: Duckworth. [Google Scholar]
3. Bell, Ilona. 2006. Private Lyrics in Elizabeth Cary's Tragedy of *Mariam*. In *The Literary Career and Legacy of Elizabeth Cary*. Edited by Heather Wolfe. Gordonsville: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 17–34. [Google Scholar]
4. Belsey, Catherine. 1987. Love and Death in 'To His Coy Mistress'. In *Post-structuralist Readings of English Poetry*. Edited by Richard Machin and Christopher Norris. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 105–21. [Google Scholar]