

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

The Art of Rhetoric in George Herbert's The Temple

by

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY  
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## Abstract

George Herbert's statement in "The Church-porch" that "A verse may find him who a sermon flies / And turn delight into a sacrifice" indicates his keen awareness that aesthetic pleasure is essential to the religious poet's didactic and persuasive purposes. Chapter one briefly surveys Herbert's practice of rhetoric as a Cambridge orator, a translator, a Member of Parliament, a preacher, and a poet. The practical effects of rhetoric are the focus of my discussion of selected techniques, such as exclamatio, admiratio, interrogatio, prosopopoeia, dialogismus, ironia, sarcasmus, apostrophes, emphatic repetitions, and proverbs, which demonstrate Herbert's ability to create the illusion of spontaneity and dramatic immediacy. Attention is given to the differences between classical and Christian rhetoric as elucidated by St. Augustine in On Christian Doctrine and Herbert in The Country Parson. Such differences are manifest in poems of The Temple which contrast the Divine uses of rhetoric with human abuses of it. Examples from Herbert's verse illustrate his skilful use of what Marcia Colish refers to as "redeemed rhetoric." He may use it as "a medicine of cherries" (Sidney An Apology for Poetry) in which sweetness serves as an agent of instruction and reassurance or as a sharp sword which instructs and persuades by piercing through artifice to expose moral depravity.

Chapter two examines Herbertian allegory as a rhetorical device recommended by Renaissance rhetoricians and as a method of Biblical

intepretation. "Redemption," "The Church-floore," "Humilitie," "The World," "The Quip," "Hope," "Peace," "The Pilgrimage," "Love unknown," "The Pulley," and "Love (III)" disclose the protean nature of allegory's forms and functions. Emblems and personifications are not interpreted statically, but in the context of narrative action. The allegories of The Temple encompass continuous metaphors, typological references and applications, enigmas, veiled references to contemporary issues, fantastic elements, subtle ironies, and comic visions. Like the Biblical parables, Herbert's allegories use mundane life experiences to explain the mysteries of Christianity while Christian logic modifies man's perception of daily experiences.

Chapter three, "The Issue of Sacred Parody," considers the relationship between style and subject matter. The language of love found in The Temple is compared to the styles of Elizabethan love poems, the Psalms, the Song of Solomon, St. Augustine's Confessions, and other devotional works. Despite the fact that religious and profane poets may use the same figures and even the same words, in religious writing, language and rhetorical techniques are transformed by their appearance in sacred contexts.

## Preface

Lord, my first fruits present themselves to thee;  
Yet not mine neither: for from thee they came,  
And must return. Accept of them and me,  
And make us strive, who shall sing best thy name.  
Turn their eyes hither, who shall make a gain:  
Theirs, who shall hurt themselves or me, refrain.

"The Dedication" of The Temple defines two audiences, God and man. George Herbert offers his poems on the Divine altar as a sacrifice of praise to God, and he uses his "utmost art" ("Praise (II)" 9) to persuade readers that they "shall make a gain" by participating in the process of praising God.

Herbert uses rhetorical ornaments for the practical purposes of delightful persuasion and instruction. The efficacy of the figures lies in their power "to move reader's affections, to quite properly affect his judgement; they move him to feel intensely, to will, to act, to understand, to believe, to change his mind" (Tuve Elizabethan 183). Rhetorical devices are not merely decorative but they are essential to the pleasure and power of poetry. Although my principal concern is with the effects of Herbert's rhetorical style, such effects cannot be isolated from the logic of his poems which strive to animate our spiritual awareness. The logical arrangement in Herbert's poems includes the juxtaposition of different forms of rhetoric, used and abused, or the juxtaposition of various traditions which he uses to

draw subtle and complex distinctions between human and Divine love. The intimate relationship between poetry that seeks to instruct and persuade delightfully and the disciplines of logic and rhetoric is not a new or original idea--it was pointed out by Rosemond Tuve over forty years ago (Elizabethan 282). My concern, however, is to trace what happens to human logic, rhetoric, and poetry when it strives to reveal spiritual realities.

It is a pleasure to thank the scholars and friends who helped me discover what I wanted to say and how to say it. Dr. Saad El-Gabalawy guided my research, giving me "a mark to aim at," and I am indebted to him for his generous advice, insightful comments, and patient encouragement. Many thanks to Dr. Ronald Bond, Dr. James Black, and Professor Josephine Evetts-Secker for stimulating my interest in Renaissance literature. I am also grateful for the Peter C. Craigie Memorial Scholarship and for the Province of Alberta Graduate Scholarship awarded by the University of Calgary Graduate Scholarship Committee.

Mary Hallam, Elaine Park, and Barbara Scott read portions of the thesis, and I appreciated their many valuable suggestions. Any idiosyncrasies which remain are mine alone. Finally, I am deeply grateful to my husband, Bob, for his continued support and for his willingness to type the manuscript until all was "done decently, and in order."

To Bob

"My praise is plaine, and where so ere profest,  
Becomes none more then you, who need it least."

(Ben Jonson)



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## A Note on the Editions Used and the Citation Format

All references to George Herbert's works are taken from F. E. Hutchinson's edition of The Works of George Herbert and will be cited in the text of the thesis. Poetry is cited by line number, and The Country Parson is referred to by page number. Punctuation and spelling used in Renaissance texts have been retained. Exceptions to this procedure include: "ȝ" has been altered to the modern "s"; a few contractions have been silently expanded. Finally, all Biblical quotations refer to the Authorized King James Version, first published in 1611.

As for the format of citations, I have followed Joseph Gibaldi and Walter S. Achtert, MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 2nd ed., (NY: Modern Language Association, 1984).

The following abbreviations have been used for journal titles:

CLAJ	College Language Association Journal
EIC	Essays in Criticism
ELH	A Journal of English Literary History
ELN	English Language Notes
ELWIU	Essays in Literature (Western Illinois University)
ESC	English Studies in Canada
ExpJ	Explicator
GHJ	George Herbert Journal
HAB	Humanities Association Bulletin (Canada)
MLQ	Modern Language Quarterly

MP	Modern Philology
PLL	Papers on Language and Literature
Ren&R	Renaissance and Reformation
SEL	Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900
TSL	Texas Studies in Literature and Language

## CHAPTER ONE

Rhetorical Devices in The Temple

According to C. S. Lewis,

Nearly all our older poetry was written and read by men to whom the distinction between poetry and rhetoric in its modern form, would have been meaningless. The "beauties" which they chiefly regarded in every composition were those which we either dislike or simply do not notice. This change of taste makes an invisible wall between us and them.

(English Literature 61)

He reminds us of a close and long-standing relationship between rhetoric and poetry. As we know, early Greek poetry had been an oral art which often served political and religious functions (Kennedy Classical Rhetoric 110). Also, Quintilian brings the two arts together in his Institutio Oratoria by recommending studies in literature as part of the orator's training (1.4.1-7). And in the Renaissance, Sidney anticipates criticism of his discussion of oratory in An Apology for Poetry: "methinks I deserve to be pounded for straying from Poetry to Oratory: but both have such an affinity in this wordish consideration . . ." (139). George Puttenham's rhetorical manual, The Arte of English Posie, is addressed specifically to Renaissance courtiers who aspire to persuade and entertain others with their verbal artistry, whether it be in conversation or in poetry (137-38, 298-300). Rhetorical and poetical theories, according to Puttenham, are not separate from their practical political functions.

Rhetoric also breaks down the barrier between theory and practical applications in the area of religion. St. Augustine, a fourth-century rhetorician who was converted to Christianity, defends the use of rhetoric by Christian orators:

For since by means of the art of rhetoric both truth and falsehood are urged, who would dare to say that truth should stand in the person of its defenders unarmed against lying, so that they who wish to urge falsehoods may know how to make their listeners benevolent, or attentive, or docile in their presentation, while the defenders of the truth are ignorant of that art? (On Christian Doctrine 4.2.3, p.118)

We know that George Herbert valued the work of this Christian thinker highly because he mentions Augustine's works in his will (382). Like Augustine, Herbert was familiar with the practice of rhetoric in the secular world. He served as a Cambridge lecturer in Rhetoric, a Public Orator for the University, a translator of parts of The Advancement of Learning, and as a Member of Parliament. When he took holy orders, he applied his understanding of rhetoric to the practice of preaching in his manual, A Priest to the Temple, or The Country Parson. Speaking to other pastors, he recommends procuring the audience's attention "by dipping, and seasoning all our words and sentences in our hearts, before they come into our mouths, truly affecting, and cordially expressing all that we say; so that the auditors may plainly perceive that every word is hart-deep" (233). He reminds himself and other preachers that "instructions seasoned with pleasantnesse, both enter sooner, and roote deeper" (268).

In "The Church-porch," Herbert observes that religious verse may have the didactic function of sermons: "A verse may finde him, who a sermon flies, / And turn delight into a sacrifice" (5-6). The lines are reminiscent of Sidney's assertion that poetry can both "delight and teach: and delight to move men to take that goodness in hand, which without delight they would fly as from a stranger . . ." (103). Sidney, of course, draws on Cicero's delineation of the three functions of eloquence--to teach, delight, and move (Orator 21.69), and in On Christian Doctrine (4.12.27 ff.), Augustine regards these as the main objectives of preaching.

Furthermore, Sidney suggests the poet can move the affections of others through the energia of his verse, loosely defined as the "forcibleness" (138) or the vividness with which the poet portrays ideas or feelings. Julius Caesar Scaliger's term for energia in his Poetices is efficacia, and he defines it as "the rhetorical power of representing words and things which succeeds in causing even an unpopular message to be heard" (cited by Kennedy Rhetorical Norms 12). Many Renaissance rhetoricians recommend such devices as exclamatio, admiratio, interrogatio, prosopopoeia, dialogismus, ironia, sarcasmus, apostrophes, emphatic repetitions, invocations, and proverbs, to provide proof of the speaker's own deep feelings and beliefs. In turn, the audience's comprehension of the speaker's ethos, of his sincere character, will move them to pathos, to imitate those feelings and embrace the author's point of view. That Herbert was well aware of the importance of the speaker's ethos is evident from his remarks in The Country Parson. The ideal parson "is not witty, or learned, or

eloquent, but Holy. A Character, that Hermogenes never dream'd of, and therefore could give no precepts thereof" (233). Hermogenes, as Hutchinson points out, was "a rhetorician of Tarsus in the reign of Marcus Aurelius. He describes and gives 'precepts' for seven 'characters' of good oratory, such as perspicuity, elegance . . . ." (557n). Herbert expands the classical list of characters for orators to suit the Christian context.

As sources of energia, apostrophes, exclamations, questions, and invocations create a sense of dramatic immediacy in the poems of The Temple. In reference to apostrophes, Puttenham maintains that

when we have runne a long race in our tale spoken to the hearers, we do sodainly flye out & either speak or exclaime at some other person or thing, and therefore the Greeks call such figure (as we do) the turnaway or turnetale & breedeth by such exchange a certaine recreation to the hearers minds. . . . (236-37)

By suddenly suspending one form of discourse to address directly someone or something, present or absent, the speaker creates a sense of variety and spontaneity which provides delight or "a certaine recreation to the hearers minds." Variation is a necessity in preaching because, as Thomas Wilson observes, "wee cannot without refreshyng, long abide to heare any one thyng" (27). George Herbert recognizes that the ideal preacher "procures attention by all possible art," and he advocates portraying sincerity and holiness because it is natural for "men to think, that where is much earnestness, there is somewhat worth hearing . . . ." (The Country Parson 232). The preacher

may convey such earnestness and holiness

by turning often, and making many Apostrophes to God, as, Oh Lord blesse my people, and teach them this point; or, Oh my Master, on whose errand I come, let me hold my peace, and doe thou speak thy selfe; for thou art Love, and when thou teachest, all are Scholers. Some such irradiations scatteringly in the Sermon, carry great holiness in them. The Prophets are admirable in this. So Isa. 64 Oh that thou would'st rent the Heavens, that thou would'st come down.

(Ibid. 233-34)

Apostrophes are not only effective in sermons; Herbert uses them in his poetry to convey the immediacy of the present and to reinforce points without seeming redundant. Nearly three-fifths of the poems in The Temple involve some form of direct address: the majority speak to God in His various manifestations, and considerably fewer turn discourse towards aspects of the speaker's self or towards things and personified abstractions. In many of these poems, Herbert focuses on one listener exclusively, but sometimes he shifts his speech from one audience to another.

"Mortification," as a meditation on the mutability of man in general, seems much like a public sermon. The speaker begins, "How soon doth man decay!" (1), and proceeds to outline logically how familiar things, which are associated with different stages of human life, foreshadow death. The poem concludes with an apostrophe as the speaker turns to God: "Yet Lord, instruct us so to die, / That all these dyings may be life in death" (35-36). This prayer reaffirms that



signs of memento mori should be heeded, and that man should prepare for death. The lines also suggest that an awareness of death in life prepares man for life after death. Actual death is merely one more peaceful transition which follows the transitions from infancy to boyhood, to youth, to manhood, and to old age. The imagery within the body of the poem associates objects related to death with familiar things and pleasant feelings: the infant's swaddling clothes suggest warmth as well as evoking the image of a shroud; the boy's bed implies restfulness and rising to a new day as well as simulating man in his grave; the youth's music represents mirth and friendship as well as foreshadowing the knell of the death bell "Which shall befriend him at the hour of death" (18); the man's home provides security as well as alluding to the enclosure of a coffin; and the aged man's chair or litter makes travel easy as well as anticipating the funeral bier. The symbols of death become familiar through the experiences of life, and because these experiences are pleasant, death is not something to be feared. According to Herbert, the man who prepares for death by understanding it as a transition, is prepared to accept it peacefully, just as Herbert's reader can accept the witty turn in the closing apostrophe because he has been prepared for it. Both the art of poetry and the art of dying well depend on preparations for changes.

In considering mutability, Herbert's personae do not always turn from meditations to direct addresses to God. "Church-monuments" opens as a meditation on tombs, the body's decay, and man's attempt to leave a record of his existence in stone. But after wondering what signs will point out the marble and jet when they "fall down flat / To kisse

those heaps, which now they have in trust" (15-16), the speaker addresses his own body:

Deare fleshe, while I do pray, learn here thy stemme  
And true descent; that when thou shalt grow fat,

And wanton in thy cravings, thou mayst know,  
That flesh is but the glasse, which holds the dust  
That measures all our time; which also shall  
Be crumbled into dust. Mark here below  
How tame these ashes are, how free from lust,

That thou mayst fit thy self against thy fall. (17-24)

He speaks to his flesh tenderly, calling it "Deare flesh," as he instructs it about its origins in the dust, its function of measuring man's time on earth, and its return to dust. After expounding the life-cycle of the body, the speaker concludes with practical advice to his own flesh. He admonishes his flesh to free itself from lust, in order to avoid sin and prepare for death. Here, the poetic persona meets one mark of the ideal pastor whom Herbert epitomizes in The Country Parson.<sup>1</sup> In the chapter entitled "The Parson Catechizing," he asserts that the preacher takes delight in the humbleness of catechizing, and views it as an

exercise upon himself, and by way of preaching to himself,  
for the advancing of his own mortification; for in preaching  
to others, he forgets not himself, but is first a Sermon to  
himself, and then to others. (255)

Herbert's poetic narrator persuasively directs the homiletic intent of

"Church-monuments" towards his own flesh first, and consequently he speaks to the reader indirectly with a sense of integrity.

In their poetic considerations of mortality, Herbert's personae not only turn and speak to God or aspects of themselves, but in "Life" the narrator redirects his words from the reader to himself, then back to the reader, and finally, to a posy of flowers. The speaker of "Life" embarks on a description of how he passed the time one day by making a bouquet, but he interrupts his description to declare briefly to himself that he will continue to use his time to smell life's flowers: "Here will I smell my remnant out, and tie / My life within this band" (2-3). Reverting to his tale, he describes how the flowers withered in his hand, how his heart saddened, and how his mind interpreted these events as a sign of his own "fatal day" (11). But the elegiac note admits feelings of hope as the speaker turns to say his last words to the flowers:

Farewell deare flowers, sweetly your time ye spent,

Fit, while ye liv'd, for smell or ornament,

And after death for cures.

I follow straight without complaints or grief,

Since if my sent be good, I care not if

It be as short as yours. (13-18)

Just as the speaker of "Mortification" spoke tenderly to his own flesh, calling it "Deare flesh," so the narrator of "Life" affectionately bids the "deare flowers" farewell. His response is more than sympathetic, it is empathetic. Realizing that the flowers have a purpose both in life (providing perfume and beauty) and in death (serving as herbal

remedies), the speaker accepts his own mutability without complaint or grief, as did the flowers. In saying farewell to the posy, the speaker practises bidding adieu to the world, but because he perceives a purpose in both partings, the sweetness of acceptance overcomes feelings of sorrow.

In "Vertue," the narrator warns a "sweet day," a "sweet rose," and a "sweet spring," of their mutable states, but he remains more detached from these things than the speaker in "Life" who identifies himself with a posy of flowers:

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,  
The bridall of the earth and skie:  
The dew shall weep thy fall to night;  
For thou must die.

Sweet rose, whose hue angrie and brave  
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye:  
Thy root is ever in its grave,  
And thou must die.

Sweet spring, full of sweet dayes and roses,  
A box where sweets compacted lie;  
My musick shows ye have your closes,  
And all must die. (1-12)

The persona of "Vertue" seems to use "sweet" in these apostrophes more as a descriptive epithet than as a term of endearment. The sweetness of the day and spring provides a general impression of pleasantness,

while the sweetness of the rose suggests qualities which delight the senses of sight and smell. Moreover, in the third stanza, the persona's use of sinathrismus, the "collection of all the former materiall points, to binde them as it were in a bundle and lay them forth to enforce the cause and renew the hearers memory" (Puttenham 237), gives these apostrophes the tone of a formal oration rather than of spontaneous speech. The "sweet spring, full of sweet dayes and roses," effectively binds together and recapitulates the examples of previous stanzas, and the incremental refrain, "For thou must die," "And thou must die," builds to the apparent climax of the speaker's theme, "And all must die." In addition, the mention of musical "closes" or cadences in the third stanza reinforces a sense of drawing to a conclusion.

Finally, the persona turns from talking to things to addressing the reader directly, presenting his true conclusion:

Onely a sweet and vertuous soul,  
 Like season'd timber, never gives;  
 But though the whole world turn to coal,

Then chiefly lives. (13-16)

The virtuous soul is sweet. Not only is it pleasing to God, but it is very precious to Him. Unlike the sweet day, sweet rose, and sweet spring, the sweet soul is not subject to death or to destruction in the final judgement. Subtly, the contrast encourages the reader to examine his soul and to seek virtue. "Vertue," like "Mortification," "Church-monuments," and "Life," urges the reader to observe the decay of things in this world. Nevertheless, life on earth is not held in

contempt, but is used, in the Augustinian sense,<sup>2</sup> to point towards an understanding of spiritual life and to reveal God's glory.

The different tones of apostrophes in these poems which contemplate mutability, mortification, and mortality--the private colloquies with the self or a hand-picked posy in "Church-monuments" and "Life," the public prayer in "Mortification," and the formal oration in "Vertue"--allow Herbert to promote the ars moriendi by repetition without boring his readers. Such variety in art, according to Erasmus, "has such force," and its excellence is undeniable because

Nature herself especially rejoices in variety; in such a great throng of things she has left nothing anywhere not painted with some wonderful artifice of variety. And just as the eye is held more by a varying scene in the same way the mind always eagerly examines whatever it sees as new. And if all things continually present themselves to the mind without variation, it will at once turn away in disgust. (16)

Herbert varies the audiences of apostrophes, and his speakers' distinctive tones range from informal and intimate to formal and somewhat distant. It is almost as if Herbert set himself the exercise of writing an example of each kind of apostrophe on the theme of mutability and mortification. The poet, thus, attempts to reach each member of his multifarious audience, and he drives home his argument forcefully with repetition--man's flesh is subject to time and it will decay, but the soul can use its time on earth to prepare for eternal life. Herbert's belief never wavers on this point, and he strives in various ways to instil his assurance in his readers.

My focus on apostrophe thus far is not meant to imply that Herbert uses this figure in isolation. In her study of rhetoric in Shakespeare's works, Sister Miriam Joseph illustrates that apostrophe "is usually combined with figures, such as exclamation, interrogation, and personification" (247). The rhetorical manuals of Herbert's day promote exclamations and interrogations as effective tools of energia. Henry Peacham, for example, recommends interrogatio, the rhetorical question, to "make the Oration more sharpe and vehemente, and much better set forward our purpose" (Sig. L3<sup>r</sup>). After providing a long catalogue of the diverse affections that interrogatio stirs up, he adds, "for doubtless it is of great force" (Sig. L3<sup>v</sup>). Likewise, John Hoskyns asserts that interrogatio "serues more fitlie then a bare affirmacõn, which were but too gentle & harmeles a speech" (146). While interrogatio evokes the reader's feelings, exclamatio or ecphonesis is advocated for its ability to reveal the speaker's intense feelings. Puttenham calls this figure "the outcrie because it vtters our minde by all such words as do shew any extreme passion, whether it be by way of exclamation or crying out" (212). According to Hoskyns, this figure comes fitly in "any great heate iustly inflamed" (146), but he warns its use "is not lawfull, but in extremity of mocõn" (147).

"The Altar," the first poem in "The Church," concludes with an exclamation which takes the form of an invocation: "O let thy blessed SACRIFICE be mine, / And sanctifie this ALTAR to be thine" (15-16). Because the poet's plea for God to provide him with inspiration begins with the exclamation, "O," Herbert creates a sense of spontaneity, which in turn contributes to the sincerity of tone. The apparent

artlessness conveyed by the exclamation conceals the formal invocation which suggests the presence of the literary tradition and human artifice. As Marion Trousedale, in Shakespeare and the Rhetoricians, maintains, "the pleasures of art are concomitant with the awareness of its art, and the pretence of artlessness itself is only a richer ornament for its apparent disguise" (87). But the struggle to praise God effectively concerns more than an aesthetic tension between spontaneity and artifice. Rosalie Colie observes: "In Herbert's symbolic system, . . . 'writing' became a sign of grace to the poet; his poems about writing poems avoid the trap of mere description, mere tautology, because the poems are altogether a metaphorical record of his Christian life" (Paradoxia Epidemica 198). In many poems, the struggle to write is a metaphor for broader spiritual conflicts engendered by feelings of inadequacy.

In "The Thanksgiving," Herbert piles up exclamations and questions to create a sense of erupting frustration:

OH King of grief! (a title strange, yet true,  
     To thee of all kings onely due)  
 Oh King of wounds! how shall I grieve for thee,  
     Who in all grief preventest me?  
 Shall I weep bloud? why, thou hast wept such store  
     That all thy body was one doore.  
 Shall I be scourged, flouted, boxed, sold? . . . .  
 Shall thy strokes be my stroking? thorns, my flower?  
     Thy rod, my posie? crosse, my bower?



But how then shall I imitate thee, and

Copie thy fair, though bloudie hand? (1-7, 13-16)

The poet-figure is overcome by his feelings of inadequacy because the imitation of Christ is an overwhelming task. In the lines following those cited above, the speaker attempts to avoid considering Christ's Passion, and focuses instead on the ways he can serve God, but at the very last moment, he realizes that he cannot possibly repay Christ's sacrifice: "Then for thy passion--I will do for that-- / Alas, my God, I know not what" (49-50). Thus, the poem concludes with the speaker paralysed completely by the recognition of his own inadequacy. Frances Malpezzi equates "the persona's inability to write about the passion" with "his shame, his recognition of guilt, [and] his need to be recreated" (189-90). The speaker's spiritual state needs improvement, but we should note that his expression of his inadequacy is also a statement of profound admiration for Christ and the suffering He endured.

In "Good Friday," the poet heaps questions upon his initial admiratio or exclamation of wonder:

O My chief good,

How shall I measure out thy bloud?

How shall I count what thee befell,

And each grief tell?

Shall I thy woes

Number according to thy foes?

Or, since one starre show'd thy first breath,  
 Shall all thy death?

Or shall each leaf,  
 Which falls in Autumne, score a grief?  
 Or can not leaves, but fruit, be signe  
 Of the true vine? (1-12)

As in "The Thanksgiving," the poet recognizes that serving as a "Secretarie of [God's] praise" ("Providence" 117) is an awesome task, and he laments the inadequacy of language. Elizabeth Cook remarks that the "infinite implications" of the Passion "place it behind the scope of a language that refers, quantifies and enumerates. The conversion of Christ's infinitely redemptive blood into poetic quantities ('measure') seems to be an inevitably trivialising process" (52). When numbers alone fail him, the poet adds a metaphoric dimension to his attempt to describe Christ's Passion. The poet exhausts his metaphoric possibilities, and he concludes his copious list with a traditional metaphor of the Eucharist--Christ as the fruit and vine.<sup>3</sup> A similar exasperation with the inadequacy of language and with the task of imitating Christ is expressed in "Miserie" when the persona asks, "How shall infection / Presume on thy perfection?" (35-36). Here, the rhetorical question does not immediately precede or follow other questions, but even so, Herbert animates the contrast between human presumptions and the Divine truth. If we compare Herbert's question to Sidney's statement of the same idea--"our erected wit maketh us know what perfection is, and yet our infected will keepeth us from reaching

unto it" (An Apology 101)--we can see how effective interrogatio is for declaring one's point vehemently.

Herbert also employs two closely related literary figures, prosopopoeia, or personification, and sermocinatio, or dialogismus, for their dramatic efficacy. Prosopopoeia--the attributing of imaginary speeches or actions to abstractions, animals, or inanimate objects--is a powerful tool of fictional illustration, which, according to Hoskyns, allows one "to make dead men speake as if your Ancestors were nowe aliue" (163). Hoskyns's use of "now" suggests that this figure creates a sense of dramatic immediacy. Likewise, Sidney's observation of the Psalmist's "notable prosopopeias, when he maketh you, as it were, see God coming in his majesty, his telling of the beasts' joyfulness, and hills leaping . . ." (An Apology 99), indicates that the figure vividly brings a poet's expression to life. My exploration of prosopopoeia and dialogismus will focus first and foremost on the effects of Herbert's attempt to obliterate historic distances by placing words in the mouth of God or Christ.

In "The Sacrifice," "Redemption," and "The Bag," Herbert subtly recreates the Passion in "the heart of the present through the introduction of spoken words dramatically uttered as from the Cross itself. Christ the eternal seems to be still appealing in these living words to all 'who pass by'" (El-Gabalawy "George Herbert's Affinities" 43), or in the words of Tuve, "the oratio of Christ is abstracted from the world of historical events" (A Reading 85).<sup>4</sup> In these three poems, the words attributed to Christ differ, and consequently, the tone varies from an expression of sorrow and reproach in "The

"Sacrifice" to an abrupt statement of fact in "Redemption," and to a friendly invitation in "The Bag." Furthermore, Herbert's Christ uses simple words and patterns of natural speech to convey complex and weighty matters of Christian doctrine.

The sorrows and complaints of Christ voiced in all but two stanzas of "The Sacrifice," for example, are punctuated by the agonized cry, "Was ever grief like mine?" Faced with the long list of grievances delivered by the Saviour from the Cross, the reader can only conclude that the answer to this question is "Never was grief like mine." Although William Empson and Rosemond Tuve disagree fundamentally about the proper approach to interpreting "The Sacrifice," their discussions of the poem are sometimes startlingly similar. Empson recognizes the ambiguity of "Onely let others say, when I am dead, / Never was grief like mine" (251-52). He argues that Christ

may wish that his own grief may never be exceeded among the humanity he pities, 'After the death of Christ may there never be a grief like Christ's'; he may, incidentally, wish that they may say this, that he may be sure of recognition, and of a church that will be a sounding-board to his agony; or he may mean mine as a quotation from the others, 'Only let there be a retribution, only let my torturers say never was grief like theirs, in the day when my agony shall be exceeded.' (228-29)

A reader's response to such a merciful and revengeful Deity would most likely be ambivalent, if not paradoxical.

Tuve arrives at a similar conclusion by referring to the juxtaposition of two Christian traditions: the first is "the extra-scriptural Monologue or Complaint of Christ" (A Reading 32)<sup>5</sup> in which Christ weeps for His people, expresses sorrow and love, and notes their ingratitude; the second is the Popule meus, which is derived from the Improperia or the Reproaches of Good Friday and is used in Holy Week liturgy. In the latter tradition, sharper ironies and antitheses foster terror in the listener rather than primarily arousing compassion and gratitude as the extra-scriptural monologue does (A Reading 37). Tuve illustrates many instances where "The Sacrifice" parallels medieval homiletical, liturgical, devotional, and poetical works; the dramatic method, which feigns the voice of divine authority "to kindle the imagination of the audience" (El-Gabalawy "The Burden of Proof" 111) and move their emotions, can also be found in sixteenth-century sermons like Hugh Latimer's. In one of his homilies, for example, Christ complains,

I came down into this world and so took on me bitter passion for man's sake, by the merits whereof I intended to make unity and peace in mankind, to make man brother unto me, and so to expel the dominion of Satan, the devil. . . . (cited by El-Gabalawy Ibid. 111)

Latimer emphasizes Christ's immense mercy to evoke his audience's pity and love. As a result, the omnipotent power of the Christ who plans to "expel the dominion of Satan" is overshadowed.

Louis Martz notes a similar trend in many medieval treatises and lyrics, maintaining that although "God the Punisher is not absent from

popular medieval treatises and poems on the Passion," this aspect of God is "underplayed: overwhelmed by pity and love for manhood" (96). But he suggests that in "The Sacrifice," Herbert employs the "meditative procedure of pondering the events of Passion week" (93) to explicitly develop, elaborate, and explore man's paradoxical response to the Incarnation and Crucifixion (93-96). Martz, then, agrees with Tuve that "The Sacrifice" is a traditional poem, but he stresses the meditative tradition more than the medieval liturgical tradition to emphasize how Herbert transforms it.

In contrast to the 252 lines amplifying Christ's sorrows and complaints in "The Sacrifice," the Crucified speaks only one line to the narrator at the close of "Redemption": "Your suit is granted, said, & died" (14). Christ's words are few and simple, His vocabulary drawn from daily life in a legalistic world, and His diction is that of the English Bible, or to borrow Coleridge's comment on Herbert's diction, it is "pure, manly, and unaffected" (cited by Patrides George Herbert 168). The impression of naturalness creates the illusion that this actually is the voice of Christ. Although His words are few, they are able to elicit surprise and wonder because they precede and anticipate the narrator's request for a new lease or Covenant.

Imagined words of the Crucified also form the conclusion of "The Bag." After the spear has pierced His side in the "strange storie" (8), Christ Himself speaks, elucidating the link between the Incarnation and the Crucifixion:

If ye have any thing to send or write,  
I have no bag, but here is room:

Unto my Fathers hands and sight,

Beleeve me, it shall safely come. (31-34)

The third stanza of the poem has already described how Christ came to earth without His heavenly garb and weapons, and so, of course, He brings "no bag" because He has no immediate use for luggage. But on earth, faced with man's longing to communicate with God, Christ offers to use Himself, specifically the wound in His side, as the bag, the carrier of man's messages to God. The homely imagery clearly portrays Christ as the mediator between God and man, and simultaneously, it alludes to "the definition of man as a 'bag of worms,' a definition crucial to Luther's description of the Incarnation as the assumption by divine majesty of 'every aspect of this bag of worms, our human nature'" (Bond 15).<sup>6</sup> In "The Bag," therefore, Herbert follows his own advice to preachers as he accommodates his reader by the naming of a bag, and he makes use of it "in teaching, because people by what they understand, are best led to what they understand not" (The Country Parson 228).

The accommodating language put into the mouth of the Divine not only explains Christ's role as mediator clearly, but the play on Luther's words theologically links the Incarnation to decay and mortification of the flesh. Even though Christ's simple words embody the complexities of theology, their effect is not primarily to teach. Instead, they are intended to ease the despair of a narrator, who, throughout the preceding poem entitled "Longing," has been yearning for some sign of God. In "The Bag," the Crucified's words reassure the narrator and readers who fear their words and messages do not reach

the Lord; whereas in "Redemption," the feigned words engender wonder and surprise in an apparently self-sufficient man-of-the-world, and in "The Sacrifice," they evoke conflicting emotions of sympathy and fear in those who would pass by and remain indifferent to the Crucifixion. Christ's discourse relies on wit, good news, information, or a combination of these, and in "The Church-porch," Herbert advises those who wish to attend to their audiences to "Get good stock of these, then draw the card / That suits him best, of whom thy speech is heard" (293-94). Francis Bacon argues that "the proofs and persuasions of Rhetoric ought to differ according to the auditors . . . which application, in perfection of idea, ought to extend so far, that if a man should speak of the same thing to several persons, he should speak to them all respectively and several ways" (3.411). I think he would have approved of the ways in which Herbert's crucified Christ adapts his words to different auditors. It is a mark of Herbert's Christian and rhetorical sophistication that he explores various meanings of the Crucifixion and that these meanings develop from imagining the Crucified speaking to individuals with distinct concerns or to all of mankind.

By resorting to dialogismus or sermocinatio, the poet extends the form of prosopopoeia so that a speaker answers the remarks or questions of a pretended interlocutor. Peacham explains:

When we fayne a person and make him speake much or little, according to comelinesse, very like to that before, whe [sic] the person which we fayne, speaketh al himselfe, then it is a Prosopoeia, but when we answere now and then to the questyon, which he putteth unto us, it is called Sermocinatio, in this



figure wysedome and warinesse must be vsed that the speech may be agreeable, for the person that is fayned, and that it be no otherwise, then it is lykely the same person woulde use: or otherwyse, our speech shal seeme foolish and absurde. . . . (Sig. 03<sup>V</sup>)

Like other Renaissance rhetoricians, such as Puttenham (235) and Hoskyns (163), Peacham reiterates Aristotle's warning that counterfeit speech should seem natural. In his Rhetoric, Aristotle cautions that even in poetry, it is not quite appropriate that fine language should be used by a slave or a very young man. . . . the style, to be appropriate, must sometimes be toned down, though at other times heightened. We can now see that a writer must disguise his art and give the impression of speaking naturally and not artificially. Naturalness is persuasive, artificiality is the contrary; for our hearers are prejudiced and think we have some design against them. . . . (3.1.1404<sup>b</sup>)

According to Aristotelian decorum, the style must suit the man. But decorum is not only a matter of who is speaking and how, but of subject matter. Cicero, in his Orator, suggests the truly eloquent man adapts his speech to suit the subject, discussing "trivial matters in a plain style, matters of moderate significance in the tempered style, and weighty affairs in the grand manner" (29.101). Christ, in Herbert's "The Sacrifice," "Redemption," and "The Bag," breaks all the classical rules: the omniscient Deity uses simple diction, dominated by monosyllabic words and mundane images to speak of the most "weighty

affairs." Herbert, of course, follows the example set by the Divine Word.

Nevertheless, before examining the poetic dialogues where a persona responds to the Divine voice, it would be prudent to consider how a Christian rhetorician would defend the Scripture's breach of classical decorum. Augustine's writings reveal his struggle to accept the Bible's simple style. He endeavours to understand the value of Biblical style, defends it, and promotes it as a model for Christian orators. In his Confessions, for example, Augustine examines one of his early reactions to the simplicity of Scriptures:

they seemed to me far unworthy to be compared to the stateliness of the Ciceronian eloquence. For my swelling pride soared wit above the temper of their style, nor was my sharp wit able to pierce into their sense. And yet such are thy Scriptures as grew up together with thy little ones. But I much disdained to be held a little one: and big swollen with pride, I took myself to be some great man. (3.5, v.1, pp.113, 115)

But the Confessions also reveal that Augustine learned to value the rhetoric of the Word for its ability to communicate profound truths so that they are easily understood and appreciated:

by how much the readier at hand it was for all to read upon, preserving yet the majesty of the secret under the profoundness of the meaning, offering itself unto all in words most open, and in a style of speaking most humble, and exercising the attention of such as are not light of heart;

that it might by that means receive all into its common bosom, and through narrow passages, waft over some few towards thee. . . . (6.5, v.1, p.285)

In On Christian Doctrine, especially in Book Four, Augustine not only defends the style of the Scriptures, but he reformulates classical notions of decorum for Christian orators, emphasizing accessibility.<sup>7</sup>

As Erich Auerbach has illustrated, the sermo humilis, the humble expression of sublime matters, gained semantic force for Augustine and other medieval writers because "humilis became the most important adjective characterizing the Incarnation" (40). When "the Word was made flesh" (John 1.14), God voluntarily humbled himself. The humility of the Incarnation was further magnified by the humility of Christ's life on earth

in the lowest social class, among the materially and culturally poor, and by the whole character of . . . [His] acts and teachings. It was crowned by the cruelty and humiliation of the Passion. . . . The humility of the Incarnation derives its full force from the contrast with Christ's divine nature: man and God, lowly and sublime, humilis et sublimus; both the height and the depth are immeasurable and inconceivable. . . . (Auerbach 41)

What is "immeasurable and inconceivable" about the Incarnation has less to do with God's chosen style of communication than with the depth of love which it reveals.

Although we cannot measure the depth of God's love exactly, in most of Herbert's dialogues, even a quick reading of the poems reveals

He speaks succinctly. In "Love unknown," the Divine voice utters thirteen lines as opposed to the narrator's fifty-seven lines; in "Artillerie," the Deity speaks three lines and the human, twenty-nine; in "The Pilgrimage," the Omniscient makes a one-sentence declaration whereas the protagonist describes his journey for thirty-five lines; in "The Collar," God responds with one word to the narrator's lengthy and blasphemous tirade; and in "Love (III)," the Heavenly Host entreats for half the number of lines that the speaker uses to describe the situation and retreat from God. Although the Divine Being condescends to speak to the narrators to reprimand, instruct, and save them, His words are brief in contrast to the elaborations that Herbert's personae use against Him.

In "Love unknown," "The Collar," and "Love (III)," the Supreme Being is anthropomorphized, speaking as friend, father and master, and gracious host. Despite the humanizing of Divine vocations, which helps man comprehend the spiritual realities of Divine understanding, discipline, and love, the restraint evident in God's responses transcends ordinary human capacities. The Friend in "Love unknown" listens carefully enough to comment on the narrator's story of unrequited love, even after being told that the narrator presumes His "love / Will more complie then help" (2-3). Similarly, the wise, patient, fatherly master of "The Collar" allows the speaker to explore the idea of rejecting Him and His love. After the speaker has exhausted his complaints, as evident in the repeated threat to go "abroad" (2, 28), he is able to hear the "still small voice" (I Kings 19.12) and understand the unceasing love behind the Caller's, God's,

gentle reproach:

But as I rav'd and grew more fierce and wilde,

At every word,

Me thoughts I heard one calling, Child!

And I reply'd, My Lord. (33-36)

One must admire the love and the restraint of the omnipotent Deity who listens to the speaker profanely use the imagery of the Passion ("Have I no harvest but a thorn" 7) and the Eucharist ("Sure there was wine / Before my sighs did drie it: there was corn / Before my tears did drown it" 10-12). The speaker effectively reduces symbols of God's love to profane complaints and pleasures; he persistently confuses service with servitude, and yet there are no thundering responses or bolts of lightning hurled in Zeus-like revenge.

Divine patience appears again in "Love (III)." As the human guest's actions query the propriety of being a guest at the Lord's table, "The question of merit is not adjudicated; it is simply set aside. . . . 'You shall be he' does not at all touch on the matter of whether or not he should be" a worthy guest (Fish The Living Temple 133). While in human terms this may appear to be a rhetorical evasion, Love's refusal to assume the role of a logical judge, which the speaker expects from Him, implies that the speaker's assumptions about Divine love and logic are wrong. Christ, as personified Love, seems less concerned with being evasive than with shocking the narrator into the realization that Divine love, as manifest in the Creation ("Who made the eyes but I?" 12) and in the Crucifixion ("And know you not, sayes Love, who bore the blame?" 15), transcends questions of merit. Mary

Ellen Rickey notes that "Few literary personages besides Don Camillo have been more comprehensively instructed by the deity than protagonist of The Temple . . ." (128); but, as Anthony Mortimer reminds us, "Herbert's God goes to no great lengths to explain Himself. Brief, . . . and frequently reproachful, His interventions have none of the patient and painstaking detail one would normally associate with comprehensive instruction" (31). Agreed, Rickey's use of "comprehensive" requires qualification, but Mortimer's use of "patient" also does. I do not know how detail can be patient, but I do not think that the lack of a detailed response indicates God's impatience in the Herbert poems examined here. The ability to hold one's tongue and one's power in check demonstrates patience which is transcendent and divine. Furthermore, providing detailed information is only one method of teaching; provoking or shocking the mind into attention so that it can make its own discovery is another.

Herbert's Divine interlocutor does not always speak from an anthropomorphized role. In "The Pilgrimage," His voice is not attached to anyone or anything as He warns, "None goes that way / And lives" (33-34). In "Artillerie," after the speaker has brushed away a star which shot into his lap, the Deity speaks from a star: "Do as thou usest, disobey, / Expell good motions from thy breast, / Which have the face of fire, but end in rest" (6-8). The brief response combines a reprimand with a warning against shallow reactions to situations. These Divine voices recall Biblical passages in which "God speaks through unexpected manifestations" such as the voice in the Garden of Eden or the voice in the Burning Bush (Meilaender 38). Like the

seemingly evasive response of Love in "Love (III)," the unusual actio or delivery of the Divine messages in "The Pilgrimage" and "Artillerie" is intended to shock the narrator into attending to spiritual matters or into following God's plans for him. Herbert's God avoids the wordy explanations of philosophy which, according to Sidney, "doth neither strike, pierce, nor possess the sight of the soul . . ." (An Apology 107). His language reminds us that "the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit . . . and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4.12). Divine rhetoric quickly gets to the heart of the matter--God's concern for the state and welfare of the human heart and soul--and it strikes Herbert's personae and readers with great force because the weight of Divine love is behind each quick thrust of it.

In contrast, the elaborate descriptions, explanations, and clarifications of Herbert's personae seem to be an attempt to bombard heaven continually with endless complaints and petitions. In "Artillerie," the speaker admits as much:

But I have also starres and shooters too,  
Born where thy servants both artilleries use.  
My tears and prayers night and day do wooe,  
And work up to thee; yet thou dost refuse. (17-20)

The speaker argues he has an army of tears and prayers to shoot up to God in protest. As Richard Todd notices,

The opaque sign of the star is "explained" and then immediately turned around on God by means of the device of Herbert's

reproaching God for ignoring his own communication. Herbert challenges God through his very revelation: "Thy promise now hath ev'n set thee thy laws." (185)

The persona scores a rhetorical victory: he catches God's reproach and with a prayer, reverses its direction,<sup>8</sup> reminding us of one description of prayer as the "Engine against th' Almighty" ("Prayer I" 5). Nevertheless, the witty rhetorical reversal of the persona's reproach backfires and we see that "Wit's an unruly engine, wildly striking / . . . the engineer" ("The Church-porch" 241-42). Although the persona of "Artillerie" scores verbal points for his wit, the way in which he perverts God's promises or words recalls the phrase with which Satan prefaces his temptation of Christ in the wilderness: "for it is written" (Matt. 4.6). Thus, the momentary rhetorical victory turns on the persona who is running the warlike machine of wit and reveals his state of moral depravity. As a poet and preacher, Herbert is opposed not to wit and rhetoric, but to their abuse. While God's rhetoric has the weight of love and concern behind it, the persona of "Artillerie" cannot find enough weight in his own matter, so he attempts to turn the weight of God's law against God. Although such verbal pyrotechnics might impress men, they are directed at an omniscient God who can see beyond the ornamental "flash of the sword" (Quintilian 8.3.5).<sup>9</sup> God knows that the speaker has no matter of his own, and that his rhetorical sword-waving or demonstration of apparent verbal strength will soon defeat itself.

Likewise, the reader knows that human powers cannot possibly defeat the superhuman power of God. Nevertheless, the sheer quantity



of words and the flashy verbal displays adopted by Herbert's human personae create the illusion of equal forces, and so the poems dramatizing verbal combat with God hold our attention. These dramatic illusions are, however, short-lived. Our admiration for these speakers who dare to debate with God is controlled by our moral reaction to the obtuse, obsessive self-interest of the loquacious narrator of "Love unknown," to the blasphemy and distortions of the speaker in "The Collar," to the humble speech disguising the narrator's pride in "Love (III)," and to the twisting of God's law in order to hurl accusations against Him in "Artillerie." These poems, therefore, recall the words of the Psalmist: "So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves . . ." (64.8).

Although many of the dialogues with God are one-sided, in "Dialogue" the exchanges of words are close to equivalent in terms of quantity. Here, God's intervention has the detail one normally associates with comprehensive instruction. The poem takes the form of a debate, beginning with the soul's expression of its inadequacy. God explains that the speaker does not have the right to assess his own value, but that God allows only Christ "who for man was sold" (14) to see the transferred accounts. Despite God's explanation for withholding an assessment of value from the speaker, the latter still wants assurance of his merit before he will accept the transaction:

As the reason then is thine;  
 So the way is none of mine:  
 I disclaim the whole designe:  
 Sinne disclaims and I resigne. (21-24)

Since God will not reveal His reasons for including the speaker in His design, the speaker disclaims or rejects God's plans for him. As Stein notes, he instantly revises "his speech to attribute the disclaiming to sin" (23). But, as Sharon Seelig suggests, the persona speaks for sin, and this reveals his sinful self still dominates (154). Seelig's point is reinforced by the ambiguity of "resign," meaning that the speaker abandons further argument with God, that he resigns or surrenders to sin, and that he relinquishes any claim to salvation.

Christ, then, tries a more rhetorical strategy. He repeats the speaker's last word to show He has been listening, remarking that all He wants is for His creature to

Follow my resigning:

That as I did freely part

With my glorie and desert,

Left all joyes to feel all smart-- -- (28-31)

Christ's deliberate misprision--"he interprets the speaker's belligerent 'I resigne' to mean 'I surrender, yield my self up to you'" (Benet 154)--is similar in structure to the rhetorical distortions of the human personae in "The Collar" and "Artillerie." The human distortions, however, debase symbols of the Passion and Eucharist, notions of service, or God's law, whereas the Divine subversion of language infuses new meaning into "resigne," to encourage the speaker. In other words, the human distortions lash out against God in revenge or anger while Divine distortions of language reach out and discipline man to draw him closer to God. Christ implies that the speaker has understood Him in part and that resigning or surrendering is

necessary. Therefore, He urges the speaker to take one more step and follow His own example of freely submitting or surrendering without repining. As Christ speaks of leaving all His glory, desert, and joy "to feel all smart," the speaker interrupts, "Ah! no more: thou break'st my heart" (31). With this line the speaker understands that "there are two vast, spacious things, . . . Sinne and Love" ("The Agonie" 4, 6). Throughout "Dialogue," the speaker poses as one "Who would know Sinne" ("The Agonie" 7), but Christ's speech brings him face to face with the results of sin: Christ's pain in separating Himself from His Heavenly Father, and His suffering on the Cross. With this picture before him, the speaker, for the first time in the poem, perceives that Christ's love is as vast as his own sin.

It is important that the speaker's understanding comes from his heart, not his ear or mind. Christ's rhetoric speaks to the persona's heart. In Puttenham's organization of the devices, there are no figures which specifically appeal to the heart. Puttenham divides the figures of ornament into auricular figures "working by their diuers soundes and audible tunes alteration to the eare onely" (161), sensible figures that "alter and affect the minde by alteration of sence" (178), and the sententious or rhetorical figures "which may execute both offices" (196). Christ's appeal is not made just to the ears and mind, but to the speaker's heart and feelings, and from this, spiritual understanding ensues. Augustine's distinction between hearing and understanding clarifies the action occurring in Herbert's "Dialogue":

if you have not only heard but also understood, then two operations have occurred; let us distinguish them: hearing

and understanding. I am the author of the hearing; who is the author of the understanding? . . . Without any doubt, someone has also said something to your heart so that there is not only this noise of words which strikes your ears, but also some truth which descends to your heart. Someone has also spoken to your heart, though you see him not. If you have understood, my brothers, then someone has spoken to your heart. Understanding is a gift of God. (Mortimer 36 cites In Iohannis Evangelium, 40.1)

"Prayer (I)," which defines prayer as "something understood" (14), reveals that for Herbert, prayer is more than speaking to God; it implies becoming aware of His presence and listening to Him. Belief in the Divine presence is not intellectually or sensuously based, but comes from the heart. In "Dialogue," the simple diction and natural phrases which Herbert places in the Divine mouth create a sense of sincerity, and this, in turn, moves the affections of the human persona's heart.

The examination of natural speech patterns and ordinary vocabulary necessitates some mention of proverbs and proverb-like sayings in The Temple. Numerous critics have noted the proverbial nature of many lines in "The Church-porch" and the poems which follow it, but Herbert's interest in proverbial wisdom manifests itself even earlier in The Temple. His first words in "The Dedication," "Lord, my first fruits present themselves to thee," indicate the poet has heeded the advice of Proverbs 3.9: "Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase." And according to Proverbs

3.10, the man who follows this advice and gives the fruit of his talents to God first will be rewarded "with plenty" or further increases. The pragmatic appeal to self-interest in these verses extracted from one of the wisdom poems found at the beginning of Proverbs anticipates the practical wisdom "which comprises both 'secular' and 'pious' maxims" appearing later in the book (Bloch 178). Throughout Proverbs, "virtue always has one eye on recompense" (Ibid. 178). Because The Temple, a collection of poems rich in terms of thought and expression, follows Herbert's dedication, the existence of the poems demonstrates the value of attending to proverbial wisdom.

The secular proverbs in The Temple, both homely English maxims and "outlandish proverbs," the latter being foreign sayings which Herbert collected and translated, have been well documented.<sup>10</sup> L. C. Knights perceives that Herbert's use of English proverbs and the native idiom gives "the effect of something immediately present, something going on under one's eyes" (67). The use of the native idiom not only appeals to a sense of reality which is familiar, but also to a sense of community which is English. In "The Sonnet," Herbert defends the English vernacular:

Let forrain nations of their language boast,

What fine varietie each tongue affords:

I like our language, as our men and coast:

Who cannot dresse it well, want wit, not words. (1-4)

Herbert's use of English proverbs, or "old said sawes" (Puttenham 189), appeals to nationalism by demonstrating that his country is not without practical wisdom, utilitarian morals, or apt ways of expressing

them.<sup>11</sup> But despite his defence of the English language and his use of homespun sayings, the highly educated Herbert cannot be accused of parochialism. The use of foreign proverbs in his letters, in The Country Parson, and in The Temple indicates that Herbert perceives wisdom as being beyond nationalism. Herbert's writing, as Summers understands it, demonstrates "a marvellous openness, an ability to examine and put to use almost anything at all" (The Heirs 94), and Herbert's comments in "The Church-porch" support this view:

All forrain wisdome doth amount to this,  
To take all that is given; whether wealth,  
Or love, or language; nothing comes amisse:  
A good digestion turneth all to health. (355-58)

"The Church-porch" is full of practical bits of wisdom, and as Bloch has shown, it resembles the Biblical Proverbs in its emphasis on rules for behaviour, such as moderation in eating, drinking, and speaking (181-85). In "The Church-porch," Herbert not only cites an outlandish proverb and an epigram,<sup>12</sup> but many of his lines have a distinct "proverbial ring" (Knights 67): "Man breaks the fence, and very ground will plough" (22), "He pares his apple, that will cleanly feed" (64), "Some till their ground, but let weeds choke their sonne" (98), "Laugh not too much: the wittie man laughs least" (229), "A grain of glorie mixt with humblenesse / Cures both a fever and lethargicknesse" (335-36), "Slacknesse breeds worms" (339), "A good digestion turneth all to health" (358), "Kneeling ne're spoil'd silk stocking" (407). The sayings grow out of observations of mundane experiences with physical nature and human nature. Bloch asserts that

"These are effective vehicles of teaching not only because they are easily committed to memory but also because they spring from a world the reader recognizes as real" (185). That such adages were actually used as effective vehicles for teaching can be seen in Thomas White's Youth's Alphabet: or Herbert's Morals (1702 edition). As well as trying his own hand at proverb writing, White extracts lines from Herbert's "The Church-porch," "Affliction I," and "The Posie,"<sup>13</sup> sometimes rephrasing them. He organizes the proverbs alphabetically, according to the first letter of the first word of each proverb. His collection concludes with the advice: "To get and fix these Rules of Memory, / There needs no art but this, mind ABC" (cited by Patrides George Herbert 148). Nevertheless, "The Church-porch" is a 462-line poem, and despite the pragmatic nature of the counsel and the memorable proverbial lines, this poem would be much more difficult to commit to memory than some of Herbert's shorter lyrics.

Our appreciation of such a long didactic poem may be enhanced if we consider that Herbert's interest in proverbial lore illustrates "how essentially he was concerned with ordinary human behavior, how he longed to have marks and aims that would be useful for himself and for others, how his mind ran toward understandable imagery that could aid understanding" (Thorpe "Reflections" 37). "The Church-porch" provides rules and morals at which the reader may decide to aim. We do continue to find proverbial sayings and didactic impulses, as Bloch has observed (186-87), in the next section of The Temple called "The Church." But we also witness personae who illustrate dramatically that humans

constantly fail to live up to ideal moral standards and rules of behaviour.

The one poem in "The Church" which consistently displays its proverbial style, "Charms and Knots," is not often anthologized and is mentioned only in passing by critics, if it is discussed at all. An early, anonymous critic writing for the Cambridge Review in 1933, claimed "'Charms and Knots' is nothing more than a string of admirable proverbs, rhymed and neatly turned, and brought to a common conclusion" (293). More recently, Heather Asals discusses the title, expanding Hutchinson's gloss on knots as representing "knotty problems" (510n), as in "Divinitie": "Who can these Gordian knots undo?" (20). She relates the knots to the obscurity which various Renaissance commentaries attribute to proverbs, but she does not discuss the poem itself (78). Bloch, even more recently, provides an honest and, I think, typical twentieth-century reaction to the poem:

The most one can say of "Charms and Knots" is that it reads like an exercise in composing maxims in octosyllabic couplets. Even as an exercise it is hardly worth a glance; there is not one striking or memorable couplet in the lot. Still, it is significant, I think, that Herbert's interest in the mashal prompted him to make such an attempt. . . .

(187-88)

But for the student of rhetoric, the third couplet, "Who shuts his hand, hath lost his gold: / Who opens it, hath it twice told" (5-6), is striking and memorable because it calls to mind the familiar analogy used to distinguish between logic and rhetoric:



Zeno the Philosopher comparing Rhetorike and Logike, doeth assimilate and liken them to the hand of man. Logike is like saith he to the fiste, for euen as the fiste closeth and shutteth into one, the iointes and partes of the hande . . . So Logike for the deepe and profounde knowledge, that is reposed and buried in it. . . . Rhetorike is like to the hand set at large, wherein euery part and ioint is manifeste, and euery vaine as braunches of trées sette at scope and liberté. So of like sorte, Rhetorike in moste ample and large maner, dilateth and setteth out small thynges . . . with soche aboundaunce and plentuousnes . . . in soche a infinite sorte, with soche pleasauntnes of Oracion, that the moste stonie and hard hartes, can not but bee incensed, inflammed, and moued thereto. (Howell 141 cites Rainolde)

The preacher, poet, or orator who relies on logic alone has no golden tongue, whereas the one who uses rhetoric, makes sure his matter is "twice told." He relies on repetition, copia, or such abundance and plenteousness, as Richard Rainolde says, to move and persuade others. As we have seen, Herbert uses language's abundance by piling up exclamations and interrogations to amplify emotional states, and he varies the objects and tones of his apostrophes to reiterate points forcefully without seeming redundant.

Bacon's brief remarks on the palm as a metaphor for rhetoric add yet another dimension to Herbert's proverbial couplet. In The Advancement of Learning, he explains: "It appeareth also that Logic differeth from Rhetoric, not only as the fist from the palm, the one

close the other at large; but much more in this, that Logic handleth reason exact and in truth, and Rhetoric handleth it as it is planted in popular opinions and manners" (3.411). Many of Herbert's terse, aphoristic statements serve to popularize Divine mysteries by using simple diction which is familiar and easily understood, and by employing parallelism and antithesis to reduce theological complexities to the easily grasped and memorable form of the maxim. The charm of proverbial rhetoric is that it unites the complex knots of logical thought with sentences that please the ear and with orderly forms that appeal to the mind. The poet who opens Divine mysteries and theological complexities to such proverbial expressions likely will hear his lines repeated or being "twice told," and it is to these poetic aphorisms in The Temple that we now turn our attention.

Bacon's differentiation between logic, as a method of seeking knowledge, and rhetoric, as the way of communicating that knowledge to others, indicates the close relationship between the two disciplines. Such closeness is manifested in Aristotle's discussion of maxims as part of a logical proof: "the premises or conclusions of Enthymemes, considered apart from the rest of the argument are maxims" (Rhetoric 2.20.1394<sup>a</sup>). Herbert concludes a number of his poems with terse sentences, and these maxims function as logical conclusions as well as poetic ones. "Repentance," for example, ends aphoristically: "Fractures well cur'd make us more strong" (36). As Bloch points out, "This looks like a piece of medicinal lore of the kind that often figures in popular proverbs" (190), and she cites Herbert's Outlandish Proverbs, numbers 534 and 1003 as examples: "Great paines quickly find

ease" and "Hee that goes to bed thirsty riseth healthy." In the closing lines of "The Pulley," we find yet another proverbial structure as God contracts an eighteen-line argument into a pithy conclusion which is based on opposition and syncretic parallelism: "If goodnesse leade him not, yet wearinesse / May tosse him to my breast" (19-20). God's reason for withholding "rest" from man is pragmatic and utilitarian, a characteristic of both secular and sacred proverbs.

By placing such aphorisms in concluding lines, Herbert abides by Aristotelian rules regarding the rhetorical use of maxims. The proverbial conclusions are best at the end of "Repentance" and "The Pulley" because they turn everyday perceptions of reality upside down. They respectively assert that afflictions and feelings of restlessness are to be appreciated because they serve a purpose; although these are topoi of the Christian experience, typically, human beings prefer to embrace well-being and peace. In his Rhetoric, Aristotle tells orators that "In the first place, the maxim may or may not have a supplement. Proof is needed where the statement is paradoxical or disputable . . . (2.20.1394<sup>b</sup>). "Repentance" and "The Pulley" both begin with specific reasons or proofs. After being exposed to specific evidence presented in the body of the poems, Herbert's readers are less likely to reject concluding statements that seem contrary to common expectations. Moreover, "Fractures well cur'd make us more strong" ("Repentance" 36) appeals to the apparent authority of long-observed human experience,<sup>14</sup> while the lines "If goodnesse leade him not, yet wearinesse / May tosse him to my breast" ("The Pulley" 19-20) have authority because Herbert places them in the mouth of God.

Herbert's proverbial endings are apt because they encapsulate or briefly recapitulate entire poems. And because they are the last items the reader sees or hears, the sayings are likely to be remembered. That Herbert is well aware of this effect is indicated by his comments in "The Parson Preaching": the Parson tells his congregation "sayings of others, according as his text invites him; for them also men heed, and remember better than exhortations" (The Country Parson 233). It is interesting to note that in "The British Church," a pithy maxim appears not in the poem's conclusion, but in the second stanza. Herbert compares the aesthetics of Roman Catholic, Anglican and Puritan Churches, and each church's ornament or ceremony is discussed in terms of a woman's dress and grooming. The aphoristic "Neither too mean, nor yet too gay, / Shows who is best" (8-9) clearly illustrates Herbert's preference for the via media, his middle-of-the-road propensity for the aesthetics of the Anglican Church. The statement is followed by humorous portrayals of an overly painted lady and an ungroomed, undressed woman, who respectively represent the traditions of Rome and Geneva. Possibly Herbert buries his proverbial conclusion in the text of the poem because he does not want it to be misconstrued, as positions in theological controversies often are. In The Country Parson, Herbert's wariness of theological disputes is also evident as he advises preachers to choose "texts of Devotion, not Controversie" (233). And readers of The Temple will observe that "The British Church" differs from the majority of pieces in The Temple, which are poems of meditation, petition, praise, or spiritual conflict, by addressing a contemporary theological controversy directly. Instead of

finishing with a brief summation of his own position, Herbert disguises his argument by presenting it as praise to God: "Blessed be God, whose love it was / To double-moat thee with his grace, / And None but thee" (28-30). He is thankful that God not only grants the Church of England His saving grace, but that He gives it an additional gift, aesthetic gracefulness (Miller 191).

So far, Herbert's penchant for proverbial wisdom has been linked to his didactic and persuasive purpose, but such a link is not necessarily as straightforward as previously examined examples may have suggested. Richard Lanham reminds us that "In imaginative literature . . . of the English Renaissance, the proverb is, very likely, ironical. And, not infrequently, it may be so wide of the point as to be ludicrously irrelevant, a comic device" (84). In "Artillerie," for instance, a star shoots into the lap of the speaker, and so he responds by rising and shaking out his clothes, "knowing well, / That from small fires comes oft no small mishap" (3-4). Richard Strier perceives

the satisfied reliance on prudential wisdom expressed in these lines. . . . There can be no doubt of this speaker's worldly wisdom; his expression of it takes on virtually proverbial form. . . . the contrast between the strangeness of the situation (. . . a star shoots into someone's lap) and the banality of the response itself tells the story.

(Love Known 98)

Common sense and worldly wisdom are ineffective ways of responding to the profound spiritual encounter.

In "The Pilgrimage," Herbert's ironic use of proverbial wisdom is even more subtle. Once the speaker recognizes he has deceived himself about the length of his journey, he decides to continue, but a voice warns him that "None goes that way / And lives" (33-34). Like the speaker of "Artillerie," he responds instantly: "If that be all, said I, / After so foul a journey death is fair, / And but a chair" (34-36). Thus, the human speaker embraces death and renounces life according to the contemptus mundi tradition. But his sour-grapes attitude, perceiving death as attractive because he is disappointed with his earthly pilgrimage, and his hasty retort, seem somewhat suspect. Just as the narrator of "Artillerie" hopes to avoid the possibility of physical pain, so the persona in "The Pilgrimage" wants to avoid the psychological pain that results from feeling there is a great distance between him and heavenly bliss. However, unlike the star which falls into the narrator's lap in "Artillerie," the voice warning the persona in "The Pilgrimage" poses no immediate danger to the speaker, and so there is less reason for him to respond quickly. Moreover, the automatic delivery of a balanced and rhyming construction, "death is fair, / And but a chair," encourages me to question whether this persona has really thought about what he is saying or whether he merely pulls this platitude from his memory to create a superficial semblance of sagely wit.

As the discussion of Herbert's ironic use of maxims has shown, a reader's understanding of irony usually depends on context. Renaissance rhetoricians stress repeatedly that to discern dissembling figures,<sup>15</sup> one must attend not only to the actual words, but to the

manner in which they are delivered. Peacham maintains that

Ironia, when a sentence is vnderstood by the contrary, or thus, when our meaning is contrary to our saying, not so well perceaued by the wordes, as eyther by the pronounciation, by the behauour of the person. . . . (Sig. D3<sup>r</sup>)

Similarly, Wilson notes that dissimulatio occurs "when in wordes wee speake one thyng, and meane in hart another thyng, declaryng either by our countenaunce, or by utteraunce, or by some other waie, what our whole meaning is" (367). Saad El-Gabalawy emphasizes orality, what Peacham refers to as pronounciation and what Wilson calls utterance, by arguing that Herbert's irony is "seen most clearly when his verses are read aloud with the inflexions they demand" ("George Herbert's Affinities" 45). I would add that consideration of the postures and gestures of characters in the poems may also be an important clue to a persona's true ethos or character and the presence of irony.

In "The Pearl," the speaker, like the merchant in the Biblical parable alluded to in the title, seems to relinquish worldly attractions for a pearl of utmost value:

I know the wayes of Learning; both the head  
And pipes that feed the presse, and make it runne;  
What reason hath from nature borrowed,  
Or of it self, like a good huswife, spunne  
In laws and policie; what the starres conspire,  
What willing nature speaks, what forc'd by fire;  
Both th' old discoveries, and the new-found seas,  
The stock and surplus, cause and historie:

All these stand open, or I have the keyes:

Yet I love thee. (1-10)

What the speaker neglects to say, however, reveals an undercurrent of pride. He asserts he has the opportunity and the skills to pursue knowledge--"All these stand open, or I have the keyes"--but he does not admit that God opens the door to various opportunities or gives the speaker the keys or skills to do so. Furthermore, the speaker's sin of pride is reinforced by the self-congratulatory tone of his speech.

Stanley Fish recognizes

the speaker's piety is a thinly disguised form of pride; the ringing declaration "Yet I love thee" is not so much a praise of God as it is a praise of the self for having had the good sense to recognize superior merchandise when he saw it. . . . And, worst of all, he misinterprets the parable of the Pearl, making himself the purchaser of the kingdom of heaven and forgetting that the great rate and price has been paid not by him, but by Christ. ("The Dialectic" 178)

The speaker claims he understands "at what rate and price" (35) he gains God's love, meaning he is willing to sacrifice the ways of learning, honour, and pleasure to love and follow God. Yet ironically, the descriptions of the speaker's "great" sacrifices are delivered to a God who sacrificed His only Son to save the speaker.

Often, the actions of Herbert's personae ironically reveal their unstated motives and unbecoming qualities. In "Affliction (I)," for example, the speaker greedily takes account of what he will gain by joining God's household: "I looked on thy furniture so fine" (7).



Similarly, the very first words of "The Collar" describe the speaker's gestures and reveal his choleric disposition: "I struck the board. . . ." Herbert, however, does not describe the gestures of the persona in "The Pearl" explicitly. But we can imagine the persona's mannerisms quite accurately because he is similar to the Pharisee in Christ's parable of two men praying: "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are . . . even as this publican. . . . And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven . . ." (Luke 18.11, 13). The Pharisee states clearly that he is above other men, while Herbert's persona only implies that he is unlike many other men who chose to follow the ways of learning, honour, and pleasure instead of God. Although the persona, like the Pharisee, formally addresses God, the purpose of his speech is to exalt himself, and so it is not difficult to imagine him assuming the Pharisee's stance with his eyes lifted piously towards heaven. Herbert's title, of course, alludes to the parable of the pearl in Matthew 13.45, but that does not mean other Biblical passages are not pertinent. The parallels between the speaker of "The Pearl" and the Pharisee in the parable of two men praying reinforce the ironic portrayal of Herbert's persona. Whether we see beyond the persona's words and into his heart through his tone or through imagined gestures suggested by a Biblical parallel, we discover that pride, masking as piety, not only distances human beings from God, but from each other. The spiritual pride of Herbert's persona and of the Pharisee depends on vain perceptions which separate these men from others. If Herbert's human readers can detect the speaker's spiritual

pride lurking beneath his mask of apparent submission, what folly it is for him to attempt to fool an omniscient God. Thus, Herbert strongly criticizes human vanity and folly, and Tuve correctly reminds us that in the Renaissance "Ironia is praised as one of the most moving and subtle of 'dark' tropes; by it one says more forcefully what one means by saying what one does not mean" (Elizabethan 185).

The irony in "The Pearl" could be called a "drye mock" (Puttenham 189), but in "Submission," Herbert combines irony and humour to compose a "merry skoffe" (Puttenham 154):

Were it not better to bestow  
     Some place and power on me?  
 Then should thy praises with me grow,  
     And share in my degree. . . .  
 How know I, if thou shouldst me raise,  
     That I should then raise thee? (5-8, 13-14)

Here, the first four lines echo the bargaining which takes place in "The Thanksgiving":

If thou dost give me wealth, I will restore  
     All back unto thee by the poore.  
 If thou dost give me honour, men shall see,  
     The honour doth belong to thee. (19-22)

But in "Submission," the speaker sees through his own "designe" and suggests teasingly that he might not live up to his side of the bargain. Beneath the tone of amusement, there is both recognition and criticism of the fact that people often make agreements with God, and then fail to live up to them. This merry scoff at man's unreliability

slides into sarcasm when the speaker shifts from exposing his own typical weakness to disparaging the behaviour of men in high places: "Perhaps great places and thy praise / Do not so well agree" (15-16). Here, human pretensions are openly rebuked: man's concept of greatness in the world has little to do with the great qualities of God which man should praise. Richard Sherry's description of sarcasmus as a "nyppyng tawnte" (46) aptly indicates the sharpness of reproof associated with this figure.

Herbert's criticism of social problems of his day has been discussed thoroughly in relation to religious controversies. Much of the critical debate focuses on whether his poetic works espouse the via media in matters of worship and doctrine or whether his doctrinal position favours the Non-conformists or Puritans above the Catholics. Herbert's disapproval of extremes is often related to the question of his poetic style. The issue is important, and the subject will probably continue to appear in critical disputes.<sup>16</sup> The result of the extended critical debate, however, is that Herbert's reaction to issues other than religion and his criticism of institutions other than various denominations have been largely ignored. As Mary Ellen Rickey points out, much of Herbert's early work is explicitly Church-centred, but this is replaced by an increasing concern for matters of everyday life:

. . . Herbert gives less poetic attention to man in the church and becomes increasingly occupied with the churchman in the world, though it is always a world which he sees in

sacred perspective, one which offers as many inducements to pious contemplation as do the contents of the parish church.

(131-32)

Herbert's concern with the churchman in the world, however, goes beyond finding aspects of everyday life as inducements to contemplation; he is interested in the churchman's activities in the world. In The Country Parson, he argues that one important activity or duty of the ideal parson includes provision of "a bold and impartial reproof, even of the best in the Parish, when occasion requires" (268). In his poetry, Herbert does not confine his criticism to religious matters such as the lack or excess of ornament in church ceremonies. We have already seen how he employs the rhetoric of blame to criticize universal faults like man's unreliability; he also reproves the behaviour and ethics of specific institutions of his time, notably the king's court.

In "The Quip," Herbert plainly and boldly expresses his disapproval of courtiers who reduce the concept of glory to fashion statements which attract attention. Glorie is depicted as a vain courtier who goes by "In silks that whistled, who but he?" (14). In the Renaissance, the social practice of dressing extravagantly is, of course, related closely to literary and rhetorical practices, which are other methods of gaining attention and favours at court. Puttenham claims it is not

inough for a Courtier to know how to weare a fether, and set his cappe a flaunt . . . and by twentie maner of new fashioned garments to disguise his body, and his face with as

many countenances . . . perhaps/rather that he could dis-  
semble his conceits as well as his countenances. . . . (299)

Tuве reminds us that the Renaissance commonplace of style as garment "adumbrates a whole theory of ornament" (Elizabethan 61). We should note, however, that this "theory" of ornament has the practical end which Puttenham describes as "to winne . . . purposes & good aduantages" (300).<sup>17</sup> In "Giddinesse," Herbert sarcastically illustrates the ridiculous picture that would be created if men revealed their many and changing desires literally by changing clothes:

O what a sight were Man, if his attires  
Did alter with his minde;  
And like a Dolphins skinne, his clothes combin'd  
With his desires!

Surely if each one saw anothers heart,  
There would be no commerce,  
No sale or bargain passe: all would disperse,  
And live apart. (17-24)

The ridicule of extravagant social conventions associated with court politics soon becomes a more serious consideration of the anxiety created when men sense that they are surrounded by deceitful disguises. Herbert is not opposed to the beauty of clothing or of eloquent words; he is opposed to beauty when it masks men's darker purposes and causes them to fear each other. In "Giddinesse," his bold condemnation of poor moral character and his comment on the potential

for distress due to artifice depreciate common political practices of his time.<sup>18</sup>

Beneath the satire on the social defects of court politics lies a deeper criticism of courtly ethical norms. For instance, the qualities which the court values, such as honour, courtesy, and wit, are admirable but what motivates them is suspect:

I know the wayes of Honour, what maintains  
The quick returns of courtesie and wit:  
In vies of favours whether partie gains,  
When glorie swells the heart, and moldeth it

To all expressions both of hand and eye. ("The Pearl" 11-15)

If courtesy is returned only for favours or gain, one wonders about the depth of the honour involved. And if a desire for glory "swells the heart," there is little room left for God or consideration of one's fellow man. The note of sarcasm is unmistakable when Herbert denigrates the overly exuberant desire for honour and glory by associating it with gestures like drunken challenges to duels: "How many drammes of spirit there must be / To sell my life unto my friends or foes" (18-19). Courtly illusions about honour and glory reveal that "Man is a foolish thing, a foolish thing" ("Miserie" 2). Such honour and glory pale when one contrasts them with true honour and glory.

It is important to stress the limitation of discussing devices in a linear fashion, one by one, because they are often blended together. For example, proverbs may be used ironically, or prosopopoeia, exclamatio, and interrogatio, may be employed simultaneously to recreate an intensely felt emotion. Renaissance rhetoricians were

sophisticated enough to be aware of the simultaneous use of several devices, as revealed by Erasmus's early comments in On Copia:

Although these can be observed anywhere, so closely combined that you cannot tell them apart at all easily, so much does one serve the other, so that they might seem to be distinct only in theory, rather than in fact and in use, nevertheless, for the purpose of teaching, we shall make the distinction in such a way that we cannot deservedly be condemned for hair splitting in distinguishing, nor, on the other hand, for negligence. (16)

For clarity, the devices have been distinguished from each other throughout this chapter despite the fact that they are often used together in practice.

"Practice" is the key word. Rhetorical devices and poetic style are more practical than theoretical because they are intended to delight, teach, and move the reader. The pleasure of art "rests upon the conscious apprehension . . . of the excellence of those ornaments that have inveigled the mind" (Trousdale 94). Herbert's didactic and persuasive purposes are inextricably related to the reader's delight in the excellence of his craft. His style disguises artifice because the devices he uses create the impression of spontaneity and naturalness. And as we have seen, Herbertian rhetoric is flexible: it may function as "a medicine of cherries" (Sidney An Apology 144) in which sweetness acts as the agent of instruction and reassurance,<sup>19</sup> or it may function equally well as a sharp sword which instructs and persuades by piercing through artifice to expose moral depravity.

## CHAPTER TWO

## Forms and Functions of Allegory

The interplay of aesthetics and ethics plays a major role in Herbert's allegorical poems. Sidney maintains allegory acts as the handmaid of ethics, contending that while philosophers speak obscurely of general notions and thereby reach a limited audience,

the poet is indeed the right popular philosopher, whereof Aesop's tales give good proof; whose pretty allegories, stealing under the formal tales of beasts, make many, more beastly than beasts, begin to hear the sound of virtue from these dumb speakers. . . . For indeed Poetry ever setteth virtue so out in her best colours, making Fortune her well-waiting handmaid, that one must needs be enamoured of her. (An Apology 109, 111)

Herbert's extensive use of allegory, one of his most effective rhetorical figures in The Temple, and his comments in The Country Parson indicate that he too believes in the efficacy of stories for moving, delighting, and teaching his human audiences. Most of Herbert's allegories are narratives, and in "The Parson Preaching," he emphasizes the value of stories:

for them also men heed, and remember better then exhortations; which though in earnest, yet often dy with the Sermon, especially with Countrey people; which are thick, and heavy, and hard to raise to a poynt of Zeal, and fervency,



and need a mountaine of fire to kindle them; but stories and sayings they will well remember. (233)

The readers of The Temple, of course, would not be uneducated country people, but Herbert's comment on preaching suggests that human beings, generally, heed or listen carefully to stories. And as Thomas Wilson points out, fables not only "delite the rude and ignoraunt, but also they helpe much for perswasion" (392). To hold the interest of his audiences, Herbert varies the framework of the allegorical narratives in The Temple: some centre on the actions of personified abstractions, one involves an animal fable, while others are based on the journey motif. Not only does Herbert vary the framework of his allegorical narratives, but he writes allegory in which the emblematic form encloses a short narrative.

Because teaching and delighting are important functions of The Temple, Herbert's allegories are usually brief. A condensed, elliptical style makes his emblems and stories memorable, and often it adds an element of enigma to challenge the reader's intellect or to create a sense of Divine mystery. Following the model of Christ's parables,<sup>1</sup> Herbert uses repetition as well as brevity to imprint ideas on readers' minds. He also juxtaposes familiar images with fantastic elements to lift a poem above the sensory, mundane plane and inform readers that his fictions strive to reveal spiritual reality. Hence, didacticism and delight become inextricably linked in the allegories: a riddle-like emblem or a fiction evokes learning and produces pleasure simultaneously.

Dramatic devices, such as personification, monologue and dialogue, enhance the vitality and variety of Herbert's allegories. The poet does not give the power of speech to all his personified figures, but he endows them with actions that create vivid "speaking pictures" of spiritual conflicts. In allegories based on the tales of human personae, spiritual conflict emerges subtly in the speech and actions of Herbert's narrators. Usually, the speakers' accounts of personal experiences or solitary quests expose their weaknesses, which contrast sharply with their admirable goals. At other times, their dialogues with the Divine Being reveal their human limitations. Conflict, contrast and dialogue engage readers' intellects while various particular and familiar occurrences encourage them to recognize and possibly identify with some aspects of the story. By participating in Herbertian allegory, intellectually or emotionally, the reader becomes involved in a re-enactment of the universal story of God's grace; hence, Herbert's dramatic techniques create dialogues and debates between God's Word, Herbert's words, and the reader's thoughts and feelings.

Jon Whitman, in his recent study, Allegory: The Dynamics of an Ancient and Medieval Technique, traces the origins of the word "allegory" to clarify its definition. He explains:

The history of the word tells us much about its nature.

Allegoria has two component parts in Greek. The first of these parts, coming from the word allos, means 'other'; it inverts the sense of the second component. This second component is the verb agoreuein, originally meaning 'to speak

in the assembly,' in the agora. . . . The composite word thus means to 'speak otherwise,' to 'say other things' to say other than that which is meant. (263)<sup>2</sup>

Cicero in De Oratore (3.41.166) and Quintilian in Institutio Oratoria (8.6.44) build on the etymological suggestion of double levels of meaning and explain that allegory can be a "chain" of metaphors or a "series of metaphors." Renaissance rhetoricians commonly adopt this aspect of the definition: Henry Peacham asserts, "in a Metaphor there is a translatiõ but of one word, but in an Aligory of many: for an Aligory is none other thing, then a contynued Metaphor . . ." (Sig. D1<sup>r,v</sup>); George Puttenham argues that the "inuersion of sence in one single worde is by the figure Metaphore, . . . and this manner of inuersion extending to whole and large speaches, it maketh the figure allegorie to be called a long and perpetuall Metaphor" (187); and Thomas Wilson defines allegory as "a Metaphore used throughout a whole sentence, or Oration" (352).

In critical explorations of Herbert's allegories, the place of allegory within the Christian tradition is as important as its position in the secular rhetorical tradition. In Galatians, Paul applies the term "allegory" to Biblical exegesis:

For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount of Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount

Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and  
 is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is  
 above is free, which is the mother of us all. (4.22-26)

When Paul applies allegory to Scripture, he stresses not only hidden meanings, but historical truths. The literal truth of Scripture, its historical reality, takes the form it does because it speaks to the future even as it narrates a particular past moment. This method of Biblical exegesis eventually developed into the four-fold method of Scriptural interpretation which Dante mentions in his letter to Can Grande (Quilligan 27-28). The four levels of meaning include: the literal, i.e. the historical events described by the Bible; the allegorical, i.e. the correspondence between Old Testament people, objects, or events and the life of Christ; the tropological, i.e. the moral scheme for the individual soul; and the anagogical, i.e. the foreshadowing of apocalyptic events.

Herbert's allegories often imitate the Scripture's potential for unending interpretation, and its ability to speak to future generations. "The H. Scriptures II" describes this technique and indicates how an allegorical way of reading the Bible enters the poems of The Temple:

This verse marks that, and both do make a motion  
 Unto a third, that ten leaves off doth lie:  
 Then as dispersed herbs do watch a potion,  
 These three make up some Christians destinie:  
 Such are thy secrets, which my life makes good,  
 And comments on thee: for in ev'ry thing

Thy words do finde me out, & parallels bring,  
 And in another make me understood. (5-12)

The Christian's life experience "comments on" or glosses God's secrets, and simultaneously, the Holy Scriptures explain the experiences of the individual Christian. Therefore, in actual applications of the "allegorical" method of interpretation to a life or Herbert's verse, differentiation between the text and various glosses cannot always be established as clearly as it is in an abstract explanation of the four-fold method of exegesis. And although allegory plays a role in Herbert's lyrics, both as a method of interpretation and as a rhetorical figure, the interpretive method and the rhetorical device cannot necessarily be separated easily.

The emphasis on allegory as a sustained metaphor or as a method of Scriptural exegesis, however, does not mean that readers must actively search for one-to-one correspondences between all elements of the literal narrative and abstract ideas or between physical representations and moral values. Such overemphasis on "reading on different 'levels'" creates a "slicing machine," reducing "human life to a psychomachia, spiritual life to morals and images to axes and hammers" (Tuve Allegorical Imagery 55). The tendency to oversimplify the nature of allegory grows out of the term "levels." Maureen Quilligan contends that "The very word signals our tendency to think about allegory in terms of a vertically organized spatial hierarchy, where the gaps between the levels of meaning, rather than the relationships across the gaps, hold for us the definitive allure of the form" (27). Because narrative allegories unfold episode by episode,

Quilligan proposes that the reader should arrive at meaning by attending to the horizontal dimension of the text. Angus Fletcher also suggests the horizontal dimension of allegory is important, but his reasons differ from Quilligan's. He argues that the System of Correspondences associated with the Chain of Being creates "horizontally parallel 'levels' of symbolism" (65). Although these critical reminders of allegory's horizontal dimensions begin to compensate for the "slicing machine" created by vertical levels of meaning,<sup>3</sup> they do not completely correct the problem. Edwin Honig points out that in allegory "The intangible quality is not separable from the object but suffuses it like motion in a stream . . ." (23).

Accordingly, in Herbertian allegory, we need not view the literal levels and the physical images as lower rungs which are used to climb to moral and spiritual meanings. Instead, allegory allows us to momentarily perceive that the "real" spiritual world (or level) encompasses the "provisionally real" world of the flesh. As Carolyn Van Dyke rightly asserts:

If a text says one thing it also means that thing: we cannot separate speech from meaning. Thus if it says one thing and means another, it both says and means two things. And unless we are linguistic schizophrenics or are willing to ignore half of what we read, a text that says and means two things must say and mean one complex thing. . (42)

Because abstract ideas include concrete details and universals contain local particulars, isolation of either element will reduce the complexity of the relationship. Just as abstract ideals of the

eternal, spiritual world permeate particulars of the temporal, physical world, so the overall design of The Temple encompasses individual allegories: a comparison of the similarities and differences of images, motifs, and actions in different poems will disclose the complex network of polysemous meanings of the Christian experience as portrayed by the allegories of The Temple.

At first glance, "The Church-floore" appears to be a straightforward moral allegory in emblematic form because it begins by portraying Christian virtues as the foundation of the Church. Coburn Freer mentions that in the first four stanzas "the broad-to-narrow stanza form suggests the geometric contrast and angularity of a checkered floor" (121):

MARK you the floore? that square & speckled stone,

Which looks so firm and strong,

Is Patience:

And th' other black and grave, wherewith each one

Is checker'd all along,

Humilitie:

The gentle rising, which on either hand

Leads to the Quire above,

Is Confidence:

But the sweet cement, which in one sure band

Ties the whole frame, is Love

And Charitie. (1-12)

Puttenham refers to such triangles or triquets as an "ocular representation," the "meeters being by good symmetrie reduced into

certaine Geometricall figures . . ." (91). Because "moral applications are drawn from the image point by point" (Summers George Herbert 124), the visual hieroglyph or emblem seems mechanical. Rosemary Freeman proposes that "likenesses are rarely inherent" in Herbert's symbols (English Emblem 163), whereas Joseph Summers (George Herbert 125), L. C. Knights (69), and Stanley Fish (The Living Temple 124) conclude that usually Herbert's metaphors are functional; that the signifier and the signified share one or more important qualities. The mechanicalness of tone in "The Church-floore," however, ensues from the catalogue of static images; whereas more frequently, Herbert's emblems take a role subordinate to narrative action.

Although the relationship between the coloured stones and the virtues in the first two stanzas appears imposed, arbitrary, and unpredictable, in stanzas three and four, the images are less arbitrary and more functional. The floor which rises towards the choir loft suggests the confidence of rising to an occasion while the cement which holds the floor together shares the cohesive property of love and charity. While the enigmas of these stanzas may be difficult, they are not completely impossible. The descriptions focus on key or common elements which the reader may use to begin to unlock allegorical meanings. According to Peacham, when readers "fynde at last, by long consyderation, the meaning of some darke riddle, they much delight and reioyce, that their capacity was able to compasse so hard a matter . . ." (Sig. D2<sup>r</sup>). Identifying elements which the floor and abstract qualities share is only one challenge that brings delight to readers of these stanzas.



In stanza four, readers who recognize Herbert's reference to a contemporary theological controversy will take further delight from their ability to recognize yet another example of love's cohesive quality. Chana Bloch's argument that Herbert uses both "love" and "charity" to avoid the theological controversy of interpreting agape provides further support that the cement image is functional: Herbert does not choose between the Geneva translation, "love," and the Authorized Version's, "charitie," but binds them together (211). Reformation controversies are divisive; whereas all Christian hearts and churches should be bound together by Christ's love and charity. The historical context of Herbert's allegory makes the opening stanzas of the "Church-floore" more than a moralization about Christian virtues--it does not merely tell us "how we should act" but rather "what we ought to believe" (Tuve Allegorical Imagery 15). Because love and charity are mentioned last in the allegorical catalogue and because stanza four is "the only stanza with two abstract nouns" (Bloch 211), the cohesive quality of Christian love is given a position of prominence and importance. We are reminded of Paul's assertion that the greatest virtue is charity (I Cor. 13.13), and that without love, the other spiritual gifts are nothing (I Cor. 13.1-3). Without the cohesiveness of love and charity, the virtues or building blocks of the Church's foundation will be nothing but parts isolated from each other.

Although Fish contends that during the opening twelve lines of "The Church-floore" "it does not occur to us that the floor is being compared to anything" (The Living Temple 37), the seventeenth-century reader or the modern reader who is aware of the controversy surrounding

Biblical translations during the Reformation, may begin to discern that the foundation of the Church is more than a physical floor. The informed reader may anticipate that the "succession of emblematic riddles" (Fish The Living Temple 37) and their solutions are embedded within the framework of a larger riddle. Yet awareness of the historical context is not essential to the understanding and enjoyment of the poem: the brief narrative within the poem's emblematic structure may, as Fish suggests, lead the reader to expect that the floor "is being compared to something" else (Ibid. 37). Regardless of when we begin to anticipate a greater significance, it is not until the final word of the poem that we know for certain that "the principal referent of the hieroglyph is not the institution of the Church but the human heart" (Summers George Herbert 125): "Blest be the Architect, whose art / Could build so strong in a weak heart" (19-20). When we realize that our hearts, not an actual floor, form the true foundation of the Church, and that virtues "are the materials with which God builds the structure of salvation in the heart" (Ibid. 125), we know "that in our search for the significances of the poem's emblems we have been looking everywhere but in the right place" (Fish The Living Temple 38). We discover that we have been looking for external signs rather than internal ones, and so we re-enact the part of the naive narrator in "Redemption" as we experience the movement from "the Covenant of Works of the Old Testament, with its observances centered first in the tabernacle and then in the temple," to "the Covenant of Grace of the New, with its substitution of the human heart as fountainhead of devotion" (Rickey 5). And like the narrator of "Redemption," we do not

invent the temple of the New Covenant, nor do we discover it entirely by our own intellectual skill. Instead, we are led to it by the poet, just as God predetermines that the narrator of "Redemption" will stumble across the path leading to the New Covenant.

The final couplet of "The Church-floore" glosses the entire poem. According to Northrop Frye, allegory distinguishes itself from other forms of literature because "continuous allegory prescribes the direction of . . . commentary" (90). Even though Herbert explicitly suggests how we are to interpret "The Church-floore," we entertain various possible meanings, and suspense is maintained because the gloss appears at the end. In contrast, the title of another emblematic poem, "The Pulley," indicates how interpretation should proceed from the beginning of the poem, and yet, the suspense of the riddle is sustained. There is no visual emblem of a pulley nor does the word "pulley" appear within the body of the poem; the image is implied by the movement of objects in the narrative. In Herbert's gloss on the story of Creation, God lowers gifts of beauty, wisdom and honour down to man, but He withholds peace or rest so that man will seek Him. Paradoxically, by withholding the last gift, God releases a greater gift which is unnamed--love. It is the weight of love which ultimately will haul or toss man to God's breast, the place of rest and loving kindness.<sup>4</sup> The motif of downward and upward movements in the poem becomes the key to the enigma behind the emblematic title. "The Pulley," therefore, is not merely a fictional account of the love between God and man; rather the poet's "dark conceit," like a

prophet's, aims at revealing something, in this case love, without directly naming it and destroying the sense of mystery around it.

The motif of upward and downward movements reappears in other allegories, reflecting some of the main episodes in the traditional Christian narrative. "Love (III)" reminds us of the Creation and of God generously pouring gifts down to man when Love asks, "Who made the eyes but I?" (12). The action of man's Fall is suggested in such allegories as "Redemption," "The Church-floore," "Humilitie," "The World," "Peace," "Love unknown," "The Pilgrimage," and "Love (III)." In addition, "Redemption" describes Christ's response to the Fall, His Incarnation or descent to earth, and the ensuing Crucifixion, while "Love (III)" alludes to the grace of the Resurrection, which makes it possible for man to rise to a place in heaven. And within "The Quip," "Love unknown," and "Hope," the speakers raise requests or complaints to God, and overall each allegory could be considered as a form of praise which the poet sends up to God. The action of a pulley, then, aptly describes the two-way movement of love "from God to man and from man to God" (El-Gabalawy "The Pilgrimage" 409) that recurs in other allegories. Because the metaphorical pulley describes the action of mutual love in other poems, it develops multiple significances which portray the complexity of love within the Christian experience.

Several of Herbert's other allegories contain elements which build on the iconographical traditions of his time. Many of his personified abstractions are associated with symbolic objects which reinforce the symbolic importance of their actions. For example, in "Humilitie," the crow brings a peacock's plume as a token to the cardinal virtues.

Consequently, the virtues, Mansuetude, Fortitude, Temperance, and Justice, abandon their positions to wrangle for the feather. Attention focuses on the peacock feather because the crow makes his presentation after the lion, the hare, the turkey and the fox and because the crow's gift is the only present which is not an aspect of himself. George Ferguson, in Signs and Symbols of Christian Art, notes "the peacock's habit of strutting and displaying its feathers has caused it . . . to become a symbol of worldly pride and vanity" (23). If the reader has not yet wondered about the virtues' motives for staging an extremely worldly and courtly pageant, the introduction of a traditional symbol of pride and vanity promotes reconsideration.

In two other allegories, "Hope" and "Love unknown," the presentation of gifts is involved as well, and Herbert adapts the emblematic tradition to his allegorical purpose. Because an "emblem outlines a concise picture in brief focus" (Honig 72), it acts as an aid to the reader's memory. In "Hope," there is a dialogue of action through a symbolic exchange:

I Gave to Hope a watch of mine: but he

An anchor gave to me.

Then an old prayer-book I did present:

And he an optick sent.

With that I gave a viall full of tears:

But he a few green eares.

Ah Loyterer! I'le no more, no more I'le bring:

I did expect a ring. (1-8)

The many facets of Hope are revealed by the gifts he receives and gives:

The watch given to Hope suggests the giver's notion that the time for fulfilment of hopes is nearly due, but the anchor, given in return shows that the soul will need to hold on for some time yet. . . . There may be an allusion to the seals, 'to be used as Seales or Rings,' sent by Donne shortly before his death . . . to Herbert, Walton, and other friends. . . . On them was engraved Christ crucified on 'an Anchor (the Embleme of hope)'. . . . (Hutchinson 520n)

The emblem of the anchor<sup>5</sup> alludes to Hebrews 6.19 where God's counsel is referred to as the "hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast." While Hutchinson claims the narrator's gift of the watch shows hope is related to expectation of fulfilment, the "Alphabetical Table" attached to the 1656 edition of The Temple suggests the emblem of the watch has a wider significance, "evoking . . . associations of the biblical command to watch and pray" (El-Gabalawy "A Seventeenth-Century Reading" 165). Thus, the watch stands as a symbol of devotion.

When the narrator gives Hope "an old prayer-book" as a token of his "long-continued devotion" (Lewalski 203), it seems he has understood the message of firm constancy behind Hope's first gift. However, Hope responds to the prayer book with the presentation of an optic which indicates fulfilment remains far off, and thereby implies further watchfulness and devotion are required. The narrator reacts to this with a "'viall full of tears' (his repentance), and is given 'a

few green eares' (recalling the Camerius plate, often reprinted, of a few ears of wheat sprouting from skeletal bones)" (Lewalski 302).

Alone, the green ears of the Camerius plate recall the promise of life after death, yet in Herbert's poem, the pairing of tears with green ears also suggests husbandry and the need for continued growth on earth. The multiple references associated with the image of green ears clarify Hope's message: for instance, green ears are also reminiscent of Leviticus 2.14 and 23.14.<sup>6</sup> The first verse concerns rules for the presentation of a meal-offering of green ears of corn to God, and the latter refers to the observance of laws pertaining to the Passover feast. Typologically, the meal-offering foreshadows Christ's sacrificed life (Heb. 2.17-18) while the Passover, which celebrates Israel's redemption from death and bondage in Egypt, looks forward to the New Law and man's new life in Christ:

Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

(I Cor. 5.7-8)

The affinities between grain, offerings, feasts, and Christ in these four passages unmistakably evoke the Eucharist, a reminder of the magnitude of God's promises and sacrifices in contrast to the small offerings He requests from man. In addition, we can reread "Hope" through the lens of "Peace," which appears after only three intervening poems. The emblematic message received by the speaker of "Hope" is

re-presented verbally in "Peace": "Take of this grain, which in my garden grows, / And grows for you; / Make bread of it" (37-39) to find peace and closeness to God through observance of the Lord's Supper. Patience and the use of God's provisions sustain hope and provide peace to anxious souls.

In "Hope," the speaker's impatience turns into exasperation, and he can no longer distance himself from his situation. He abandons his description and expresses his expectation directly to Hope: "I did expect a ring." The ring represents a desire for union because it is the emblem of the accomplished wedding with the Bridegroom. The point, which the reader should infer by interpreting the emblems better than the speaker, is that the business of Hope is with expectation, not fruition: the speaker must patiently wait to receive his ring hereafter. (Lewalski 203)

Despite Barbara Lewalski's perspicacious interpretation of the emblems used throughout "Hope," her point about Herbert's narrator requires qualification. By responding to Hope's gifts and by attempting to prove his devotion and his state of repentant readiness, the speaker demonstrates that he partially understands the message behind the emblems. His major flaw is not misunderstanding but immaturity. When he knows that his desired union with God will not be achieved immediately, he decides to withdraw from the relationship by ending the gift exchange: "I'll no more, no more I'll bring." The words are similar to, though less violent than, the opening lines of "The Collar": "I struck the board, and cry'd, No more. / I will abroad." The immaturity of both narrators emerges as they manipulatively



threaten to withdraw from God because their respective relationships with Him do not proceed as they wish. In short, the reader needs to interpret the emblems of "Hope" within the context of the overall narrative action rather than as static pictures.

Lewalski's statement that "the business of Hope is with expectation, not fruition" also demands further explanation. Agreed, the speaker must wait to obtain the ring which will allow him to join Christ the bridegroom in heaven, but the business of hope involves more than expectation. By summarizing the statement of "Hope" in the form of a binary opposition, Lewalski avoids specifying the more subtle facets of hope. Herbert's use of traditional emblems allows him to bring frequently overlooked aspects of hope to the reader's attention and to convey a dialogue of complex ideas within seven short lines. The emblematic images imprint various qualities of hope--sustained expectation, steadfastness, continued devotion, watchfulness, patience, and promise--on the reader's memory.

Herbert's successful use of emblems to make a vivid impression on the memory of his audience is evident in "Love unknown." The emblems in this poem strongly affected Coleridge who "quotes this poem in full in Biographia Literaria, ch. xix, as illustrating 'the characteristic fault of our elder poets', namely, 'conveying the most fantastic thoughts in the most correct and natural language'; he calls the poem 'an enigma of thought'" (Hutchinson 522n). Twentieth-century criticism often recognizes that the fantastic thoughts of "Love unknown," are similar to popular emblematic themes. Rosemary Freeman remarks that "Love unknown" is "the Schola Cordis in little" (English

Emblem Books 167), and Mario Praz indicates that both Benedictus van Haften's well known emblem book and Antonius Wiericx's Cor Iesu amanti sacrum present the experiences and schooling of the Christian heart (151-52). Still, as Barbara Lewalski maintains, "the tone is different." Herbert's speaker, unlike Anima in the van Haften emblems, "does not cooperate actively in what happens to his heart but is surprised and shocked by the treatment it receives, not from a childlike Divine Love but from a lord whose actions seem bizarre and strange" (206). Although the emblems alluded to in "Love unknown" may have been familiar to Renaissance readers, Coleridge's comment that the thoughts are strange or fantastic may not be entirely wrong, especially since the speaker's description of his tale as "long and sad" indicates he found the symbolic actions taken on behalf of his Lord to be unsettling.

The tale in "Love unknown" develops around three emblematic incidents.<sup>7</sup> In the first episode, the speaker reports how his heart was seized from an offering of "a dish of fruit" and was bathed in blood. This corresponds to a Georgette de Montenay emblem which pictures a man offering his heart in a dish to heaven, and God, in a cloud, pours Christ's blood from a vase over the heart. In the second episode, the narrator describes how he offered "a sacrifice out of . . . [his] fold," but instead of the sacrifice, his heart was thrown into "A boyling caldron," called "AFFLICTION." Emblematic analogues include Daniel Cramer's "Probor" showing God's hands descending from the clouds and putting a heart into the door of an open furnace, and Cramer's emblem 33 illustrating the testing of a heart by fire. An

earlier variation of this image is Augustine's emblem of devotion, the flaming heart. Finally, hoping "to sleep out all these faults," the narrator discovers "that some had stuff'd the bed with thoughts, / I would say thorns" (50-51). Emblems approximating the thorn episode are "Mannich's heart encased within piercing thorns while the divine arm extends the cross above, and Cramer's plate of the heart pierced by thorns yet sprouting flowers, indicating that the heart is rather aided than hindered in its fruition by tribulation" (Lewalski 206). The visual emblems are important in relation to Herbert's imagery, but it is also significant that such "emblems were used by Southwell in 'The Burning Babe' with which Herbert was almost certainly familiar" (El-Gabalawy "George Herbert and the Emblem" 183). Regardless of the source of Herbert's imagery, the emblematic descriptions give "Love unknown" the quality of a strange "dream" (Miller 64) which requires interpretation.

The speaker's offerings of fruit and a sheep betray his adherence to the Old Law requiring sacrifice; instead of accepting the sacrifices tendered, the Lord, according to the New Testament, makes his heart tender (Strier Love Known 164). The contrast between old and new laws is reminiscent of "The Church-floore" and "Redemption," but here Herbert combines his characteristic interest in the New Testament and the Christian heart with "another central topic of The Temple--the place of 'affliction' in the Christian life" (Strier *Ibid.* 159). At the poem's conclusion, the narrator's friend aphoristically reiterates his interpretations of the narrator's description of the emblematic afflictions:

The Font did onely, what was old, renew:

The Caldron suppld, what was grown too hard:

The Thorns did quicken, what was grown too dull;

All did but strive to mend, what you had marr'd. (64-67)

The friend's summation stresses that affliction purifies, strengthens, and revivifies man's heart. The relationship between Divine love and affliction is complex, but Herbert presents it clearly because he has already prepared the reader by stressing the importance of the heart and of the New Testament in previous allegories.

"Love unknown" does not end with the friend's explanations and interpretations, but with an exhortation:

Wherefore be cheer'd, and praise him to the full

Each day, each houre, each moment of the week,

Who fain would have you be new, tender, quick. (68-70)

It is not enough to understand the purpose of affliction in the Christian life, but one should praise God for it. Throughout the poem, the speaker agrees with his friend that his heart was foul, "Indeed 'tis true" (19), and hard, "Indeed it's true" (38). His glib admissions are hastily delivered, and he seems too anxious to describe another episode and complain about it. The friend's lively exhortation is a final attempt to transfer the loquacious narrator's efforts of complaint and self-pity to a better use of words, the praise of God.

Herbert uses the emblematic tradition in numerous ways to serve diverse poetic functions. "The Church-floore" is a visual hieroglyph; "The Pulley" is a submerged emblem; the narratives of "Humilitie" and "Hope" refer to traditional iconographical images; and "Love unknown"

alludes to emblem book pictures. The emblematic forms of "The Pulley" and "The Church-floore," as well as the images in "Love unknown" and "Hope," have much in common with riddles, an important aspect of allegory. The riddle-like nature of hieroglyphs makes them delightful and memorable for two reasons. First, the reader who interprets emblems to discover Biblical truths derives satisfaction from exercising his intellectual capacities, and he likely will remember the truths which he actively searches for and discovers. Secondly, the visual images evoked by the emblems condense complex ideas into vivid, memorable pictures. Paradoxically, Herbert's emblematic images are enigmatic, alluding to the mystery of the Christian experience, while simultaneously they clarify or reinforce the significance of the narrative action. By challenging the reader's intellect and stimulating his memory, the emblematic images contribute to the delightful instruction of the reader.

Herbert also carefully manages imagery in order to appeal to a diverse audience. He derives many images from simple, everyday experiences, occupations, and objects. For example, "Redemption" is based on the commercial and legal imagery of a real-estate transaction; "The Church-floore" and "The World" draw images from architecture and construction; "Peace" and "The Pilgrimage" contain natural-landscape descriptions; the brawling virtues in "Humilitie" behave like children fighting over a toy; portions of "Love unknown" and "Love (III)" appear to be ordinary conversations between friends or between host and guest; while "The Pulley" alludes to the function of a common object. Such homely images do more than create an air of verisimilitude: they evoke

a sense that any object or situation, no matter how lowly, can be used to praise God or to reveal His presence. Thus, the entire world is regarded as a divine allegory. In discussing "The Parson's Completeness," Herbert argues that Christ used familiar illustrations so that

labouring people . . . might have every where monuments of his Doctrine, remembering in gardens, his mustard-seed, and lillies; in the field, his seed-corn, and tares; and so not be drowned altogether in the works of their vocation, but sometimes lift up their minds to better things, even in the midst of their pains. (261)

In addition to reassuring people of God's closeness, commonplace references constitute effective methods of teaching and preaching.

The role of homely images in teaching and preaching the Word is to make abstract doctrine or theology relevant to the audience. This involves "The Parsons Accessary Knowledges": "Wherefore the Parson hath thoroughly canvassed al the particulars of humane actions, at least all those which he observeth are most incident to his Parish" (230). Such information allows him to address specific interests and concerns of a varied congregation, and, in "The Parson Preaching," Herbert explains the rationale for this approach: the preacher should particularize

his speech now to the younger sort, then to the elder, now to the poor, and now to the rich. This is for you, and This is for you; for particulars ever touch, and awake more then generalls. Herein also he serves himselfe of the judgements of God, as those of antient times, so especially of the late

ones; and those most, which are nearest to his Parish; for people are very attentive at such discourses. . . . (233)

The catalogue of everyday topics in Herbert's allegories reflects his belief that "particulars ever touch, and awake more then generalls" in poetry as well as in sermons. Even the settings of Herbert's allegories--a manor, a court, a palace, a host's home, and a countryside landscape--indicate his realization that a range of details is required to engender a sense of familiarity and delightful recognition in different readers.

The introduction of fantastic elements interrupts the ordinary details and thereby contributes to variety. Irrational elements--including unexplained shifts in locale, dislocations in time, supernatural powers, or personified abstractions--are an "often remarked signal of the presence of allegory" (Barney 17). El-Gabalawy discusses the various blends of fact and fantasy as clues

to the symbolic nature of the fables. . . . in such pieces as "The Pilgrimage" or "Peace" fantasy is only a possible departure from the known environment exploited to point up the symbolic character of the narration, in other allegories there is a bold display of strangeness which emphasizes the literal impossibility of the action. Perhaps the best example of the latter type is "Love unknown."

("Personification" 32)

In "Redemption" and "Love (III)," improbable elements subtly become part of ordinary narrative and indicate allegorical intention. The significance of the rich Lord in "Redemption" becomes clear when the

earthly setting suddenly moves to the doorstep of a mansion in heaven. Dislocation occurs not only in relation to space, but also in the dimension of time. Suddenly, Biblical myth comes alive in a contemporary situation. The richness of "Redemption"

derives in large part from the relations between that timely fiction and the timeless reality which it represents: the speaker is both one man in the present and all mankind from the Fall to the Crucifixion; the search is the search of the Jews until Calvary and it is also the search of everyman who wishes to be a Christian. . . . (Summers George Herbert 182)

The sudden conflation of various historical moments not only signals the presence of allegory, it also suggests the eternal presence of the Christian story. In "Love (III)," fantasy again encourages us to recognize the identity of Love when we hear about His supernatural powers (Montgomery 470): "Who made the eyes but I?" (12). Herbert's blend of the ordinary and the fabulous not only provides variety, but it makes his allegories memorable. Michael Murrin maintains that "for this purpose [the poet] . . . uses a few striking images; few because too many will dull the mind, made to expect and therefore to ignore even unusual images when they are everywhere present" (80). Both the colloquial phrase insinuating Love's miraculous power in "Love (III)" and the narrator's prosaic account of a physically impossible journey in "Redemption" fuse the ordinary with the extraordinary, thereby disguising the irrational elements of the narratives. In contrast, we have seen that "the bold display of strangeness" in "Love unknown" combines with a matter-of-fact conversation between two friends and



accentuates the unusual elements. Thus, a reciprocal relationship between probable and improbable aspects of narrative is fundamental to Herbertian allegory.

Personification, another aspect of the fantastic, also adds drama to allegory as it attributes human characteristics to animals, objects, or abstract ideas. While Peacham recommends the figure for "perswading, chyding, complayning, praysing, and pittying" (Sig. 03<sup>V</sup>), Puttenham states it is a device "whereby much moralitie is taught" (239). Because of its persuasive, instructive and dramatic capacities, personification often appears in allegory. Philip Rollinson points out that while most symbols are arbitrary, "The naming of personifications accomplishes . . . explicit joining of the idea and concrete embodiment very nicely" (27). Nevertheless, Tuve stresses that "personification of abstractions is not a defining or causative element in allegory . . ." (Allegorical Imagery 26). El-Gabalawy demonstrates Tuve's theoretical point by applying it to Herbert's "Sunday." Although personified figures appear in this poem, it is not an allegory per se. Initially, the poet addresses Sunday as a living being. The second stanza develops the personification by presenting Sunday as the face of a human figure while the other weekdays represent the back, and the third stanza depicts Sunday's actions. But personification "does not control the whole poem, for in the fourth stanza the poet abandons personification entirely for an architectural similitude" of Sundays as pillars ("Personification" 26), followed by the image of the Sundays of the Church year as bracelets adorning the bride of the King. Personification is "simply one of several modes

adopted by Herbert to deepen and extend his reading of Sunday as a symbol of eternal life" (El-Gabalawy "Personification" 26). One could also affirm Tuve's statement by eliminating the short narrative part of "The Church-floore" which contains references to "Sinne" and "Death." These personified figures do not make "The Church-floore" an allegory--without them the metaphor remains continuous.

The entry of personified abstractions into "The Church-floore" demonstrates how creative combination of the ordinary and the extraordinary functions as a means of delightful illustration:

Hither sometimes Sinne steals, and stains

The marbles neat and curious veins:

But all is cleansed when the marble weeps.

Sometimes Death, puffing at the doore,

Blows all the dust about the floore:

But while he thinks to spoil the room, he sweeps. (13-18)

With Sinne's entry, the abstractions are no longer just points of reference to which parts of the floor are compared, but are active agents (Strier Love Known 148). In a poem where so far all the abstractions have been static, movement attracts attention. Sinne enacts the part of someone stealing in and dirtying or staining the floor while Death plays the role of God's housekeeper sweeping the floor. Richard Strier correctly maintains that "definite articles--'the doore,' 'the dust,' 'the floore,' 'the room'--together with the homeliness and familiarity of the terms themselves work to keep the scene literal and visualizable" (Ibid. 148); however, his assertion that Death is a "wind sweeping rather than dirtying the room

. . . ." (Strier Love Known 148) gives Death an intangible quality.

Although this may be one interpretation, Death's puffing and blowing could be associated with the human characteristic of pride too. The word "puffing" has this connotation in "The Quip": "Then came brave Glorie puffing by / In silks that whistled, who but he? / He scarce allow'd me half an eie" (13-15). Here, Glorie plays a vain courtier putting on airs. Similarly, in "The Church-floore," we discover that Death's entrance and his attempt to "spoil the room" reveal his puffed-up opinion of himself. Herbert literally deflates Death.<sup>8</sup>

For all his puffing and blowing, we know him by his tangible, menial action of sweeping, not by his airs--Death is only God's housekeeper. By having ominous concepts like sin and death behave like ordinary human beings, Herbert demystifies them and humorously relegates them to their proper place within the Christian perspective.

Not only does personification serve to demystify frightening, abstract concepts, it also vividly portrays spiritual conflicts, and it is well-known that Herbert in his message to Ferrar described The Temple as "a picture of the many spiritual Conflicts that have past betwixt God and my Soul" (Walton 314). Because of its capacity to illustrate conflict dramatically, personification appears in meditative exercises like Lorenzo Scupoli's Spiritual Combat:

Consider yourself as on the field of battle, facing the enemy and bound by the iron-clad law--either fight or die. Imagine the enemy before you, that particular vice or passion that you are about to conquer--imagine this hideous opponent is about to overwhelm you. . . . Begin to fight immediately in

the name of the Lord, armed with distrust of yourself, with confidence in God. . . . With these weapons attack the enemy. . . . (cited by Martz 126)

Such exercises make abstract vices concrete so they can be understood and conquered. The use of personification, then, is commended by manuals of religious exercises as well as rhetorical handbooks.

In "The World," there is not any hand-to-hand combat between vice and virtue as in the meditative tradition of Scupoli, but there is a dramatic struggle between creative and destructive forces. Herbert describes a cycle of building, assault, and repair of a stately house which represents the microcosm called man. The first assault comes from Fortune who claims her web of fancies support the house's frame, but Wisdome quickly sweeps "them all away." In stanza two, Pleasure adds balconies and terraces until "she had weakned all by alteration: / But rev'rend laws, and many a proclamation / Reformed all at length with menaces" (8-10). The attractive female forms of Fortune and Pleasure permit these figures to gain unopposed entries, and thereafter they conduct their sieges from within. The allegory points to everyman's attempt to deal with the temptations offered by Fortune and Pleasure. The abstractions vividly illustrate that, externally, Fortune and Pleasure are attractive and desirable, but when man's internal desires obsessively focus upon them, they become destructive forces. The threat is internal not external.

Simultaneously, the struggle of forces in the first two stanzas may be read as a dramatic portrayal of contemporary debates about the architecture of great Renaissance manors--the issue of new styles and

whether houses ought to be designed for show or use. William A. McClung, in The Country House in English Renaissance Poetry, suggests that architecture, housekeeping, and hospitality are used frequently as metaphors for the ethical state of the inhabitants in Renaissance literature. In the ideal manor "utility is to be desired before beauty" (McClung 36). In "The World," Herbert juxtaposes beautiful and useful characteristics of houses, thus magnifying a sense of contrast. The "fine cobwebs" oppose the truly fine quality of the strong "frame" of the "stately house." Something as "fine" as a cobweb is so dainty that it acts as a pretty curiosity rather than inviting use, and cobwebs also insinuate neglect and uncleanness. On the other hand, a good "frame," providing strength and "support," makes the stately house functional.<sup>9</sup> Spenser expresses similar sentiments in The Faerie Queen by placing the functional House of Holinesse (1.10)<sup>10</sup> in opposition to the extravagance of The House of Pride (1.4 & 5). An even closer parallel between The Faerie Queene and "The World," however, is Spenser's description of the House of Alma (2.9) and the siege Alma faces (2.11) in the Book of Temperance. Both Herbert and Spenser use architectural metaphors to portray the body as a house for the soul, and both depict the house or body as being attacked. But in Herbert's poem, the architectural metaphor assumes an added significance because it is an integral part of other Herbertian poems, like "The Church-floore," "Man," and "Sion," and because the title of Herbert's collection, The Temple, reminds us of Paul's exhortation that "ye are the temple of the living God" (2 Cor. 6.16).

As we follow the narrative progression of "The World," more ominous opponents attack the stately house. In stanza three, after Sinne "The inward wall and sommers cleft and tore," Grace "shor'd these." Then, at the climax of the assault in the fourth stanza, Sinne and Death combine forces, and "raze the building to the very floore" (17). The sustained architectural metaphor, the emphasis on "very floore," and the appearance of the destructive duo, Sinne and Death, together in the last stanza of the poem, all indicate "The World" should be read with "The Church-floore" in mind. Although they ruin the stately house, Herbert emphasizes that they do not destroy "the very floore," the soul of man. In addition, the homonymic pun, "raze," is reminiscent of Christ's words in "The Sacrifice": "Some said, that I the Temple to the floore / In three dayes raz'd, and raised as before" (65-66). The word play in both poems suggests a positive outcome despite an apparent tragedy. The positive outcome in "The World" occurs when Love, Grace, and Glorie combine forces, and, outnumbering Sinne and Death, build "a braver Palace" on the same foundation. The constant oscillation between actions of creative and destructive characters and the increasing number of characters in the last stanza intensify the active struggle between the forces of death and life. Hence, the literal story and its allegorical meaning emerge simultaneously.

In "The Quip," conflict appears not as a struggle of forces, but as a pageant of temptations. Unlike Spenser's elaborate allegorical figures, Herbert's personified abstractions are reduced to their most noticeable gestures, attributes, or speech habits (El-Gabalawy

"Personification" 28). Herbert also uses the vernacular "of the popular preacher addressing his audience" (Knights 67), and his succinct homely style is lively because he represents "things . . . in a state of activity" (Aristotle Rhetoric 3.11.1411<sup>b</sup>). For example, "Beautie crept into a rose" which offered itself to the narrator while "Money came . . . chinking," flaunting his wealth to attract the persona. "Wit and Conversation" urbanely proffered "comfort." But the most striking example of a figure in an active state appears when "came brave Glorie puffing by / In silks that whistled, who but he?" (13-14). Glorie's clothing is not an attribute arbitrarily hung on the abstraction; the whistling silks allow the reader to see, hear and know the concept of glory in the concrete form of a vain courtier. Thus, the reader, like the narrator, experiences an appeal to the senses.

The narrator of "The Quip" copes with the worldly temptations' dramatic assault on his senses and intellect by repeating a condensed version of Psalm 38.15, "But thou shalt answer, Lord, for me." The reply distances the speaker from the allure of temptation because he places God between himself and things which tempt him, and he realizes that God may defer His response:

Yet when the houre of thy designe  
To answer these fine things shall come;  
Speak not at large; say, I am thine:

And then they have their answer home. (21-24)<sup>11</sup>

As Arnold Stein comments, "The playful leisure of the mocking world receives one answer in the deliberate leisure of the first two lines, which impose their sense of the encompassing movement of God's time;

the third line justifies the brevity of the poet's answers by anticipating God's" (148). The speaker knows God's eternal present differs from the world's sense of time. His brief reply to the temptations not only anticipates God's quip, but it appropriately imitates "the example of Christ who answered the temptations of Satan with Scripture . . ." (Bloch 17). Past, present, and future conflate in the speaker's quip to verify the timeless effectiveness of Biblical knowledge. The Scripture incorporated into "The Quip" does not allude abstractly to theology, but rather proves the practical application of the Word to life in the world. Moreover, because Psalm 38 was repeated on the eighth day of every month in the Morning Prayer, "The Quip" reinforces the practicality of the Anglican liturgy's focus on Scripture.

"Humilitie" also dramatizes the process of temptation, but in the form of an animal fable. Fables, according to Aristotle, serve as proofs in the process of persuasion (2.20.1393<sup>a</sup>-1393<sup>b</sup>). In a ceremonial pageant, the secular virtues are defined by their control of natural passions which appear in animal form: the "angrie Lion" submits his paw of strength and courage to Mansuetude; the "fearfull Hare" brings her listening ears to Fortitude; the "jealous Turkie" gives up his wattle to Temperance; the Fox presents his brain or intelligence to Justice. Because these virtues are defined by control of their opposites, we see that beastly behaviour does not encroach upon the civilized, courtly world, but lies latent within it. The animal element lies dormant until it combines with deceptive vanity, and then rises to prey on whatever stands in the way of each virtue's individual



achievements. Ironically, the secular virtues which are symbols of civilized behaviour become a threat to it. Without the Christian virtue of humility, the secular virtues struggle against each other to win a feather, and behave in a beastly fashion. In contrast, Humilitie, the Christ-like virtue, is the only personified character with the power of speech, the function which differentiates man from the beasts. Humilitie weeps as he watches his companions descend to a sorry state. After his tears spoil the plume, he interrupts, "saying, Here it is / For which ye wrangle" (26-27). The other virtues see the pettiness of their attempts to outdo each other, and this moves them to regain control of their beastly passions. The Christian virtue is, therefore, the example and source of truly civilized behaviour.

The moral of "Humilitie" is not attached, as it would be in the tradition of Aesop, but is inherently part of the apologue, just as man's animal nature or his passions are intrinsically the reason that he should be humble. In the opening of "Christmas," for example, contemplation of Christ's humble birth leads the narrator to admit his own lowly nature (Benet 45): "Since my dark soul and brutish is thy right, / To Man of all beasts be not thou a stranger" (11-12). Man must recognize that he too is an animal in spite of the gift of reason which God bestowed upon him. Man does not approach God by emphasizing his own majesty and control of his animal nature or by parading human virtues before Him, but he seeks God in a spirit of humility. An unpretentious manner reflects his recognition of God's majesty and magnifies it.

To amplify the mystery of God, Herbert employs enigmas, which Puttenham classifies as an aspect of allegory or "dark speeches" (188). In "Redemption" and "Love (III)," Christ is referred to respectively as a "rich lord" and personified "Love." In "Love unknown," the Lord described in the narrator's story represents the Divine Being. Although Vendler maintains that "the poem may be seen as an internal colloquy, or dialogue of the mind with itself" (90), the Friend who listens to the speaker's tale and interprets it could be the Holy Spirit, or, in Martz's words, the speaker's "other self: the Christ who at the close reveals the full counsel of his 'inward speaking'" (309). It is also possible that the personified figure of Hope in the poem bearing this name, represents a glimpse of the Divine. Likewise, in "The Pilgrimage," the unidentified, omniscient being who utters "None goes that way / And lives" (33-34) probably is God. The rhetoric involved in not using the proper name of God stems from the Jewish tradition. The Jews substituted Adonai, My great Lord, for YHWH (Yahweh) to avoid misuse of God's actual name and thus preserve its sanctity. Herbert avoids using Christ's proper name in "Redemption" and "Love (III)," and consequently readers only gain a glimpse of Christ through His actions and the traits that the narrators use to refer to Him. As readers, we derive intellectual pleasure from recognizing the Divine by His attributes, but recognition is only the beginning of our understanding of Him. By leaving Christ unnamed, the poems illustrate that He is someone whom "we see through a glass, darkly" now, but we cannot know Him fully or "face to face" (I Cor. 13.12) until after death. In terms of man's desire to know God, death

is only a part of the journey which brings man closer to a complete understanding of his Maker.

Several of Herbert's allegories, including "The Pilgrimage," "Peace," and "Redemption," present the soul's quest for God in the form of a journey. As the travellers of these poems move across archetypal landscapes and through various episodes, they are exposed to knowledge about themselves, God, or their search for Him. Nevertheless, knowledge is not the end of their quests, and this indicates its limited value. The position of knowledge in the pilgrimage poems parallels the place Herbert gives it in "The Parson Catechizing": there are

three points of his [the Parson's] duty, the one, to infuse a competent knowledge of salvation in every one of his Flock, the other, to multiply, and build up this knowledge to a spirituall Temple; the third, to inflame this knowledge, to presse, and drive it to practice, turning it into reformation of life. . . . (255)

Knowledge of salvation is valued because without it "reformation of life" cannot be attained, but having knowledge does not ensure that one will apply it. Tuve's comment that allegory is "open at one end, allowing interpretations which can be supported but not proven"

(Allegorical Imagery 220) aptly summarizes the notion that Herbert's personae need to apply their knowledge and continue their journeys beyond the conclusions and confines of the poems. The allegories focus on the process by which characters try to realize their objectives rather than on their actual achievement of their goals. While each

quest poem contains a labyrinth of episodes, each poem is only an episode in a larger story.

C. S. Lewis emphasizes the appropriateness of the journey metaphor to reflect the labyrinth of the mind and the bellum intestinum:

The journey has its ups and downs, its pleasant resting-places enjoyed for a night and then abandoned, its unexpected meetings, its rumours of dangers ahead, and, above all, the sense of its goal, at first far distant and dimly heard of, but growing nearer at every turn of the road. . . . this represents . . . the perennial strangeness, the adventurousness, and the sinuous forward movement of the inner life. (The Allegory 69)

Allegory "needs the long road and mountain prospects of the fable to match" (Ibid. 69) conflicting motions of the soul. Thus Augustine, in his Confessions, "wanders hither and thither in his own mind and speaks the language of a traveller" (Ibid. 65): "Behold, in those innumerable fields, and dens, and caves of memory, innumerably full of innumerable kinds of things . . . through all these do I run and flit about on this side, and on that side . . . (10.17, v.2, pp.121, 123). The first eight books of the Confessions chart Augustine's "journey from paganism to Christianity" (Colish 17), and the pilgrimage is an ideal vehicle for revealing the internal workings of the mind. Herbert's narrators in "The Pilgrimage," "Peace," and "Redemption," for example, are all errant travellers who set out, respectively, in search of a summit of expectation, an inner peace, or a new lease. The isolation of these characters against the landscape clearly contrasts their weaknesses

with their admirable goals. The reader's delight in, and perhaps even his understanding of, the allegories derives from observing how each of these personae reacts to various obstacles.

In "The Pilgrimage," the speaker projects personal feelings and anxieties onto aspects of the landscape as he passes by them. At first, he refers to "The gloomy cave of Desperation" (4), "The rock of Pride" (6), "Fancies meadow" (7), "Cares cops" (11), "the wilde of Passion" (12), and "the gladsome hill" (19). Here, the landscape provides the ornamental element of the metaphor; whereas words which literally describe the emotions of the speaker indicate the meaning. Puttenham, relying on Quintilian (8.6.49), classifies such allegory as mixed because the form permits the reader to discover the parallels between the physical pilgrimage and the spiritual journey immediately, whereas "in a full allegory [they] should not be discovered but left at large to the reader's judgement and conjecture" (188). Each aspect of the landscape in "The Pilgrimage" represents an emotional obstacle which the speaker overcomes in order to continue his journey. He navigates around the cave of desperation and the rock of pride because he instantly recognizes these as obstacles which pose a menace to his journey.

After he has transcended fancies, cares, and passions, which also threaten to divert him from his goal, he discovers that the hill where he has expected to find God is a false summit:

When I had gain'd the brow and top,  
A lake of brackish waters on the ground  
Was all I found.

With that abash'd and struck with many a sting  
 Of swarming fears,  
 I fell, and cry'd, Alas my King!  
 Can both the way and end be tears?  
 Yet taking heart I rose, and then perceiv'd  
 I was deceiv'd. . . . (22-31)

Vendler notes that the "brackish waters" are not immediately identified with an emotional state as are the previously mentioned characteristics of the landscape (95). Although we discover in the next stanza that these waters are likely associated with the speaker's tears, his tears could reveal disappointment, "swarming fears," repentance, or a mixture of all three. Not only does the speaker discard the form of mixed allegory, but as Summers observes, he "abandons narration for the dramatic evocation of a specific scene" (George Herbert 174) in the stanza beginning, "With that abash'd. . . ." He changes his earlier mode of narration and exposition because he begins to relive the tale he tells at its most emotional moment, the moment of recognition and discovery. While he nearly abandons the pursuit of his goal because his initial expectations are frustrated, he soon discovers that he deceived himself from the outset of his journey. Once he recognizes his self-deception, he can overcome it and continue his journey. His achievement of knowledge, nevertheless, involves the pain of shattered illusions.

The narrator of "Peace" initially misreads the landscape, or to use the term favoured in the Renaissance, the Book of Nature, as he searches for tranquillity. He seeks Peace "in a secret cave," sees "a

rainbow" as a sign that Peace is above earthly matters, and then ironically assumes it dwells at the root of a "gallant flower." As an archetypal symbol, the cave alerts us that the speaker explores the landscape of his mind as well as the natural world. Superficially, each aspect of the landscape respectively promises security, transcendent beauty, or sensuous attraction, thus confirming God's knowledge that man might "rest in Nature, not the God of Nature" ("The Pulley" 14). However, once the speaker delves below surface appearances, he finds hollow answers ("A hollow winde did seem to answer, No: / Go seek elsewhere" 5-6), lack of substance ("while I lookt, the clouds immediately / Did break and scatter" 11-12), and infestation ("But when I digg'd, I saw a worm devoure / What show'd so well" 17-18). Whether we read the allegory as the speaker's attempt to see beyond the surface of the Book of Nature or as an effort to find tranquillity in the depths of his own human nature, his mind, the expansion of his knowledge involves the discovery and denunciation of delusions. However, unlike "The Pilgrimage," this spiritual odyssey is not interrupted by an emotional outburst when initial expectations are dashed, and the narrator continues his search for peace.

Ignorance is exposed again in "Redemption," and here, as in "The Pilgrimage," it combines with the narrator's self-deception. As the narrator moves across a landscape that includes a heavenly manor as well as earthly cities, theatres, gardens, parks, courts, and a den of thieves and murderers, he plays the part of an "alazon", which means imposter, someone who pretends or tries to be something more than he is" (Frye 39). Initially, the narrator presents himself as the

apologue's main character who recognizes a need for change and who seeks out an absentee landlord to discuss the possibility of a new lease:

Having been a tenant long to a rich Lord,

Not thriving, I resolved to be bold,

And make a suit unto him, to afford

A new small-rented lease, and cancell th' old. (1-4)

The narrative action, nevertheless, reveals the speaker's lack of knowledge as he seeks his Lord in all the wrong places, and the tale's conclusion reveals his self-deception about the importance of his role. Because the narrator unwittingly encounters the scene of the Crucifixion--"At length I heard a ragged noise and mirth / Of theeves and murderers: there I him espied, / Who straight, Your suit is granted, said, & died" (12-14)--we see that he has not been deliberately misleading us to satisfy his hubris, but that ignorance has led to his misinterpretation of his role. The Lord's answer anticipates the narrator's proposal, and as readers, we discover that "the narrator is, strictly speaking, not the protagonist at all. He is simply the searcher; Christ is the protagonist, constantly acting in the background until finally He is picked up by the spotlight for the dazzling conclusion" (Mollenkott 266). As Mollenkott implies, most readers might initially misconstrue the narrator as the cynosure of the action. Therefore, if we make the same error as the naive speaker's, we are likely to feel some sympathy for his ignorance. Like the narrator, we are left facing our folly.



Although the words and actions of Christ in "Redemption" emphasize the narrator's limited knowledge and put him in his place, the main purpose of Herbertian irony is not to focus on the story-teller's pretentiousness. Christ's words, "Your suit is granted," continue the legal metaphor of the narrator's story, indicating that He accepts the man's efforts and words despite their limitations. The legal and commercial terms which Herbert puts in the mouth of the Crucified have, of course, precedents "in the Pauline terminology of Romans 3.21-26" (Patrides "A Crown of Praise" 14). In "Redemption," Christ's simple, straightforward statement and His action, which associates Him with "theeves and murderers," deny any attempts to separate the sacred statement from the secular, or to segregate the actions of God and man. The principal function of Christ's rhetoric and actions is to mediate, to bring secular and sacred realities together, and to heal the breach between man and God, despite man's inadequacies.

By taking up the quest for a new agreement with his Lord, the narrator of "Redemption" ironically parodies Christ's journey. In contrast to the labyrinthine and circuitous wandering of "Redemption's" naive narrator, Christ travels resolutely, deliberately, and directly to earth through the Incarnation; he suffers Crucifixion and death; and consequently atonement can be offered to man.<sup>12</sup> The speaker of "Redemption" dramatically recreates the Incarnation "in the heart of the present" (El-Gabalawy "George Herbert's Affinities" 43) when he describes his arrival at his Lord's heavenly manor and is told that Christ "was lately gone / About some land, which he had dearly bought / Long since on earth to take possession" (6-8). Only three lines later,

the poem concludes by focusing on details surrounding Christ's Crucifixion. The speaker's discovery of Christ amid the "ragged noise and mirth / Of theeves and murderers" (12-13) comes close to the Biblical account of the Crucifixion. "Ragged noise and mirth" alludes to the multitude's cries to free Barabbas, the murderer, and to crucify Christ (Matt. 27.21-24, Mark 15.11-14, Luke 23.18-21, John 18.40-19.15). While reference to "theeves" reminds the reader of Christ crucified between two thieves, the mention of "murderers" also suggests the guilt of the crowd who insisted on the crucifixion of an innocent man. Herbert's details are not merely decorative but are functional, contributing to the poem's economy.

The poet of "Redemption" is able to convey Christ's life on earth within a sonnet because he depends on the reader to fill in the gaps and to write his own conclusion. If we apply Herbert's account of reading Scripture to his own poems, we can connect the essential details like stars to create "the constellations of the storie" ("The H. Scriptures II" 4). Wolfgang Iser expounds the dialectic between a work and a reader in "The Reading Process":

The "stars" in a literary text are fixed; the lines that join them are variable. The author of the text may, of course, exert plenty of influence on the reader's imagination--he has the whole panoply of narrative techniques at his disposal--but no author worth his salt will ever attempt to set the whole picture before his reader, for it is only by activating the reader's imagination that the author can hope to involve him and so realize the intentions of his text. (57)

Herbert's rhetorical use of allusion assumes the reader's familiarity with the Bible, and this, to borrow Iser's phrase, "exerts plenty of influence" on the reader's imaginative interpretation of events. As previously demonstrated, the reader draws on Biblical accounts, filling in the details which surround cryptic phrases like "theeves and murderers" to recreate the story of the Crucifixion. Thus, Herbert does not presume "to set the whole picture before his reader's eyes." And although at the conclusion of "Redemption," the reader is sure about God's intent to redeem the narrator, he does not know if the narrator will accept the new lease or New Covenant offered by Christ. Such open-endedness is characteristic of Herbert's lyrical narratives. There is no certainty in the postlapsarian world, and so Herbert's human pilgrims always have more choices to make, more obstacles to encounter, and more distances to travel.

The ending of "Peace," for example, is uncertain as well. The poem concludes with the words of "a rev'rend good old man" who tells the questing persona a parable about Salem's Prince and the "twelve stalks of wheat," which grew "after death out of his grave." As Hutchinson indicates, "Melchisedec, 'king of Salem, which is king of peace' (Heb. vii.2), who 'brought forth bread and wine' [to Abraham] (Gen. xiv.18), prefigures Christ" (521n) "in his character as the Eucharist" (Tuve A Reading 161). And the twelve stalks of wheat growing from Melchisedec's grave foreshadow Christ's twelve apostles. Furthermore, just as an interpretation is occasionally attached to a parable,<sup>13</sup> so the old man concludes his story with advice for the persona:

Take of this grain, which in my garden grows,

And grows for you;

Make bread of it: and that repose

And peace, which ev'ry where

With so much earnestnesse you do pursue,

Is onely there. (37-42)

When the narrator is encouraged to participate in the Holy Communion, Herbert goes "beyond the restraints of conservative typology" (Scheick 79) in which Old Testament figures, things, and events are types alluding to their anti-types in the New Testament. The narrator's personal experience re-presents Old and New Testament history,<sup>14</sup> and Herbert's fiction represents, in a synecdoche, larger truths. The synecdochic mode of typology demonstrates Quintilian's point that allegory is not always based on metaphor (8.6.46). Because the plot of "Peace" ends before the entire story does (we do not know if the persona will accept the old man's counsel and offer), the partial story not only alludes to the whole range of Christian history, but it also stresses the importance of man's free will. By grace the narrator and the reader hear the Christian story, but neither is forced to accept it. Even as we contemplate the narrator's acceptance or rejection, we realize that the resolution of this critical episode would not conclude the story. Instead, it would only raise the question of whether the narrator would continue his journey by travelling on a path leading towards God or on a road leading away from Him.

"The Pilgrimage," in contrast, ends with the narrator's words, which indicate the direction that he might take. Once he realizes that

his destination lies further, he continues until he hears a voice crying out of the wilderness: "None goes that way / And lives" (33-34). Although Herbert gives the narrator the last word, "If that be all, said I, / After so foul a journey death is fair, / And but a chair" (34-36), we do not see his final actions. The words suggest that he will probably fling himself towards death, but his future deeds are unknown. Because the reader of "The Pilgrimage," "Redemption," and "Peace" experiences poems which lack complete closure, he shares the position of the Christian traveller who arrives at a fork in the road and must decide which direction to take.

Appropriately, "Love (III)," which depicts the end of a journey, appears at the end of "The Church," the central section of The Temple. Here, Herbert conflates the Communion on earth with the final banquet in heaven (Luke 12.37) in a dialogue between a loving, gracious host and a shame-faced, diffident guest. The guest arrives covered in "dust and sinne" from his journey, and Herbert refers to both the curse of Adam, "for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return (Gen. 3.19), and the parable of the wedding garment (Matt. 22.11-13). The curse of Adam simultaneously looks backward and forward in time, reminding us that no one is free from the guilt of original sin and suggesting that the bodies of men return to dust at the end of their pilgrimages on earth. The wedding garment parable refers to preparations guests should make before attending feasts, and it is mentioned in the Communion liturgy (Bloch 103):

consider the dignity of the holy mystery, and the great peril  
of the unworthy receiving thereof, and so to search and

examine your own consciences, as you should come holy and  
 clean to a most godly and heavenly feast, so that in no wise  
 you come but in the marriage garment, required of God in the  
 Holy Scripture, and so come and be received as worthy  
 partakers of such a heavenly table. (Booty 257)

The narrator of "Love (III)," nevertheless, arrives unprepared to  
 partake of a great feast or of Communion.

Much of the criticism of "Love (III)" has focused on whether the  
 poem primarily alludes to the Communion liturgy or to the final banquet  
 in heaven. Because "Love (III)" follows "Death," "Doomsday,"  
 "Judgement," and "Heaven," Joseph Summers argues that "the banquet at  
 which Love serves is not that of the earthly church but that final  
 'communion' mentioned in Luke xii.37" (George Herbert 89). James  
 Thorpe does not dismiss Summers's reading, but illustrates that the  
 poem also dramatizes the Anglican Communion service. He draws  
 parallels between the guest's initial feelings of unworthiness and the  
 Prayer Book's General Confession ("we knowlege and bewaile our manifold  
 sins and wickednes"); between Love's response ("You shall be he"),  
 implying the speaker is forgiven and worthy, and the Absolution  
 ("pardon and deliver you from all your sinnes, confirme and strengthen  
 you in al goodnesse"); between Love's response to a second  
 remonstratation of unworthiness ("And know you not, . . . who bore the  
 blame?") and the Prayer of Consecration ("Almighty God our heauenly  
 Father which of the tender mercy didst give thine onely Sonne Jesus  
 Christ, to suffer death vpon the Crosse for our Redemption"); between  
 the speaker's insistence on serving ("My deare, then I will serve")

and the Prayer for Purity ("we bee not worthy so much as to gather vp the crumbes vnder thy Table") ("Herbert's LOVE III" 16). Nicholas Sharp stresses the importance of the Holy Communion service too, but he focuses on the literal situation of an interaction between a host and a guest. He emphasizes the word play on "host": "a person who gives a banquet" and "a communion wafer" (26). In contrast, Anne Williams concludes that "in Herbert's mind 'Love (III)' was unequivocally an adumbration of the celestial banquet" (22). She argues that in The Country Parson Herbert writes: "The Feast indeed requires sitting, because it is a Feast; but man's unpreparedness asks kneeling" at Communion, and in the final line of "Love (III)," the guest sits and eats (22). Yet in other allegories, such as "Peace," "Redemption," and "The Quip," we have seen past, present, and future amalgamated, and so it should not be surprising to find a similar situation in "Love (III)." The Communion service looks back to the Crucifixion and Atonement while it foreshadows the future banquet in heaven. Rather than vacillating between equally persuasive positions which are limited by a human perception of history as a diachronic phenomenon, we should remember that Herbert's audience includes an omniscient God who has a synchronic view of past, present, and future.

As well as indicating parallels with the Holy Communion and the final banquet in heaven, "Love (III)" may be read in comparison to the narrative structure of the parable of the great supper (Matt 22.2-10, Luke 14.16-24). Herbert's allegory, like the parable, inverts common-sense reality to create a comic vision.<sup>15</sup> Sidney perceives "that the Comedy is an imitation of the common errors of our life,

which he [the writer] representeth in the most ridiculous and scornful sort that may be, so as it is impossible that any beholder can be content to be such a one" (117). However, later in the Defence, he adds: "But our comedians think there is no delight without laughter which is very wrong. . . . Delight hath a joy in it either permanent or present" (136). The comedy in "Love (III)" does not evoke laughter or scorn, but it does elicit a smile from Love as he reassures the speaker. Benet thinks "one of the reasons Christ smiles at the end of the second stanza of this poem . . . is that he thinks ruefully, 'Here we go again'" (189). The reader shares this smile because he realizes that throughout The Temple, the Divine Being has repeatedly dealt with human sins, including ambition, pride, obsessive desires for sensual pleasure, and a sense of paralysing inadequacy. Such repetition of "the common errors" of human life reveals just how silly human behaviour must appear from the Divine perspective. As we smile at the errors of Herbert's human narrators in "Redemption," "Peace," "Love Unknown," "The Pilgrimage" and "Love (III)," our experience of reading these poems illustrates that we too are prone to making mistakes. Part of our delight in "Love (III)" also grows out of realizing that the narrator's recurrent hesitation and apparent humbleness suggest "a courtesy-contest" dramatizing a process in which "self-denial becomes self-assertion" (Strier 74). The allegory turns our expectations about humility upside down. The speaker's humble sense of his great inadequacy actually demonstrates his belief that he is so unworthy that he is beyond Divine love.



Robert Funk, in Language, Hermeneutic, and the Word of God, asserts that parable "concentrates on the familiar in such a way that it is shattered" and it turns "everydayness inside out or upside down" (161). And one of Bernard Scott's thesis statements regarding the parables is that "the World of the hearer is questioned by the World of Parable" (31). In the parable of the great banquet, for example, predictability is challenged when all the invited guests refuse to accept the invitation of the host (Scott 39). This story is important in relation to "Love (III)" because the reluctance of the speaker in the poem reminds us of the parable, and as Chana Bloch notes, "The Prayer Book exhortation to those who are 'negligent to come to the holy Communion' had already used the parable of the great supper" (102):

Ye know how grievous and unkind a thing it is, when a man hath prepared a rich feast, decked his table with all kind of provision, so that there lacketh nothing but the guests to sit down; and yet they which be called without any cause most unthankfully refuse to come. Which of you in such case would not be moved? Who would not think a great injury and wrong done unto him? (Booby 254-55)

The parable is mentioned in the Communion ceremony to evoke sympathy for the host, but as Scott reminds us, "the sight of . . . everyone making excuses and fleeing the feast" presents an "amusing picture" (38). The chain of excuses given by the narrator of "Love (III)" to avoid the banquet offered by Love--being guilty of sin (1); having marred a gift from the Divine, his eyes (13); wanting to repay Christ by serving the meal (16)--provides comic repetition which is not unlike

the excuses offered by the different guests invited to the feast in the parable. Repetition of similar errors entertains us and imprints the error of refusal on our memories in both the great banquet parable and "Love (III)."

The great feast parable and "Love (III)" also evoke delight through anastrophe, an unexpected upward turn in fortunes which is brought about by grace. The good, bad, poor, maimed, or blind people of the various versions of the parable probably would not expect to receive an invitation, and would be confused but delighted to be included in the magnificent celebration. In "Love (III)," the narrator's persistent refusals of hospitality deserve a reciprocal lack of graciousness from the host, but Divine Love patiently puts aside the guest's refusal to participate. Herbert's poem, unlike Matthew's version of the parable, circumvents the threat of judgement for those who refuse several invitations. Nevertheless, both the poem and the parable end with a feast celebrating the delight in a union and in a new order.<sup>16</sup> Yet to enjoy the anastrophe of the poem or the parable, the reader or hearer must accept grace, putting aside human logic and notions of worthiness. Marion Meilaender's comment on "Love (III)" affirms this: "we (like the speaker) must learn that Love welcomes precisely those who do not merit and cannot earn, Love's invitation" (42).

The analysis of Herbert's allegories in this chapter discloses various combinations of forms, techniques, and functions. Emblems, fables of conflicting forces, and narrative journeys characterize the forms of Herbertian allegory. The original details which Herbert adds

to traditional material derived from Christian sources attest to his mastery of story-telling. As the forms of Herbert's narratives unfold, they reveal continuous metaphors, symbolic or emblematic events and objects, enigmas, veiled references to contemporary issues, commonplaces, fantastic elements, personified figures, typology and synecdoche, similitudes, contrasts, ironies, or comic visions. Because allegory may encompass so many elements, George Puttenham aptly names it "the chief ring leader and captaine of all other figures either in the Poeticall or oratorie science" (186). Therefore, allegory's etymology, mentioned earlier, proves to be both useful and limited. To "speak otherwise" applies to Herbert's allegories because they heighten the reader's awareness that a spiritual reality can suffuse and change our way of perceiving mundane experiences. The etymology, however, does not adequately suggest the protean combinations of forms, functions, and techniques in the allegories of The Temple.

## CHAPTER THREE

## The Issue of Sacred Parody

In the preface to the second edition of Silex Scintillans, Henry Vaughan praises George Herbert's poetic accomplishments. He proposes that "the first, that with any effectual succession attempted a diversion of this foul overflowing stream [of secular verse] was the blessed man, Mr. George Herbert, whose holy life and verse gained many pious Converts, (of whom I am the least) . . ." (391). Does Herbert convert the conventions of profane love poetry to sacred devotion deliberately? Or do the streams of praises, petitions, and laments in The Temple belong to an earlier Christian tradition? Such questions are frequently raised by Herbertian critics. The issue of stylistic influence is complex, and to overemphasize a particular aspect of Herbert's poems detracts from the rich poetic texture of The Temple. The laments, petitions, praises, and the tradition of candidus rubicundus belong not only to the realm of profane love poetry, but they also appear in the Bible, Saint Augustine's Confessions, medieval religious lyrics, and the writings of medieval mystics, to name only a few sources. And the contemporary rhetorical manuals of Herbert's day demonstrate the effectiveness of various devices to emphasize one's complaints or praises or to strengthen one's persuasive power by citing examples from the Bible as well as from secular writings. Hence, the reader who brings an awareness of the Renaissance's literary, religious, and rhetorical milieux to a reading of The Temple will find the poems to be rich complexes of meanings.

The multiple meanings of "parody" in critical commentary complicate the issue of profane influence on Herbert's poems. Among critics who argue that Herbert adopts the conventions of Elizabethan love songs and sonnets, it is agreed that Herbert's parodies are not travesties or harsh ridiculing satires. F. E. Hutchinson proposes that Herbert's use of the word "parody" in one of his titles fits

Dryden's description of parodies (Juvenal, Dedication, p. 34) as 'Verses patch'd up from great Poets, and turn'd into another Sense than their Author intended them'; it is not Herbert's intention to travesty . . . but to convert the profane to sacred use. (541)

Louis Martz builds on Hutchinson's gloss and commentary by suggesting that "sacred parody of love poetry plays an essential part in much of Herbert's best work . . . ," and Martz also stresses the "neutral sense" of parody (186). However, Rosemary Freeman contests Hutchinson's interpretation of Dryden's definition by asserting that in the dedication to Juvenal, Dryden was referring to burlesque ("Parody" 307). Freeman's own definition of parody comes close to the Renaissance idea of imitation when she states that in the seventeenth century, the poet trying to say something serious might apply a style overused in one context to another (307-8). In her essay, "Sacred 'Parody' of Love Poetry," Rosemond Tuve also opposes Hutchinson's idea that Herbert intended to displace secular love poetry with divine verse, and she refutes Martz's suggestion that this definition of parody is neutral. Because Herbert was a musician, she suggests a musical definition of parody which is truly neutral: it is the

"replacement of text for a known tune" (212). Just before Herbert's lifetime, the use of secular music for religious lyrics sung during the mass was widespread, and it is likely Herbert was aware of this when he titled one of his poems "A Parodie." Tuve does not claim that Herbert set out to write a parody mass, but she shows that he could have been aware of various forms of parody. Hence, she concludes that those who emphasize one aspect of parody above others commit an intentional fallacy.

Joseph Summers introduces another dimension to the debate. He admits love poetry's laments, pleas, and praises often provide a frame of reference for Herbert's religious poetry, but he asserts that:

the differences between the secular and the religious lyrics are more striking than the similarities, and Herbert would probably have insisted that in matters of real import the love poets had borrowed the language of Christianity rather than that he imitated them. (George Herbert 105)

Saad El-Gabalawy, in "George Herbert and the Ars Amatoria," provides specific examples of 'the language of Christianity' which Summers neglects to mention. These include Saint Augustine's Confessions and two poetic books of the Bible--the Psalms and the Song of Solomon. In another essay, "George Herbert and Caritas," Tuve, like Summers, emphasizes parallels between Herbert's poems and other religious expressions of love for God. She maintains that even though Herbert's words may be superficially similar to utterances in profane poetry, the nature of God's love for man alters the meanings of the words (204). Stanley Fish, in "The Dialectic of the Self in Herbert's Poetry,"

similarly notes "that Herbert baptizes language by making it subversive of its usual function" (159). And more recently, Thomas Merrill illustrates that poems which address God are fundamentally different from those which speak to another mortal: he refers to theological studies which show "it is the status of the object addressed which determines the grammar of the talk" (198).<sup>1</sup> The point made by Tuve, Fish, and Merrill is that a religious context transforms a text comprised of seemingly profane poetic language: words take on meanings which differ significantly from their connotations within secular experience. So the term "sacred parody" is justly applied to Herbert's poems if they make the reader aware of the difference between a secular and a sacred relationship. Therefore, combining an understanding of the conventions of courtly love poetry with knowledge of the style of the Bible and other religious writings will place the question of sacred parody in perspective.

Traditionally, certain colours and varieties of flowers have been associated with characteristics of the beloved. In the English medieval tradition of candidus rubicundus, the white lily symbolizes purity while the red rose represents love. In the Renaissance, the two colours and flowers became standard descriptions of a mistress' facial complexion. Due to the overuse of this commonplace comparison, poets began to question the tradition. In "Sonnet 130," Shakespeare claims, "I have seen roses damasked, red and white, / But no such roses see I in her cheeks" (5-6). Shakespeare's lines make us conscious of the difference between the natural beauty of damask roses and the artificial comparison of their beauty to a woman's. In a sonnet sent

to his mother in 1610 as a New Year's gift, the seventeen-year-old Herbert adds another dimension to criticism of the conventional compliments to women: "Sure Lord, . . . . / Roses and Lillies speak thee; and to make / A pair of Cheeks of them, is thy abuse" ("Sure Lord" 6-7). By addressing his poem to God who created the flowers, Herbert makes his readers aware of the contrast between God's creative power and the poet's creative ability. The flowers praise their Maker naturally by being beautiful: "they toil not, neither do they spin" (Matt. 6.28). In contrast, poets toil and spin,<sup>2</sup> ransacking the works of other poets for some "poor invention" ("Sure Lord" 9) or some convention to imitate, and their poetic clichés reduce the true beauty of God's creation.

"Love (I)" and "Love (II)" shed light on Herbert's attitudes towards love and poetry. "Love (I)" is addressed to "Immortall Love, the author" of the universe, and the poet laments that man has casually "parcel'd out thy glorious name, / And thrown it on the dust which thou hast made, / While mortall love doth all the title gain!" (3-5). Here, Herbert denounces the "idolatry" of women, not the love of women. But he also remonstrates against the reduction of human love: "Wit fancies beautie, beautie raiseth wit: / . . . they two play out the game" (9-10). The application of love's glorious name to the coy sport of seduction by words and beauty raises the question of whether a courtly game should be called love. In "Love (II)," the poet pleads:

Immortall Heat, O let thy greater flame  
 Attract the lesser to it: let those fires,  
 Which shall consume the world, first make it tame;



And kindle in our hearts such true desires,

As may consume our lusts, and make thee way. (1-5)

The poet prays that purifying flames of Divine love will annihilate lesser fires of lust. Significantly, in his Holy Sonnet, "I AM a little world . . . ," Donne ardently pleads with God to extinguish the "flames" of "lust and envie": "And burne me ô Lord, with a fiery zeale / Of thee and thy house, which doth in eating heale" (13-14). In a similar vein, Spenser addresses his "hungry soule" which has been "misled" by "false beauties flattring bait": "And looke at last vp to that soueraine light, / From whose pure beams al perfect beauty springs, / That kindleth loue in euery godly spright" ("An Hymne of Heavenly Beavtie" 295-97). These parallels between Herbert, Donne, and Spenser reflect the traditional approaches to sacred and profane love.

As well as its purifying power, the Divine fire is also a light which enables man to see spiritual realities. For instance, in "The Forerunners," Herbert reasons, "True beautie dwells on high: ours is a flame / But borrow'd thence to light us thither" (28-29). In the Confessions, faced with "temptations of the lusts of the flesh" and his eyes' "delight in fair forms, and vanities of them" (10.34, v.2, p.169), Augustine pleads for the inner light described in the Bible: "This is the light indeed; it is one, and one are all those who see and love that light. As for this corporeal light which I now spake of; it besauces this present life for her blind lovers, with a tempting and dangerous sweetness" (10.34, v.2, p.171). Like Augustine, Herbert was well aware of man's tendency to worship the creature instead of the Creator, and he also equates this with blindness: "Our eies shall see



"Dulnesse" attempts to offer God a supreme love song, and as J. B. Leishman points out:

There is that same blend of wit and tenderness which is characteristic of some of the best love-poetry of his age --even that conceit about red and white, . . . seems . . . in keeping with the tone of the poem, and not at all extravagant. (137)

The wit is evident when one brings Platonic and Christian traditions, as well as the conventions of profane love poetry, to an interpretation of the conceit about red and white. In "Dulnesse," the word "pure," modifying "red and white," suggests that the beauty traditionally associated with women is a lesser beauty than the love demonstrated by the Crucified. Thus, Herbert's conceit describing the beauty of the Crucified's love is part of an argument that true "Beautie and beauteous words should go together" ("The Forerunners" 30). Further support for this interpretation appears in the next stanza, as the poet suggests that all forms of beauty merely reflect Divine beauty: "When all perfections as but one appeare, / That those thy form doth show" (13-14). These concepts parallel ideas expressed in Plato's "Symposium" when Socrates repeats Diotima's assertion that the vision of true beauty will not

take the form of a face, or of hands, or of anything that is of the flesh. It will be neither words, nor knowledge, nor a something that exists in something else, such as a living creature, or the earth, or the heavens, or anything that is --but subsisting of itself and by itself in an eternal

oneness, while every lovely thing partakes of it in such sort that, however much the parts may wax and wane, it will be neither more or less, but still the same inviolable whole.

(562)

The weight of classical tradition supports Leishman's assertion that the conceit is "not at all extravagant."

In addition to the Platonic implications of "pure red and white," we are well reminded of Biblical precedents by Tuve in A Reading of George Herbert (149). She cites words from the Song of Solomon, which were occasionally "applied to Christ as the soul's lover" (149): "My beloved is white and ruddy" (5.10). Within the Canticles, the colours of red and white are connected closely to numerous references to the rose and the lily (2.1-2, 16; 3.5; 4.5). Tuve also illustrates that many Christian commentaries, including meditations attributed to Augustine, "relate the candidus to His [Christ's] divinity, the rubicundus to His Passion, or contrast the spotless loveliness of His birth and life to the bloody martyrdom of His unjust death" (Ibid. 149). So Tuve's critical commentary further substantiates Leishman's defence against claims that Herbert's use of the red and white conceit is extravagant. The associations of red and white were long-standing in both religious and secular traditions, and, as El-Gabalawy suggests, authors could imitate both ("George Herbert and the Ars Amatoria" 32).

Nevertheless, perhaps readers who find the association of red and white with Christ's death extravagant are not entirely wrong because "Dulnesse" is structured to disturb our comfortable expectations. In the first stanza of the poem, Herbert laments the dullness of his

ability to praise; in the second he describes the songs of earthly lovers; and in the opening of the third, he leads us to believe he is adopting the secular lover's sweet strains: "Thou art my lovelinesse, my life, my light / Beautie alone to me" (9-10). But the lover's strains or tunes referred to in "Dulnesse" are not modified by "sweet" as they are in "The Pearl." Instead, Herbert suggests that the "window songs" (18) or serenades of the wanton lover are "curious" (5), meaning that they are skillfully crafted or elaborately wrought (OED).

Ironically, "curious strains" describes what occurs as Herbert continues to sing his praise to God in language also used by earthly lovers. Red and white, emblematic colours of female beauty, strain curiously to become graphic descriptions of the Crucified's blood on His skin. As Coburn Freer illustrates, the hard d (and I would add the hard b) sounds in "bloudy death and undeserv'd" make the meter of the line tread heavily in contrast to the mellifluous quality of the opening lines of this third stanza (187). The change in rhythm and the graphic representation jar the reader to attention. As we focus on a meaning we did not expect, we become aware of the religious context in which Herbert presents his text of love. He is not just imitating conventions because this is common writing practice in the Renaissance. Herbert makes us aware of the difference between using the red and white conceit to portray Divine love as expressed through the Crucifixion and using it to describe man's love of the beauty of women. Merrill's commentary on "A Parodie" may also be applied to the language of "Dulnesse" and to how it is metamorphosed by the religious context:

Like all serious God-talk, it strives with whatever means it can to wrench, bully or cajole a generally uncooperative, earth-bound language structure into evoking awarenesses its grammar was originally designed to filter out. (205)

Herbert's wrenching and bullying of the red and white conceit may seem "extravagant" because it is intended to shock the reader's mind into awareness.

As Fish argues in "Catechizing the Reader," Herbert's poems are often constructed like a catechism: they are designed to lead the reader from what he knows to what he has not yet discovered (178). In The Country Parson, Herbert's recommendations for conducting the catechism illuminate the poetic technique used in "Dulnesse": "he thinks it the most useful way that a Pastor can take, to go over the same, but in other words: for many say the Catechisme by rote, as parrots, without ever piercing the sense of it" (256). One could say many read poems by applying a set of conventions, without ever piercing their sense. Herbert, like Socrates in the Dialogues of Plato, has in mind the discovery he wants his readers to make before he frames the poem: he subtly leads us to the discovery that secular poets do not have exclusive rights on literary traditions used to express love. Reading a Herbertian poem is an active process: the reader is required to continually re-evaluate the perspective from which he reads the poem.<sup>3</sup> The interplay between secular, Platonic, and Christian traditions and the rhetorical control of rhythm prevents the reader from applying a set of preconceived conventions to "Dulnesse" without piercing its sense. In other words, "Dulnesse" prompts readers to

question their own expectations, and as Herbert explains in The Country Parson, "men may sleep or wander; but when one is asked a question, he must discover what he is" (257). I am not proposing that the poet asks the reader questions about poetic conventions directly, but rather that the juxtaposition of Petrarchan, Platonic, and Christian traditions causes the reader to raise questions regarding the differences between physical descriptions and philosophical ideas or between secular poetic conventions and sacred traditions. The potent scheme of interrogatio, where the answer is plain and where the poet's point is made "sharpe and vehemente" (Peacham Sig. L3<sup>r</sup>), is submerged in "Dulnesse." Thus, Herbert disguises his persuasive art.

Nevertheless, upon entry into The Temple, the reader finds the poet's open admission of his persuasive intent. He uses his "utmost art" ("Praise (II)" 9) to entice one with "sweet youth" ("The Church-porch" 1) to "Hearken unto a Verser, who may by chance / Rhyme thee to good, and make a bait of pleasure" ("The Church-porch" 3-4). These lines are written by a poet who knows "the wayes of Pleasure, the sweet strains" ("The Pearl" 21), and recognizes the value of pleasure as a tool of persuasion. Herbert must have been aware of the commonplace portrayal of the mistress as bait in Renaissance works.<sup>4</sup> He would have known that lines seeded with words like "sweet," "pleasure," and "bait" would remind readers of secular verses. Just as a mistress' attributes act as bait and promise pleasures, so poems which promise the pleasure of discovery behave as bait. However, we are well reminded by Sharon Seelig that words like "sweet," "pleasure," and

"bait" are key notes in a theme which "will dominate the rest of The Temple and be redefined by it" (15).

Herbert's complaints to God in "Affliction I,"--for instance, "When first thou didst entice to thee my heart" (1); "Thou didst betray me to a lingring book" (39); "I took thy sweetened pill . . ." (47)--all call to mind the delightful verses offered in "The Church Porch" as bait to entice sweet youth to linger over The Temple. But the reader who expects to taste only sweet phrases and lovely metaphors, like the persona of "Affliction I" who expects a continual diet of "milk and sweetnesse" (19), will be surprised. Based on Paul's message to the Hebrews, the speaker's desire to be maintained on such a diet indicates his spiritual immaturity: "For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is as a babe . . . (5.13). The mature Christian recognizes that the Christian experience does not always seem sweet or delightful (Seelig 15). Throughout The Temple, Herbert presents both the joy and the pain of sacrifice. In "The Agonie," "Love is that liquor sweet and most divine / Which my God feels as bloud; but I, as wine" (17-18). Likewise in "The Flower," the persona would not know "How fresh, O Lord, how sweet and clean / Are thy returns" (1-2) if he had never felt separated from God. The fugue which Herbert plays on the word "sweet" ranges from the bitter tone of "sweetened pill" in "Affliction I" to the smooth expression of appreciation for the Eucharistic sign of love, the "liquor sweet" in "The Agonie." This reveals the importance of the poem as context because the same word can be used for both complaining and praising.



Herbert brings the instruments of secular poetry, Biblical tradition, and rhetoric to the poems of complaint. One recurring complaint throughout The Temple involves feeling separated from the object of love. Lyrics which lament the real or perceived absence or unresponsiveness of the beloved appear frequently in both secular and sacred traditions. In the Song of Songs, the anguish of separation is apparent in "my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone . . . I sought him, but I could not find him. I called him, but he gave me no answer (5.6). Herbert repeatedly laments his feelings of isolation, and continually expresses his fear that God does not hear his cries. In "The Search" he asks, "Whither, O, whither art thou fled, / My Lord, my Love?" (1-2); in "Longing" he calls out, "Bowels of pitie, heare! / Lord of my soul, love of my minde, / Bow down thine eare!" (19-21); in "Church-lock and key," he admits, "I know it is my sinne, which locks thine eares, / And bindes thy hands, / Out-crying my requests, drowning my tears" (1-3); and in "Deniall" when the persona perceives his devotions do not "pierce / Thy silent eares" (1-2), he accuses God of cruelty:

O that thou shouldst give dust a tongue  
To crie to thee,  
And then not heare it crying! all day long  
My heart was in my knee,  
But no hearing. (16-20)

Initially, these lines might seem to depict the human persona as the lamenting, Petrarchan lover and God as the cruel mistress who is deaf to his pleading. This Petrarchan tradition was so prevalent in the

secular love poetry of the Renaissance that it would be folly to suggest that Herbert was parodying particular poets. The traditional Petrarchan lament can be exemplified by a few lines from "Sonnet 44" in Sidney's Astrophel and Stella: "And yet she hears and yet no pity I find, / But more I cry, less grace she doth impart. / Alas, . . ." (5-7).<sup>5</sup> The similarity between Herbert's complaint in "Deniall" and Astrophel's typical Petrarchan grievance is strengthened because both Herbert and Sidney use exclamations like "O" and "Alas" to convey their petitions forcefully. Peacham suggests exclamation may be employed as a device of pathopeia "when the Oratour [or poet] by lamenting some case . . . moueth them to pittye . . ." (Sig. P3<sup>r</sup>). However, just because different poets use the same device to evoke their beloveds' pity, it does not necessarily follow that their poems of persuasion are the same.

Despite the common element of lament supported by exclamation, Herbert's expressions of discontent differ from the frustrated utterances of the Petrarchan lover. Herbert's grievances are transformed because they are directed towards God. In "Deniall," Herbert reminds us of the Divine Creator's power and love as He made man from the dust and gave him the gift of speech. The persona, however, turns this benevolent act into one of calculated cruelty by suggesting that God does not listen to His creation. But if the speaker really believed God was so malevolent, would he risk speaking to Him in such an impudent manner? As the speaker questions God's apparent indifference, we begin to examine the speaker's indictment in relation to his own words and actions. The speaker's logic, based on

the assumption that God's silence means that He does not listen to him, is questionable, and his lack of gratefulness for having been created is reprehensible. God's charitable tolerance of unjustified complaints and faulty logic exposes the complainer as the one who is most cruel and insensitive. In "George Herbert and Caritas," Tuve asserts that "the forms and attitudes of secular love pleas are little use as models in a situation where the partner who pleads is also the partner who is unready" (178). But "little" implies the secular forms and attitudes are of some use: "Secular love, appropriately qualified, precipitates a series of 'love stories' in the reader's mind which ultimately causes the penny to drop and the religious depth to occur" (Merrill 207).

"Religious depth" has implications, I think, for the claim that Herbert's parodies do not criticize his models. As Tuve illustrates, Herbert does not attack the "Song," attributed to William Herbert, third earl of Pembroke, when he borrows Pembroke's form and echoes the first few lines, and titles his poem "A Parodie" ("Sacred Parody" 207-49). Richard Strier adds that Herbert probably did not "intend 'A Parodie' to be witty. It is a an extremely serious piece" (Love Known 239). Herbert turns Pembroke's "valediction fobidding mourning" (Ibid. 239) upside down by

speaking from the point of view of the one who is left rather than of the one who is leaving. He is the passive partner. . . . Where Pembroke's poem is devoted primarily to the solution to the apparent dilemma of the opening, Herbert is devoted primarily to evoking and analyzing the dilemma. The great advantage Herbert has over Pembroke in making use

of the you or I "cannot be alone" conceit is that Herbert is able actually to mean what he says. . . . Pembroke's poem offers formal possibilities for a mode of perception more complex than it attains. (Strier Love known 240-41)

Our appreciation develops in part from the depth and complexity which Herbert gives to the form of Pembroke's lyric by putting it in a sacred context.

Similarly, we can admire Herbert's sacred rendering of a line from one of John Donne's profane love lyrics, "The Sun Rising." In this song, the lover wakes up and mocks the sun: "Thine age askes ease, and since thy duties bee / To warme the world, that's done in warming us. / Shine here to us, and thou art everywhere" (27-29). The lover perceives that the whole world is "contracted" in him and his mistress, and so the sun can warm the world by warming the lovers in bed. Their bed is the centre of the universe around which the sun revolves. In "The Temper (I)," the echoed line appears at the poem's conclusion. Here, the speaker claims he will accept both the highs and lows of a relationship with God because "Thy power and love, my love and trust / Make one place ev'ry where" (27-28). Unlike the lover who confines his reality to the bedroom, Herbert's speaker's reality expands as he recognizes that God is everywhere. When he is with God through his own love and trust, he feels connected to the rest of the world through God's all-embracing love and power. Without assailing the profane models of love poetry which he found in Donne and Pembroke, Herbert's serious thought and deep feelings make his models seem trifling by comparison. Tuve correctly maintains that Herbert does not deny the



in religious terms as basic elements in the soul's relation with God: "Sighs and groans . . . how welcome to God . . . They are musick to him . . . how necessary they are and advantagious to man . . . they waft the godly to bliss . . . Sighs and tears are the souls artillery . . . and storm heaven-gate . . . One good sigh better than all worldly joys" (Sig. K2<sup>V</sup>). . . . These characteristic features of Herbert's poetry are not sentimental effusions but constitute a sign of high spirituality, having a ritualistic potency.

(El-Gabalawy "A Seventeenth-Century Reading" 167)

Such proofs of sincere emotion also play an important part in the Psalms. The Psalmist cries: "Return, O Lord . . . I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears" (6.4-6); ". . . give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears" (39.12); "My tears have been my meat day and night while they continually say, unto me, where is thy God?" (42.3); "put thou my tears into thy bottle . . ." (56.8). The cries and groans in Herbert's laments are generally similar to the Psalmist's laments. In "Praise (III)," the poet alludes specifically to Psalm 56.8: "But when mine eyes / Did weep to heav'n, they found a bottle there" (26-27). This clear parallel indicates Herbert's awareness that tears enhance the Psalmist's lament.

Many of Herbert's lyrics take the form of a communion with God, and sometimes they seem almost confessional. It is interesting to note that often

St. Augustine's Confessions overflow with tears and sighs of love, expressed in burning words of longing addressed to the person of the Beloved: "Woe is me! Lord, have pity on me. Woe is me! Behold, I do not hide my wounds." . . . 'The streams of my eyes gushed out an acceptable sacrifice to the [sic] . . . I cried to thee: "And thou, O Lord, how long, O Lord? Wilt thou be angry forever?"' (El-Gabalawy "George Herbert and the Ars Amatoria" 30)

That tears, sighs, and groans are effective in revealing a speaker's sincerity is proved by critics who would read The Temple as Herbert's personal spiritual autobiography.

God, of course, is not influenced by the art of pleading, but by honest expressions of the desire for spiritual intimacy with Him or by true feelings of repentance. In "The Bag," for example, Christ reassures man that "Sighs will convey / Any thing to me" (41-42). And while contemplating the "glorie . . . pomp and state" (7) of the temple which Solomon offered to God, the speaker of "Sion" realizes "All Solomons sea of brasse and world of stone / Is not so deare to thee as one good grone" (17-18). God does not require man to be eloquent or articulate or to be able to offer Him glorious and rich expressions of love. All He asks is for man to express a genuine desire for Him:

But grones are quick, and full of wings,  
And all their motions upward be;  
And ever as they mount, like larks they sing;  
The note is sad, yet musick for a King. ("Sion" 21-24)

Nevertheless, overemphasizing affinities between Herbert's tears, sighs, and groans and those found in other Christian writings is as reductive as laying too much stress on their parallels in secular love poetry. Helen Vendler's comments on "Affliction (I)" warn against trying to fit Herbert's poems into a particular category:

the personal hesitations, accusations, self-justifications and remorse . . . show Herbert's care and accuracy in describing his own notions of God as they changed from episode to episode. There is a remarkable lack of censorship; even with the Psalms as precedent, Herbert shows his absolute willingness to say how things were . . . to follow the truth of feeling. (43)

"Personal," "self," "own notions of God," and "truth of feeling" imply that Herbert takes universal complaints and breathes individual experience and knowledge into them. I would add that the reverse is also true: the typical Christian experience allows Herbert to re-evaluate the individual experience. This two-way relationship between tradition and personal knowledge and feelings not only revitalizes the conventions but it weaves a rich poetic texture in Herbert's poems of complaint.

Besides the interplay of personal and traditional elements in Herbert's poetic laments, there is also a relationship between complaint and praise. Arnold Stein illustrates that the themes of lament, love, and praise often coexist within a Herbertian poem, and he sees a process of metamorphosis occurring in many of Herbert's best laments: "Transforming the recalcitrant human materials into praise is



one of the hardest poetic achievements and effective praise transforms the man himself" (117). The movement from laments and petitions to praise in Herbert's poems<sup>6</sup> has parallels in both secular and sacred traditions. Louis Martz finds this overall structure or movement in both Sidney's and Herbert's poems, and to demonstrate this, he compares Sonnet 47 in "Astrophel and Stella" to "The Collar." Just as Herbert's persona's rebellion is easily vanquished by the call from God, so Astrophel's "rebellion is easily quelled by a word or a look" (Martz 270) from Stella. More specific echoes of Sidney's work<sup>7</sup> occur elsewhere in Herbert's poetry and therefore, Martz's point is not one to be dismissed. Nevertheless, it should be noted that dramatic intervention of the beloved to subdue complaints also appears in the Psalms. In Psalm 12, David begins with a combined plea and complaint: "Help Lord; for the godly man ceaseth. . . . They speak vanity every one with his neighbor . . ." (1-2). The complaints build until God intervenes: "For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now I will arise, saith the Lord . . ." (5). Admittedly, in terms of imagery, "The Collar" is closer to Sidney's "Sonnet 47" than to Psalm 12: images of bondage and servitude (including the suit of livery, the cage, and the rope) in "The Collar" parallel Astrophel's concern that as a lover, he wears the mark of a slave and the "yoke of tyranny" (4).

The reassurance provided by the intervention in "The Collar," however, resembles that of Psalm 12 more closely. David responds to God's reassurance with words of trust and praise: "The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified

seven times" (6). Likewise, the speaker in "The Collar" reacts to the gentle and reassuring rebuke of "Child," with "My Lord," thereby indicating his submission and praise. I am suggesting that God's reproach is reassuring because the speaker's complaint, "shall I ever sigh and pine?" (3), betrays a feeling that God has abandoned him. Like a child who feels ignored, he threatens to run away because he is tired of pining for attention; of course, he thinks that he wants to go "abroad" (2, 28) to satisfy his yearning for the sensual pleasures which the world offers. The speaker is not aware that his desire for God may be as strong as his desire to experience the world, but God's rebuke reveals that He pays close attention to the feelings of His children, and He addresses the speaker's unrecognized fear. Chana Bloch points out that "same expression of assurance" (272) is a common feature of Herbert's and the Psalmist's complaints.

In Sonnet 47, Stella's glance vanquishes Astrophel's rebellion against love. The sonnet begins with Astrophel protesting that he wants to be free from feelings of love, but just one look from Stella impels him to say, "Oh me, that eye / Doth make my heart give to my tongue the lie" (13-14). The lines praise Stella's power over Astrophel and reveal his passive resignation: he admits that her eyes make him think his desire for freedom was just an illusion. Stella's eyes subdue Astrophel, but they provide no reassurance because the emphasis is on her power over him, not her love for him. This form of praise allows Astrophel to blame Stella, and unlike David's and Herbert's persona's recognition that God does what is best for them, it hardly "transforms the man himself," to use Stein's words. Astrophel

abandons reason and resigns his will to Stella; whereas Herbert's speaker and David reasonably submit to God, and thus, their rebellious wills are transformed.

The intimacy between Herbert's personae and God combines with their "detached involvement and passionate observation" (Stein 93), and this contributes to the resolution of many of the spiritual conflicts. A by-product of this combination of qualities is cultivated, witty humour. Martz clearly illustrates that Herbert's conversational tone resembles Sidney's neat, sophisticated, witty tone more often than it resembles Donne's dialectical talk (267-68). These general comments regarding tone can be applied specifically to the gentlemanly humour of both the speaker in "The Temper (I)" and Astrophel, and may be extended to the humour of David in Psalm 6. Their humour is possible because they are all able to observe themselves and their greatest fears with interest and amused detachment. In Sonnet 10, Astrophel remains detached from himself by personifying his reason. As he observes his well-trained reason being blinded and rendered helpless by the "downright blows" (11) from Stella's eye beams, his detachment allows him to see the humour behind the situation he fears. Neil Rudenstein describes this comic aspect as "just another reflection of Astrophel's ability to convert dismay into wit" (212). Herbert also endows the persona of "The Temper (I)" with a similar ability to convert his greatest fear into wit. The speaker fears God's absence, and complains that the experience is hell for him. To overcome the feeling of distance and his anxieties, he asks God to take him up to heaven. His proposal is a bargain which would bring mutual benefit to God and

himself: "Then of a sinner thou art rid, / And I of hope and fear" (19-20). Like *Astrophel*, the speaker is aware of his apprehensions, but his humour helps him cope with them. Similarly, David bargains with God jestingly, and thereby, he conveys his anxiety about death to God directly: ". . . oh save me for thy mercies' sake. / For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?" (Ps. 6.4-5). Although David in Psalm 6 and the persona of "The Temper (I)" have intimate relationships which allow them to joke with God, theirs is not the intimacy of lovers. Rather it is the intimacy of one friend nudging another, or in the case of "The Temper (I)," where Herbert wants to "roost and nestle" (18) under God's roof, perhaps it is the intimacy of a child manipulating the friendship he has with a parent. The affinities between Sidney and Herbert, as noted by Martz, usually can be extended to the Bible, especially to the Psalms. I have not drawn these parallels to illustrate that Herbert imitates the style of Sidney or the Psalms, but rather to show that any discussion of similarities should include a discussion of differences, and that words like "intimacy" must be specifically defined and qualified by their poetic contexts.

Context is especially important when examining words which are used to describe both Divine and human love. The language of love is manifest in the Biblical portrayal of Christ as the bridegroom. Psalm 19 presents the heavens as a ". . . tabernacle for the sun, / Which is as bridegroom coming out of his chamber . . ." (4-5). Here, the Psalmist's reference to the "sun" is poetic and anticipates Christ's identifying Himself as "the light of the world" (John 8.12). In

Isaiah, the connection between God and the bridegroom is clearer:

". . . and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee" (62.5). Similarly in "Ungratefulnesse," Herbert portrays God as the generous bridegroom rejoicing over man:

The Trinitie, and Incarnation:

Thou hast unlockt them both,

And made them jewels to betroth

The work of thy creation

Unto thy self in everlasting pleasure. (8-12)

Augustine's reference to Christ as the bridegroom in his account of the Incarnation parallels Herbert's "Ungratefulnesse" in its attempt to suggest the infinite love of God: Christ

came forth to us; coming first into the Virgin's womb, whence the humanity was married unto him, . . . and thence came he like a bridegroom out of his chamber, rejoicing as a giant to run his course. . . . he ran, crying both in words, deeds, death, descent, and ascension; still crying to us to return unto him. (Confessions 4.12, v.1, p.181)

In the Confessions and "Ungratefulnesse," the Divine bridegroom woos the heart of man in many ways: in Augustine's account, Christ seeks man in words, deeds, death, descent, and ascension; in Herbert's poem, God demonstrates his love through the mysteries of the Trinity and Incarnation. In "The Church Militant," Herbert depicts God as the bridegroom of the Church: "But above all, thy Church and Spouse doth prove / Not the decrees of power, but bands of love" (9-10). If we recall "The Church-floore," we know that the hearts of individuals form

the foundation of the Church, and this is part of the answer to the question in "Mattens":

My God, what is a heart,  
That thou shouldst it so eye, and woove,  
Powring upon it all thy art,

As if thou hadst nothing els to do? (9-12)

Here the use of interrogatio conveys the poet's wonder at the extent of Divine love for man's small heart. No human bridegroom's love, no matter how unself-regarding, could be as infinite as the love expressed by God's patient wooing and his betrothal gifts of the Incarnation and Trinity. In "Ungratefulnesse," man's unwillingness to unlock his "poore cabinet of bone" (29) and give God his heart after God has given him such generous betrothal gifts cannot but make us wonder about man's character. But the sequel to "Ungratefulnesse," entitled "Gratefulnesse," pleads: "Thou hast giv'n so much to me, / Give one thing more, a gratefull heart" (1-2). Beneath Herbert's humour lies his recognition that he can only begin to imitate and thereby praise Divine love if God provides him with a heart that is grateful for His gifts. Once grateful, the heart can demonstrate this by offering itself as one "whose pulse may be / Thy praise" (31-32). Human love begins to rise to a Divine level when it imparts its wings on God's ("Easter wings" 19).

Words of tenderness and love fill the praises Herbert sings and the prayers he whispers to God. In "The Call" he sings, "Come, my Joy, my Love, my Heart: / Such a Joy, as none can move" (9-10); in "The Search" God is his Lord and his Love (2); in "The Glance" God has a

"sweet and gracious eye" (1); in "Love III" he addresses Christ as "my deare" (9); in "A Parodie" he refers to God as "Souls joy" (1); and in "The 23rd Psalme" Herbert asserts, "While he is mine, and I am his, / What can I want or need?" (3-4). Such words of endearment occur frequently in secular love poetry, but in Herbert's poems they are submerged in a Christian context. The lines cited from "The 23rd Psalme," for instance, recall one of the more subdued statements of affection from the Song of Solomon: "My beloved is mine, and I am his" (2.16). And in his Confessions, "Augustine like Herbert never tires of calling God in caressing terms: 'my love,' 'my light,' 'my delight,' 'my hope,' 'my life,' 'my physician,' 'my sweet tender Lord'" (El-Gabalawy "George Herbert and the Ars Amatoria" 30).

Herbert's expressions are tender and intimate, but are they the passionate language of love associated with the Counter-Reformation? El-Gabalawy maintains that Herbert was influenced by the Song of Solomon, but that "he was sober enough to avoid its erotic language of love which we find in Crashaw or the Spanish mystics especially St. Teresa" (Ibid. 30). Strier, in "Changing the Object: Herbert and Excess," concurs. Strier's argument is a response to Malcolm MacKenzie Ross's assertion that in "Bitter-sweet" there is "an almost Teresian yearning after the 'wound of love' which hurts much yet is desired" (177). Strier perceives this as an apt description of Richard Crashaw's "A Hymn to . . . Saint Teresa," but not of Herbert's poem. Crashaw depicts angels leaving their choir to become "love's souldiers" or heavenly cupids which "exercise their archerie" on Saint Teresa, and he anticipates her complaints:

Of a sweet & subtle PAIN  
 Of intolerable IOYES;  
 Of a DEATH in which who dyes  
 Loues his death, and dyes again.  
 And would for euer so be slain. . . .

How kindly will thy gentle HEART

Kisse the sweetly killing DART! (98-102, 105-6)

In contrast, love's arrow "is not erotically treated" as a source of masochistic ecstasy in Herbert's poems (Strier "Changing" 25). In "Discipline," Herbert describes Heavenly Love as "a man of warre" (22) who "can shoot, / And can hit from far" (23-24), but the speaker sees these arrows not as bringing him ecstasy, but humility (Strier Ibid. 26): "That which wrought on thee, / Brought thee low, / Needs work on me" (26-28). And in "Longing," Herbert does not desire the dart of affliction as St. Teresa does, but asks God to end his pain: "Pluck out thy dart, / And heal my troubled breast which cries" (82-83). Strier's clinching point involves a comparison of the oxymorons in Herbert's "Bitter-sweet" to those in Crashaw's "Hymn." Herbert's persona's response to a Lord who "dost, love yet strike; / Cast down, yet help afford" (2-3) is to "complain, yet praise: / . . . bewail, approve / And all [his] sowre-sweet dayes / . . . lament, and love" (5-8). As Strier maintains, this pain "is pain; it is not an 'intolerably' intense form of joy. Herbert, like Job, loves God in spite of not because of, this pain" (Strier "Changing" 27). The ability to perceive one's immediate experience of affliction in relation to the patterns presented in the Bible or in one's own past experience of Divine



testing or discipline enables one to understand that being the object of Divine love does not free one from pain; acceptance of pain is not a desire for it.

Further support that Herbert does not set out to transfer the sensuality of human love to Divine love in the spirit of the Counter-Reformation can be seen in his revisions of the Williams manuscript. In the early version of "Whitsunday," Herbert portrays God as a mother in the final stanza:

Show yet thy breasts can not be dry  
But yet from them ioyes purle for ever  
Melt into blessings all sky,

So wee may cease to praise thee never.<sup>8</sup>

The depiction of the milk of joy flowing from the Divine breast recalls the words of the medieval mystic, Walter Hilton. In The Goad of Love, a translation of the Stimulus Amoris, formerly attributed to St. Bonaventure, Hilton articulates his desire to be a child of God.

Christ

vouchsafeth to bear my soul as his child within his blessed  
sides. But I dread over soon to be sperred out from the  
delices that I now feel. Certainly if he cast me out, he  
shall nevertheless as my mother give me suck of his paps and  
bear me in his arms. (51)

The image of sucking at God's breast is not erotic, but sensual. So it is significant that Herbert discards the image by completely rewriting the original stanza in his revision of "Whitsunday."

The assertion that Herbert tempers sensual and erotic impulses in his poetry does not mean that he ignores human sexuality. Although Richard Strier argues vehemently that Herbert, unlike Crashaw, does not transfer sensual, worldly passions to God, he recognizes subtle suggestions of sexuality in Herbert's verse. For instance, he agrees with Joseph Summers that the imagery of ". . . the wayes of Pleasure, the sweet strains, / The lullings and the relishes of it" ("The Pearl," 21-22) is musical, but he adds that "the implicit reference is sexual. 'Sweet strains' blends both realms brilliantly and the reader's mind cannot help but fill in 'it'" (Love Known 89). Likewise, Helen Vendler observes a "tentative sexuality" in images of "'budding' and 'shooting up' and later 'swelling'" in "The Flower" (51). The keywords in Vendler's and Strier's interpretations are "tentative" and "implicit." The reader may entertain such possibilities, but as we shall discover, ultimately, the poems of The Temple strive to make us aware of much larger definitions of love.

In "Love (III)," numerous critics have recognized the sexual metaphor in the opening and closing lines:

Love bade me welcome: yet my soul drew back,

Guiltie of dust and sinne.

But quick-ey'd Love, observing me grow slack

From my first entrance in,

Drew nearer to me, . . .

You must sit down, sayes Love, and taste my meat:

So I did sit and eat. (1-5, 17-18)

In reference to the implication of "a sexual encounter between an

inhibited or impotent man and a gently loving, patient woman," Chana Bloch remarks, "it is unlikely that" Herbert

would have intended an explicitly sexual scene. At all events, I hardly think Herbert would have used the sexual metaphor here without the precedent of the Song of Songs. I would suggest that in this respect the Bible has freed his imagination to more direct expression than he would otherwise have attempted. (111)

Bloch's justification of the metaphor is sound, but she does not address Greg Crossan's assertion that "'taste my meat' may be loosely paraphrased as 'enjoy my flesh.' The point of the analogy is that both physical and spiritual love require a purgation of guilt-feelings before there can be consummation or atonement (at-one-ment)" (41). Some parallels may exist between physical and spiritual loves, but the two are not entirely analogous. Janis Lull explains:

if the fallen imagination has interpreted the encounter sexually, so much the better for an ending that seems like a surprise even though the reader has known it all along. (Herbert's readers, in particular, would have heard echoes of Luke 12:37: "he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.") . . . "Love" (III) considers and rejects sexuality as an image of humanity's love relationship with God. Eroticism is replaced not with a disembodied spirituality, but with a Christian doctrine rooted in the life of the flesh, in a bodily need even more basic than sex--the need for food. (13-14)

Lull is correct when she asserts that the reader may be surprised by his own fallen imagination, but I would respond that man's need for food is also a metaphor for spiritual food. Herbert's readers would know how Christ answered Satan's temptation: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4.4). The Holy Communion service to which "Love (III)" alludes is a symbol of man's need for spiritual food.

Herbert is aware of the carnality of man, but he is always seeking to direct man's attention towards God. In The Country Parson, he maintains:

This is the skill, and doubtlesse the Holy Scripture intends thus much, when it condescends to the naming of a plough, a hatchet, a bushell, leaven, boyes piping and dancing; shewing that things of ordinary use are not only to serve the way of drudgery, but to be washed, and cleansed, and serve for lights even of Heavenly Truths. (The Country Parson 257)

And in "The Forerunners," he speaks to language, reminding the "sweet phrases" and "lovely metaphors" that they "Of stews and brothels onely knew the doores, / Then did I wash you with my tears, and more, / Brought you to Church well drest and clad" (14-17). Even language which has been associated with stews and brothels can be washed with tears of repentance. After this baptism, it is transformed and can go to Church well dressed and serve as lights of heavenly truths.

Baptism, of course, is a symbol of purification, regeneration, conversion, and consecration. This calls to mind the literary baptism which appears in Herbert's "Jordan" poems. The titles of these poems,

as Hutchinson observes, may be explained in many ways: "Grossart suggests that Herbert having crossed into his promised land, can now take Jordan for his Helicon" (495n), his river of inspiration. Hutchinson thinks it is more likely that the title alludes to the story of Naaman in 2 Kings 5.10-14. Naaman is cured of his leprosy when he overcomes his pride and agrees to follow the advice of Elisha's messenger and wash in the undesirable Jordan river. In "Jordan (I)," the poet-figure does not want to wash away the elaborate "fictions" of profane poets; he merely asserts there should be room for poets who want to plainly say, "My God, My King" (15). Perhaps there is some smugness in his depiction of himself as tolerant of secular poets (he declares, "let them sing") while they are intolerant and would "punish" him for his loss of rhyme. Nevertheless, in "Jordan (II)," the poet recognizes his vanity and "long pretence" (16). As Tuve points out, Herbert realizes "his Jordans never stayed crossed" (A Reading 196), and recognizes the need for purification, regeneration, and reconsecration is unending. He is also intensely aware that seemingly pious language could be covering sins of intellectual pride.

Some critics, in their attempt to rewrite Herbert for the modern intellect, focus on the fertility of language or on erotic implications alone while ignoring the religious context and didactic purpose of the poems.<sup>9</sup> Jonathan Goldberg, in an attempt to demonstrate infinite interpretive possibilities, which he regards as the pleasure of the text, interprets the subtitle of The Temple, Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations, by taking a few words from poems out of context:

Could the title be a restatement of the quotation with its joining of sacred and private (profane?), written and spoken? . . . Or is the title page a scene of masturbation? Narcissistic encounter with the ideal other, a voice become a text, a scenario? Gloss the ejaculation: "We are shooters both" (Artillerie, line 25); "And ev'n my verse, when by the ryme and reason / The word is, Stay, sayes ever, Come" (Home, lines 75-76). A scene of scattered seed, shooting stars, and the ejaculation traces of a forestalled and productive path. . . . (110-11)

Why does Goldberg disregard the fact that "ejaculation" also means "a short prayer darted up to God, often in an emergency" (OED)? And why does he ignore the lines from "Artillerie" which gloss the speaker's reference to "shooters" as prayers (ll. 19-21)? He also neglects the subject index in the editions of The Temple from 1656 to 1709, where ". . . the indexer takes the poet's fervent prayer to the 'Lord' to 'come,' reiterated in such poems as 'Home' or 'The Call,' to mean that Christ is importuned to hasten his second coming" (El-Gabalawy "A Seventeenth-Century Reading" 32). Although Goldberg admits to taking words from their sacred contexts (110), it is interesting to note that Herbert did not approve of basing interpretations on isolated definitions. In The Country Parson, he advocates drawing out choice observations from

the whole text, as it lyes entire, and unbroken in the Scripture it self. This he thinks naturall, and sweet, and grave. Whereas the other way of crumbling a text into small

parts, . . . hath neither in it sweetnesse, nor gravity, nor variety, since the words apart are not Scripture, but a dictionary. . . . (The Country Parson 235)

Goldberg and modern readers are free to pull a few words from The Temple and ignore the religious context in which the words are offered, provided such "pleasures of the text" are not confused with George Herbert's rhetorical practices which use aesthetic delights to reveal heavenly truths. By focusing on language's copious qualities or its erotic implications and by ignoring Herbert's use of language as a tool of instruction and persuasion, critics like Goldberg attempt to kidnap Herbert from his Christian milieu. Agreed, we need to be aware of modern critical interests and of our tendency to interpret earlier cultures through our own. But past history is an integral part of rhetorical criticism because the text is a product of its culture, and it seeks to have an effect or influence on its culture. Too often studies of influence ignore this dialectical relationship, and to ignore the didactic and persuasive elements of The Temple reduces the power of its poetry.

The conventions of seventeenth-century love songs do have a role to play in Herbert's poetry, but so do Christian and rhetorical traditions. The various traditions are filtered through the poet's design to move, delight, and teach. If we disregard the poetic context in which a particular convention functions or if we emphasize one convention and ignore other traditions, we unravel Herbert's wreath of praise. Instead of being left with a significant appreciation for his work of art, critics who fall into this trap are left holding one

strand of what was once a rich poetic tapestry. So the question is not whether Herbert weaves "a new webbe" in the looms of secular verse, but how he creates a complex pattern as he weaves together the threads from the Bible, Christian devotional works, secular lyrics, and rhetorical manuals on the frame of his own sensibility. The texts and traditions which enter The Temple are transformed by their relationships with each other, and this reflects the pattern of changes we see in Herbert's personae--changes which develop because of their relationships with God.



### Conclusion

As we have seen, George Herbert's poetic rhetoric is preeminently designed for the purpose of delightful and persuasive instruction. Proverbs, vocabulary drawn from daily life, and narrative allegories unite Divine mysteries and complex theological thoughts with familiar words which appeal to the ear and with the recognizable forms of speech and fiction that can be easily grasped by the mind and sustained imaginatively. The open-endedness of stories, the enigmatic elements of emblems, the knot-like structure of proverbial sayings, all cause the reader to discover that man can only gain a glimpse of Divine truths and mysteries in this world. Only after death will he come face to face with God and be able to fully comprehend Divine mysteries. Hence, Herbert's simple diction and natural phrases should not be equated with a simple-minded understanding of Christianity or a simplistic use of rhetoric. His sense of irony and his poetic dialogues between God and man reveal his awareness of man's tendency to abuse rhetoric. But his recognition of this abuse does not translate into cynicism, and his poems demonstrate his belief that the aesthetic manipulation of language can be used effectively for ethical persuasion.

Herbert's zeal for persuasion and his technical accomplishments are intimately related to his spiritual climate. The issue of influence is complex: The Temple is informed by Herbert's Christian sensibility and is influenced, in part, by his rhetorical training, but it is also a work which uses Christianity and rhetoric to influence

individuals, and thereby, society. Through the rhetorical art of poetry, he attempts to extol God's love and glory, and communicate them for his readers' spiritual edification. His flexible use of particular devices demonstrates there is no single delightful way to teach Divine truths. The diversity of the poet's audience reflects the complexity of the Divine Creator while the various effects of selected rhetorical devices reveal Herbert's desire to recognize God's glorious complexity and to convey it to others. As a poet-preacher, Herbert realizes that rhetoric can be used as God's instrument, and he believes that Divine inspiration is the ultimate source of spiritual energia which animates religious poetry with the power to transform human perceptions. For Herbert, Divine inspiration is "the famous stone / That turneth all to gold" ("The Elixir" 23-24).

## Notes

Chapter 1

<sup>1</sup> In his prefatory remarks to The Country Parson, Herbert states: "I have resolved to set down the Form and Character of a true Pastour, that I may have a Mark to aim at: which also I will set as high as I can, since hee shoots higher that threatens the Moon, then hee that aims at a Tree" (224).

<sup>2</sup> In On Christian Doctrine, Augustine writes:

Some things are to be enjoyed, others to be used. . . .

Those things which are to be enjoyed make us blessed. Those things which are to be used help and, as it were sustain us as we move toward blessedness in order that we may gain and cling to those things which make us blessed. (1.3.3)

He adds that we should use this world "so that by means of corporal and temporal things we may comprehend the eternal and spiritual. The things which are to be enjoyed are the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit" (1.4.4, 1.5.5). For other applications of Augustine's distinction between use and enjoyment to Herbert's works, see Rosemond Tuve, "George Herbert and Caritas" (173-184) and Heather Asals, Equivocal Predication (57-62).

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed account of the fruit or vine as a symbol for Christ, see Tuve, A Reading of George Herbert (112-17).

<sup>4</sup> Although Dr. El-Gabalawy's comments are made in reference to "The Sacrifice" and "Redemption," they can be extended to "The Bag."

Likewise, Rosemond Tuve's remark about "The Sacrifice" can be applied to the other two poems.

<sup>5</sup> Chana Bloch argues that Herbert could have created such ironies and antitheses by "clashing together two biblical passages that are linked by a common word" (70). For a detailed account of how "The Sacrifice" could be read in relation to the Scriptures, see her Spelling the Word (65-79).

<sup>6</sup> Dr. Ronald Bond graciously allowed me to read the typescript of his paper, "God's Back Parts," which will appear in Silence, the Sacred and the Word, eds. E. D. Blodgett and H. G. Coward (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier UP, forthcoming 1988).

<sup>7</sup> For an example of Augustine's defence of the Scriptures, see On Christian Doctrine 4.6.9-11 (pp. 123-25). His modification of Cicero's delineation of styles to suit subject matters appears later in 4.18.35ff (p. 143ff). He argues that in the Orator Cicero's comments were made in reference to legal matters where concerns are confined to man's temporal welfare. Such divisions are inappropriate for the Christian orator, says Augustine, because his concern is for man's "eternal welfare and the avoidance of eternal punishment, so that everything we say is of great importance" (4.18.35).

<sup>8</sup> Here, I have applied E. B. Greenwood's comment (37) on Herbert's sonnet, "Prayer (I)," to "Artillerie."

<sup>9</sup> Brian Vickers, in Classical Rhetoric in English Poetry, notes that Quintilian revives the sword-fighting metaphor from the Ad Herennium to portray the effectiveness of rhetorical ornament (99). In the Ad Herennium, the metaphor refers to the effect of specific

devices, whereas Quintilian uses it in reference to the effect of ornament in general.

<sup>10</sup> James Thorpe, in "Reflections and Self-Reflections," identifies the outlandish proverbs which appear in Herbert's letters (30-31), in The Country Parson (31-34), and in The Temple (34-36). For a list of common seventeenth-century English proverbs found in The Temple, see Chana Bloch's Spelling the Word (187).

<sup>11</sup> Repeatedly, English Renaissance apologists and rhetoricians defend the use of the vernacular. Of his mother tongue, Sidney claims, "But for the uttering sweetly and properly the conceits of the mind . . . that hath it equally with any other tongue in the world . . ." (An Apology 140). Similarly, Puttenham asks, "If againe Art be but a certaine order of rules prescribed by reason, and gathered by experience, why should not Poesie be a vulgar Art with vs as well as with the Greeks and Latines, our language admitting no fewer rules and nice diuersities then theirs?" (5). Also, see Puttenham (59, 157). As he lists examples of various ornaments in The Arcadian Rhetorike, Abraham Fraunce usually places the English examples drawn from Sidney immediately after Latin and Greek examples and before Italian, French, and Spanish examples. Thereby, he subtly asserts the importance of Sidney's work and perhaps the superiority of the English language.

<sup>12</sup> F. E. Hutchinson informs us that the final lines of "The Church-porch" allude to an epigram used by Cato, among others (Works 483n461-62). For an account of the affinities between Herbert's maxims and the writing of epigrams, see Robert Wickenheiser, "George Herbert and the Epigrammatic Tradition," GHJ 1 (1977): 39-56.

<sup>13</sup> White's introductory maxim consists of the well-known lines from "The Church-porch" (5-6); his entry for 'K' cites "The Church-porch" (407-08); for 'O,' he revises the final couplet of "Affliction I"; for 'Q,' he builds on Herbert's motto or the last line of "The Posie"; for 'T,' he quotes "The Church-porch" (35-36); and for 'Y,' he revises "The cunning workman never doth refuse / The meanest tool that he may chance to use" ("The Church-porch" 353-54) to read "Your prudent workmen never do refuse / The meanest Tool that they may chance to use" (Patrides 148 cites White). White changes "cunning" to "prudent," and the proverb becomes a didactic sledgehammer. Examining White's rendition of maxims found in The Temple allows us to appreciate Herbert's poetic craftsmanship in the subtle phrasing of proverbs.

<sup>14</sup> Rosalie Colie perceives the adage as summing "up a mass of human experience in one charged phrase, demonstrating the community of human experience" (The Resources 28).

<sup>15</sup> Ironia is referred to as a trope by the Ramist, Abraham Fraunce, whereas non-Ramist rhetoricians such as Puttenham and Peacham refer to it as a figure.

<sup>16</sup> For some considerations of Herbert's position in seventeenth-century religious controversy and its relationship to his poetic style, see Ilona Bell, "'Setting Foot into Divinity': George Herbert and the English Reformation" MLQ 38 (1977): 219-41; Sheridan Blau, "George Herbert's Homiletic Theory" GHJ 1.2 (1978): 17-29; Richard Strier, "History, Criticism, and Herbert: A Polemical Note" PLL 17 (1981): 347-52; Daniel Doerkson, "Recharting the Via Media of Spenser and Herbert" Ren&R 20 (1984): 215-25. Also see Leah Sinanoglou Marcus,

"George Herbert and the Anglican Plain Style" in Too Rich to Clothe the Sunne, eds. Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Peb-worth (Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 1980) 179-93; John Bienz, "Images and Ceremonial in The Temple: Herbert's Solution to a Reformation Controversy," SEL 26 (1986): 72-95.

<sup>17</sup> For a consideration of rhetoric as a practical tool, see B. Vickers, "On the Practicalities of Renaissance Rhetoric," in Rhetoric Revalued, ed. B. Vickers (Binghamton, NY: Centre for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1982) 133-42.

<sup>18</sup> Herbert was well aware that politics was a risky game of handy-dandy in which one's position could quickly change from being within a favoured group to being outside of it. Amy Charles, in A Life of George Herbert, reminds us that

whatever the reasons that had led Herbert to stand for Parliament, delusions about the glories of public office were not among them. The fall of his friend Bacon that had begun with a parliamentary inquiry in 1621 was too recent a reminder. . . . (107)

<sup>19</sup> I have applied Richard Waswo's idea to Herbert's use of rhetorical devices. Waswo suggests that Sidney's phrase "a medicine of cherries" implies that "the sweet is simply the wholesome; pleasure neither contains nor conceals profit, but constitutes it" (229).

## Chapter 2

<sup>1</sup> "Parable," throughout this chapter, is used in a limited sense, to refer to the narratives attributed to Christ teachings in the

New Testament.

<sup>2</sup> Whitman's study contains one of the most comprehensive examinations of the etymology of allegoria; my quotation does not reveal the scope of Whitman's discussion. For further details, see his "Appendix I" (263-68). For other discussions of the historical origins of "allegory" see Honig (24), and Barney (16).

<sup>3</sup> The argument against assigning meaning on different levels to every object and action in an allegory has become a critical commonplace during the last forty years. For further discussion of this issue, see Edward Bloom (190), Hamilton (10), Murrin (57ff) and Barney (46ff).

<sup>4</sup> The idea that God withholds "rest" or peace so that man will seek Him is expressed by Augustine as he concludes his Confessions:

thou being the Good, needing no good, art at rest  
always, because thy rest thou art thyself. And what  
man is he that can teach another man to understand  
this? Or what angel, another angel? Or what  
angel, man? Let it be begged of thee,  
be sought in thee, knocked for at  
thee; so, so shall it be received,  
so shall it be found, and so  
shall it be opened. (13.38, v.2, p.475)

The emphasis on "rest" and on man seeking it evokes associations of "The Pulley." I am indebted to Elaine Park for bringing this to my attention.



<sup>5</sup> The action of Hope giving an anchor to the narrator appears contrary to Rosemary Freeman's comment about personified actions:

His use of personification also reflects Herbert's modification of the ways of the emblematisers. It was not a device that he employed often, and his figures were entirely his own. They carry no bit, bridle, anchor, or other recognizable paraphernalia. . . . (171 my emphasis)

Although many of Herbert's personified characters have less traditional characteristics, his portrayal of Hope illustrates his ability to create a dialogue by fusing traditional emblems with the familiar action of exchanging gifts. To replace this "speaking picture" with direct dialogue would involve writing a much more lengthy poem, and this would make it more difficult for the reader to determine and remember the various facets of Hope.

<sup>6</sup> Chana Bloch mentions Leviticus 2.14 as a text related to the image of "green ears" in "Hope," but she does not develop the significance of the passage for the poem.

<sup>7</sup> This summary of a few emblems, to which incidents in "Love unknown" correspond, combines Barbara Lewalski's discussion of "Protestant Emblematics" in Protestant Poetics (206) and El-Gabalawy's application of Mario Praz's Studies in Seventeenth-Century Imagery to the poetry of George Herbert in "George Herbert and the Emblem Books," (181-83). For further reflections on "Love unknown" and the Emblem Books, see Rosalie L. Colie's The Resources of Kind: Genre-Theory in the Renaissance (57-61).

<sup>8</sup> John Donne also deflates Death in "Death be not proud," one of the Holy Sonnets of 1633. He argues, "poppy or charms can make us sleep as well, / And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?" (11-12). Death's swelling, like his puffing in Herbert's "The Church-floore," indicates that he is filled with vanity.

<sup>9</sup> For this reading of "The World," I am indebted to McClung's discussion (36) of Kalander's ideal country manor as it is described in the New Arcadia.

<sup>10</sup> References to The Faerie Queene in this chapter are identified by book and canto respectively.

<sup>11</sup> A. D. Nuttal, in Overheard by God, suggests that "The Quip" first "says that it would be wrong for Herbert to give God's answer and then, instead of lapsing into devout silence, actually tells God what to say!" (13). Consequently, Nuttal perceives the poem's tone as bumptious, but there is another plausible interpretation. Perhaps the speaker is not offensively self-assertive or conceited, but because of his right relationship with the Divine, he speaks boldly to God, just as men such as Abraham did (Gen. 18.20-33).

<sup>12</sup> For another account of Christ's life story as a journey, see "The Bag" (151-52). Although "The Bag" is not an allegory, the speaker, like the narrator of "Redemption," personalizes the central events of Christ's lifestory--His Incarnation and Crucifixion. The persona in "The Bag," unlike his counterpart in "Redemption," begins to retell and re-experience the Christian story to combat despair rather than to magnify his own importance.

<sup>13</sup> For instance, the parable of the sower is interpreted in Matt. 13.18-23, Mark 4.13-20, and Luke 8.11-15, but the great supper parable is not interpreted in Matt. 22.1-14 or Luke 14.15-24.

<sup>14</sup> For extended reflections on the Reformation's relationship to typological interpretations, especially emphasis on stricter literal interpretation, types proper, and on the intensification of personal self-examination and identification with Biblical accounts, see Ira Clark's Christ Revealed: The History of the Neotypological Lyric (1-28, 80-106).

<sup>15</sup> I am indebted to Frances Leonard's Laughter in the Courts of Love for clearly delineating several links between allegory and comedy. Both are polysemous (10) dramatic ways of thinking about the universe (11), and both rely on the reader's complicity to achieve their effects (15).

<sup>16</sup> In his discussion of comedy, Frye notes that a reunion "causes a new society to crystallize" and "the appearance of this new society is frequently signalled by some kind of party or festive ritual, which either appears at the end of the play or is assumed to take place immediately afterward" (163).

### Chapter 3

<sup>1</sup> Here, Merrill is citing D. Z. Philips's The Concept of Prayer. For other studies referred to by Merrill, see his "Sacred Parody" (196-97n8-10).

<sup>2</sup> Speaking of his praise for God, Herbert claims, "My busie heart shall spin it all my dayes" ("Praise (III)" 3). Herbert realizes

that despite a religious poet's best intentions, he could easily "work and winde" and "weave [him-] self into the sense" ("Jordan (II)" 13,14). The poet's pride in his own wit may turn a poem of praise into a web which ensnares him.

<sup>3</sup> I have extracted this concept from Fish's remarks on "Love-joy":

At one point, the reader is encouraged to think himself superior, because it appears that the speaker has given the wrong answer; but the positions are reversed when the answer is approved by the catechizer. In a final reversal, the reader learns that he was correct after all, but his understanding of his own response is now deeper because of the sequence he has negotiated. ("Catechizing the Reader" 179)

<sup>4</sup> The association of the mistress with bait appears in numerous Renaissance poems including Spenser's Sonnet XLVII and Donne's "The Bait." It also surfaces repeatedly in many Shakespearean dramas: "O cunning enemy, that, to catch a saint, / With saints dost bait thy hook! (MM 2.2.181); "Do their gay vestments his affections bait (Err. 2.1.94); "Bait the hook well; this fish will bite . . ." (Ado 2.3.114); "And she steal love's sweet bait from fearful hooks" (Rom 2.Pro1.8). For further discussion of the commonplace association between women and bait, see Katherine Wilson's discussion in Shakespeare's Sugared Sonnets (121).

<sup>5</sup> To see how another poet writes within this secular tradition, compare Sonnet 54 from Edmund Spenser's Amoretti:

But when I laugh she mocks, and when I cry  
 She laughs and hardens evermore her heart.  
 What then can move her? if nor merth nor mone,  
 She is no woman, but a sencelesse stone. (11-14)

The more the Spenserian lover and the Sidnean lover lament, the harder the hearts of their mistresses become.

<sup>6</sup> The movement from lament to praise, discontent to contentment, and rebellion to submission is a commonplace in Herbertian criticism: see Stein (101), Knights (72), Vendler (267), Strier (Love Known 105-113), and Théberge (106).

<sup>7</sup> Martz draws parallels between Herbert's "Love I" and "Love II" and Sidney's "Leave me ô Love" (264-65). But the most striking similarity is between the advice of Herbert's friend and that of Sidney's Muse. Herbert's friend tells him: "There is in love a sweetnesse readie penn'd: / Copie out onely that, and save expense" ("Jordan II" 17-18), and Sidney writes: "Foole, saide my Muse to me, looke in thy heart and write" (AS 1.14). Martz also suggests these poems are linked because Herbert "originally entitled his poem 'Invention'" (261) and the word "invention appears three times in Sidney's first sonnet." Martz draws further parallels between Herbert's Jordan poem and the last line of Sidney's "Sonnet 3": "But Copying is, what in her Nature writes."

<sup>8</sup> F. E. Hutchinson cites the closing three stanzas of "Whitsunday" from the Williams manuscript below Herbert's revised version of the poem (p. 59). I am indebted to Dr. El-Gabalawy for

pointing out the parallel between the images in the early version of Herbert's "Whitsunday" and Hilton's The Goad of Love.

<sup>9</sup> Compare William Empson's suggestion of Divine incest in "The Sacrifice" in his Seven Types of Ambiguity (232), and John Garrett's Freudian interpretation of "Sin and Shame in George Herbert's Poetry," Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses 8 (1984): 139-47. Garrett, unlike Empson and Goldberg, reads the poems biographically, as revealing Herbert's problem of a domineering mother.

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