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ALLEN, ANNE KIMBERLY BRYSON

"AN HARMONY OF PARTS": IMAGE AND LOGIC IN THE POETRY OF EDWARD, LORD HERBERT OF CHIRBURY

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro PH.D. 1981

"AN HARMONY OF PARTS": IMAGE AND LOGIC IN THE POETRY OF EDWARD, LORD HERBERT OF CHIRBURY

by

Anne Kimberly Bryson Allen

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Approved by

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APPROVAL PAGE

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ALLEN, ANNE KIMBERLY BRYSON. "An harmony of parts": Image and Logic in the Poetry of Edward, Lord Herbert of Chirbury. (1981) Directed by: Dr. Amy M. Charles. Pp. 147.

The purpose of this study was to explore the combination of logic and image in the poetry of Edward, Lord Herbert of Chirbury. Herbert's poems were found to be tightly constructed arguments whose imagery is embodied in tropes and schemes that build upon one another in the logical progression of the thought.

Edward Herbert drew his poetic subject matter from issues within those areas of seventeenth-century thought that were familiar and interesting to him: politics, science, and philosophy. Because Herbert's subjects are themselves abstractions, the imagery of his poems is typically without shape or substance.

This study examines Herbert's use of logic and image in poems inspired by politics, by science, and by philosophy. "To his Mistress for her True Picture" is presented as a paradigm of Herbert's method.

It was found that Herbert's combination of abstract image patterns and complex dialectical patterns dilutes any intensity of feeling that may be inherent in the occasion or situation of the poem; thus, the appeal in Herbert's poetry is to the reader's intelligence rather than to his emotions.

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CHAPTER I

EDWARD HERBERT'S POETRY AS A REFLECTION OF HIS TIMES

Edward Herbert's poems[1] reveal a side of their maker that would probably astonish those readers who are familiar with Herbert only through his Life.[2] For nowhere in the poems is the apparent egocentricity that dominates the autobiography in evidence. Herbert the poet is remarkably self-effacing. He writes with intelligence, sensitivity, and artistry; his predilection for the abstract and universal rather than the concrete and particular image renders the poet's personality curiously indistinct. The unique characteristic of Herbert's poetic style is his method of evoking images from abstract ideas.

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[1]Edward Herbert, Poems, ed. with introduction by G. C. Moore Smith (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1923). The canon established by G. C. Moore Smith includes seventy-two English poems; all references to Edward Herbert's poems in this study will be to this edition.

[2]The Life of Edward Lord Herbert of Cherbury: A Critical Edition, ed. J. M. Shuttleworth (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1976); unless otherwise noted, further citations to Herbert's autobiography in this study will be to this edition. Other editions include: Horace Walpole, The Life of Edward Lord Herbert of Cherbury Written by Himself (Strawberry Hill Press, 1764; 2nd ed. London: J. Dodsley, 1770); C. H. Herford, The Life (Montgomeryshire: Gregynog Press, 1928); and Sir Sidney Lee, The Life with a continuation by Lee (London: Routledge, 1906).

In his poems such abstract concepts as monarchy, freedom, music, and the soul become almost concrete through the poet's use of personification, metaphor, and the carefully logical development of his thought.

Instead of expressing the feelings of the poet, Herbert's poems reflect the kaleidoscope of events and ideas current in seventeenth-century England. During Herbert's lifetime, England experienced revolutionary changes in politics, scientific knowledge, and philosophy. Herbert confronted the new ideas and changing political order not with complacent acceptance nor with dogmatic repudiation, but with a certain quizzical skepticism.[3] In both his poetry and his prose Herbert concentrates on questioning and proving. Because Edward Herbert subjects the seventeenth-century ferment of political, scientific,

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[3]Edward, Lord Herbert of Chirbury was sixty-six years old when he died in his Queen Street, London home in 1648. Although there is some confusion about whether Edward Herbert was born in 1582, 1583, or 1584, March 3, 1582 is almost certainly the correct date. See H. C. Lancaster, letter in MLN, LXIII (February, 1948), 144; Mario Manlio Rossi, La Vita, le opere, i tempi di Edwardo Herbert di Chirbury (3 vols.; Florence: G. C. Sansoni, 1947), I, 3; and Amy M. Charles, A Life of George Herbert (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1977), p. 25.

As an example of Herbert's personal, if somewhat idiosyncratic, skepticism, Aubrey, Brief Lives, ed. Anthony Powell (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949), p. 25, tells us that "when in his deathbed, and he would have received the sacrament . . . . He sayd indifferently of it that 'if it did no good 'twould doe no hurt.'" Ussher, Lord Primate of Ireland, refused to administer the sacrament in the face of such indifference, but Herbert, nevertheless, died "very serenely."

and philosophical events and ideas to such close scrutiny in his poetry, it is necessary to summarize those ideas that directly influence his verse before describing his poetic method.

The political stability of the Elizabethan period began to break down with the death of the Queen. A decline in national confidence and security characterized the reigns of James and Charles I and culminated in civil war. As the civil war divided friends and families,[4] national unity was totally shattered, and the ensuing regicide called into question the validity of the monarchy as an institution of social and political cohesion.

Edward Herbert lived out his adult years close to the center of this political milieu. In 1600 he met the aging Elizabeth at court where, according to the Life, he made a great impression on the ladies as well as on the Queen herself: "The queen . . . looked attentively upon mee, and swearing againe her ordinary oath, said it is pity [I] was married soe young, and thereupon gave mee her hand to kisse twice, both times gently Clapping mee on the Cheek."[5]

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[4]The Herberts were one such divided family. After Lord Herbert had surrendered Montgomery Castle to Parliamentary forces, his sons continued to fight in the Royalist cause.

[5]Life, p. 37.

After the Queen's death, Edward Herbert was one of the party escorting James I's royal progress to London.[6] James created Herbert Knight of the Bath in 1603,[7] and Herbert received James's commission as English ambassador to the French court of Louis XIII in 1619.[8] Herbert was summarily recalled in 1624 for doubting the political wisdom of James I's strategy to marry Prince Charles to the Spanish princess.[9] Convinced that he had acted in accord with his conscience as well as in the best interests of his king, Herbert received his recall with disappointment.[10] The King's only reward to Herbert for the years of faithful and distinguished diplomatic service was an Irish peerage, the Barony of Castle Island.

Charles I was somewhat more appreciative and created him the first Lord Herbert of Chirbury. J. D. K. Lloyd writes that Herbert "was no doubt precluded from taking the more obvious title of Montgomery by the fact that his

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[6]Charles, p. 49.

[7]Moelwyn Merchant, "Lord Herbert of Cherbury and Seventeenth-Century Historical Writing," The Transactions of the Honorable Society of Cymmrodorion, 1956, notes Herbert's "quixotic acceptance of his order of knighthood in an age when such romance was blown upon. Though one of King James's knights 'of carpet consideration,' he took chivalry and its obligations as seriously at its level as he took his interior world of mind and spirit," p. 56.

[8]Life, p. 89.

[9]Sir Sidney Lee, The Life, p. 123.

[10]Rossi gives a full account of Herbert's recall in II, 371-373; see also Lee, Life, pp. 135-137.

kinsman Philip, later fourth Earl of Pembroke, had been created Earl of Montgomery in 1605."[11] Neither James nor Charles I, however, saw fit to reimburse Herbert for the debts that he had incurred during his service in Paris.[12]

In spite of his financial hardships, Herbert, a Royalist by birth and temperament, supported the King during the beginning battles of the civil war. But after a brief stint with the Royalist forces, ill health forced him to retire to Montgomery Castle.[13] In the later stages of the war, Herbert--probably in hopes of preserving his valuable library as well as the castle itself--turned Montgomery Castle over to Parliamentary troops and was escorted into London, where he remained until his death.[14] The civil war had caused Royalist and Parliamentarian alike to re-evaluate the powers of the monarchy.

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[11] J. D. K. Lloyd, A Guide to Montgomery (5th ed., 1936; rpt. Montgomery: The Montgomery Corp., 1972), p. 19.

[12] Life, p. xi.

[13] Lloyd, p. 20.

[14] Lloyd explains that "Lord Herbert . . . suspected to be but a lukewarm royalist and had excused himself on the grounds of ill health, from obeying a summons by the King to Oxford in 1643 and a further one by Prince Rupert to Shrewsbury early in the next year. It was on September 4th., 1644, that a Parliamentary army led by Sir Thomas Myddleton . . . appeared before the castle and occupied the outworks. At half past twelve the next night Lord Herbert signed articles of agreement for the surrender of the castle on the condition that no violence was to be offered to the person or goods of himself or the inmates, and the fortress was garrisoned for Parliament," p. 20.

As the validity of the monarchy was questioned during the early seventeenth century, so too was the importance of man's place in the universe. The scientific discoveries of Copernicus, Gilbert, Kepler, and Galileo had significantly changed man's conception of microcosm, macrocosm, and geocosm.[15] With the first edition of De revolutionibus in 1543, Copernicus had banished forever the comfortable illusion of the earth as the fixed center of the universe:

> Then in the middle of all stands the sun. For who in our most beautiful temple, could set this light in another or better place, than that from which it can at once illuminate the whole? Not to speak of the fact that not unfittingly do some call it the light of the world, others the soul, still others the governor. Tremegistus [sic] calls it the visible God; Sophocles' Electra, the All-seer. And in fact does the sun, seated on his royal throne, guide his family of planets as they circle around him.[16]

Thus, rather than remaining fixed in the midst of all, the earth joined the other planets in their revolutions around the throne of the sun.

William Gilbert in De Magnetica, published in 1600, supported the Copernican theory of the diurnal revolution of the earth, but did not accept the idea that the earth

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[15]Marjorie Hope Nicolson, The Breaking of the Circle (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1960), adds geocosm to the familiar microcosm/macrocosm correspondence, p. 28.

[16]Nicholas Copernicus, De revolutionibus, Bk I, ch. 10, trans. by Edwin Arthur Burtt in The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1939), p. 45.

revolves around the sun.[17] Copernicus, however, had established the sun as the center, although he left undisturbed Eudoxus's notion of the spheres and the fixed stars.[18] But belief in the perfection of the spheres and fixed stars was not to endure for many more years. In 1609 John Kepler published his Astronomia nova, seu physica coelestis traditia commentariis de motibus stellae Martis[19] in which he proposed that the planets' revolutions around the sun proceed in eliptical rather than spherical paths, and in 1619 he extended his theory in De harmonice mundi by suggesting that the distances of the planets from the sun affect their revolutions.[20] The concentric spheres of the Ptolemaic universe were thus broken. Galileo provided further evidence against belief in the eternal constancy of the celestial realm with his telescope, through which it was possible to actually see the imperfections of the moon and to discern the

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[17]William Gilbert, On the Loadstone and Magnetic Bodies and on the Great Magnet the Earth, Bk. VI, trans. by P. Fleury Mottelay in Great Books of the Western World (Chicago: William Benton, 1938), XXVIII, 106-118.

[18]Edwin Rosen, ed., Three Copernican Treatises (1939; rpt. New York: Dover Publications, 1959), p. 11.

[19]Biographical introduction to John Kepler's Epitome of Copernican Astronomy: IV and V and The Harmonies of the World, ed. by Robert Maynard Hutchins in Great Books, XVI, "Kepler's theory in Astronomia Nova . . . was inspired by Gilbert's work on the magnet," p. 841.

[20]John Kepler, De harmonice mundi in Great Books, trans. by Charles Glenn Wallis, pp. 1080-1081.

satellites of Jupiter along with many stars never before seen.[21]

Revolutionary as these developments were, it would be a mistake to assume that their effect upon seventeenth-century minds was either universal or instantaneous. As Douglas Bush points out:

> In the earlier seventeenth-century the Ptolemaic or Aristotelian system, though declining in prestige, was by no means dead among educated laymen. It had the support of tradition, of the Bible, of Aristotle, of the senses, and of common sense, and it did after all explain the phenomena. The Copernican theory, like Einstein's, could be properly assessed only by mathematical scientists, and Galileo's demonstrations were not known or accepted by everybody.[22]

Although not universally accepted, the new scientific theories were known and understood by enough people in the early seventeenth century to make their influence felt.[23] From references in his poems, his autobiography, and his philosophical works, it is apparent that Edward Herbert was familiar with the new scientific theories. The number of scientific treatises included in the catalogue of Herbert's books donated to Jesus College, Oxford indicate that the poet found enough time during the course of his

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[21] Douglas Bush, Science and English Poetry (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1950), p. 28.

[22] Ibid.

[23] See C. J. Fordyce and T. M. Knox, "The Library of Jesus College, Oxford, with Appendix on Books Bequeathed by Lord Herbert of Cherbury," Proceedings and Papers of the Oxford Bibliographical Society, V (1937), 75-115.

political career to keep up with the new trends in scientific thought. The earth was once and for all removed from the center of the universe.

Scientific endeavor relentlessly marched toward the discovery of truth. During the early seventeenth century, conflicts within governmental, religious, and social institutions increased the desire for the certainty of truth. Philosophers joined scientists in this quest, and frequently the two disciplines merged.[24] Philosophy was invoked in the attempt to answer questions concerning the proper role of government; man's proper relationship to God, to the world, and to his fellow man; the nature of the universe; and, most fundamental, the nature of truth.

De Veritate is Edward Herbert's contribution to the search for truth.[25] The book reflects an eclectic combination of influences and traditions,[26] but its major importance lies in Herbert's original additions to philosophic thought. John Locke found the book important

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[24]Nicolson, p. 154.

[25]Edward Herbert, De Veritate, ed. and trans. by Meyrick H. Carre (Bristol: J. Arrowsmith, Ltd., 1937); further references to De Veritate in this study will be to this edition.

[26]Carre, "Review of Rossi's La Vita . . . Cherbury," Mind, LVII (1948), 238.

enough to refute,[27] and Descartes assimilated its major theories.[28]

Herbert firmly believes that truth can be identified, and his purpose in De Veritate is to explain "the common nature of the search for truth which exists in every normal human being."[29] Universal consent (agreement) is a necessary attribute of truth, but "normal human being" excludes the feeble-minded, the ignorant, and the fanatic so that universal consent is consent only among the majority of rational human beings.

R. D. Bedford interprets Herbert's conception of truth as "certainty": "De Veritate is a defense of certainty, and an argument seeking to prove through epistemological investigation that genuine and certain knowledge is possible."[30] Herbert's doctrine of certainty rests upon the assumption that truth lies in a certain harmony existing between objects and their analogous faculties within the human mind.[31] Meyrick H. Carre

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[27]John Locke, Concerning Human Understanding, Bk. 1, Ch. 1, ed. Robert Maynard Hutchins in Great Books, XXXV, 94.

[28]Basil Willey, The Seventeenth Century Background (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1934, Anchor Books ed. 1953), p. 128.

[29]De Veritate, p. 71.

[30]R. D. Bedford, The Defense of Truth: Herbert of Cherbury and the Seventeenth Century (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1979), p. 27.

[31]Bedford, pp. 87-88.

defines faculties as "mental events directed towards, or stimulated by, objects."[32] Man perceives objects through use of his corresponding faculties. Thus perception, in Herbert's theory, is never passive, but always involves an active mental process.

The Neoplatonic doctrine of the analogous universe is the basis for Herbert's system of knowledge and perception in De Veritate. The major premise of his ontology is that

> Our minds clearly correspond to God and our bodies to the world, and the principles of all the differences in the world are inscribed in man. This is the basis of my proposition that the number of differences in the faculties correspond to the number of differences in things.[33]

The conception of beauty as a reflection of the essence of God derives naturally from this theory of correspondences and informs both Platonic and Neoplatonic poetry of the seventeenth century.

The poet's efforts to find his place in the changing universe had an important effect on verse. Rosemond Tuve remarks that "it is obvious that images carry into poetry the sights and sounds of the physical world."[34] Images also reflect ideas and beliefs. Thus the music and brilliant pictorial images of sixteenth-century lyrics began

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[32]Carre, introduction to De Veritate, p. 16.

[33]De Veritate, p. 169.

[34]Rosemond Tuve, Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1947), p. 3.

to fade during the seventeenth century in favor of discordant speech rhythms and images grounded in logic that reveal their makers' preoccupations with scientific speculation. Marjorie Hope Nicolson writes of seventeenth-century poetry: "the images were new. The poets did not rack their brains or ransack Nature to invent them. They burst around them as bombs around our own atomic age."[35] As the world picture was radically changing, the poets of the first half of the seventeenth century found themselves literally between two universes, free to refer to either or both as the occasion of the poem demanded. Nicolson has demonstrated John Donne's eclectic use of both the Copernican and Ptolemaic systems in his Anniversarie poems.[36]

In addition writers of the early seventeenth century shared in the poetic tradition that was their common heritage. A new consciousness of the relationship between form and content led to stanzaic innovation and to increased experimentation with such established forms as the sonnet.[37] The satire, the elegy, the verse letter, and the epigram--each having particular prescribed

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[35]Nicolson, p. 6.

[36]Nicolson, passim.

[37]Ruth Wallerstein, Studies in Seventeenth-Century Poetic (Milwaukee: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1965), pp. 143-144.

conventions--were all in vogue. Nearly every poet of the period at least experimented in these popular genres as well as in imitations and translations from the classical writers.

Like that of his brother George, the poetry of Edward Herbert reflects the diverse poetic trends of his age. His poetic canon includes an ode, Elizabethan songs, innovative sonnets, elegies, epigrams, verse letters, satires, imitations, and translations. Herbert enjoyed friendships with both Donne and Jonson,[38] and similarities of phrase and thought are occasionally apparent in the poetry of the three.

It has been the custom, among critics who discuss Herbert as a poet, to classify him as a metaphysical poet

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[38]Donne's verse letter, "To Sr Edward Herbert. at Julyers," in The Poems of John Donne, ed. by H. J. C. Grierson (1912; rpt. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1963), I, 193-194, testifies to the friendship and respect that Donne must have felt for the younger poet; Amy M. Charles places the beginning of Donne's friendship with Magdalene Newport Herbert (Edward Herbert's mother) early in 1599 after the Herbert household was established in Oxford, p. 34, and it is reasonable to suppose that the friendship between the two poets began about this same time; both Frank Warnke, "This Metaphysic Lord" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1954), p. 15, and Mario Manlio Rossi, I, 83-84, emphasize the close personal friendship between Donne and Herbert; for a discussion of the possible poetic relationship among Herbert, Donne, and Jonson, see Don A. Keister, "Donne and Herbert of Cherbury: an Exchange of Verses," MLQ, VIII (December, 1947), 430-435; Jonson's Epigramme CVI, "To Sir Edward Herbert," expresses affection and respect:

> If men get name, for some one vertue: Then
> What man art thou, that art so many men,

and a follower of Donne.[39] But it is impossible to confine the poetry of Edward Herbert within any one school. Too many poems are "left over"; too many techniques are "out-of-place." For instance, Herbert's "Epitaph on Sir Edward Saquevile's Child, who dyed in his birth" echoes the restraint of Jonson; "Echo in a Church" suggests George Herbert's poetry in its theme and technique; "Madrigal" ("How should I love my best?") recalls the lyrics of Sir Walter Raleigh; and "To His Watch When he could not sleep" is in the manner of Donne.

Robert Ellrodt classifies Edward Herbert's poetry as predominantly metaphysical,[40] but points out that the

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All-vertuous Herbert! on whose very part
Truth might spend all her voyce, Fame all her art.
Whether thy learning they would take, or wit,
Or valour, or thy judgement seasoning it,
Thy standing upright to thy self, thy ends
Like straight, thy pietie to God, and friends:

Their latter praise would still the greatest bee
And yet, they, all together, lesse then thee.

[39]Critics who generally begin from this perspective include: H. J. C. Grierson, Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1959), p. xxxvi; Earl Miner, The Metaphysical Mode from Donne to Cowley (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1969), p. 172; A. Alvarez, The School of Donne (New York: Pantheon Books, 1961), p. 54; Douglas Bush, English Literature of the Earlier Seventeenth Century (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948), p. 153; George Williamson, The Donne Tradition (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1930), p. 138; and Patrick Cruttwell, The Shakespearean Moment (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1955), pp. 167-169.

[40]Robert Ellrodt, Les Poetes Metaphysiques Anglais, Vol. 1 of 2 vols. (Paris: Librairie Jose Corti, 1960), Vol. I, Part ii, p. 11.

strong sense of place and occasion, so dramatically evoked in the poetry of Donne and George Herbert, is almost entirely absent in the poems of Edward Herbert.[41] Ellrodt goes on to evaluate Herbert's poems in terms of their own qualities: "Le plus sovent le poete ne prend pour theme ni une situation, ni meme etat d'ame qui se preterait a l'analyse psychologique."[42]

More typical than Ellrodt's thoughtful evaluation, however, is the criticism of Patrick Cruttwell, who begins from the customary critical perspective:

> Of Lord Herbert's poetical output, almost the whole is thoroughly in the metaphysical manner; it is very clearly the work of a man who had read his Donne and taken him as master. He is in fact always "placed," in the literary histories, as a "minor metaphysical," and that placing is perfectly sound, as far as intention and surface technique are concerned. But one cannot go far before misgivings arise.[43]

Strangely, Mr. Cruttwell's misgivings are not for the metaphysical classification, but for Edward Herbert's obstinate refusal to follow correctly in the footsteps of Donne:

> It is clear at once that Lord Herbert has quite failed to catch that organic and dramatic rhythm which is Donne's most essential quality. His

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[41]"Il apparait d'emblee que ce poete n'a pas un sens aussi aigu de la situation concrete que Donne et George Herbert," I, ii, 13.

[42]Most often Herbert the poet takes for his theme not one situation so much as a state of the soul that lends itself to psychological analysis, I, ii, 15.

[43]Cruttwell, p. 167.

> rhythm does not dominate the form; the reverse is what happens. This rhythm has not the faintest affinity to the verse of the theatres; it is not in the least--as Donne's is always--rhetorical.[44]

It is true that Herbert's poems are not dramatic in the same sense that Donne's are. The intentions of the two poets, however, are often opposite; Donne uses the language of metaphysics to describe immediate phenomena, while Herbert strives to represent metaphysical experience via the phenomenon of words.

Reaching for the expression of abstract truth through words, Herbert frequently eliminates entirely the phenomenally immediate, the concrete image. Critics, apparently expecting Donne's often "unpoetic" but nearly always concrete imagery in the work of the "disciple," have been quick to point out Herbert's want of traditional images that makes the poems seem, at first reading, to be hopelessly cerebral, obstruse, obscure. But Herbert uses the world of the senses in his poetry as a shadowy indication of a more ultimate reality: music echoes the harmony of the universe; fleshly beauty provides a glimpse of its original Idea; and physical love reflects divine love.

The purpose of Herbert's imagery is rarely to recreate the poet's sensual impressions or even his state of mind.

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[44] Ibid., p. 168.

The tropes and schemes embodying his images are most frequently units of logic that build upon one another in the development of the central argument of the poem, and for this, the techniques that serve Donne so effectively are inadequate. Herbert's poems appeal to reason and intuition rather than to the physical senses.

Political and scientific theories were in flux during the early seventeenth century, and the resulting shift in beliefs and knowledge stimulated philosophical questions about immortality, love, beauty, eternity, divinity, life, and death. These universal questions are the subjects of Herbert's poems. He uses each subject time and time again, without developing any one of them twice from the same perspective.

As Herbert's subjects are abstractions, so the images supporting them are typically without finite body or shape. Brilliant, though formless images of light shine through his poems; blackness becomes almost palpable; and the soul acquires both substance and magnetic force. Herbert presents his ethereal images within the context of carefully planned logic.

Herbert's poetic strategy is to question and prove. His poems, therefore, often constitute complex arguments wherein the poet displays deft technical skill in adjusting form and meter to correspond to the dialectical

progression of his thought. "To her Face"[45] illustrates Herbert's method of framing abstract images within a logical pattern:

> Fatal Aspect! that hast an Influence
> More powerful far than those Immortal Fires
> That but incline the Will and move the Sense,
> Which thou alone constrain'st, kindling Desires
> Of such an holy force, as more inspires
> The Soul with Knowledge, than Experience
> Or Revelation can do with all
> Their borrow'd helps: Sacred Astonishment
> Sits on thy Brow, threatning a sudden fall
> To all those Thoughts that are not lowly sent,
> In wonder and amaze, dazling that Eye
> Which on those Mysteries doth redely gaze,
> Vow'd only unto Loves Divinity:
> Sure Adam sinn'd not in that spotless Face.

The speaker's argumentative purpose is to explain the mysterious force embodied in the beauty of the face. His explanation is in two parts: (1) the power of the "influence" of the face (ll. 1-8); and (2) the effect of this power on those who presume to admire the face. The structure of the single complex sentence constituting the poem stresses each part of the argument equally.

"Fatal" the first word of the poem declares the lady's face ("Aspect") to be imbued with cosmic power whose influence is greater than that of the stars ("those Immortal Fires"). The stars affect man's will and sensual desires, but the lady's face has the greater power to inspire the viewer's soul with intuitive knowledge. In

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[45] Poems, p. 5.

line 8 the intangible "Astonishment" takes substance, if not form, in its role as a guardian against presumptuous thoughts. The images are inseparable from the argument as abstraction builds upon abstraction in the progression of the thought. The effect of Herbert's poetry is its unity, its "harmony of parts."

CHAPTER II

EDWARD HERBERT'S USE OF IMAGERY FROM POLITICS

The seventeenth-century political arena, familiar to Edward Herbert from early adulthood through the remainder of his life, provided some of his most interesting and distinctive poetic images. Three poems, "The State-progress of Ill," the "Epitaph for King James," and the "Elegy for the Prince" illustrate Herbert's use of images drawn from the political events and theories of his day.[1] These three poems also provide typical examples of Herbert's unconventional preference for general and implied images based on abstractions rather than on concrete objects and particular occasions.

Equating abstraction with obscurity, critics have usually discounted the aesthetic value of these poems.[2] H. J. C. Grierson summarizes this critical discontent: "Nothing but a determination to be enigmatic could

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[1] Poems, "The State-progress of Ill," pp. 9-13; "Epitaph for King James," p. 24, and "Elegy for the Prince," pp. 22-24.

[2] The following critics constitute a representative sample of proponents of this point of view: A. Alvarez, The School of Donne (New York: Pantheon Books, 1961), p. 39; Sir Sidney Lee, introduction to Life (London: Routledge, 1906), p. xxxvi; Arthur Benson, "A Jacobean Courtier," Fortnightly Review, XLIX (1887-8), 294; George

explain or justify the obscurity" of the "Elegy for the Prince" and "The State-progress of Ill."[3] Donne's remark to Drummond that he wrote his own "elegy for Prince Henry, Look to me, Faith, to match Sir Ed: Herbert in obscurenesse"[4] has perhaps had more influence than it deserves in perpetuating the charge that Herbert's poetry is obscure. But it is not necessarily certain that Donne meant to disparage Herbert's work.

Obscurity in poetry of the early seventeenth century was considered to be praiseworthy because the poems were addressed not to the vulgar, but to the educated who could understand and appreciate their wit. George M. Held points out that

> For both satire and epigram the chief vehicle was the iambic pentameter couplet; this is the form of both Donne's and Herbert's elegies on Prince Henry,

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Williamson, The Donne Tradition (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1930), pp. 134-137; and Frank Warnke, "This Metaphysique Lord" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1954), although finding much to praise in Herbert's poetic canon, argues that the satires "have little poetic value, but . . . are . . . interesting as historical documents," p. 39, and that Herbert's "besetting vices of carelessness, pedantry, and needless obscurity dominate [the satires] as they do none of his [other poems]," p. 52.

[3]Review of G. C. Moore Smith's edition of Poems, Modern Language Review, II (April, 1926), 212.

[4]R. F. Patterson, Ben Jonson's Conversations with William Drummond of Hawthornden (London: Blackie and Son Ltd., 1924), p. 12.

> the concept of purposeful obscurity no doubt being carried over from one genre to another.[5]

Herbert's poetry does not merit the critical censure that it has received for its supposed obscurity. The language of Herbert's poems is often abstract--abstractions are his subjects--but his arguments are well-constructed and clear.

Herbert was able to use the language of politics with confidence. For most of his adult life he had participated in statecraft at various levels of the governmental hierarchy. By 1601 he was living in London and acquainted with a number of eminent statesmen.[6] He sat for Merioneth in the first Stuart parliament and served as sheriff for Montgomeryshire in 1605.[7] Thus even before his terms as English ambassador to France (1619-1624), Herbert enjoyed a vantage point near the political center where he could not have helped noticing the sharp contrast between the standard seventeenth-century conception of the ideal government and the reality of pragmatic political machinations.[8] Moelwyn Merchant argues that

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[5]George M. Held, "A Critical Introduction to the English Poems of Lord Herbert of Cherbury" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Rutgers University, 1967), p. 82.

[6]Amy M. Charles, A Life of George Herbert (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1977), pp. 37-39; see also Sir Sidney Lee, p. xiii.

[7]Charles, p. 106.

[8]Moelwyn Merchant, "Lord Herbert of Cherbury and Seventeenth-Century Historical Writing," The Transactions of the Honorable Society of Cymmrodorion, 1956, outlines

"this contrast between the ideal commonwealth and the actual manifestations of statecraft produced for the . . . generation of George and Edward Herbert intolerable mental and spiritual conflict."[9] Edward Herbert expresses his conflicting attitudes about governmental order, degree, and hierarchy through the imagery of "The State-progress of Ill," the "Elegy for the Prince," and the "Epitaph for King James." The first two are the most important, but Herbert's political skepticism is also apparent in the "Epitaph for King James."

The date of "The State-progress of Ill," August 1608,[10] when Herbert was twenty-six, is evidence of the poet's early interest in the ideal as opposed to the real operations of the State. Herbert worked out this first satire in France at Merlou, the estate of the Duc de Montmorency.[11] In the tranquillity of this country setting, far removed from the pressures of political compromise, the poet had leisure to work out opposing political ideas on paper.

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the ideal conception wherein governmental actions took place in accordance with the "divine shaping" of God's providence. The Monarch was God's surrogate on earth, and separate events were considered essential elements of an ultimately harmonic pattern, pp. 48-49.

[9] Ibid., p. 52.

[10] Poems, Moore Smith's chronology, p. xxxi.

[11] In his Life, Herbert describes the mutual respect between himself and the Duke as well as the peaceful landscape surrounding Merlou, pp. 41-42, 45-49, 57, 66.

It is impossible to ascertain Edward Herbert's personal political convictions with any degree of certainty, from either the poems or the prose writings, though it is probable that in spite of bitter disappointments at the hands of the Stuarts, Herbert remained a loyal monarchist throughout his life.[12] A passage from the May 1642 Journal of the House of Lords supports this hypothesis:

> On one occasion when the Lords were in debate over sending to the King a petition that declared all those who assisted him in warring against the Parliament to be traitors Herbert spoke against the affront, saying, "I should agree to it, if I could be satisfied that the King would make War upon the Parliament without Cause."

In practice, Edward Herbert's political skepticism seems to have taken the form of conscientious respect for fairness and truth.

From this point of view, G. C. Moore Smith's evaluation of Herbert's first satire seems somewhat off the mark:

> the first satire shows the boldly speculative turn of Herbert's mind even as a young man, and his extraordinary independence of the influences of high birth and courtiership. An attack upon monarchy and aristocracy by a young aristocrat and man of fashion under King James I is something hardly to be paralleled.[13]

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[12] Lee implies this in his continuation of Herbert's Life, pp. 135, 138, 139, 140-147.

[13] G. C. Moore Smith, introduction to Poems, p. xvii; John Hoey, "A Study of Lord Herbert of Cherbury's Poetry," Renaissance & Modern Studies, XIV (1970), agrees with Moore Smith's evaluation, p. 77.

Rather than being an assault on the political status quo of the monarchy, however, "The State-progress of Ill" represents the poet's critical examination of evil as it manifests itself in the workings of the State.

Herbert's thesis in the first satire is that the State, though an evil in itself, is necessary for social man's salvation.[14] There is no certainty, however, that this thesis is even a result of Herbert's original thought. Rossi convincingly argues that "The State-progress of Ill" is based on Donne's manuscript of poema satyricon, "The Progresse of the Soule," as well as on a poem by Etienne de la Boetie that Herbert admired more for its paradox than for its political doctrine.[15]

Whether the first satire reflects the poet's personal political convictions at this time in his life or not, it does exemplify Herbert's poetic method of drawing contemporary ideas from the current stream, universalizing them, and ordering them upon a frame of logic. The satire is organized into five logical sections: (1) the definition of Ill by its attributes (ll. 1-7); (2) the explanation of the origin, nature, and power of Ill (ll. 8-30); (3) the description of the workings of Ill

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[14] Warnke, p. 40.

[15] Mario Manlio Rossi, La Vita, le opere, i tempi di Edwardo Herbert di Cherbury (3 vols.; Florence: G. C. Sansoni, 1947), I, 114-125.

in the government (ll. 31-74); (4) the picture of state government (ll. 75-116); and (5) the conclusion (ll. 117-126).

The subject of "The State-progress of Ill" is the nature of evil--its origins and its historical progress. Moelwyn Merchant points out that the title of the poem:

> is a conceit in itself [and] contains a fuller implication of [Herbert's] meaning; the poem is at once a description of "the state progress" of evil, its regal course down the ages, and a description of the progress of evil in and through the state . . . . The central subject, therefore is the nature of evil and not the evil nature of the state.[16]

Careless readers often miss this critical distinction, however, because Herbert develops his subject in exclusively political terms.

The introductory words of the satire suggest the image of the young poet determinedly struggling to impose order upon his subject:

> I say, tis hard to write Satyrs. Though Ill
> Great'ned in his long course, and swelling still,
> Be like to a Deluge, yet, as Nile,
> 'Tis doubtful in his original; this while
> We may thus much on either part presume,
> That what so universal are, must come
> From causes great and far. (ll. 1-7)

In establishing his subject, the poet defines Ill by its attributes; it is nebulous, swelling, and, like a "Deluge," relentlessly overpowering. The origin of evil is obscure,

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[16]Merchant, p. 54.

but its universal nature indicates some sort of divine beginning.

Having defined his subject, Herbert proceeds to narrow his thesis to focus upon the workings of evil in the State:

> Now in this state
> Of things, what is least like Good, men hate,
> Since 'twill be the less sin. I do see
> Some Ill requir'd that one poison might free
> The other; so States, to their Greatness, find
> No faults requir'd but their own, and bind
> The rest. (ll. 7-13)

Like the scourge of God, some necessary evil is antidotal to greater "poison" in the functions of State. Thus the evil of the government is necessary to counteract the greater evil in the body of the Commonwealth. The poet, however, candidly concedes that this idea is "mysterious still," and so expands his logical development by elaborating on the origin of evil and the source of its power over men:

> This Ill having some Attributes of God,
> As to have made it self, and bear the rod
> Of all our punishments, as it seems, came
> Into the world, to rule it, and to tame
> The pride of Goodness, and though his Reign
> Great in the hearts of men he doth maintain
> By love, not right, he yet the tyrant here
> (Though it be him we love, and God we fear)
> Pretence yet wants not, that it was before
> Some part of Godhead, as Mercy, that store
> For Souls gone Bankrupt, their first stock of Grace,
> And that which the sinner of the last place
> Shall number out, unless th' Highest will shew
> Some power, not yet reveal'd to Man below. (ll. 17-30)

The syntax of lines 21-24 appears more snarled than it is; realizing that the antecedent for the third person pronoun is Ill makes the poet's thought easier to follow.

Ill, or evil, partakes of divine nature in its creative, punitive, and governing powers. As Moore Smith paraphrases:

> With some attributes of the divine, in that it is apparently self-existent and a punitive power, Ill came into the world to tame the haughty. And though it is supported not by inherent right, but popular acquiescence, it claims a partly divine character (like Mercy which in itself is conditioned by sin).[17]

Merchant notes that the passage

> would seem to follow a wholly Pauline doctrine of the state and to be wholly congruous with Jacobean thought on the subject. It is based on S. Paul's Epistle to the Romans (xiii, 1-7), "The powers that be are ordained of God . . . for rulers are not a terror to good works but to the evil . . . for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." This is the familiar function of the state in Jacobean drama, in which the tyrant is frequently "the scourge and wrath of God."[18]

Lines 28-30 suggest that mercy will always be necessary for the salvation of sinners unless God reveals a greater power that as yet is incomprehensible to man.

The imagery of the passage is abstract and universal, but definite. Ill is a universal monarch with all the attendant power of majesty. Herbert uses the language of

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[17]Moore Smith, commentary in Poems, p. 143.

[18]Merchant, pp. 54-55.

law and commerce to describe mercy as a "store" or storehouse for "Bankrupt" souls. Mercy is the first "stock of Grace" for souls overcome by sin. Thus Herbert has established the divine origin and power of Ill.

In the opening lines of the following section of the satire, Herbert declares his intention to describe the progress and methods of Ill through the ages:

> But that I may proceed, and so go on
> To trace Ill in his first progression,
> And through his secret'st ways, and where that he
> Had left his nakedness as well as we,
> And did appear himself,
> I note, that in
> The yet infant-world, how
> mischief and sin,
> His Agents here on earth, & easie known,
> Are now conceal'd Intelligencers grown: (ll. 31-38)

Ill has concealed himself, and his agents mischief and sin have become "Intelligencers," or undercover agents. The intelligencer, or spy, was a well-known figure in the political plots and counterplots of Jacobean England, and the figure seems to have been generally viewed with anathema as in Thomas Nash's epithet in Have with You to Saffron-Walden of the "hellish detested Judas name of an intelligencer."[19] Herbert's medieval personification of Ill and his agents serves to heighten the universal quality of the abstract ideas, and the word "Intelligencers" would have suggested a concrete, stereotyped image to the poet's contemporaries.

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[19]Example from OED.

Herbert continues the metaphor and personification as he describes the work of mischief and sin:

> For since that as a Guard th' Highest at once
> Put Fear t' attend their private actions,
> And Shame, their publick, other means being fail'd:
> Mischief, under doing of Good was vail'd,
> And Sin, of Pleasure; though in this disguise
> They only hide themselves from mortal eyes. (ll. 39-44)

Because of man's fear and shame, mischief is disguised as good and sin as pleasure, but the two are not concealed from the "Highest" and are not expiated with death:

> Yet they will work
> Through after death: Nor ever come alone,
> But sudden fruitful multiply e'r done. (ll. 48-50)

Herbert compares mischief disguised as good to comets that the ignorant, unable to discern their portended evil, hail as glorious. With their evil likewise disguised, tyrant kings also appear glorious. As H. J. C. Grierson interprets this passage:

> Ill in the individual is Sin prompted by Pleasure, in the State it is Mischief which "veil'd" under "doing of Good" keeps private vices in check. To the ignorant, its powers are revealed as glory, the glory of the conqueror and ruler, and hurt, the power to punish. Yet we might have got the rule which we apparently need to make us herd together without the evils of tyranny and succession . . . .[20]

The poet deplores the age-old dilemma that had been so frequently staged by the Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists: what is to be done about the anointed king who is unfit to reign? The country suffers under an

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[20]Grierson, Review, p. 212.

unjust rule, but to depose the legitimate monarch is treason. This being the state of the world, Herbert continues:

> now we cannot spare,
> (And not be worse) Kings, on those terms they are,
> No more than we could spare (and have been sav'd)
> Original sin. (ll. 69-72)

The monarchy, in spite of its numerous abuses, is as necessary for the commonwealth as is original sin for salvation.

Herbert devotes the fourth section of the satire to explaining the arts of state government:

> That we may know them yet, let us see how
> They were deriv'd, done, and are maintain'd now,
> That Princes may by this yet understand
> Why we obey, as well as they command. (ll. 77-80)

The poet pictures the degrees of men in the State through the involved image of a tableau with the different degrees in their proper distances from the base. The image is at once concrete in its correspondence to a painting and abstract in Herbert's insistence upon universal types. But the logical development of the image, as well as the progression of the thought, is temporarily broken by the emphasis upon the "Exalted Spirit," the ideal citizen:

> State, a proportion'd colour'd table, is,
> Nobility the master-piece, in this
> Serves to shew distances, while being put
> 'Twixt sight and vastness they seem higher, but
> As they're further off, yet as those blew hills,
> Which th' utmost border of a Region fills
> They are great and worse parts, while in the steep

> Of this great Prospective, they seem to keep
> Further absent from those below, though this
> Exalted Spirit that's sure a free Soul, is
> A greater privilege, than to be born
> At Venice, although he seek not rule, doth scorn
> Subjection, but as he is flesh, and so
> He is to dulness, shame, and many moe
> Such properties, knows, but the Painters Art,
> All in the frame is equal: . . . (ll. 81-96)

The allusion to Venice, as Warnke points out, takes its

> meaning from La Boethe's contention that the Venetians were the freest, and hence the happiest, of all citizens, a contention which had received wide circulation in French intellectual circles of the later sixteenth century.[21]

It is perhaps Herbert's concentration upon the freedom of the "Exalted Spirit" that has prompted critics to view the poem as being an attack upon the aristocracy and the monarchy.

The poet, however, does not "place" this "Exalted Spirit" within any definite rank; he seems rather to be an ideal that is universal across the limits of degree and position. Herbert describes the qualities of his ideal citizen in the following lines:

> As he gives poor, for God's sake, (though they
> And Kings ask it not so) thinks Honors are
> Figures compos'd of lines irregular,
> And happy-high, knows no election
> Raiseth man to true Greatness, but his own.
> (ll. 98-102)

The poet contrasts these qualities to the hypocrisy of "sugred Divines" (l. 103) and those "whose harder minds Religion/ Cannot invade" (ll. 111-112). The ideal man is

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[21]Warnke, p. 45.

distinguished from other men by his free soul, his proper use of free will.

In his brief conclusion, Herbert suggests that the current disposition of government, while not ideal, is necessary because the majority of men, unlike the "Exalted Spirit," have failed to exercise properly their reason and will:

> I will
> But only note, how free born man subdu'd
> By his own choice, that was at first indu'd
> With equal power over all, doth now submit
> That infinite of Number, Spirit, Wit,
> To some eight Monarchs, then why wonder men
> Their rule of Horses?
> The World, as in the Ark of Noah, rests,
> Compos'd as then, few Men, and many Beasts.
> (ll. 119-126)

When man proved unable to govern his own will, Ill came into the world, and thus men must be subject to monarchs.[22] But Herbert justifies this state of affairs in the last two lines of the poem. Merchant notes that in these final lines:

> . . . the existence of evil is accepted, together with the function of the monarchy in its suppression; yet with a satiric turn which anticipates Swift, the due order in the state which results from this

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[22]Aloysius Gasior, "Satiric Elements in the Poetry of Lord Herbert of Cherbury" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois, 1971), argues that

> "Herbert believed in the perfectability of man and in the notion that the state helps realize this perfectability. He postulated that all men are capable of knowing the first principles of Natural Law through experience and of applying them accurately to particular situations through the use of conscience, one of the 'interior senses,'" p. 340.

> submission of men to princes is but a submission of the universally bestial to the control of the few.[23]

Thus Herbert's first satire, an examination of the workings of evil in the state, is essentially a justification of the monarchy.

Although the genre of the satire is restrictive,[24] the logical arrangement of ideas and the universalized imagery of "The State-progress of Ill" reflect the individual style of Edward Herbert's poetry.

Herbert's "Epitaph for King James," complimentary on the surface, is pervaded by irony arising from the discrepancy between qualities that are admirable in the private citizen and qualities that are admirable in the monarch:

> Here lyes King James, who did so propagate
> Unto the World that blest and quiet state
> Wherein his Subjects liv'd, he seem'd to give
> That peace which Christ did have, and so did live,
> As once that King and Shepherd of his Sheep,
> That whom God saved, here he seem'd to keep,
> Till with that innocent and single heart
> With which he first was crown'd, he did depart
> To better life: Great Brittain so Lament,
> That Strangers more than thou may yet resent
> The sad effects, and while they feel the harm
> They must endure from the victorious arm

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[23] Merchant, p. 55.

[24] Helen Gardner, introduction to The Metaphysical Poets (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1961), notes that "In the 1590s formal satire appeared in English, and the satirists took as their model Persuis, the most obscure of Roman satirists, and declared the satire should be 'hard of conceit and harsh of style,'" p. 16.

> Of our King Charles, may they so long complain
> That tears in them force thee to weep again.

James I's most distinctive quality was his love of peace, but Herbert is anxious for the more decisive "victorious arm" of Charles I.

The one-sentence epitaph is almost free of concrete imagery beyond the allusions to Christ and David. The purpose of the poem is embodied in the image suggested by "the victorious arm/ Of our King Charles." The relative particularity of this image emphasizes the desirability of an active versus a passive king. The epitaph is more an admonition to the new king than a lament for the old.

Herbert's "Elegy for the Prince" was inspired by a particular event. On November 16, 1612, Henry, Prince of Wales, died, and with him died English hopes for a strong Protestant ruler capable of resisting the increasing strength of the counter-reformation. Edward Herbert, knight and member of parliament, added his poetic voice to the public mourning:

> Must he be ever dead? Cannot we add
> Another life unto that Prince that had
> Our souls laid up in him? (ll. 1-3)

These lines set the tone of quiet regret that the poet maintains through the final resolution of the elegy.

The argument of the poem, though involved and complicated by Neoplatonic references,[25] is tight and carefully developed. The imagery, though extremely abstract, is effective. Although Ruth Wallerstein sees Herbert abandoning the "traditional elements and form of the lament . . . to make his poem a speculative study,"[26] Warnke demonstrates that the poem

> falls easily into the three fundamental movements which seem natural to all poetic laments for the dead: (1) ll. 1-18 expresses a stunned inability to face the ultimate fact of death; (2) ll. 19-34 the poet's mind examines various propositions in an attempt to give some sort of meaning to existence in the face of chaotic negation of bereavement; (3) ll. 34-66 he reaches a resolution.[27]

Although Herbert's elegy does conform to the traditional structuring, it departs radically from poetic conventions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by having a philosophical rather than a Christian frame of reference. The poem contains no definite Christian elements; its philosophy is almost wholly Neoplatonic.[28]

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[25]Warnke calls Herbert "a powerful spokesman for the new secularist forces to which Donne, newly converted . . . was strongly opposed," p. 63.

[26]Ruth Wallerstein, Studies in Seventeenth-Century Poetic (Milwaukee: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1965), p. 82.

[27]Warnke, p. 57.

[28]I shall leave the philosophical content of the "Elegy for the Prince" for discussion in Chapter IV of this study; in this section I shall discuss Herbert's political images and their logical development in the poem.

Herbert depends upon questions to introduce and develop his thought in sections 1 and 2 of the poem, and in section 3 the answers provide the resolution. The poet's expressed inability to accept the fact of death continues after the opening lines of section 1:

> Could not our love,
> Now when he left us, make that body move,
> After his death one Age? And keep unite
> That frame wherein our souls did so delight?
> For what are souls but love? Since they do know
> Only for it, and can no further go.
> Sense is the Soul of Beasts, because none can
> Proceed so far as t' understand like Man:
> And if souls be more where they love, then where
> They animate, why did it not appear
> In keeping him alive: (ll. 3-13)

The central idea of the poem, probably more sincere than conventional because of the extreme popularity of the Prince, is that the combined loves of the people unite in the person of Prince Henry. Since the Prince was the object of this harmonic love, and since through love the souls experience a reality superior to animal existence, then how can the embodiment of all these souls be dead? Lines 5 and 6 suggest the emblem of the frame of the world in the "frame" (body) of the Prince. Through this suggested emblem, Herbert establishes the cosmic implications of the death.

The images in lines 1-13 are abstract ("soule," "one Age," and "love") and general (Man and Beasts), but the following lines of this first section are based on allusion to a particular political event, and the image

evoked is definite:

> Or how is fate
> Equal to us, when one man's private hate
> May ruine Kingdoms, when he will expose
> Himself to certain death, and yet all those
> Not keep alive this Prince, who now is gone,
> Whose loves would give thousands of lives for one:
> (ll. 13-18)

Moore Smith notes that "one man's private hate" refers to "Ravaillac's assassination of Henry IV."[29] The logical function of the allusion is to provide a contrast that emphasizes the inequitable nature of Fate in allowing the hatred of one man to outweigh in practical effect the love of thousands who "would give thousands of lives for one."

In section 2 Herbert analyzes the possible consequences of his premise that the Prince embodies the combined souls of the people:

> Do we then dye in him, only as we
> May in the worlds harmonique body see
> An universally diffused soul
> Move in the parts which moves not in the whole?
> (ll. 19-22)

Here the poet returns to the cosmic correspondence introduced in section 1. The figure of the Prince is equated with the world-soul, and provokes the question: do we, the parts, also die with him, the whole? Herbert proceeds to examine the logical consequences of this line of thought:

> So though we rest with him, we do appear
> To live and stir a while, as if he were

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[29]Moore Smith, commentary in Poems, p. 150.

> Still quick'ning us? Or do (perchance) we live
> And know it not? See we not Autumn give
> Back to the earth again what it receiv'd
> In th' early Spring? And may not we deceiv'd
> Think that those powers are dead, which do but sleep,
> And the world's soul doth reunited keep?
> And though this Autumn gave, what never more
> Any Spring can unto the world restore,
> May we not be deceiv'd, and think we know
> Our selves for dead? (ll. 23-34)

Although our souls are with the Prince, we appear in our animation to live. Is death final, or does the possibility of cyclic regeneration exist also for us as parts of the great world soul?

The imagery in this section of Herbert's analysis is wholly abstract and universal, but rich in the accretion of meanings attached to the ideas of autumn and spring. Autumn returns the gifts of spring in harvests; spring quickens roots and seeds that have lain dormant through the winter. The life-death-life cycle of the parts united in the whole is eternal.

Elaborating upon this conception of the unity of parts, Herbert reaches a resolution that provides consolation in an unexpectedly practical way:

> Because that we are so
> Unto each other, when as yet we live
> A life his love and memory doth give,
> Who was our worlds soul, and to whom we are
> So reunite, that in him we repair
> All other our affections ill bestow'd:
> Since by this love we now have such abode
> With him in Heaven as we had here, before
> He left us dead. Nor shall we question more,
> Whether the Soul of man be memory,
> As Plato thought: We and posterity
> Shall celebrate his name, and vertuous grow,

> Only in memory that he was so;
> And on those terms we may yet seem to live,
> Because he lived once, though we shall strive
> To sigh away this seeming life so fast,
> As if with us 'twere not already past. (ll. 34-50)

Because our souls are inextricably bound up in the Prince, our imperfections are restored by his virtue, and we now enjoy an expanded realm "with him in Heaven," while he lives here on earth through our memories. These memories inspire virtue, and thus the death provides a practical benefit for the State.

Then in an abrupt shift of thought, the speaker returns momentarily to the despair of the opening lines:

> We then are dead, for what doth now remain
> To please us more, or what can we call pain,
> Now we have lost him? And what also doth make
> Diff'rence in life and death, but to partake
> Nor joy, nor pain? Oh death, could'st not fulfill
> Thy rage against us no way, but to kill
> This Prince

Herbert employs personification in his apostrophe to the universal Death that has so efficiently consumed the parts along with the whole of the world's soul. The concrete image of "our Mothers womb" refers again to the regeneration of the earth as well as to the gestation of each man, but in this section the image holds no promise--life seems barren and sterile.

The poet's resolution, however, is antithetical to these lines of despair:

> Or should we proceed
> To such a wonder, that the dead should breed,

> It should be wrought to keep that memory,
> Which bring his, can, therefore, never dy.
> (ll. 63-66)

The figure of the Prince as the repository of all virtue and love unifies the poem. The souls of the people are united in their love for him; as parts of a greater harmonic whole, each individual lives in celestial bliss with the Prince, and the Prince lives on earth in memories that shall be renewed through successive generations.

Herbert advances the complex logic of his development through abstract and universal images rich in connotations of regeneration and life: "the worlds harmonic body," "an universally diffused soul," "Autumn," "Spring," "Mothers womb," and "breed." The connotative significance of the imagery increases through the poem as Herbert expands his argument. The "Elegy for the Prince" is an example of Edward Herbert's style at its best; the argument, although somewhat eccentric and complex, is easily followed, and the extremely abstract imagery depends for its effect upon the argument. There is nothing superfluous, no unnecessary embellishment.[30]

Edward Herbert's personal acquaintance with the Stuart family and first-hand knowledge of state affairs

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[30]Wallerstein takes a contrary position, asserting that "since [Herbert's images] lack complex substance to express, [they] tend to become merely ingenious," p. 82.

supplied the poet with ideas and images for these poems. The "Elegy for the Prince" and the "Epitaph for King James" represent his direct poetic statements on the royal family. The "Elegy" focuses on the very genuine affection the English people felt for Prince Henry and on their shared sense of loss at his sudden death. The "Epitaph" praises James I's peaceful rule, but exhorts Charles I to be a more forceful leader. "The State-progress of Ill" is a satiric examination of the history of evil in the State. "The State-progress of Ill" and the "Elegy for the Prince," the two most important of the poems in terms of expressed political doctrine, also provide the two best illustrations among his political poems of Herbert's poetic method of ordering abstract images upon a solid base of logic.

CHAPTER III

EDWARD HERBERT'S USE OF IMAGERY FROM SCIENCE

As the theory of correspondences among microcosm, macrocosm, and geocosm was challenged during the early part of the seventeenth century, a mechanistic explanation of the universe provided a reasonable alternative for many who found themselves no longer able to accept the ancient analogies.[1] The resulting tension between proponents of the analogous universe and proponents of the mechanistic universe stimulated major advances in nearly every branch of science.[2] In turn, these dramatic new scientific developments provided ideas, metaphors, and images for seventeenth-century poets. For Edward Herbert, this ferment of scientific thought was another important source of the peculiarly abstract images that characterize his poetic style.[3]

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[1]Marjorie Hope Nicolson, The Breaking of the Circle (1960; rpt. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1962), p. 2.

[2]A. C. Crombie, Medieval and Early Modern Science (1953, Harvard Univ. Press; rev. ed., Anchor Books, 1959), II, 235.

[3]R. D. Bedford, The Defense of Truth: Herbert of Cherbury and the Seventeenth Century (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1979), p. 94.

I. The Analogous Universe

The conservative doctrine of the analogous universe is central to Edward Herbert's philosophy in De Veritate[4] and underlies much of his poetry as well. Meyrick H. Carre points out that

> Herbert's extensive reading in the medical teachings of the school of Paracelsus leads him to apply the belief [in the analogous universe] to physiological matters. The entire system of the world is represented in the basic motions and structure of the body.[5]

In De Veritate Herbert defines bodily structure in terms of its conformity to the elements:

> Accordingly I call bodily structure that definite system of principles which in order to produce the human organism coalesce and remain latent in the humours as in minerals; (for the humours correspond to the elements). Anyone who refuses to look for the law by which these principles combine with our own in the mind or Harmony of the world, that plastic power which reduces different kinds of food to one form, may learn to know it through his inner consciousness . . . . And so our mind clearly corresponds to God and our body to the world, and the principles of all the differences in the world are inscribed in man . . . . I hold, then, that the entire order of things is represented in the humours or elements of the microcosm and that they produce their effects whether they enter by physical generation, or by food, or by the air we breathe.[6]

According to Herbert's frame of reference, then, the principles that determine the formation of man's physical

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[4]Edward Herbert, De Veritate, ed. and trans. by Meyrick Carre (Bristol: J. Arrowsmith, Ltd., 1937); further references to De Veritate will be to this edition.

[5]Carre, introduction to De Veritate, p. 18.

[6]De Veritate, p. 169.

and mental nature correspond to the principles that determine the nature of the universe. This belief in the conformity of the human frame to both the terrestial and the celestial realms is usually a central idea in Herbert's poetry.

Two poems, "Elegy over a Tomb"[7] and "Upon Combing her Hair,"[8] exemplify Herbert's use of the theory of correspondences. In both Herbert uses the macrocosm/microcosm analogy as a point of departure for his argument. His purpose in both is to emphasize the dignity of the human body through its reflection of the universe, a dignity that is not a property to be bestowed arbitrarily by man, but is derived naturally by virtue of the body's correspondence to the macrocosm.

Herbert's theme in "Elegy over a Tomb" is the idea that with the death of a person, the microcosm (the body) is subsumed by the macrocosm (the universe). The speaker of the poem seeks comfort in the idea of the individual beauty of the lady becoming part of the wider beauty of creation.

Herbert uses general and abstract images to convey his graceful, if fanciful, compliment to the lady's beauty. The question of the value of living human beauty

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[7]Edward Herbert, Poems, ed. G. C. Moore Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), p. 32.

[8]Ibid., p. 7.

opposed to the value of a more universal beauty wrought by the changes of death is central in this poem, whose rhetorical construction develops through a series of questions. Formless imagery of light surrounding this paradox between life and death pervades the speaker's six-stanza address.

Herbert's artistic use of alternating line lengths, contrapuntal rhythms, and patterns of interlocking rhyme supports the central thematic opposition. Horace Rockwood writes that "Elegy over a Tomb" exhibits Herbert's "masterful control of rhythm as well as [his] skillful union of thought and phrase."[9] The first stanza illustrates Herbert's technical deftness:

> Must I then see, alas! eternal night
> Sitting upon those fairest eyes,
> And closing all those beams which once did rise
> So radiant and bright,
> That light and heat in them to us did prove
> Knowledge and love?[10]

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[9]Horace Seymour Rockwood III, "A Reconsideration of the Poetry of Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury and of its Supposed Conformity to the Poetry of Donne" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1965), p. 87.

[10]The play of light and darkness in this poem recalls the poetry of Henry Vaughn, and the technical similarity between "Elegy over a Tomb" and "I walkt the other day (to spend my hour)" is striking. Frank Warnke, "This Metaphysick Lord: A Study of the Poetry of Herbert of Cherbury" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1954), writes that "the abrupt changes, the intricate contrapuntal quality [in the two poems] are the same, and in some cases the metrical effects seem to evoke the same tone," p. 123.

Herbert carries his argument forward by continuing the interrogative syntactic pattern that opens the poem. His use of alternating line length reflects the posing of the query and the wished security of the tentative conclusions:

> Oh, if you did delight no more to stay
> Upon this low and earthly stage,
> But rather chose an endless heritage,
> Tell us at least, we pray,
> Where all the beauties that those ashes ow'd
> Are now bestow'd?
>
> Doth the Sun now his light with yours renew?
> Have waves the curling of your hair?
> Did you restore unto the Sky and Air,
> The red, and white, and blew?
> Have you vouchsafed to flowrs since your death
> That sweetest breath?
>
> Had not Heav'ns Lights else in their houses slept,
> Or to some private life retir'd?
> Must not the Sky and Air have else conspir'd
> And in their Regions wept?
> Must not each flower else the earth could breed
> Have been a weed?
>
> But thus enrich'd may we not yield some cause
> Why they themselves lament no more?
> That must have changed the course they held before,
> And broke their proper Laws,
> Had not your beauties giv'n this second birth
> To Heaven and Earth? (stanzas 2-5)

The individual as the instrument of a "second birth," a regenerative force, is a theme that Herbert had explored previously in his "Elegy for the Prince." In both poems the idea of regeneration provides justification for the death--if not complete consolation for the mourners. Herbert emphasizes the universal nature of this regenerative force through general rather than specific images. The sun, waves, sky, air, stars, and flowers will

all be revitalized through the elemental, though transformed, beauty of the deceased.

The speaker's uncertainty of this consoling transformation, however, is evident in the final stanza where the speaker importunes for a comforting word of certainty:

> Tell us, for Oracles must still ascend,
> For those that crave them at your tomb:
> Tell us, where are those beauties now become,
> And what they now intend:
> Tell us, alas, that cannot tell our grief,
> Or hope relief. (stanza 6)

The image evoked in the first line of this stanza, the vapor ascending from the shrine of an oracle, depends upon the metaphorical correspondence between the ascending spirit and the ascending vapor that accompanies oracular revelation. The speaker urges the lady's spirit as he would urge an oracle. The repetition of the imperative "Tell us" communicates the speaker's sense of urgency to the reader, and the pun on "tell our grief" emphasizes despair too great to speak of and too great to estimate or to add up. The idea of a "second birth" is attractive, but uncertain; there is no resolution in this poem, no definite relief.

The tone of "Upon Combing her Hair" is less serious than that of "Elegy over a Tomb," but Herbert's theme is again the correspondences between individual and universal beauty. The poet concentrates on the analogies between

the beautiful, shining hair and various beauties of the universe. Though the poem is essentially a hyperbolic compliment to a lady, it is also a contemplation of beauty, a contemplation "so intense," Warnke notes, "as to be almost . . . a religious veneration."[11]

Like "Elegy over a Tomb," this poem is filled with brilliant imagery of light, and the sense of brightness builds from image to image until it reaches its zenith in line 20, the final line of the fifth quatrain. In the final two quatrains the poet returns his subject, along with his reader, to earth.

Evoked through implied metaphors, Herbert's images in this poem are characteristically general and abstract. Mythology along with the sciences of astronomy and alchemy provides imagery that supports the central theme of the analogous universe. Herbert equates the hair, whose owner is fairer than Venus, with the sun, the evening star, threads of destiny, and golden treasure.

Herbert patterns the speaker's deification of the lady and his subsequent return to the realm of time and change into seven quatrains. The rhyme pattern (abba) echoes associations and oppositions among the end-words. The poet artistically manipulates internal rhyme to communicate the intensity of the effect of the shining hair upon his speaker.

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[11] Ibid., pp. 147-148.

The speaker's awe in the presence of such beauty is evident in the first quatrain:

> Breaking from under that thy cloudy Vail,
> Open and shine yet more, shine out more clear
> Thou glorious golden-beam-darting hair,
> Even till my wonderstrucken Senses fail. (ll. 1-4)

The unfastened hair shines as brightly as the sun suddenly emerging from the clouds. And like the sun, the hair is no passive reflector of borrowed light, but seems to emit beams of its own. Herbert emphasizes this idea of the active nature of the hair in the second quatrain through the imperatives, "shoot" and "shine":

> Shoot out in light, and shine those Rays on far,
> Thou much more fair than is the Queen of Love,
> When she doth comb her in her Sphere above,
> And from a Planet turns a Blazing-Star. (ll. 5-8)

In this stanza Herbert again stresses the superiority of light-emitting bodies to passive reflecting ones. He bases the delicate image that culminates in line 8 on the conceit of the goddess Venus as a passive light reflecting planet and as a star whose light shoots forth in blazing streams as if she were combing her hair. Awe-inspiring as this vision is, however, the speaker, addressing his lady rather than the hair itself, declares her to be fairer, brighter, and more beautiful than Venus.

Besides her immortal beauty, the lady is endowed with the power of destiny as the speaker equates the individual hairs to threads of life:

Nay, thou are greater too, more destiny
Depends on thee, then on her influence,
No hair thy fatal hand doth now dispence,
But to some one a thred of life must be. (ll. 9-12)

The hair, like threads spun by the Fates, is "dispenced" through the comb. But through her act of combing, this awesome goddess grants the speaker grace. The comb separates the hairs that in their cumulative glory would have "amazed sense":

While gracious unto me, thou both doth sunder
Those Glories which, if they united were,
Might have amazed sense, and shew'st each hair,
Which if alone had been too great a wonder.
(ll. 13-16)

Her hair loose and combed, the lady appears to be a goddess in her crowning halo of "Heav'ns beams":

And now spread in their goodly length, sh' appears
No Creature which the earth might call her own,
But rather one, that in her gliding down,
Heav'ns beams did crown, to shew us she was theirs.
(ll. 17-20)

The lady seems immortal, a creature of light. As such, she is above the power of time:

And come from thence, how can they fear times rage
Which in his power else on earth most strange
Such Golden treasure doth to Silver change
By that improper Alchimy of Age? (ll. 21-24)

The memory of mortality breaks the speaker's reverie, but undaunted, he seems, in the final quatrain, ready to launch another hyperbolic compliment to the lady's eyes:

But stay, me-thinks, new Beauties do arise,
While she withdraws these Glories which were spread,
Wonder of Beauties, set thy radiant head,
And strike out day from thy yet fairer eyes.
(ll. 25-28)

The restrictions of time bind neither goddesses nor poets, and in these final lines Herbert compresses time to present the image of two suns rising and setting simultaneously.

II. Images from Optics

Herbert's preoccupation with images of light may derive from his interest in optics, that branch of physical science dealing with the properties of light as these properties facilitate sight.[12] Apart from Herbert's frequent use of optical theory in his poetry, we can infer his interest in optics by particular books on that subject in the portion of his library donated to Jesus College. Among these volumes are Joannes Marcus Marci's Idearum operaticum idea (1635); Christopher Scheiner's Rosa Ursina (1630); Francois D'Aguilon's Opticarum Libri VI (1613); and Johan Kepler's Astronomia Nova (1609) and De Cometis (1619).[13] Ronald McFarland points out that D'Aguilon "synthesized the known optical theories of the time from the works of Euclid, Alhazen, Witelo, Roger

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[12] OED.

[13] C. J. Fordyce and T. M. Knox, "The Library of Jesus College, Oxford, with Appendix on Books Bequeathed by Lord Herbert of Cherbury," Proceedings and Papers of the Oxford Bibliographical Society, V (1937), 49-115.

Bacon, and Kepler."[14] Thus Herbert was probably aware not only of the historical development of the science of optics, but of the accepted seventeenth-century theories as well.

In spite of his knowledge of modern theory, however, Herbert most often bases his poetic imagery upon Plato's extramittory theory of sight articulated in the Timaeus. Though it had become outmoded, Plato's theory continued to provide metaphors and images for seventeenth-century poets (as in Donne's "the Extasie"). One of the primary attractions this extramittory theory held for poets was the idea of the active light-emitting character of the human eye:

> So much of fire as would not burn, but gave a gentle light, they formed into a substance akin to the light of everyday life, and the pure fire which is within us and related thereto they made to flow through the eyes in a stream smooth and dense, compressing the whole eye and especially the center part, so that it kept out everything of a coarser nature and allowed to pass only this pure element. When the light of the day surrounds the stream of vision, then like falls upon like, and they coalesce, and one body is formed by natural affinity in the line of vision, wherever the light that falls from within meets with an external object. And the whole stream of vision, being similarly affected in virtue of similarity, diffuses the motions of what it touches or what touches it over the whole body, until they reach the soul, causing that perception which we call sight. But when night comes on and

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[14]Ronald E. McFarland, "The Rhetoric of Optics in Lord Herbert's Poems to Diana Cecil," Medievalia et Humanistica, N.S. V (1974), 217.

> the external and kindred fire departs, then the stream of vision is cut off . . . .[15]

The analogy of the eye of the microcosm to the eye of the macrocosm, the sun, fit naturally into the pattern of universal correspondences. Thus the Platonic theory of optics like the Ptolemaic theory of the heavens lived on in verse long after it had been discarded by science.

Herbert's peripheral treatment of optics in De Veritate is also in accordance with the idea of an analogous universe. He held the apprehensions of sight and hearing to be "cognitive forms of instruction."[16] Bedford explains Herbert's concept of cognitive apprehension:

> [Herbert] describes the acts of the mind as rays of light which pierce the apertures of the sense organs and apprehend the things to which they are related in accordance with their reciprocal analogy, so that every aspect of apprehension is related to a feature in things. The theory explains the nature of conformatio in which a faculty is in conformity with its object . . . . But such a view is of course dependent on suppositions of cosmic harmony and of correspondence between truths and beings, implying an image of the universe as a great series of infinitely reflecting mirrors.[17]

The idea of the universe "as a great series of infinitely reflecting mirrors" suggests that complete understanding

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[15]Plato, Timaeus, trans. by Benjamin Jowett in The Collected Dialogues of Plato, ed. by Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (New York: Pantheon Books, 1961), p. 1173.

[16]De Veritate, p. 96.

[17]Bedford, p. 95.

of the phenomena of reflection and refraction might constitute a metaphorical key to understanding the First Cause of the universe.

Herbert's poetic examination of the properties of light within the framework of the analogous universe informs the series of poems addressed to Diana Cecil. The theory of optics underlying this series is specifically Platonic. McFarland believes that

> Herbert retains the Platonic theory of vision primarily because he finds it more suitable to his purpose in these poems, for he intends to demonstrate the metaphysical (broadly conceived) growing out of the physical, the concept developing from the experience.[18]

The metaphysical ideas in these poems, of course, take meaning from Herbert's particular application of Neoplatonic philosophy, but at this point I shall discuss only Herbert's images derived from the science of optics, reserving discussion of images dependent upon philosophical theory for a later section in this study.

"To Mrs. Diana Cecyll,"[19] the first poem in the series, introduces the dark beauty who provides the occasion for Herbert's poetic examination of the properties of light. Establishing the lady's superior beauty in this first poem, Herbert devotes the second in the series "To

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[18] McFarland, "Optics," p. 218.

[19] Poems, p. 34.

her Eyes"[20] and the third "To her Hair."[21] The two poems that follow, "Sonnet of Black Beauty"[22] and "Another Sonnet to Black it self,"[23] focus upon the essence of dark beauty, blackness. In the final poem in this series, "The first Meeting,"[24] the poet describes the speaker's emotional interaction with the lady.

Herbert's logical development of the paradoxical idea of "light inaccessible" is deductive, beginning with the general description of Diana Cecil, followed by meditations that focus specifically on her hair and her eyes. These meditations are followed by the more abstract concentrations on black itself. "The first Meeting" presents a synthesis of ideas that emerge in the preceding poems.

The central paradox of light in darkness is an intellectual problem,[25] and Herbert's imagery in the series--especially in the two poems devoted to black--is extremely abstract and general. The poet, however, uses slightly more concrete and particular images in the first poem, "To Mrs. Diana Cecyll," to establish his subject. There are three concrete images in the first stanza:

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[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid., p. 35.

[22] Ibid., p. 37.

[23] Ibid., p. 38.

[24] Ibid., p. 39.

[25] Herbert may be alluding to John I:5, "And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."

Diana Cecyll, that rare beauty thou dost show
Is not of Milk, or Snow,
Or such as pale and whitely things do ow.
But an illustrious Oriental Bright,
Like to the Diamonds refracted Light,
Or early Morning breaking from the Night.
(ll. 1-6)

"Milk" and "Snow" represent the category of "pale and whitely things" that are foreign to this particular kind of beauty. The lady is like the bright East, like "Diamonds refracted light," and like the dusky light of dawn. McFarland notes that "Herbert's use of the word 'refracted' . . . represents a very early appearance of this technical optical term in English."[26]

The rhyme pattern (aaabbb) serves to delineate the poet's antithetical pattern of development through the first three of the four stanzas that comprise the poem. Herbert presents examples of conventional beauty in the first three lines of each of these stanzas, and in the remaining three, contrasts the conventional with the unconventional beauty that characterizes this lady. These stanzas prepare for the speaker's conclusion that the lady's awe-inspiring beauty cannot be conceived by the conventional means of the senses, but must be intellectually apprehended to be understood.

Herbert establishes the preeminence of "reverend black" in the second stanza:

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[26]McFarland, "Optics," p. 218.

Nor is thy hair and eyes made of that ruddy beam,
Or golden-sanded stream,
Which we find still the vulgar Poets theme,
But reverend black, and such as you would say,
Light did but serve it, and did shew the way,
By which at first night did precede the day.
(ll. 7-12)

Beyond emphasizing the beauty of refracted light and the superiority of black, or darkness, Herbert does not concentrate on the science of optics in this first poem.

The second poem in the series, "To her Eyes," represents the poet's application of optical theory to a particular case for the purpose of establishing the divine nature of his subject. Herbert carries Plato's theory of extramission through a logical sequence that ends in the equation of blackness and divinity.

The poem is composed of three eleven-line stanzas. The stanzaic rhyme scheme (abbccadeede) with its three sets of enclosed couplets and the sound break between lines 6 and 7 suggests a change in the thought between the two sections, but the thought changes only in the first stanza; Herbert uses enjambement to carry his thought without pause through the second and third stanzas. The almost wholly abstract imagery in this poem is inseparable from the developing thought. The speaker begins with a direct address to the lady's eyes:

Black eyes if you seem dark,
It is because your beams are deep,
And with your soul united keep:
Who could discern
Enough in them, there might learn,

Whence they derive that mark;
And how their power is such,
That all the wonders which proceed from thence,
Affecting more the mind than sense,
Are not so much
The works of light, as influence. (stanza 1)

The poet uses argument from cause and effect to express his thesis. The eyes are dark because their beams originate deep within the lady's soul. The suggested image is of light issuing from within a mystical cavern of darkness. Moreover, being derived from the essence of the soul, the eye-beams are more powerful than mere light and thus strike their viewer's intelligence forcefully while leaving his physical senses relatively unaffected. The poet implies a cosmic unity between the eyes and the universe in the final line with the word "influence," suggesting the image of twin stars imbued with astrological power.

In the second stanza the speaker develops his thesis by explaining the metaphysical relationship between the eyes and the First Cause of the universe. The eyes share in the divine nature of the First Cause by virtue of their dependence on the soul:

As you then joined are
Unto the Soul, so it again
By its connexion doth pertain
To that first cause,
Who giving all their proper Laws,
By you doth best declare
How he at first b'in hid
Within the veil of an eternal night,
Did frame for us a second light,
And after bid
It serve for ordinary sight. (stanza 2)

Enjambement carries the thought smoothly over the rhyme-break between lines 6 and 7 in the one-sentence stanza.

The speaker emphasizes the significance of his analogy between the eyes and the First Cause in the first line of the final stanza and then proceeds to elaborate by comparing the irises to tinted glass. Again enjambement facilitates the forward movement of the idea between lines 6 and 7 of the stanza:

> His image then you are.
> If there be any yet who doubt
> What power it is that doth look out
> Through that your black,
> He will not an example lack,
> If he suppose that there
> Were grey, or hasle Glass,
> And that through them, though sight or soul might shine,
> He must yet at the last define
> That beams which pass
> Through black, cannot but be divine. (stanza 3)

The eye-beams, conceived in accordance with Platonic theory as continuous streams of light, emanate from the soul, where they derive their power. The soul properly belongs to the "first cause" for whom the black eyes provide an analogy. The divine power is light within darkness, and sight shining in a stream through blackness must also be divine.

The metaphors and images that Herbert uses to glorify Diana Cecil's brunette curls in "To her Hair" present a refinement of the same figures that he had previously used to celebrate golden hair in "Upon Combing her Hair." The

poet again compares the hairs to threads of destiny, and once more the hairs are streams of light. The ultimate source of this light is the soul; the eyes receive the light from the soul; and the hair appears as an "extraction" of beams from the eyes.

Herbert organizes his anatomy of the hair into six stanzas. In the first half of the poem he describes the extraordinary awe that the hair effects upon its mortal viewers, and in the final half the poet attempts to define the cause of this extraordinary effect. Unlike the speaker in "Upon Combing her Hair" who addresses the lady, the speaker in this poem addresses the hair itself, referring to its owner in the third person.

Each stanza is a unit of argument, and the rhyme scheme (aabccb) is essential to the argumentative structure. The "aa" couplets function as sub-topics that the poet develops within each stanza. The third and sixth lines (b, b) carry the exposition forward while the intervening couplet (cc) emphasizes the speaker's conclusion:

> Black beamy hairs, which so seem to arise
> From the extraction of those eyes,
> That into you she destin-like doth spin
> The beams she spares, what time her soul retires,
> And by those hallow'd fires,
> Keeps house all night within. (stanza 1)

The topic couplet continues the thought of "To her Eyes" as the speaker connects the hair to the First Cause through the eyes and the soul. The lady, like Destiny or Fate,

spins threads of light that her mortal viewers perceive as hairs. The argumentative conclusion of the cc couplet stresses the dual nature of the lady's soul as the link between spirit and flesh. The image of the retired soul presents both worldly ("Keeps house") and spiritual ("hallow'd fires") qualities.

The fatal significance of the hair is the subject of the following two stanzas:

> Since from within her awful front you shine,
> As threads of life which she doth twine,
> And thence ascending with your fatal rays,
> Do crown those temples, where Love's wonders wrought
> We afterwards see brought
> To vulgar light and praise. (stanza 2)

> Lighten through all your regions, till we find
> The causes why we are grown blind,
> That when we should your Glories comprehend
> Our sight recoils, and turnith back again,
> And doth, as 'twere in vain,
> It self to you extend. (stanza 3)

Though black, the hairs shine as brightly as a crown, dazzling the senses of mortal viewers. The streams of light from the eyes of the lady's would-be admirers recoil, and then vainly extend themselves toward her again.

The speaker seeks reasons for this phenomenon and suggests possible causes in stanzas 4 and 5:

> Is it, because past black, there is not found
> A fix'd or horizontal bound?
> And so, as it doth terminate the white,
> It may be said all colours to infold,
> And in that kind to hold
> Somewhat of infinite? (stanza 4)

> Or is it, that the centre of our sight
> Being vailed in its proper night

Discerns your blackness by some other sense,
Then that by which it doth py'd colours see,
Which only therefore be
Known by their difference? (stanza 5)

As the repository of all colors, black is infinite and confounds mortal vision. The "centre of our sight" refers both to the stream of light constituting vision in the Platonic scheme and to the dark pupil of the eye itself. Ordinary sensual apprehension is insufficient for understanding the divine implications of the lady's dark beauty.

Because of the mortal limitations of the admirers, in the final stanza the speaker exhorts the hair to "lighten":

Tell us when on her front in curls you lye
So diapred from that black eye,
That your reflected forms may make us know
That shining light in darkness all would find,
Were they not upward blind
With the Sun beams below. (stanza 6)

Divine glory is hidden from man because he is blinded by the "shine" of earthly concerns.

The definite images in this poem are few, and its success depends upon submerged metaphor and images that are suggested by the progression of the argument. The images of the Fates spinning threads of light, the votary soul tending the hallowed fires, the streams of light from the viewers' eyes, the hair pulsating with light, and the "reflected forms" of the curls are suggested through metaphor and the logical progression of the argument.

The two poems on blackness, "Sonnet of Black Beauty" and "Another Sonnet to Black it self," are among the most abstract of Herbert's poems and exemplify this poet's ability to create art from intellectual speculation. McFarland points out that "of the six poems in the series, those least explicitly related to the physics of optics are 'Sonnet of Black Beauty' and 'Another Sonnet to Black Itself,'"[27] but Herbert's concern in both poems is to examine the properties of light against the foil of darkness. The concern is now completely abstract; although these poems are connected through the theme of blackness with those that precede them in the series, the role of Diana Cecil, the personification of dark beauty, is now only an association in the reader's mind.

The poet's purpose in "Sonnet of Black Beauty" is to define the power of darkness. Although the rhyme pattern (abba baab cdcdcd) indicates a logical organization into octave and sestet, the argument of the one-sentence sonnet progresses without division to a philosophical conclusion in the final line.

The constancy of blackness, its property of remaining "unvary'd to the sight" (l. 4), is the subject of the poem. Herbert argues that the imperishability or immortality of blackness is a sign of its metaphysical superiority:

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[27]McFarland, "Optics," p. 218.

Black beauty, which above that common light,
   Whose Power can no colours here renew
   But those which darkness can again subdue,
Do'st still remain unvary'd to the sight,

And like an object equal to the view,
   Art neither chang'd with day, nor did with night;
   When all these colours which the world call bright,
And which old Poetry doth so pursue,

Are with the night so perished and gone,
   That of their being there remains no mark,
Thou still abidest so intirely one,
   That we may know thy blackness is a spark
Of light inaccessible, and alone
   Our darkness which can make us think it dark.

The formless images of light enhance the poet's argument. The central contrast of darkness to light, however, is designed to appeal to the intellectual interest in the juxtaposition of opposites, to reason rather than to sense. The argument leads up to the dramatic oxymorons, "blackness is a spark" (l. 12) and "light inaccessible" (l. 13), that anticipate Herbert's metaphysical resolution.

Darkness as the medium of a superior vision is the subject of "Another Sonnet to Black it self." Again Herbert develops his argument straight through the one-sentence sonnet:

Thou Black, wherein all colours are compos'd,
   And unto which they all at last return,
Thou colour of the Sun where it doth burn,
   And shadow, where it cools in thee is clos'd
Whatever nature can, or hath dispos'd
   In any other Hue: from thee do rise
Those tempers and complexions, which disclos'd,
   As parts of thee, do work as mysteries,
Of that thy hidden power; when thou dost reign
   The characters of fate shine in the Skies,

And tell us what the Heavens do ordain,
   But when the Earth's common light shines to our eyes,
Thou so retir'st thy self, that thy disdain
   All revelation unto Man denys.

The images of light in this poem are anchored to concrete sources, the sun and the stars. The speaker's oblique references to these light-emitting bodies are couched in terms designed to evoke rich associations of unstated meaning. When the earth is in darkness, man can "read" his fate in the stars, but the brighter light of the sun blinds him to this deeper vision.

The series of poems to Diana Cecil culminates in "The first Meeting," a six-stanza narration describing the first encounter between the speaker and the dark beauty. Each of the first five stanzas is devoted to describing a development in the sequence of events that comprise the meeting, and the final stanza is the speaker's meditation on the endurance of spiritual love. Frank Warnke points out that "Love is Herbert's subject, and, despite the larger implications outlined in the poem, it remains the central concern."[28] Herbert uses images from the sciences of optics and magnetics to explore the significance of the romantic relationship between the speaker and the lady.

The description of the speaker's emotional response to the lady provides the dramatic interest of the poem.

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[28]Warnke, p. 29.

Warnke further notes that "the intense emotions of the poem are developed solely in terms of relationship and intellectual significance."[29] The speaker focuses on the spiritual and intellectual implications of the physical meeting. Herbert's use of mock epic style to describe the majestic aura surrounding the lady does not undercut her significance, but rather heightens the reader's sense of her remarkable presence:

> As sometimes with a sable Cloud
> We see the Heavens bow'd,
> And darkning all the aire,
> Untill the lab'ring fires they do contain
> Break forth again,
> Ev'n so from under your hair
> I saw such an unusual blaze
> Light'ning and sparkling from your eyes,
> And with unused prodigies
> Forcing such terrors and amaze,
> That I did judge your Empire here
> Was not of love alone, but fear. (stanza 1)

The speaker addresses the lady throughout the poem. Her hair is now like dark clouds; her eyes still flash with light.

The images in this poem are general and largely abstract. The speaker's response to the beauty of the lady is the subject, and the idealized idea of the lady is the central image. Warnke writes that "the imagery of the poem . . . is certainly not as abstract as that of the sequence on black, but it still must be classified as abstract. The girl is presented only in terms of the black

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[29] Ibid., p. 110.

brightness of her hair and eyes."[30] The poet suggests her picture through particulars--her hair, her eyes, her smile--in much the same way that a painter might suggest a form with a few lines and patches of color. The reader and the viewer must mentally supply the detailed image of beauty too perfect to reproduce.

Herbert alludes to optics in the second stanza of the poem, establishing the lady's eyes as light-emitting bodies:

> And your appeased eyes did send
> A beam from them so soft and mild,
> That former terrors were exil'd,
> And all that could amaze did end;
> Darkness in me was chang'd to light,
> Wonder to love, love to delight. (ll. 19-24)

The eye-beams directly affect the speaker, transporting him from darkness to light and, through graceful anadiplosis in line 24, from wonder to delight.

Herbert again uses optical theory in stanza five:

> But as those bodies which dispense
> Their beams, in parting hence
> Those beams do recollect,
> Until they in themselves resumed have
> The forms they gave,
> So when your gracious aspect
> From me was turned once away,
> Neither could I thy soul retain,
> Nor you gave mine leave to remain,
> To make with you a longer stay,
> Or suffer'd ought else to appear
> But your, nights hemisphere.

Herbert's analogical use of optical theory here is

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[30] Ibid.

complex and prompts McFarland to conclude that the poet is combining two theories of optics to fit his poetic purpose:

> The concept of bodies dispensing beams would seem to imply a contradictory use of the theory of intramission by Herbert at this point in the poem. More likely, however, he is making use of a combined form of the two theories of vision.[31]

McFarland bases his conclusion on the assumption that Herbert intended the word "body" to signify the object, or thing, seen. But since the poet has already designated the eyes as active, light-emitting bodies in stanza two, it is probable that he uses "bodies" in stanza five to refer to the eyes again. The word also alludes to celestial sources of light, the sun and stars, and emphasizes the idea of the harmonious analogous universe.

This interpretation fits the sense of the remaining lines in the stanza. The speaker is comparing the sudden withdrawal of light with the departure of the lady. Her face, her "gracious aspect," is like the sun. When she turns away, her dark hair is like "nights hemisphere," or the dark side of the earth.

In the concluding stanza of the poem the speaker analyzes the future implications of his encounter. The poet turns from optical theory to the magnetic theory of William Gilbert for the basis of his analogy:

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[31]McFarland, "Optics," p. 225.

Only as we in Loadstones find
Vertue of such a kind,
That what they once do give,
B'ing neither to be chang'd by any Clime,
Or forc'd by time,
Doth ever in its subjects live: (ll. 61-66)

The effect of light is temporary, but the lady has had a permanent effect upon the speaker. Thus her virtue is like that of the loadstone whose influence once given is unchanging.[32] The equation of the lady to the loadstone makes the resolution of the poem possible:

So though I be from you retir'd
The power you gave yet still abides,
And my soul ever so guides,
By your magnetic touch inspir'd,
That all it moves, or is inclin'd,
Comes from the motions of your mind. (ll. 67-72)

If the lady's effect, like that of the loadstone, is immutable, then the speaker can rest in the assurance that it will not be lessened or erased by distance.

Like the Platonic theory of optics, Gilbert's magnetic theory is congenial with the theory of the analogous universe. Gilbert sees the loadstone as a model for the universe itself:

> . . . the loadstone possesses the actions peculiar to the globe, of attraction, polarity, revolution, of taking positions in the universe according to the law of the whole; it contains the supreme excellences of the globe and orders them: all this in token and proof of a certain eminent combination and of a most accordant nature . . . . The loadstone far surpasses

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[32]Raymond Bruce Waddington Jr., "The Aesthetics of Some Seventeenth Century Platonic Poets" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Rice University, 1965), p. 127.

> all other bodies around us in the virtues and properties that pertain to the common mother of us all.[33]

III. Imagery from Medicine

The theory of correspondences also informs Herbert's knowledge of medicine, a branch of science that held particular fascination for him. In De Veritate he explains the medical application of the analogy:

> I may add something concerning the analogy between the microcosm and the macrocosm, a subject of which recent writers have notably treated, especially in medical matters. We may notice that the agitations of passion, anger, suspicion, envy, etc., which are rebuked as evil by conscience when it is in due conformity, are analogous to that region in which hurricanes, whirlwinds, and meteors rage; only they fall upon the body instead of upon the earth when they are set in motion.[34]

Perhaps because of a sickly childhood and frequent illnesses throughout his life,[35] Herbert was especially interested in the diagnosis and treatment of disease. He

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[33]William Gilbert, On the Loadstone and Magnetic Bodies and the Great Magnet the Earth, trans. by P. Fleury Mottelay in Great Books of the Western World (Chicago: William Benton, 1938), XXVIII, 144-146.

[34]De Veritate, p. 171.

[35]Herbert mentions several instances of his ill health in The Life: he describes his infancy as "very sickly, my hed continualy purging itself very much by the Eares," p. 11; and he writes that two years preceding his appointment as ambassador to France: "a Quartan Ague seised on me which held me for a year and a half without intermission and a year and a half longer at Spring and Fall . . . All that saw me wondered how I could go on, being so weak and consumed as I was," pp. 87-88.

derived his knowledge of symptoms and cures partly from his personal use of curative herbs and partly from the writings of medical authorities. He refers to some of his authorities in his autobiography: "Among writers of physic, I do especially commend, after Hippocrates and Galen, Fernelius, Lud. Mercatus, and Dan. Sennertus, and Heurinius: I could name many more but I conceive these may suffice."[36]

Familiar with his authorities' various theories of treatment, Herbert must have also been well aware of the then current controversy among doctors between the paracelsists, or spagyrists, who advocated use of the new chemical drugs and the more conservative herbalists who maintained the superiority of vegetable curatives.[37] In his autobiography Herbert declares himself firmly within the conservative herbalist circle:

> As for the Chymique or Spagerique medicines I cannot commend them to the use of my Posterity, there being neither Emetique, Cathortique, Diaphoretique, Dieuretique, medicines extant among them which are not much more happily and safely performed by vegitable.[38]

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[36]See Sir Sidney Lee's note on these authorities in his edition of The Life of Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury (New York: E. P. Dutton & Sons Limited, 1906), p. 30.

[37]Crombie discusses the two schools, pp. 255-269.

[38]Edward Herbert, The Life of Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury: A Critical Edition, ed. J. M. Shuttleworth (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1976), p. 23.

Herbert's wide knowledge of symptoms and his preference for natural cures is evident in his two poems entitled "The Green Sickness Beauty."[39]

The longer of these two poems presents a catalogue of symptoms that together constitute a metaphor for newly emerging beauty. Green sickness, a form of what we now call iron-deficiency anemia, was prevalent among adolescent girls.[40]

The logical structure of this poem is compact; Ronald E. McFarland points out that it "reveals a structural control for which Lord Herbert has not often been properly credited,"[41] and Horace Rockwood comments on the "very solid structure"[42] of the poem. The first three stanzas of the seven-stanza poem comprise one sentence, and each stanza articulates an advancement of logic. The though-yet-so arrangement of the clauses structures the thesis-antithesis-synthesis pattern of the thought:

> Though the pale white within your cheeks compos'd,
> And doubtful light unto your eye confin'd,
> Though your short breath not from it self unloos'd
> And careless motions of your equal mind,
> Argue, your beauties are not all disclos'd:

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[39] Poems, pp. 67-68.

[40] OED.

[41] McFarland, "The Rhetoric of Medicine: Lord Herbert's and Thomas Carew's Green-Sickness," Journal of the History of Medicine & Allied Sciences, XXX (March, 1975), 250.

[42] Rockwood, p. 79.

Yet as a rising beam, when first 'tis shown,
   Points fairer, then when it ascends more red,
Or as a budding Rose, when first 'tis blown,
   Smells sweeter far, then when it is more spread,
As all things best by principles are known:

So in your green and flourishing estate
   A beauty is discer'd more worthy love,
Then that which further doth it self dilate,
   And those degrees of variation prove,
Our vulgar wits so much do celebrate. (stanzas 1-3)

The speaker sees the four symptoms of the green sickness (paleness, dull eyes, shortness of breath, and mental agitation) as signs not only of disease, but also of emerging feminine beauty. The suggestion of burgeoning sexual attractiveness in the symptoms of this particular illness is more conventional than original since the green sickness affected only young virgins in the beginning stages of puberty, and copulation was one of the recommended treatments. The symptoms hint at conventional feminine beauty that is not yet fully revealed.[43] The white is "within" the cheeks; the light is "confined" in the eye; and the breath is "short" and "not from it self unloos'd."

Herbert uses examples in the second stanza to suggest that promise is superior to fulfillment. A "rising beam"

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[43]McFarland, "Green-Sickness," writes that "Lord Herbert's view here is consistent with that expressed in his sequence of poems concerning black beauty and in his other writings; in properly Platonic fashion, he insists that apparent beauty is not to be confused with the essence of beauty itself" (p. 253).

of light presents a more attractive image than the fully ascended sun, and the bud is sweeter than the rose in full bloom. The apparent paradox between the first two stanzas prepares for the poet's synthesis in the third: the girl's innocent, virginal beauty is more worthy of receiving pure love than is more fully developed mature beauty.

The high level of abstraction in these stanzas emphasizes the delicate, fragile nature of Herbert's picture of ethereal youthful promise. The poet uses his only concrete image, "a budding rose," to establish the analogy between the emerging beauty of the girl and the unfolding beauty of plants. Herbert continues this analogy in stanza 6 to conclude his elaboration upon the advantageous implications of each of the symptoms:

> Thus, though your eyes dart not that piercing blaze
> Which doth in busy lovers' looks appear,
> It is because, you do not need to gaze,
> On other object than your proper sphere,
> Nor wander further than to run that maze. (stanza 4)
>
> So, if you want that blood which must succeed,
> And give at last a tincture to your skin,
> It is, because neither in outward deed,
> Nor inward thought, you yet admit that sin,
> For which your Cheeks a guilty blush should need.
> (stanza 5)
>
> So, if your breath do not so freely flow,
> It is because you love not to consume
> That vital treasure which you do bestow,
> As well to vegetate as to perfume
> Your virgin leaves, as fast as they do grow.
> (stanza 6)

Maintaining his tight control, the poet deals with the

symptoms separately in each of these one-sentence stanzas. Like the syntactic structure, the logical pattern in these stanzas is parallel: "though" her eyes do not flash, "it is, because" she is not yet a "busy lover"; "so" if her complexion is pale, "it is, because" she has no thoughts to make her blush; "so" if her breath is short, "it is, because" her vital spirits are consumed by her own growth.

Herbert alters his rhetorical pattern, however, in the final stanza:

> Yet stay not here, love for his right will call,
> You were not born to serve your only will;
> Nor can your beauty be perpetual:
> 'Tis your perfection for to ripen still
> And to be gather'd rather than to fall. (stanza 7)

The change in pattern parallels the turn in thought. The vegetable image that corresponds to the young girl has changed from budding rose to ripening fruit--with all of the associated sexual connotations. Nevertheless, Herbert does not reject his thesis of the beauty of promise, but stresses the necessarily transitory nature of promise; it must either die or end in fulfillment.

In the shorter one-sentence poem on green-sickness, Herbert narrows his focus to one symptom, the lady's pallor:

> From thy pale look, while angry Love doth seem
> With more imperiousness to give his Law,
> Then where he blushingly doth beg esteem,
> We may observe py'd beauty in such aw;
> That the bravest Colour under her command
> Affrighted, oft before you doth retire,
> While like a Statue of your self, you stand

In such symmetrique form, as doth require
No lustre but his own: As then in vain
One should flesh-colouring to statues add,
So were it to your native White a Stain,
If it in other ornaments were clad,
Then what your rich proportions do give,
Which in a boundless fair being unconfin'd
Exalted in your soul, so seem to live,
That they become an emblem of your mind,
That so, who to your Orient White should joyn
Those fading qualities most eyes adore,
Were but like one, who gilding Silver Coin,
Gave but occasion to suspect it more.

Regal in her pale symmetry, the lady stands like a statue scorning the personified Love.[44] Her beauty is complete even without the rosy blush of beauty's "brav'st Colour."

The general "statue" and "silver coin" are the only concrete images in the poem, but Herbert's structure of logic makes his conceit clear. In the first nine lines he establishes a picture of idealized feminine beauty as the central image of the poem, and elaborates the self-sufficient perfection of this ideal in the remaining lines. The lady's pallor, a symptom of her illness, provides Herbert's occasion for this poetic tribute to the symmetry of the unadorned feminine form.

These poems provide examples of Herbert's application of scientific thought to poetic imagery. Using scientific theory in conjunction with the doctrine of the correspondences of the analogous universe (the basic tenet of his philosophy), Herbert produces poems of

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[44]For a different interpretation, see McFarland, "Green-Sickness," p. 255.

unusual intellectual beauty. The microcosm/macrocosm analogy is the basis for "Elegy over a Tomb" and "Upon Combing her Hair" as well as for the poems wherein Herbert utilizes optical and medical theory. In all of these poems sophisticated logic supports imagery whose effect depends upon the reader's knowledge and understanding of the poet's allusions to the scientific ideas of his time.

CHAPTER IV

EDWARD HERBERT'S USE OF IMAGERY FROM PHILOSOPHY

Although the machinations of statecraft and the hypotheses and discoveries of science suggested many of Edward Herbert's poetic images and arguments, philosophy provided his primary source of poetic inspiration. The main body of Herbert's poetry reflects an avid interest in philosophy. Characteristically, he develops his philosophical ideas through tightly reasoned logic wherein it is often impossible to divorce image, metaphor, and theme in a single poem.[1] Occasionally the poet builds his central image in conjunction with his developing argument; thus the image is clear only in the context of the entire poem. For example, the image of the statue of idealized feminine beauty in the shorter of the two poems entitled "The Green Sickness Beauty" is the central image and controlling metaphor of the entire poem. Herbert's images from philosophy, like his images from

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[1]Frank Warnke, "This Metaphysick Lord: A Study of the Poetry of Herbert of Cherbury" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1954), notes that "for Herbert, a philosophical belief is not a poetic element employed to give shape and expression to his emotions in a human situation; it is the subject of the poem," p. 96.

politics and from science, appeal to the reader's intellect and intuition rather than to his senses.

The philosophy that informs Herbert's poetry is a synthesis of Neoplatonic thought.[2] Although it is impossible to trace specific influences in the poems,[3] Herbert's Neoplatonism includes ideas from Iamblicus, Plotinus, Ficino, Pico, and Bruno.[4] Their focuses and perspectives differ, but, in varying degrees, all of

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[2]Although Mario Manlio Rossi, La Vita, le opere, i tempi di Edwardo Herbert di Chirbury (3 vols.; Florence: G. C. Sansoni, 1947), argues that Herbert's debt to Neoplatonism is only superficial, I, 284-285, R. D. Bedford, The Defense of Truth: Herbert of Cherbury and the Seventeenth Century (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1979), stresses Herbert's "Neoplatonic metaphysic, founded upon analogy," p. 88, and Warnke asserts that "whereas the philosophy of the De Veritate is extremely eclectic, derived from such varied sources as stoicism, neo-Platonism, scholasticism, and sixteenth-century anti-Aristotelianism, the philosophy of the poems is unified and, within its limits, coherent. It is specifically neo-Platonic philosophy," p. 153.

[3]Bedford points out that "the specific sources of Herbert's ideas are a matter for dispute--inevitably so since his mind, like that of many a Renaissance syncretist, does not sift its material and provide the sort of attributions that would make the task of defining those sources simple," p. 88.

[4]Frances A. Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition (New York: Vintage Books, 1969), passim; Meyrick H. Carre, Review of Rossi's La Vita, Mind, LVII (1948), 243; Raymond Bruce Waddington Jr., "The Aesthetics of Some Seventeenth Century Platonic Poets" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Rice University, 1965), p. 154; Bedford, pp. 76, 91, and 95; and C. J. Fordyce and T. M. Knox, "The Library of Jesus College, Oxford, with Appendix on Books Bequeathed by Lord Herbert of Cherbury," Proceedings and Papers of the Oxford Bibliographic Society, V (1937), 49-115.

these philosophers color their interpretations of the Platonic dialogues to some extent with ideas from the Corpus Hermeticum.[5] Within the overriding conception of universal harmony, the Corpus Hermeticum rests upon two primary points of doctrine. Bedford defines these fundamental ideas:

> 1) the idea of the substantiality of the incorporeal world and man's involvement in it by virtue of his incorporeal soul (with the insistence on the final destiny of the soul in the transcendent world).
> 2) the idea of "Correspondence," of a definite and involved relation between the different parts of creation.[6]

The theory of correspondences is a unifying theme, while the immortality of the soul is axiomatic in both Herbert's poetry and prose.[7]

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[5]Isaac Casaubon, Herbert's friend and mentor, had in 1614 revealed the Corpus as a magnificent fraud by proving that it could not have been written by the apocryphal Hermes Trismegistus and was instead a collection of writings from a much later date. Frances A. Yates, however, points out that "Hermetism was not immediately dislodged . . .," p. 170, and Bedford notes that "numerous writers of the sixteenth century had summarized and evaluated the Corpus until it became so absorbed into Renaissance speculative philosophy that its basic doctrines came to be commonplaces of Renaissance thought," p. 96. The catalogue compiled by Fordyce and Knox shows that Herbert owned a copy of Casaubon's Exercitations ad Boronii prolegomena in annales that contains Casaubon's exposure of the hermetic texts, p. 75.

[6]Bedford, p. 97.

[7]Thus Herbert's poetry differs substantially from the fashionable court Platonism of the Caroline period. This court Platonism simply celebrated a love divorced from all corporeal involvement and consisting of contemplation and praise of the beloved. For a discussion of Platonism in the court of Charles I, see Catherine Hebert, "The

Herbert's conception of universal harmony derives from the Neoplatonic idea of the world as a hieroglyph of sensible things. The individual reflects a part of the divine in whom all diversity is unified.[8] Form is prior to matter because shape denotes essence. Through artistic image making, the essence of the individual object becomes accessible to sensual and intellectual perception. In De Veritate Herbert observes that

> these images or appearances which emanate from objects seem to have a homogeneous nature; each part has something of the significance of the whole. Thus the bulk of a mountain does not enter the eye in its actual dimensions. It seems that the representative form of a thing, just as the form itself is wholly present in the whole and in any part.[9]

Edward Herbert constructs his poetic imagery to make the essences of abstract conceptions accessible to his reader's intellect and intuition. In the following pages of this chapter I shall discuss Herbert's poetic

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Platonic Love Poetry of Lord Herbert of Cherbury," Ball State University Forum, XI (April,), 46-50.

[8]Bedford writes that "Herbert holds as axiomatic the doctrine of Plotinus (from whatever source it may have reached him) and of the Florentine neoplatonists that form is the absolute prius in respect of matter. The whole is prior to the parts and cannot be derived from them," pp. 91-92.

[9]Edward Herbert, De Veritate, ed. and trans. by Meyrick H. Carre (Bristol: J. Arrowsmith, Ltd., 1937), p. 99; further references to De Veritate in this chapter will be to this edition.

examinations of the natures of (1) beauty; (2) love; and (3) immortality.

I. Beauty

Since the whole is prior to the parts, mortal beauty is only a shadowy reflection of divine beauty. Herbert explains his belief in this fundamental tenet of Neoplatonism: "Accordingly, whatever truth or goodness exists in us exists preeminently in God. And in pursuing this view, I believe that the divine image is in turn imparted to the body."[10] Mortal beauty embodies the harmony of the analogous universe, and its contemplation can lead to greater knowledge of divinity or to a mystic union with divinity.

Harmonious beauty in the natural world is the theme of the "Sonnet" that Herbert "Made upon the Groves near Merlow Castle."[11] To develop this theme Herbert uses the Italian sonnet form "Englished" with a concluding couplet. The form is appropriate to the poet's concentration upon two Neoplatonic ideas in the poem. Herbert devotes the octave to describing the according of opposites in the

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[10] *De Veritate*, p. 150.

[11] Edward Herbert, *Poems*, ed. G. C. Moore Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), p. 54; according to Moore Smith's chronology, Herbert wrote this poem in 1620.

scene and the sestet to stressing the active regenerative forces in an animate nature.[12]

In the octave Herbert relies on abstraction and suggested metaphor in conveying the visual scene while, at the same time, evoking a mood of quiet tranquillity:

> You well compacted Groves, whose light & shade
> Mixt equally, produce nor heat, nor cold,
> Either to burn the young, or freeze the old,
> But to one even temper being made,
> Upon a Greene embroidering through each Glade
> An Airy Silver, and a Sunny Gold,
> So cloath the poorest that they do behold
> Themselves, in riches which can never fade,

The nebulous impressions of light and shade playing through these lines are the basis of Herbert's clothing metaphor in line 7. Warnke remarks that "the densely concentrated metaphors evoke a natural scene with objective clarity . . . ."[13] The silver of shade and the gold of sunlight thread among the groves like embroidery.

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[12]Corpus Hermeticum, vol. 1 of 3 vols., ed. by A. D. Nock and trans. by H. J. Festugiere (Paris, 1945; rpt. 1954); in Book XII of the Corpus, Hermes Trismegistus explains this principle to Tat:

> "The world too, is a god, image of a greater god. United to him and conserving the order and will of the Father, it is the totality of life. There is nothing in it, through all the duration of the cyclic return willed by the Father, which is not alive . . . . All that is in the world, without exception, is in movement, and that which is in movement is also in life. Contemplate then the beautiful arrangement of the world and see that it is alive, and that all matter is full of life," pp. 174-183,

trans. into English by Frances Yates in Giordano Bruno, pp. 33-34.

[13]Warnke, p. 87.

This image logically unites octave and sestet: the beauty of these silver and gold "riches" is eternal, just as the motion and change described in the sestet is eternal.

Herbert's imagery in the sestet is concrete, though general:

> While the wind whistles, and the birds do sing,
> While your twigs clip, and while the leaves do friss,
> While the fruit ripens which those trunks do bring,
> Sensless to all but love, do you not spring
> Pleasure of such a kind, as truly is
> A self-renewing vegetable bliss?

The relatively high number of active verbs in lines 9-12 underscores Herbert's emphasis on the animate qualities in nature. Warnke writes that in this poem, "Herbert is close, for the only time, to the author of 'The Garden' and 'Upon Appleton House.'"[14] Herbert and Marvell make similar poetic use of the Hermetic principle of the animate world. Herbert's images of change and motion recall Andrew Marvell's images of an active, almost aggressive, nature in "The Garden."[15]

Beautiful music reflects a synthesis of the harmony of the animate world and the harmony of the universe, the music of the spheres. In both Platonist and Neoplatonist

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[14] Ibid.

[15] For a discussion of Marvell's hermetic treatment of nature in "The Garden," see Marin-Sofie Rostvig, "Andrew Marvell's 'The Garden': A Hermetic Poem," ES, XL (April, 1959), 65-76.

belief music derives its power to affect the mind through its echoes of heavenly harmony. E. H. Gombrich notes that

> We see the Renaissance Platonists searching eagerly for the tradition of the music of the ancients which must have embodied the laws of the universe and which was therefore reputed to have produced such miraculous effects [as in the legend of Orpheus].[16]

The power of music to induce mystic ecstasy is the subject of Herbert's poem, "To a Lady who did sing excellently."[17]

This is one of Herbert's most successful poems in terms of technical control, logical structure, and form. The three ten-line stanzas (rhymed abba, cc, dede) comprise one periodic sentence. Each of stanzas 1 and 2 constitutes a complex adverbial clause, and the final stanza begins with a third adverbial clause; these three clauses modify the verb "ravish'd" in line 25. Intellectual ravishment of the audience is the subject of the poem, and through his technical control, Herbert achieves simultaneous climax of meaning and syntax in line 25:

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[16] E. H. Gombrich, "Icones Symbolicae," JWCI, XI (1948), 177-178.

[17] Poems, pp. 44-45; this poem is dated 1618 in the first edition and may have been inspired by an actual experience in 1614. Herbert describes the occasion in his Life:

> "[In Venice] I was received by the English ambassador, Sir Dudley Carlton, with much Honor; among other favors shewed mee, I was brought to see a Nunne in Murano who being an Admirable beauty and together singing extreamly well, who was thought one of the Raritys not onely of that Place but of the Tyme; we came to a room opposite unto the Cloyster, when she coming on the other side of the Grate betwixt us,

When our rude & unfashion'd words, that long
A being in their elements enjoy'd,
Sensless and void,
Came at last to be formed by thy toungue,
And from thy breath receive that life and place,
And perfect grace,
That now thy power diffus'd through all their parts
Are able to remove
All the obstructions of the hardest hearts,
And teach the most unwilling how to love;

When they again, exalted by thy voice,
Tun'd by thy soul, dismiss'd into the air
To us repair,
A living, moving, and harmonious noise,
Able to give the love they do create
A second state,
And charm not only all his griefs away,
And his defects restore,
But make him perfect, who, the Poets say,
Made all was ever yet made heretofore;

When again all these rare perfections meet,
Composed in the circle of thy face,
As in their place,
So to make up of all one perfect sweet,
Who is not then so ravish'd with delight
Ev'n of thy sight,
That he can be assur'd his sense is true,
Or that he die or live,
Or that he do enjoy himself, or you,
Or only the delights, which you did give?

The alternating line length and contrapuntal rhythms along with the even measured tone combine with the logical development to give the poem a kind of circular unity.

To appeal to his reader's intellect, Herbert uses extremely abstract imagery to carry his argument. "Words,"

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sung soe extreamly well, That when shee departed, neither my Lord Ambassador nor his Lady . . . could finde as much as a word of fitting Language to returne her for the extraordinary Musicke shee gave us . . .," p. 73.

"soul," "love," and "circle," all terms representing ideas rich in Neoplatonic associations, become almost concrete through Herbert's poetic artistry. The words become instruments "tun'd" by the lady's soul; their resulting harmony has the power to charm even the god of love and to restore his defects.[18] The circle of the lady's face symbolizes the beauty of unity in diversity apparent in the "living, moving" harmony of the world.

Terrestrial beauty mimics the perfection of the celestial Idea of its origin. Contemplation of the Idea, or the divine origin, of beauty is the subject of Herbert's "The IDEA, Made of Alnwick in his expedition to Scotland with the Army, 1639."[19] Herbert summarizes his topic in the first stanza of the thirty-one stanza poem:

> All Beauties vulgar eyes on earth do see,
> At best but some imperfect copies be,
> Of those the Heavens did at first decree.

The speaker in the poem contemplates the Idea of perfect beauty that is reflected in the appearance of his absent

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[18] Herbert is probably referring to the discussion of Love as a god of creation in Plato's Symposium and also to the catalogue of Love's physical defects in the Phaedrus.

[19] Poems, pp. 75-79; another version of "The IDEA" in Herbert's hand exists in a manuscript at Powis Castle. Frank Warnke, "Two Previously Unnoted Mss. of Poems by Lord Herbert of Cherbury," NQ, I (April, 1954), concludes that the printed version (the version used by Moore Smith) "appears to be a later re-working by Herbert of the poem in the Powis Ms.," pp. 141-142; the most significant difference between the two versions is the omission in the Powis Ms. of three stanzas following line 33.

loved one and concludes that she will be even more beautiful in death when her soul transcends its "outward Clay" and rejoins the supreme good.

The logic of the argument is tightly constructed; Herbert supports his major premise with examples, causes, and reasons. Because the argument involves abstract philosophical concepts, the imagery of the poem is primarily intangible, though it is not vague. The central metaphor of Nature as a willing, but imperfect, artist, her "weak hand" being guided by the "supreme Pow'r" is well developed, and Herbert occasionally bows to his reader's need for pictorial images in his illustrative examples.

Probably echoing Plato's doctrine of Ideas in the Parmenides,[20] Herbert's major premise is that appearance reflects essential nature: "Fair is the mark of Good, and foul of Ill" (l. 25). The poet admits some exception to this categorical statement in lines 26 and 27:

> Although not so infallibly, but still
> The proof depends most on the mind and will.

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[20]Moore Smith, p. 160, suggests that Herbert is echoing the Parmenides, but it would be forcing the issue to point out definite parallels between the argument of the poem and the dialogue; Edith Hamilton writes in The Collected Dialogues of Plato, ed. by Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (New York: Pantheon Books, 1961), that "the Parmenides presents a great difficulty to the reader. The best Platonists differ about its meaning," p. 920.

The following triplet comprises an example made concrete with a simile:

> As Good yet rarely in the Foul is met,
> So 'twould as little by its union get,
> As a rich Jewel that were poorly set. (ll. 28-30)

An ugly body is inappropriate for a being who is essentially good.

Herbert continues to support his premise by developing the relationship between "Fair" and "Good":

> For since Good first did at the Fair begin,
> Foul being but a punishment for sin,
> Fair's the true outside to the Good within.
>
> In these the supreme Pow'r then so doth guide
> Natures weak hand, as he doth add beside
> All by which Creatures can be dignifi'd.
>
> While you in them see so exact a line,
> That through each sev'ral part a glimpse doth shine
> Of their original and form divine.
>
> Therefore the characters of fair and good
> Are so set forth, and printed in their blood,
> As each in other may be understood. (ll. 31-42)

Having established in the lines above that "Good" is understood to underlie a fair appearance, Herbert's speaker begins to consider particular feminine beauty:

> That Beauty so accompani'd with Grace,
> And equally conspicuous in the face,
> In a fair Woman's outside takes the place. (ll. 43-45)

In the following four stanzas the speaker describes the body's cooperation in maintaining the purity of the soul. A "gentle blush" will correct a "tempting thought," and lips "will chase all grievous thoughts and sad" (ll. 51 and 56).

The speaker then compares the interdependence of body and soul to the interdependence of mold and liquid metal in a typically Neoplatonic analogy:[21]

> As Statuaries yet having fram'd in Clay
> An hollow Image, afterwards convey
> The molten mettle through each several way:
>
> But when it once unto its place hath past,
> And th' inward statua perfectly is cast,
> Do throw away the outward Clay at last,
>
> So when that form the Heav'ns at first decreed
> Is finished within, Souls do not need
> Their Bodies more, but would from them be freed.
> (ll. 58-66)

The cast forms the molten metal, but paradoxically, it is the soul that forms the body to reflect its divine Idea.[22] When the body is formed, then the earthly work of the soul is done and the body, like the mold for a statue, is dispensable. The image of the smoothly finished metal statue contrasted to its rough cast of clay makes Herbert's illustration of the relationship

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[21]It is probable that Herbert intentionally chose this metaphor because of its Neoplatonic associations; Frances Yates notes that the followers of Ficino and readers familiar with the writings of Iamblicus and Plotinus commonly believed that the ancient priests, or magi, possessed the knowledge and ability to animate their statues with aerial demons and spirits, pp. 56, 57, 65, and 68; Bedford presents a convincing argument that Edward Herbert was also interested in this sort of sympathetic magic, p. 94.

[22]For a discussion of this Neoplatonic notion, see Nesca A. Robb, Neoplatonism of the Italian Renaissance (New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1968), p. 73.

between soul and body vivid. The beauty of the soul, shining like a golden statue, becomes concrete.

Herbert develops this analogy further by comparing the beauty of the finished form emerging from its mold to the future beauty of his beloved when her soul will emerge to rejoin her original Idea:

> Thus from above I doubt not to behold
> Your second self renew'd in your own mold,
> And rising thence fairer then can be told. (ll. 73-75)

Herbert's speaker is not, however, renouncing the value of mortal beauty:

> Hasten not thither yet, for as you are
> A Beauty upon Earth without compare,
> You will shew best still where you are most rare.
> (ll. 88-90)

In the eyes of the speaker, this particular lady is a paragon of terrestrial beauty; her appearance provides a glimpse, or hint, of the awesome beauty of her original Idea whose essence she embodies. Thus the speaker's contemplation of the Idea of feminine beauty leads him to an intuitive knowledge of divinity.

Intuitive knowledge resulting from the contemplation of beauty is a theme that Herbert develops from a different perspective in his series of poems addressed to Mrs. Diana Cecil.[23] Blackness in this series is a symbol

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[23]In Chapter III of this study I have discussed Herbert's use of imagery derived from science in these poems. Herbert's speaker in this series moves from reverent admiration in "To Mrs. Diana Cecyll," through analysis of particular manifestations of the lady's beauty

for infinity.[24] Although white, representing celestial light, was commonly believed in the seventeenth century to be superior to black, many thinkers argued that blackness possessed even greater virtues. For example, John L. Harrison quotes Sir John Ferne (a contemporary of Lord Herbert) on the immutable quality of blackness:

> The colour of blacke is the most ancient of all colours, for in the beginning there was darkness over the face of the earth. And although that the colour of white was alwaies most praise worthy for the brightness of the same, yet can we not omit the honore due to the colour of blacke: as first, it is the most perdurable of all colours, for it can hardly be altered into any other show or colour than which the same of nature it is, whereas of the contrarie part it doth easily extinguish and blot out any other colour.[25]

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in "To her Eyes" and "To her Hair," to meditation upon the metaphysical implications of the blackness that is her essence in "Sonnet of Black Beauty" and "Another Sonnet to Black it self." The series culminates in "The first Meeting," a narration describing the succeeding stages of the relationship between the speaker and the lady.

[24]Waddington notes that black assimilates all the other colors and fills "the primary position of the genus given to splendor in Ficino's color scheme," p. 142; Warnke argues that "Herbert's attribution of mystical significance to blackness is probably derived from neo-Platonic and early Christian sources especially from the De divinis nomibus and the Mystical Theology of Dionysius the Areopagite, though similar views were held by thinkers as diverse and as separated by time as St. Bonaventura, Leone Ebreo, and St. John of the Cross," p. 106; John L. Harrison, "Lord Herbert's Two Sonnets on Black," NQ, CXCVIII (August, 1953), believes that the significance of black in the two sonnets is primarily heraldic, but he also notes that "black was for Herbert a symbol of infinity" and of harmony, p. 323.

[25]Quoted by Harrison, p. 324; primary source, John Ferne, The Blazon of Gentrie (London, 1586); also cited in F. E. Hulme, The History, Principles and Practice of Heraldry (London, 1898), p. 41.

Blackness is the essence of Diana Cecil's beauty, and immutability is the essence of blackness. Through this quality, blackness is eternal and partakes of the divine nature.

Herbert equates the lady with divinity in "The first Meeting."[26] The sense of light shining out of blackness pervades the poem and supports the poet's equation. Paul O. Kristeller explains the significance that Platonists and Neoplatonists attached to sources of light:

> In Plato's Republic, the sun is called the image of the idea of the good, and this analogy is developed by Plato in great detail. In Plotinus, light and its irradiation became a basic metaphor for the diffusion of goodness and being from their respective sources, and from Plotinus the metaphor found its way into later Neoplatonism, and through St. Augustine and the Areopagite into Christian thought.[27]

As the source of light in the poem, Herbert's lady becomes coeval with the good.

Herbert's characteristically abstract image patterns in "The first Meeting" again appeal to reason rather than to sense or emotion, and Warnke writes that

> The intense emotions of the poem are developed solely in terms of relationship and intellectual significance. The kiss in the fourth stanza is "fashion'd by your mind" and it has "a soul infused" into it. Typically

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[26] Poems, p. 39.

[27] Paul O. Kristeller, Eight Philosophers of the Italian Renaissance (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1964), p. 120; see also Nesca Robb, pp. 64-67.

> in the last metaphor of the poem, the figure of the loadstone, Herbert makes his appeal to the intellect rather than to the senses.[28]

The individuality of Herbert's method of image making is even more apparent if one compares his treatment of the loadstone, or magnet, to Donne's treatment of the compass in "A Valediction: forbidding mourning" or to Marvell's graphic treatment of parallel lines in "The Definition of Love." Images from science inform all three poems, and in each the lover wishes to be closer to his beloved, but Herbert's poem is devoid of the emotion that characterizes the other two. Although Herbert's technique is closer to that of Marvell, the difference in the emotional effect of the two poems is striking.

The image of the loadstone in the final stanza of Herbert's poem is rich in both scientific and philosophical connotations. Herbert devotes the first half of the stanza to a description of the scientific properties of the stone, and the last half to his analogy between the power of love and the power of the stone.[29] It is the speaker's soul that is affected by the lady's mind:

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[28]Warnke, p. 110.

[29]For Gilbert's magnetic theory, see William Gilbert, On the Loadstone and Magnetic Bodies and the Great Magnet the Earth, trans. by P. Fleury Mottelay in Great Books of the Western World (Chicago: William Benton, 1938), XVIII, 126, and Marjorie Hope Nicolson, The Breaking of the Circle (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1960, rev. ed., 1962), pp. 141-146; Aloysius Gasior, "Satiric Elements in the Poetry of Edward Herbert of Cherbury" (unpublished Ph.D.

And my soul ever so guides,
By your magnetic touch inspir'd
That all it moves, or is inclin'd
Comes from the motions of your mind. (ll. 69-72)

Distance can have no effect on this love wherein soul and body attain perfect harmony.[30]

II. Love

Beauty, in both Platonic and Neoplatonic ideology, is the inspiration for love. The deity is both the source and final recipient of love. The mortal lover desires to possess beauty, but must transcend the physical before he can achieve happiness. This need for transcendence, however, does not deny a legitimate place in the pattern of correspondences to physical love.

Herbert's poetic use of the theory of correspondences often results in unexpected arguments from a poet who characteristically universalizes the particular experience and depends upon highly abstract imagery designed to appeal to reason rather than to emotion. In spite of all

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dissertation, University of Illinois, 1970), points out that the loadstone image "was used . . . by many medieval Augustinian theologians (one such being John Scotus Erigena), and it referred to God . . .," p. 435.

[30] J. S. Harrison, Platonism in English Poetry (New York: The Columbia Univ. Press, 1903), writes that "the great value which this purely spiritual love was supposed to possess was that it was unaffected either by time or distance. The union, not being one known to sense, could exist as well in the absence of the lovers as in the presence of both," p. 143.

his abstraction and universalization of human experience, Herbert never disparages the body or the physical aspects of love in his poems. In its affinities with the universe, its participation with the world soul, the body is "the greatest miracle of Nature."[31]

In De Veritate Herbert explains the relationship between physical and metaphysical love:

> Love was the first of the inner emotions. This faculty is above all sensitive to the divine beauty and goodness and afterwards to the divine attributes. For there is nothing in God which is not an object of love, not even justice, so that this faculty responds to everything in the nature of God; and just as many of the attributes of God coalesce in the divine unity, so our love gathers with it all the faculties . . . . The common object of this faculty is physical love. For this reason the feeling which relates to the perpetuation of the species, so long as it is not infected with unlawful lust or concupiscence, is humane and may spring from the faculty which seeks the general good.[32]

In his poetry Edward Herbert expresses the idea of love as the avenue to attaining the "general good" and to participating in the divine nature.

Herbert expresses variations on this theme in three poems entitled "Platonic Love."[33] The speaker addresses a lady in the first two of these poems,[34] but in the third

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[31]Herbert, Life, p. 24.

[32]De Veritate, pp. 197-198; see also pp. 193-194.

[33]The locations of these poems in the first edition indicates that all three were written in the early 1630's.

[34]Poems, pp. 71-72.

he narrows his point of view to concentrate entirely upon himself.[35] John Harrison describes the speaker in this third poem "as wavering between despair and hope with a slight balance in favor of the latter."[36]

Underlying all three poems is Herbert's idea of love as a means of participating in the divine nature and as "a faculty which seeks the general good."[37] The love he describes in these poems transcends fleshly desires and rests in spiritual security.

The images in the three poems are abstract and general, depending upon familiarity with Platonic and Neoplatonic doctrine for vividness. As the focus in each poem is different, so is the rhetorical structure, but Herbert artistically manipulates meter, rhyme, and stanzaic pattern to suit each argument.

The rhetorical structure of the first of these poems is particularly skillful. Each of the five stanzas comprises one complex sentence. The rhyme pattern (aaabbb) stresses the thesis/qualification or thesis/conclusion division of each sentence-stanza.

The speaker begins by celebrating the lady's beauty and by describing the salutary effects of the love that she has inspired in him. He declares that her beauty is

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[35] Ibid., p. 79.

[36] Harrison, pp. 159-160.

[37] De Veritate, p. 198.

above "poetic praise," although she still deserves commendation:

> Madam, your beauty and your lovely parts
> Would scarce admit poetic praise and Arts
> As they are Loves most sharp and piercing darts;
> Though as again they only wound and kill
> The more deprav'd affections of our will,
> You claim a right to commendation still. (ll. 1-6)

Her beauty and "lovely parts" make up the finest weapons in the God of Love's arsenal, but these annihilate only lower sensual appetites, leaving affections refined.

The speaker elevates love completely above sensual pleasure in the following two stanzas:

> For as you can unto that height refine
> All Loves delights, as while they do incline
> Unto no vice, they so become divine;
> We may as well attain your excellence,
> As without help of any outward sense
> Would make us grow a pure Intelligence.
>
> And as a Soul, thus being quite abstract,
> Complies not properly with any act,
> Which from its better Being may detract:
> So through the virtuous habits you infuse,
> It is enough that we may like and chuse,
> Without presuming yet to take or use. (ll. 7-18)

Herbert's poetic method imitates his meaning. Completely devoid of imagery, the argument in these stanzas appeals to the reader's "pure Intelligence." The lady refines the delights of love from the realm of sense to the realms of intelligence and spirit.

In contrast to the visually barren stanzas above, stanza 4 shines with ethereal images of the empyrean. Herbert's "Angels in their starry Orbs" (l. 19) anticipate the radiant images of light that crown the poem:

> Do not refuse then, Madam to appear,
> Since every radiant Beam comes from your Sphere,
> Can so much more than any else endear,
> As while through them we do discern each Grace,
> The multiplied lights from every place,
> Will turn and Circle, with their rays, your face.
> (ll. 25-30)

Radiating from the lady's soul, the light illuminates objects that fall within her sphere and that reflect the beams back upon her face. The speaker thus identifies the lady with the Good, the dynamic source of all light and grace. The syntax and meter of the final line mimic the meaning, and the poem ends in a radiant image.

The second of the poems entitled "Platonick Love" is an extended definition of ideal love. Again addressing the lady, the speaker devotes the first two stanzas of the ten-stanza poem to stressing the seriousness of love and to contrasting love to selfish desire. He characterizes the true lover in stanzas 3 and 4 and lists the beneficial effects of love in stanzas 5 through 8. Love as a means of moral transformation is the subject of stanza 9, and the poem ends on a triumphant note with the speaker's affirmation of the immutability of love.

As in the first of his "Platonick Love" poems, Herbert directs his argument to the mind rather than to sense. The imagery is again general and abstract, and the more striking images depend upon Platonic and Neoplatonic doctrines of love for deeper intellectual associations. For example, the poet depicts the true lover's ability to

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transcend physical desire in favor of spiritual love through an agrarian image in stanza 4:

> For while they from the outward sense transplant
> The love grew there in earthly mould, and scant,
> To the Souls spacious and immortal field,
> They spring a love eternal, which will yield
> All that a pure affection can grant. (ll. 16-20)

The image, grounded in the analogy that links spiritual and vegetable, harks back to Plato and to the Neoplatonic doctrine of the animate world.[38]

The idea of true lovers being returned to one star in stanza 9 presents another example of imagery borrowed from philosophy:

> So that however multipli'd and vast
> Their love increase, they will not think it past
> The bounds of growth, till their exalted fire
> B'ing equally inlarg'd with their desire,
> Transform and fix them to one Starr at last.
> (ll. 41-45)

This image alludes to Plato's articulation in the Timaeus of the notion that souls reside in stars before descending to earth to be born.[39] Neoplatonists believed that true lovers originally dwelt in the same star, and that their souls will return to that star in death.[40] Herbert's

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[38]Plato, Timaeus: "We are a plant not of an earthly but of a heavenly growth . . . the divine power suspends the head and root of us from that place where the generation of the soul first began," p. 1209.

[39]Ibid., pp. 1170-1171.

[40]Robb, "According to Astrologers, love springs up naturally between people born under the same star, since they participate in the same idea," p. 81.

image of the fires of the twin souls merged at last into the fire of the star vividly illustrates his conception of eternal love.

In his third "Platonick Love" Herbert concludes an argument couched in conventional courtly love conceits with a Neoplatonic resolution. The speaker, in expressions of melancholy comprising the first five of the seven stanzas of the poem, laments that he is unworthy of his lady's love, and that his pride denies him even the pity that he could receive in place of love. But he consoles himself in stanzas 6 and 7 with the conviction that some of the glory radiating from the lady will fall on him, and that partial glory, impersonally dispensed, will sustain him.

Herbert uses unobtrusive poetic control to mold conventional conceit and Neoplatonic philosophy into an artistic unity. Each stanza consists of a trimeter line followed by five pentameter lines. The short lines introducing the stanzas help to carry the speaker's exposition of his melancholic state forward. The rhyme pattern (abbaba) with the end-stress falling on important words tightens the development of the thought in each stanza.

Herbert's conceits in the first five stanzas include: the contrast of the "Matchless Mistress" to the unworthy lover (l. 3); the exchange of hearts (stanzas 2, 3); the

lover confined by the "Manacles" of his lady's wrath (l. 21); the lover cast on a rock of despair (l. 22); and the lover as a beggar subsisting on the "alms of Love" (l. 26). "Disconsolate," the first word in the poem, summarizes the mood of these five stanzas.

In contrast, however, the mood of stanzas 6 and 7 is one of contentment:

> Let her then be serene,
> Alike exempt from pity and from hate:
> Let her still keep her dignity and state;
> Yet from her glories something I shall glean,
> For when she doth them every where dilate,
> A beam or two to me must intervene.
>
> And this shall me sustain,
> For though due merit I cannot express,
> Yet she shall know none ever lov'd for less,
> Or easier reward: Let her remain
> Still Great and Good, and from her happiness
> My chief contentment I will entertain. (ll. 31-42)

The egocentric despair of the first part of the poem has given way to the unselfish ideal of Platonic love.

"An Ode upon a Question moved, Whether Love should continue for ever?" is Herbert's most thorough poetic treatment of this ideal love. The "Ode," one of the best known and most beautiful of his poems of philosophic love, has provoked much critical comment. But in spite of this critical attention, Herbert's poem has not been fully appreciated because it has been judged almost exclusively in comparison to Donne's "The Extasie."[41]

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[41] H. J. C. Grierson, Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1969), writes that Herbert's "Ode" "seems to me the finest

Similarities in theme, argument, and setting between Herbert's "Ode" and Donne's "Extasie" make comparisons valuable and perhaps even inevitable, but no evidence that Herbert is in any sense "following" Donne exists. The poetic style and philosophical content of the "Ode" are entirely consistent with Herbert's usually graceful poetic technique and with the philosophic thought that informs his other poems.

Herbert's speaker narrates a dialogue between Celinda and Melander[42] concerning the nature of love, the same overall theme that Herbert develops in his three "Platonick Love" poems. But in the "Ode," his examination of the relationship between physical and spiritual love is more probing. The setting of the poem with its emphasis

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thing inspired by Donne's Ecstasy . . .," p. xxxvi; Earl Miner in The Metaphysical Mode from Donne to Cowley (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1969), takes for granted the notion that Herbert is imitating Donne, p. 172; A. Alvarez, The School of Donne (New York: Pantheon Books, 1961), categorically asserts that Herbert "was prompted" to write his "Ode" "by Donne's 'The Extasie'," p. 61; Douglas Bush, English Literature of the Earlier Seventeenth Century (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948), compares Herbert's "Ode" to "The Extasie," p. 153; and George Williamson, The Donne Tradition (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1930), declares that the Platonism in the "Ode" is "Platonism as touched by Donne . . .," p. 138.

[42]Horace Seymour Rockwood, "A Reconsideration of the Poetry of Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury and of Its Supposed Conformity to the Poetry of Donne" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1965), notes that "Celina is an anagram for Diana Cecil without using repeated letters," and Melander, denoting a man of dark complexion, refers to Edward Herbert himself who was known for his dark hair and complexion, p. 113.

on harmonious fertility anticipates Celinda's question and Melander's resolution:

> Having interr'd her Infant-birth,[43]
> The watry ground that late did mourn,
> Was strew'd with flow'rs for the return
> Of the wish'd Bridegroom of the earth.
>
> The well accorded Birds did sing
> Their hymns unto the pleasant time,
> And in a sweet consorted chime
> Did welcom in the chearful Spring.
>
> To which, soft whistles of the Wind,
> And warbling murmers of a Brook,
> And vari'd notes of leaves that shook,
> An harmony of parts did bind.
>
> While doubling joy unto each other,
> All in so rare concent was shown,
> No happiness that came alone,
> Nor pleasure that was not another. (ll. 1-16)

The scene suggests a sense of vibrant accord in the animate world that recalls Herbert's "Sonnet" on Merlou.

Assonance, alliteration, sibilance, and internal rhyme work in conjunction with end-rhyme to evoke a prevailing mood of peace and harmony. The pattern of

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[43] H. J. C. Grierson, Metaphysical Lyrics, explicates "Infant-birth" as "probably the snowdrops and earliest flowers. They had faded, and--as though Nature wept for them--a season of rain had followed," p. 223, but John Hoey, "A Study of Lord Herbert of Cherbury's Poetry," Renaissance & Modern Studies, XIV (1970), disagrees with Grierson: "I would suggest that 'Infant-birth' could mean seeds buried unseen in the ground which will be brought into full existence by the seemingly mournful rain at the appearance of the Sun, the 'Bridegroom of the earth'," p. 86; Hoey's interpretation seems more in keeping with the philosophical context of the poem than does Grierson's.

tetrameter quatrains rhymed abba[44] echoes this idea of harmony while continuing the exposition of the thought. These poetic techniques coupled with the general images (the damp ground strewn with flowers, the sun, the singing birds, the running brook, and the moving leaves) provide a stage that is somewhat above ordinary space and time for the ensuing philosophic dialogue.

The subject of Herbert's Horatian ode is the harmonious love binding microcosm and macrocosm. Although the theme of the "Ode" is philosophical rather than religious, the setting, the question, and the resolution correspond to the conventional divisions of a religious meditation:[45] composition of place (stanzas 1-9); analysis (stanzas 10-33); and colloquy (stanzas 34 and 35). The theme of harmony between microcosm and macrocosm unifies the three parts of the poem.[46]

The lovers, "mutually happy," become an integral part of the harmony of the natural world:

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[44]George Williamson writes that "the harmony which Herbert gets from the In Memoriam metre--first used by Jonson--is fully up to that of Tennyson . . .," p. 141.

[45]Louis Martz, The Poetry of Meditation (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1954, rev. ed., 1962), pp. 34-35.

[46]Alvarez notes that "nothing, not even the setting, gets into the poem for its own sake. Everything has a metaphysical justification," p. 63.

When with a love none can express,
That mutually happy pair,
Melander and Celinda fair,
The season with their loves did bless. (ll. 17-20)

This inexpressible love, able to bless the season, recalls Herbert's conception in De Veritate of love as a force for the common good as well as the Ficinean notion of the creative power of love.[47]

As the lovers rest upon the grass near "a pleasant Grove" (l. 21), Celinda expresses uncertainty about the immortality of love. She poses her doubts in two hypothetical premises that provide the basis for Melander's deeper analysis of the nature of love:

Only if loves fire with the breath
Of life be kindled, I doubt,
With our last air 'twill be breath'd out,
And quenched with the cold of death.

That if affection be a line,
Which is clos'd up in our last hour;
Oh how 'twould grieve me, any pow'r
Could force so dear a love as mine! (ll. 49-56)

If love, like flesh, is corruptible, then death is the greater power.

Insisting upon love's proper habitation in the soul, Melander begins his argument with an apostrophe to the stars:

O you, wherein, they say, Souls rest,
Till they descend pure heavenly fires
Shall lustful and corrupt desires
With your immortal seed be blest?

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[47]Hoey, p. 86.

And shall our Love, so far beyond
That low and dying appetite,
And which so chast desires unite,
Not hold in an eternal bond?

Is it, because we should decline,
And wholly from our thoughts exclude
Objects that may the sense delude,
And study only the Divine? (ll. 64-76)

These questions set up Melander's challenge to the scholastic dictum that mortal life be treated exclusively as preparation for the heavenly life.

Melander begins his defense of chaste earthly pleasure by asserting that mortals are able to comprehend the invisible only through the visible:

No sure, for if none can ascend
Ev'n to the visible degree
Of things created, how should we
The invisible comprehend?

Or rather since that Pow'r exprest
His greatness in his works alone,
B'ing here best in his Creatures known,
Why is he not love'd in them best? (ll. 77-84)

Since the creator exists in all things, to enjoy the created world is to honor its author. Melander's argument echoes a passage in De Veritate: "Infinity cannot be grasped except through the idea of the infinite, nor eternity save through the form of time."[48] Thus experience in the finite world results in greater understanding of divine nature.

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[48] De Veritate, p. 104.

In response to Celinda's fear that death will divide the two, Melander attests to the imperishable nature of love. As a power originating in the soul, love is not dependent on life:

> O no, Belov'd, I am most sure,
> Those vertuous habits we acquire,
> As being with the Soul intire,
> Must with it evermore endure. (ll. 89-92)

In De Veritate Herbert lists love as one of the "divine faculties" that are, like God, eternal.[49]

Identifying love as a "vertuous habit" of the soul, Melander strengthens his argument with an analogy between virtue and vice:

> For if where sins and vice reside,
> We find so foul a guilt remain,
> As never dying in his stain,
> Still punished in the Soul doth bide. (ll. 93-96)

Since it is commonly accepted that vice and wickedness stain the soul with undying guilt, it should also be commonly understood that the effects of virtue are even more enduring:

> Much more that true and real joy,
> Which in a vertuous love is found,
> Must be more solid in its ground,
> Then Fate or Death can e'r destroy. (ll. 97-100)

Through its habitation in the soul, the virtue of love is not bound to mortal life and thus will not perish.

Melander stresses the interdependence of earthly and heavenly love in the resolution of his argument:

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[49] Ibid., pp. 159-160.

Nor here on earth then, nor above,
Our good affection can impair,
For where God doth admit the fair,
Think you that he excludeth love?

These eyes again then, eyes shall see,
And hands again these hands enfold,
And all chast pleasures can be told
Shall with us everlasting be.

For if no use of sense remain
When bodies once this life forsake,
Or they could no delight partake,
Why should they ever rise again? (ll. 105-116)

Melander concludes his argument with the idea of immortality through propagation:

So when one wing can make no way,
Two joyned can themselves dilate,
So can two persons propagate,
When singly either would decay.

So when from hence we shall be gone,
And be no more, nor you, nor I
As one anothers mystery,
Each shall be both, yet both but one. (ll. 125-132)

The couple's love, refined of "All imperfection" (l. 120), will endure eternally in the celestial realm while their issue will keep their love alive on earth.

Melander's analysis of the nature of love results in the couple's increased understanding of this divine attribute. Herbert closes the poem with a description of their ecstasy:

This said, in her up-lifted face,
Her eyes which did that beauty crown,
Were like two stars, that having faln down,
Look up again to find their place:

While such a moveless silent peace
Did seize on their becalmend sense,
One would have thought some influence
Their ravish'd spirits did possess. (ll. 133-140)

At this point in their dialogue, Melander and Celinda apprehend love intellectually, and are ravished with their new knowledge. A. Alvarez comments that the closing conceit

> clinches the argument of the whole poem . . . when Melander has logically proved his point about the immortality of pure love, the stars inevitably return. Her eyes, the windows of the soul, are like "faln stars" because her doubts have confined her to the limits of fallen humanity; his argument has restored their love to the eternal. Hence the triumphant moment of truth, of perfect harmony, the "moveless silent peace." The final image is justified and gains its place because of the argument; and the argument itself, like that image, depends on a kind of conceit from philosophy. To understand both, the reader is expected to have Plato at his fingertips.[50]

Throughout the "Ode," Herbert's images drawn from Platonic and Neoplatonic doctrine merge into the dialectical development of the thought. The poem represents Edward Herbert's most thorough poetic expression of the synthesis of physical and metaphysical love.

III. Immortality of the Soul

Love is eternal in Melander's argument through its place in the human soul.[51] The immortality of the soul is assumed in Herbert's poetry as well as in his prose.

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[50] Alvarez, pp. 63-64.

[51] Kristeller writes that the immortality of the human soul was central in Ficino's philosophy, and it was probably largely due to the influence of his work that the Lateran Council of 1521 pronounced the immortality of the soul as dogma of the Catholic Church, pp. 45-47.

Virtues such as love that emanate from the soul are also immortal.[52] In his "Epitaph for himself"[53] Herbert presents a concise poetic summary of his conception of the fates of body and soul after death:

> Reader,
> The Monument which thou beholdest here,
> Presents Edward Lord Herbert, to thy sight,
> A man, who was so free from either hope or fear,
> To have or loose this ordinary light,
> That when to elements his body turned were,
> He knew that as those elements would fight,
> So his Immortal Soul should find above,
> With his creator, Peace, Joy, Truth, and Love.[54]

In death, the material elements of the body dissolve into other forms,[55] while the soul and its virtues return to unity with the divine.

The soul and love merge in Herbert's "Elegy for the Prince."[56] Mario M. Rossi explains that Herbert implicitly accents the idea of one love and one universal life so that soul and love are unified.[57] This idea of the unity of the soul and love probably derives from Plato's

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[52] De Veritate, p. 159; unlike Ficino, Herbert does not associate the immortality of the soul with Christianity.

[53] Poems, p. 54.

[54] Herbert expands these ideas in "De Vita Coelesti"; see Poems, p. 103.

[55] Corpus Hermeticum, I: "Living beings do not die, but being composite bodies they are dissolved, it is not to be destroyed but to be renewed," p. 178.

[56] Poems, p. 22; in Chapter II of this study I have discussed Herbert's use of political theory in the "Elegy."

[57] Rossi, I, 184.

Symposium, and Herbert's references to the "worlds harmonique body" (l. 20), "our worlds soul" (l. 21), and "An universally diffused soul" (l. 21) are parts of the Neoplatonic motif that provides a philosophical basis for the non-Christian elegy.[58]

The mourners participate in the universal soul through their love for the Prince. He lives with them on earth through their memories, while they share joys "With him in Heaven" (l. 40). Thus the Prince's immortal soul, reunited with the creator, also endures on earth.

The certainty of death and the relationship between time and eternity is the subject of "To His Watch, when he could not sleep":[59]

> Uncessant Minutes, whil'st you move you tell
> The time that tells our life, which though it run
> Never so fast or farr, you'r new begun
> Short steps shall overtake; for though life well
>
> May scape his own Account, it shall not yours,
> You are Death's Auditors, that both divide
> And summ what ere that life inspir'd endures
> Past a beginning, and through you we bide
>
> The doom of Fate, whose unrecall'd Decree
> You date, bring, execute; making what's new
> Ill and good, old, for as we die in you,
> You die in Time, Time in Eternity.

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[58] Warnke notes that the poem, "free from any Christian reference," is exclusively informed by Platonic and Neoplatonic ideas--"it is the non-Christian character of 'The Elegy for the Prince' which one must first consider in any attempt to explain the poem's meaning," pp. 58-59.

[59] Poems, p. 1.

"To His Watch" illustrates Herbert's artful manipulation of his thought to a logically grounded conclusion.

The controlling image is the circle that is suggested by the shape of the watch as well as by Herbert's poetic method. Mary Ellen Rickey notes that the poem:

> deals with the circular movement of moments, time, and eternity as embodied in the ticking of his watch and in the revolutions of its hands. The meaning of the piece is reinforced by the rhyme schemes of its three stanzas--abba, abab, abba. Making a circle in rhymes as well as in matter, Lord Herbert here achieves the sort of tidy correspondence between content and form which was later to be the hallmark of his brother's verse.[60]

The circle suggests the ancient image of time as a coiled serpent with its tail in its mouth. E. H. Gombrich comments on the significance of this sort of iconography to the Renaissance Neoplatonists whom Herbert often echoes:

> Time is not part of the sensible world. It can never appear to our bodily eyes. Yet it is not a mere "abstraction" either. The idea of Time is thought of as something existing by itself in a higher sphere--a sphere accessible to intellectual intuition. The image-symbol, then, is a representation of the unrepresentable, both demanding contemplation and spurring us on to transcend it.[61]

Herbert's use of the language of commerce in this poem

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[60] Mary Ellen Rickey, "Rhymecraft in Edward and George Herbert," JEGP, XLVII (1958), 505.

[61] E. H. Gombrich, "Icones Symbolicae: The Visual Image in Neo-Platonic Thought," JWCI, XI (1948), 172; also Frances Yates notes that "for the Renaissance Neoplatonist, an 'ancient' image, one which reached him from traditions going back, so he believed, into a remote past, did actually have within it the reflection of an Idea," p. 66.

recalls Donne; the metaphor of minutes as "Deaths Auditors" (l. 6), dating, bringing, and executing the judgment of Fate helps to make the ideas of time and eternity concrete.

The division of body and soul in death is also the theme of "A Meditation upon his Wax-Candle burning out."[62] In this poem Herbert elaborates ideas from the "Epitaph for himself," "The Elegy for the Prince," and "To His Watch." The diminishing candle is the central image-symbol, functioning in the poem as a concrete example of the conception of the relationship between body and soul.

The imagery supporting this central conceit is primarily abstract, but Herbert also uses such concrete images as "Meteors" (l. 35), "Stars" (l. 36), and "Creatures" (l. 57) to exemplify his more ethereal ideas. The poem ends with a conventional Neoplatonic conceit of the soul ascending on wings of faith and love.

Herbert organizes his ten-stanza poetic argument into four logical units. With the exception that Herbert's argument is in two parts (in the first the speaker considers souls, and in the second the "poor Carkasses they leave behind" (l. 26)), the poem conforms to the usual ordering of seventeenth-century religious

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[62] Poems, pp. 83-85.

meditations. The speaker's focus in the first unit, the composition-of-place, is on the candle:

> While thy ambitious flame doth strive for height,
> Yet burneth down, as clogged with the weight
> Of earthly parts, to which thou art combin'd,
> Thou still do'st grow more short of thy desire,
> And do'st in vain unto that place aspire,
> To which thy native powers seem inclin'd.
>
> Yet when at last thou com'st to be dissolv'd,
> And to thy proper principles resolv'd,
> And all that made thee now is discompos'd,
> Though thy terrestrial part in ashes lies,
> Thy more sublime to higher Regions flies,
> The rest b'ing to the middle wayes expos'd.
>
> And while thou doest thy self each where disperse,
> Some parts of thee make up this Universe,
> Others a kind of dignity obtain,
> Since thy pure wax in its own flame consum'd,
> Volumes of incense sends, in which perfum'd,
> Thy smoak mounts where thy fire could not attain.
> (stanzas 1-3)

The weight of the wax in stanza 1 keeps the flame from rising to the heights its essential nature yearns for. Completely burned out in stanza 3, the candle separates into its "proper principles," or atoms.[63] The wick is in ashes, the heat has ascended to "higher Regions," and the smoke to "middle ways." The melted wax in stanza 3 exists as incense, perfuming the mounting smoke. Herbert develops his image of the candle burning itself out, and finally utterly changed in form, through the three stanzas.

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[63] Poems, Moore Smith's commentary, p. 161.

The analysis in the second section begins with the speaker's comparison of the soul striving to reach its origin to the flame straining to rise higher:

> Much more then, when they go from hence,
> And back unto the Elements dispense
> All that built up our frail and earthly frame,
> Shall through each pore & passage make their breach,
> Till they with all their faculties do reach
> Unto that place from whence at first they came.
> (stanza 4)

The soul expires through every opening of the dying body, "our frail and earthly frame," taking with it the faculties of peace, joy, truth, faith, love, and hope.[64]

Herbert devotes four stanzas to section 3, the second part of his analysis, wherein the speaker concentrates on the metamorphosis of the body's material elements. Having been imperfectly mixed in the body, the elements will return to their proper levels as the body disintegrates:[65]

> Nor need they fear thus to be thought unkind
> To those poor Carkasses they leave behind,
> Since being in unequal parts commix'd
> Each in his Element their place will get,
> And who thought Elements unhappy yet,
> As long as they were in their stations fix'd?

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[64]Herbert enumerates four of these "faculties" of the soul in "Epitaph for himself," p. 114 supra, and the others in De Veritate: "But our divine intellectual faculties impress their ideas on the body, namely peace, faith, joy, love, hope . . .," p. 159, and "since God alone is the eternal and universal object, it is only in Him that our hope, love, and joy can lie," p. 160.

[65]Herbert's description of the properties of the elements echoes Plato in the Timaeus, pp. 1183-1185.

Or if they sally'd forth, is there not light
And heat in some, and spirit prone to fight?
Keep they not, in the Earth and Air, the field?
Besides, have they not pow'r to generate
When, more then Meterors, *In the Constellation
they * Starrs create, of Cassiopeia, 1572
Which while they last scarce to the brightest yield.
(stanzas 5 and 6)

Through their dynamic nature, the elements that compose the body are capable of generation and the creation of new worlds.[66]

The material elements enjoy eternal life as part of the universal soul, but material life is confined to regions below the celestial spheres of the soul, and material form must constantly change. Herbert describes the renewal of the separated elements in stanza 7:

That so in them we more then once may live,
While these materials which here did give
Our bodies essence, and are most of use,
Quick'ned again by the worlds common coul,
Which in it self and in each part is whole,
Can various forms in divers kinds produce.

One of the fundamental ideas in Neoplatonic ideology is that of the world-soul, the principle that knits the various parts of creation into a harmoniously ordered universe.[67]

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[66]In this stanza Herbert's interest in astronomy seems to have superseded his interest in philosophy; the new star that appeared in 1572 provided strong evidence against the Neoplatonic pattern of cosmic order in which unchanging perfection was the distinguishing attribute of celestial realms.

[67]Bedford, p. 97.

Stanzas 8, 9, and 10 constitute the speaker's resolution. Having deduced that the elements, restored to their proper stations with the death of the body, are at last free to enjoy their separate natures, the speaker realizes that the soul, relieved of its material weight, will enjoy an even happier state:

> If then, at worst, this our condition be,
> When to themselves our Elements are free,
> And each doth to its proper place revert,
> What may we not hope from our part divine,
> Which can this dros of Elements refine,
> And them unto a better state assert?
>
> Or is as cloid upon this earthly stage,
> Which represents nothing but change or age,
> Our Souls would all their burdens here devest,
> They singly may that glorious state acquire,
> Which fills alone their infinite desire
> To be of perfect happiness possest. (stanzas 8 & 9)

Free of the body, the soul, like the flame of the candle, will achieve the heights it desires.

In the final stanza, the speaker, valuing his spiritual, or internal, faculties more than those of his external senses, looks forward to the immortal state of his own soul:

> And therefore I, who do not live and move,
> By outward sense so much as faith and love,
> Which is not in inferior Creatures found,
> May unto some immortal state pretend,
> Since by these wings I thither may ascend,
> Where faithful loving Souls with joys are crown'd.

Man alone of all the creatures has the power to choose his way of life: he can live sensually, "By outward sense," like the beasts, or he can cultivate such faculties of the

soul as "faith and love." Faith and love are the wings that will carry the speaker's soul aloft. The image of the winged soul may allude to Socrates's discussion of the soul regaining its plumage in Plato's Phaedrus.[68]

Conclusion

Edward Herbert uses images, metaphors, and themes from Platonic and Neoplatonic philosophy to develop his poetic arguments. His images borrowed from philosophy are ethereal and general, designed to appeal to the reader's intellect rather than to his senses.

The theory of correspondences that takes for granted an intelligently ordered universe is central to the philosophy of Herbert's poetry. Edward Herbert describes the world as a living entity, kept in motion by the universal soul that moves all things.

Each part of the universe reflects the divine essence in whom all diversity is unified. Form is prior to matter because shape is a key to essential nature. In the human being the soul forms the body to reflect its original Idea. Through artistic image-making, Herbert makes his abstract conceptions of the natures of beauty, love, and immortality accessible to his reader.

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[68] Plato, Phaedrus, pp. 496-498; see also Robb's discussion of the wings of intellect and will and of love and faith in Italian Neoplatonism, p. 87.

CHAPTER V

"TO HIS MISTRESS FOR HER TRUE PICTURE" AS A PARADIGM OF EDWARD HERBERT'S POETIC METHOD

Edward Herbert combines images from politics, science, and philosophy in "To his Mistress for her True Picture"[1] a poem representing the poet's most thorough analysis of the physical and metaphysical ramifications of death. Written in the manner of a paradoxical, extended encomium to an aristocratic lady, the poem provides a convenient paradigm of Herbert's poetic method of presenting abstract, intellectual images that become substantial through the poet's use of supporting logic. This poem is conveniently analyzed as a pattern of Herbert's method because of the manner in which the

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[1]Edward Herbert, Poems, ed. G. C. Moore Smith (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1923), pp. 48-55. Mario Manlio Rossi, La Vita, le opere, i tempi di Edwardo Herbert di Chirbury (3 vols.; Florence: G. C. Sansoni, 1947), dates the poem in 1613 shortly after Herbert had completed the "Elegy for the Prince," I, 189, but Frank Warnke, "This Metaphysick Lord: A Study of the Poetry of Herbert of Cherbury" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1954), believes it to have been written during the late 1620's because "Herbert's couplets in 'To his Mistress' are very unlike those of the 'Elegy for the Prince' and show a kinship with those of the 'Elegy on Dr. Dunn'" and also, "the preoccupation with death shows a relevance both to the serious themes of his philosophy and poetry in the late 1620's and to his own poor health in that period," p. 132.

image-patterns develop from the rhetorical structure of the argument. The length of the poem (142 lines) allows the poet room to develop his theme fully.

Depending for effect upon familiarity with seventeenth-century political, scientific, and philosophical lore, the imagery in this poem is in close harmony with the developing thought. In passages directed to sensual apprehension Herbert's images are concrete, but the speaker's mystic descriptions of the nature of death are expressed in images of light and such personified abstractions as "Justice" (l. 59), "Soul-ravisher" (l. 63), "Heavens-Light-Usher" (l. 64), and "Man's deliverer" (l. 64).

Herbert's mistress, of course, is Death. Although the theme of the poem is the benevolent majesty of Death, Herbert's development owes nothing to Christian doctrine. The poet represents Death as a goddess responsible for freeing the formative and immortal soul from the material body.

Although Herbert's handling of his subject is uneven in the poem,[2] his logical arrangement results in a remarkable technical unity. Organized into seven

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[2]Warnke writes that "the poem is weakened . . . by the poet's faulty sense of proportion. At one point he plays with the idea of cursing those who deny the beauty of his mistress, Death. Unfortunately, the curse takes up at least a third of the poem, and it is composed of equal parts of bad taste and ill-temper," p. 134.

rhetorical units, the poem opens and closes with the speaker's pledges of devotion to his mistress. The climactic fourth section in the center of the poem is contrasted in imagery and subject matter by framing passages. In addition to the speaker's affirmation of love for his mistress, section 1 (ll. 1-14) includes a refutation of the conventional dogma associated with Death. In the second rhetorical unit (ll. 15-42) the speaker presents his conception of Death based upon intuition of her essential nature. His repudiation of knowledge gained through the senses in section 3 (ll. 43-54) provides striking contrast to his inspired apostrophe in section 4 (ll. 55-66). The speaker's rejection of fleshly beauty in section 5 (ll. 67-105) anticipates his invocation to the worms in section 6 (ll. 106-132). In the final passage (ll. 133-142) the speaker re-dedicates himself to his mistress.

Herbert's images of Death in section 1 include the emblematic figure of the skeleton[3] and the representation of Death as sleep:

> Death, my lifes Mistress, and the soveraign Queen
> Of all that ever breath'd, though yet unseen,
> My heart doth love you best, yet I confess,
> Your picture I beheld, which doth express

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[3]Rossi suggests that the title page of Sylvester's Lachrymae Lachrymarum with its skeleton motif inspired Herbert to write "To his Mistress," I, 189. Herbert departs somewhat from tradition by picturing Death as female.

No such eye-taking beauty, you seem lean,
Unless you'r mended since. Sure he did mean
No honour to you, that did draw you so;
Therefore I think it false: Besides, I know
The picture, Nature drew, (which sure's the best)
Doth figure you by sleep and sweetest rest: (ll. 1-10)

The mocking tone of lines 3-6 reflects the speaker's derision of the first conception, a conception based upon sensual knowledge of the effects rather than upon intuitive knowledge of the essential attributes of Death, but the speaker does not mock Death herself.[4] The conventional picture of Death as sleep[5] is an example of a representation derived from intellectual perception. The connection through similarities between death and sleep is dialectical--the known phenomenon of sleep becomes a medium for understanding something of the nature of the unknown phenomenon of death.

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[4]Horace Rockwood, "A Reconsideration of the Poetry of Edward Lord Herbert of Cherbury and of Its Supposed Conformity to the Poetry of Donne" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1965), p. 101, writes that "it is clear that the grotesqueness and roughness of the poem are intentional--indeed, studied--as in the satires. The kind of playfulness in 'To his Mistress' is unusual in Herbert, but the contemptus mundi expressed in Herbert's parody of a Petrarchian address to a courtly lady, together with the strongly Platonic pose of the speaker, makes the poem essentially serious; all the things of this world are frivolous and ephemeral, especially vanity about physical beauty, which Herbert subjects to an appropriately wormy 'metaphysical shudder.'"

[5]Samuel Daniel's Sonnet 49, "Care-charmer Sleep, son of the sable Night,/ Brother to Death . . .," and John Donne's "Death be not proud . . ." are examples of the conventional comparison of death to sleep in poetry of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

These two images correspond respectively to the Neoplatonic categories of sensual and intellectual perception. E. H. Gombrich explains the Neoplatonic theory of three levels of knowing:

> At the lowest end is knowledge derived from sense perception. This is fallible and deserves only the name of "opinion." The artist as a maker of such visual images leads away from truth and feeds on delusion. The higher form of knowledge is that derived from reasoning which proceeds step by step in the dialectical process. As long as the soul is imprisoned in the body we are really thrown back on these two imperfect guides, the senses and reason, and our understanding remains dim and obscure. True knowledge only results from the third and highest process, that of intellectual intuition of ideas or essences.[6]

In the opening passage of the poem, the speaker recognizes and then rejects figures of Death that arise from the first two of the three Neoplatonic levels of knowledge.

The second rhetorical unit of the poem is the speaker's refutation of these two false images and his presentation of a "true" image drawn from his intuitive understanding of the Idea of Death:

> Yet some will say, Can pictures have more life
> Then the original? To end this strife,
> Sweet Mistress come, and shew yourself to me,
> In your true form, while then I think to see
> Some beauty Angelick, that comes t' unlock
> My bodies prison, and from life unyoke
> My well divorced soul, and set it free,
> To liberty eternal: Thus you see,
> I find the Painters error, and protect

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[6] E. H. Gombrich, "Icones Symbolicae: The Visual Image in Neo-Platonic Thought," Journal of the Warburg Courtauld Institutes, XI (1948), 170.

> Your absent beauties, ill drawn, by th' effect:
> For grant it were your work, and not the Graves,
> Draw Love by Madness then, Tyrants by Slaves,
> Because they make men such. (ll. 15-27)

Death, who releases the soul from its prison of flesh, is a spirit akin in goodness and beauty to the angels, but painters portray her by her effect rather than by her true nature. If this were a valid method, then all things should be pictured and defined according to their effects as well.

His logical refutation complete, the speaker proceeds to describe his intuitive vision of Death:

> Dear Mistress, then
> If you would not be seen by owl-ey'd Men,
> Appear at noon i' th' Air, with so much light,
> The Sun may be a Moon, the Day a Night,
> Clear to my Soul, but dark'ning the weak sense
> Of those, the other Worlds Cimmeriens,[7]
> And in your fatal Robe, imbroidered
> With Star-characters, teaching me to read
> The destiny of Mortals, while your clear brow
> Presents a Majesty, to instruct me how
> To love or dread nought else: May your bright hair,
> Which are the threds of life, fair crown'd appear
> With that your Crown of Immortality:
> In your right hand the keys of Heaven be;
> In th' other those of the eternal Pit,
> Whence none retires, if once he enter it. (ll. 27-42)

Death's "bright hair" equated with "threads of life" echoes ideas and images from "Upon Combing her Hair" and "To her Hair." The image of Death as a goddess whose brightness vies with that of the noon-day sun emerges in

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[7]G. C. Moore Smith glosses "the other Worlds Cimmeriens" as "men living in spiritual darkness. Cf. Homer, Odys. xi. 14-19," p. 155.

much the same manner as that of Lady Philosophy in Boethius's Consolation:

> . . . there appeared standing above me a woman of majestic countenance whose flashing eyes seemed wise beyond the ordinary wisdom of men. Her color was bright, suggesting boundless vigor, and yet she seemed so old that she could not be thought of as belonging to our age. Her height seemed to vary; sometimes she seemed of ordinary human stature, then again her head seemed to touch the top of the heavens. And when she raised herself to her full height she penetrated heaven itself, beyond the vision of human eyes. Her clothing was made of the most delicate threads, and by the most exquisite workmanship; it had--as she afterwards told me--been woven by her own hands into an everlasting fabric. . . . At the lower edge of her robe was woven a Greek II, at the top the letter o, and between them were seen clearly marked stages, like stairs, ascending from the lowest to the highest.[8]

As in Boethius's description of Lady Philosophy, each detail of Herbert's speaker's description of Death--her brightness, her robe, her hair, and the keys she holds--is rich in symbolic meaning.

Death's shining brightness recalls Herbert's theme of mystical blackness that only the soul can apprehend.[9] This refined light is too intense for mortal vision. Herbert uses variations of this theme in "To her Eyes,"

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[8]Boethius, The Consolation of Philosophy, trans. with introduction by Richard Green (New York: The Bobbs Merrill Co., Inc., 1962), pp. 3-4.

[9]Warnke notes that "the poem shows that the speculations of the sequence on black remained in Herbert's mind. Death itself becomes equated with that mysterious light in darkness, the contemplation of which had imbued his love poetry with a religious quality," pp. 133-134.

"To her Hair," "Sonnet of Black Beauty," "Another Sonnet to Black it self," and "The first Meeting."

Death's "fatal robe" embroidered in astrological figures also elevates her above mortal understanding by symbolizing her sympathetic relationship with celestial powers. Herbert's familiar equation of hair with threads of destiny is especially appropriate for his goddess of Death.[10] The keys in Death's hands are likewise appropriate; the power capable of freeing the soul from her earthly prison also decides her subsequent destination. In Herbert's image based upon the speaker's intuitive knowledge of the nature of Death, representation and symbol merge.

Death holds the key to the "eternal Pit," the ultimate destination of those who depend exclusively upon sensual knowledge, in her sinister hand. In section 3 the speaker moralizes that too few are able to transcend their dependence upon sensual perceptions:

> And here let me complain, how few are those
> Whose souls you shall from earth's vast dungeon lose
> To endless happiness! few that attend
> You, the true Guide, unto their journeys end:
> And if old Vertue's way narrow were,
> 'Tis rugged now, having no passenger.
> Our life is but a dark and stormy night,
> To which sense yields a weak and glimmering light;
> While wandring Man thinks he discerneth all,
> By that which makes him but mistake and fall:

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[10] Cf. "Upon Combing her Hair" and "To her Hair."

He sees enough, who doth his darkness see;
These are great lights, by which less dark'nd be.
(ll. 43-54)[11]

The image of Death as the guide through the "vast dungeon" of terrestrial life is surrounded by murky darkness that blurs the distinction between earth and hell. Sensual perception is too weak to penetrate this darkness. Only a few "enlightened" souls can perceive the brightness of the guide through their intellectual intuition.

The darkness of section 3 is a foil for the images of brilliant light in section 4, the speaker's invocation to Death:

Shine then Sun-brighter through my senses vail,
A day-star of the light will never fail;
Shew me that Goodness which compounds the strife
'Twixt a long sickness and a weary life.
Set forth that Justice which keeps all in aw,
Certain and equal more then any Law,
Figure that happy and eternal Rest,
Which till Man do enjoy, he is not blest,
Some and appear then, dear Soul-ravisher,
Heavens-Light-Usher, Man's deliverer,
And do not think, when I new beauties see,
They can withdraw my settled love from thee.
(ll. 55-66)

The speaker appeals to Death to pierce the veil of his senses and shine into his soul. Through imperative verbs ("shine," "shew," "set forth," "Figure," and "Come"), he requests that Death reveal her essential attributes of goodness, justice, comfort, deliverance, and beauty.

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[11]Warnke, p. 135, and Rockwood, p. 17, both note that Herbert anticipates Dryden in this passage.

These eternal characteristics inspire eternal love for Death in the speaker's soul.

In contrast, the speaker repudiates "Flesh-beauty" in the fifth section of the poem. Beginning with specific examples of corrupting mortal beauty, he focuses in the remainder of this comparatively long passage upon the constant corruption of flesh during a lifetime:

> Be she nut-brown,
> The lovliest colour which the flesh doth crown:
> I'll think her like a Nut, a fair outside
> Within which Worms and rottenness abide:
> If fair, then like the Worm it self to be;
> If painted, like their slime and sluttery.
> If any yet will think their beauties best,
> And will, against you, spite of all, contest,
> Seize them with Age: so in themselves they'l hate
> What they scorn'd in your picture, and too late
> See their fault, and the Painters: (ll. 71-81)

The conceits of woman as a worm-infested nut, the worm itself, and the slime of the worm result in concrete images that repel the senses while engaging the intelligence. The lines introduce Death's earthly agents, the worms, that function as a central motif through the remainder of the poem.

The speaker here associates the worms with man's physical self; they actively break down the body's form and help to free the soul from her prison. In the remaining lines of section 5 the speaker exhorts Death to unleash her armies of worms upon the bodies of women who disparage her beauty:

Yet if this,
Which their great'st plague and wrinkled torture is,
Please not, you may to the more wicked sort,
Or such as of your praises make a sport,
Denounce an open warr, send chosen bands
Of Worms, your soldiers, to their fairest hands,
And make them lep'rous-scabb'd: upon their face
Let those your Pioners, Ring-worms, take their place.
And safely near with strong approaches got
Intrench it round, while their teeths rampire rot[12]
With other Worms, may with a damp inbred
Stink to their senses, which they shall not dead:
And thus may all that e'r they prided in,
Confound them now: As for the parts within,
Send Gut-worms, which may undermine a way
Unto their vital parts, and so display
That your pale Ensign on the walls: then let
Those Worms, your Veteranes, which never yet
Did fail, enter Pel mel, and ransack all,
Just as they see the well-rais'd building fall:
While they do this, your Forragers command,
The Caterpillars, to devour their land;
And with them Wasps, your wing'd-worm-horsemen, bring,
To charge, in troop, those Rebels, with their sting:
All this unless your beauty they confess. (ll. 81-105)

The conceits and images of war parody sixteenth-century poems wherein Love, rather than Death, is the general, marshaling forces to anatomical battle. Sir Philip Sidney's "Fly, fly, my friends," Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey's "Love that livith and reigneth in my thought," and Sir Thomas Wyatt's "The long love that in my thought doth harbor" exemplify poems written in the style that Herbert parodies.

In section 6 the speaker digresses to address the "noble Worms" as his muses:

And now, sweet Mistress, let m' a while digress
T' admire these noble Worms, whom I invoke,

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[12] Ramparts and rotted.

> And not the Muses: You that eat through Oak
> And bark, will not spare Paper, and my Verse,
> Because your praises they do here reherse?
> (ll. 106-110)

Scientific and philosophical notions blend in the speaker's panegyric to the worms. He begins by assigning them a heroic lineage:

> Brave Legions then, sprung from the mighty race
> Of Man corrupted, and which hold the place
> Of his undoubted Issue; you that are
> Brain-born, Minerva-like, and like her warr,
> Well-arm'd compleat-maile-jointed Souldiers,
> Whose force Herculean links in pieces tears;
> To you the vengeance of all spill-bloods falls,
> Beast-eating Men, Men-eating Cannibals.
> (ll. 111-118)

In focusing upon their strength and persistence, Herbert links the worms with the classical gods and heroes.

In the following lines the assertion that worms cut in two are able to live as separate entities and are thus immortal provokes a macabre application of the Neoplatonic theory of correspondences:

> Death-priviledg'd, were you in sunder smit
> You do not lose your life, but double it:
> Best framed types of the immortal Soul,
> Which in your selves, and in each part are whole:
> Last-living Creatures, heirs of all the earth,
> For when all men are dead, it is your birth:
> When you dy, your brave self-kill'd Generall
> (for nothing else can kill him) doth end all.
> What vermine-breeding body then thinks scorn,
> His flesh should be by your brave fury torn?
> (ll. 119-128)

The worms enjoy material immortality comparable to the spiritual immortality of the soul. They are like the deity in that they are complete in all their sundered

parts. The speaker reasons that it is thus a participation in the nature of divinity to have one's body devoured by the worms:

> Willing to you, this Carkass I submit,
> A gift so free, I do not care for it:
> Which yet you shall not take, untill I see
> My Mistress first reveal her self to me. (ll. 129-132)

The speaker justifies his claim to a true picture of his mistress in the final passage of the poem:

> Mean while, Great Mistress, whom my soul admires,
> Grant me your true picture, who it desires,
> That he your matchless beauty might maintain
> 'Gainst all men that will quarrels entertain
> For a flesh-Mistress; the worst I can do,
> Is but to keep the way that leads to you,
> And howsoever the event doth prove,
> To have Revenge below, Reward above;
> Hear, from my bodies prison, this my Call,
> Who from my mouth-grate, and eye-window bawl.
> (ll. 133-142)

Herbert's final image is graphically concrete, if somewhat "unpoetic." The closing couplet succinctly summarizes the poet's central theme of the body as an unwholesome prison for the soul.

Although Herbert predicates this theme on his belief in the immortality of the soul, his treatment of this belief is in no way a Christian one.[13] Aloysius Gasior, who assumes the poem to have a Christian frame of reference, writes that the central conflict of the poem

> is one between Nature and Grace and Faith and Reason. The poem possesses the same basic themes as do the

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[13] Warnke argues that Herbert's "treatment is not really Christian or indeed religious in any way," p. 132.

> other satires: the arbitrary and positive nature of human law; the inadequacy of natural reason to intuit true certitudes, the depravity of natural desires, the infallibility of the senses, and the necessity of God's grace for the apprehension of truth and transcendence over these depraved natural desires.[14]

In the argument of this poem, however, neither grace nor faith is very, if at all, important. The conflict of the poem is simply between body and soul, matter and spirit. Death is the power capable of dissolving the one and freeing the other.

Herbert's central image presents Death as a goddess imbued with the divinity of a light-source. Leading up to this image by presenting conventional pictures of Death, Herbert elaborates his intuitive portrayal of the goddess in the climactic fourth section of the poem. The "wormy" images that appeal to sensual knowledge contrast sharply to the visionary descriptions of Death and to the personified abstractions that are her attributes.

"To his Mistress for her True Picture" is thus a pattern of Edward Herbert's poetic method. Herbert develops his ideal picture of Death, his image of her as a guide through the darkness of terrestrial life, and his concrete images of the dissolution of the body in harmonious conjunction with the logical development of his theme.

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[14]Aloysius Gasior, "Satiric Elements in the Poetry of Edward Herbert of Cherbury" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois, 1971), p. 394.

CONCLUSION

THE POEM AS IT IS

Edward Herbert's poetic strategy is to probe issues within those areas of seventeenth-century thought that are familiar and interesting to him: politics, science, and philosophy. Each poem is an argument whose rhetoric is tightly constructed for the purpose of questioning or proving, and Herbert's imagery is embodied in tropes and schemes that build upon one another in the logical progression of the thought. Because Herbert's subjects are abstractions, these supporting images are typically without shape or substance.

This combination of abstract image patterns and complex dialectical patterns dilutes any intensity of feeling that may be inherent in the occasion or situation of the poem; thus the appeal in Herbert's poetry is to the reader's intelligence rather than to his emotions. Since Herbert assumes his reader to be as familiar as himself with the melange of seventeenth-century ideas, critics frequently complain that his meanings are too "obscure." If, however, Herbert's poetic purpose is to engage his reader's interest through intellect rather than emotion or sensual apprehension, this critical disapproval is unwarranted. When considered as they are, without

applying arbitrary critical principles, Edward Herbert's poems reveal deft technical artistry along with unusual intellectual beauty.

I. Images and Arguments from Politics

In his poems that borrow images and themes from the realm of politics Herbert confronts such issues as the moral responsibilities of government, the justification of the monarchy, and the proper role of the monarch. The institution of monarchy receives the poet's close scrutiny in "The State-progress of Ill." The theme of the poem is the nature of evil within state government. Herbert describes the State itself as a tableau, picturing social classes ranked in proper degree from the base. Although evil prevails in all levels of government, it does not obscure the benefits of an established order, and Herbert's speaker concludes that the monarchy is necessary to prevent the greater evil of anarchy. Herbert's "Epitaph for King James" addresses the discrepancy between qualities that are honorable in a private citizen and qualities that are honorable in a ruler, while "The Elegy for the Prince" is a thoughtful evaluation of the royal figure as a symbol of cohesiveness for the country.

The imagery in all three of these poems is strikingly abstract. In the "State-progress of Ill" Herbert relies heavily on personification to communicate his conception

of evil to the reader; the one concrete image in the "Epitaph for King James" ("the victorious arm" of Charles I) emphasizes the ironic paradox of the argument; and the images in "The Elegy for the Prince" are inextricably bound to the argument.

II. Correspondences of the Analogous Universe

The idea of correspondences or analogies among the parts of an intelligently ordered universe is the basis of Herbert's poems that examine both scientific theory and philosophy. The microcosm reflects and is a part of the macrocosm, and natural principles governing the universe also govern the body and mind. Matter is plastic and subordinate to form. In death, the material body dissolves into its separate elements, while the formative soul ascends to reunite with its original Idea.

III. Images and Arguments from Science

Two branches of science of particular interest to Herbert are optics and medicine. Although Herbert was familiar with modern seventeenth-century theories of optics, he prefers to rely on Plato's extramittory theory with its strong affinities with the idea of the analogous universe. Herbert uses Plato's theory as a point of reference for his series of poems addressed to Mrs. Diana Cecil. The phenomena of reflection, refraction, and

light-emission function in the poems as metaphorical suggestions of metaphysical truths about the natures of beauty, divinity, love, and infinity.

Herbert's knowledge of medicine informs his two poems entitled "The Green Sickness Beauty." The disease suggests the controlling metaphor for each poem. Symptoms of the disease (such as pallor, shortness of breath, and dullness of eye) supply Herbert with supporting conceits for his arguments. The effect of these images from optics and medicine depends upon the reader's knowledge and understanding of Herbert's scientific references.

IV. Images and Arguments from Philosophy

It is not surprising that Herbert, as a student of philosophy and author of De Veritate, should express his philosophic beliefs through poetry. Herbert's philosophy is a synthesis of Platonic and Neoplatonic doctrine, and thus it is often impossible to identify his allusions and background assumptions with any single source. In general, however, Herbert's philosophy includes ideas from the writings of Iamblicus, Plotinus, Ficino, Pico, and Bruno, all of whom were influenced by the Corpus Hermeticum. The analogous, ordered universe and the immortality of the human soul are the two major doctrines of the Corpus, and both ideas are central to Herbert's conception of universal harmony. The poet finds this

harmony reflected in mortal beauty (the inspiration for love), and in the immortal soul which forms human beauty and refines love.

The imagery in Herbert's philosophical poems is almost wholly abstract, and the recurring images of the soul and of light against darkness take on the additional weight of symbol. Herbert's blackness is almost palpable and functions in these poems as a symbol for infinity. Light, signifying divinity, flashes from stars, souls, eyes, and even from hairs in the poems. Images of the soul as a divine power impressing its original Idea upon such perishable entities as words, eye-beams, and human forms are also numerous in these philosophic poems.

V. Herbert's Rhetorical Techniques

Herbert's imagery from politics, science, and philosophy depends upon the tight rhetorical structure of his poetic arguments. Rhetorical techniques of definition, enthymeme, example, and parallelism are the foundations of Herbert's patterns of development. The poet also manipulates rhythm, line-length, rhyme-pattern, and syntax to support his developing arguments. Rarely does one find superfluous embellishment in Edward Herbert's poetry. Everything is subordinate to the intellectual appeal of the argument.

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