

Andrew marvell's  
description of life in  
carpe diem as  
illustrated in his poem  
to ...



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In Andrew Marvell's poem, *To His Coy Mistress*, he writes to show that is hurrying after him and will bring death, so because of this his beloved must live by *carpe diem*. Marvell uses "coy" to describe his lover as she is shy, but due to his fear of time running out they must act on their emotions now. To achieve his purpose, Marvell uses his diction, imagery, and metaphors.

Marvell uses his diction to portray time as a villain chasing after him and love, causing the necessity for them to seize the moment. By using the words "worms", "ashes", and "dust", Marvell shows the severity of the situation as these things are what time will bring to the lovers in death. The connotation behind these words is that death is completely empty and they will rot in the ground. Due to this, the lovers must make the most of their time together as it is already running out. In using the words "youthful hue" and "morning dew", Marvell shows that they should take advantage of their love before their youth is stolen by their foe, time. Like dew, the life that they have is temporary. The connotation behind these words implies that the pair will only be young for so long before time has its' grip upon them. Marvell's diction urges his love to *carpe diem* with him as time is chasing after them both.

Another way Marvell achieves his purpose of showing time is the enemy of love is through imagery. If they had all the time in the world, Marvell says that he "would love you ten years before the Flood" and "till the conversion of the Jews". This imagery shows the true nature of love as if Marvell had eternity, he would love this girl for all of that time. But behind these promises of loving her forever, lies him urging her to accept his love now as they do not have all this time. He shows how futile it is to not love, as her "quaint honor

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[will] turn to dust, and into ashes all my [Marvell's] lust". This imagery is a contrast of images as it proposes his love, which represents life, versus death, which represents time. This points out that as time ticks by, they are coming closer and closer to death. Death has finality and if him and his do not get together soon, time will overcome them both; therefore they need to live in the moment.

Marvell also uses metaphors to show that time is coming for him and his love with the inescapability of death. If Marvell had eternity to love, he would have his "vegetable love grow, vaster than empires, and more slow". In comparing his love to vegetable growth, Marvell shows that his love would grow slowly and surely, if they had eternity. But, they do not have this time as "at my [Marvell's] back I always hear time's winged chariot hurrying near". With comparing time to a winged chariot, Marvell is proving that time is fast and right behind him. Marvell can hear this "chariot" as it is coming towards him and his love, once it catches them they will no longer have time left to love each other. Marvell uses metaphors to show that time is coming after him and his love quickly, preventing them from having forever together. Due to this, Marvell wants to take advantage of the time they do have left and use it.

To His Coy Mistress uses Marvell's diction, imagery, and metaphors to press the urgency of the situation in that time is running out. He views time to be the enemy of love and it will bring death. Marvell and his lover must *carpe diem* and love each other while they can.