

THE LIFE AND THE POETRY OF EDWARD, LORD HERBERT
OF CHERBURY:
A STUDY IN RELATIONSHIPS

by

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A thesis submitted to the Department of English,
University of Manitoba, in partial fulfillment
of the degree of Master of Arts

September, 1977



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ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to explain and interpret the wide variety of images, content and form, and the so-called "uneven quality" in the dated poems of Herbert's canon.

The main thrust of the argument is that Herbert's poetic style was constantly in the state of change, and that changes took place according to specific patterns. The specific pattern of changes which occur in the poetry are closely paralleled by changes in the poet's social position. Herbert rises and falls from political prominence and power, and as he does so, his poetry takes on new images and styles which reflect these new circumstances. Herbert's canon, in its existing form, was shaped not only by literary influences, but by social political and personal forces as well. In short, the thesis takes the position that Herbert, the poet, the politician, the social climber and the philosopher are all part of the same entity, and that this entity was a dynamic and changing individual. Consequently, his poetic style was also constantly changing.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank Professor R. Berry and Professor J. Heller for their constructive and helpful criticism.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to Professor K. J. Hughes for his advice and his suggestions, and for his encouragement.

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INTRODUCTION

There has been much argument and contradiction among Herbert critics about the essential nature of Lord Herbert's poetry. Yet most critics settle, in some form or another, for the view that Herbert is a poet of "eclectic" tastes, and that his poems are "uneven" in quality. While we do have a fairly clear sense of the man drawn through his Autobiography together with subsequent studies, we do not have any real understanding either of the poetry considered as a totality, or of the relationship of the man to the poet. The tendency has been to view either the man himself, or his poems, but rarely both together. Moreover, no one has really attempted to explain the eclecticism in the canon.

When I first began work on this thesis, I did so with a careful study of Herbert's poems in order to familiarize myself with the canon. While engaged in this process I also began to read Herbert criticism. The great variety of Herbert's forms, images and themes (his so-called poetic "eclecticism") seemed to have caused critical confusion and I saw that critics tended to react to the poems in one of two ways: either they selected and discussed only those poems which tended to support an *a priori* notion about the nature of the poetry, or they argued generically, saying that the variety in the canon was due primarily to Herbert's experimentation and/or imitation of literary conventions and genres. In one of its aspects this latter view seemed to me to be closer to the truth, but its fatal shortcoming was that it tended to suggest that Herbert's poetry was merely a game. This attitude was not consonant with the nature of Herbert's poetry as I was beginning to understand it.

Although I saw that Herbert undeniably experimented and imitated literary fashions and genres, it seemed to me that a number of critics had fallen into a trap by attempting to make him one type of poet rather than another. Indeed, the very variety in the canon denies the view that Herbert was simply Elizabethan, or Metaphysical, and suggested that he was, at different times in his life, all of these. The characteristics of the canon as a whole had to be explained without recourse to the view that Herbert was simply playing games when he wrote poetry. I had to ask myself why images of one kind rather than another were selected from a largely public source of images, why his imitations and experimentations with various genres and conventions had resulted in poems of specific kinds with specific content, and most importantly, why Herbert's *choice* of style, form, content, theme and image was constantly changing.

These questions were partly raised and partly answered as I studied Herbert's life. I began to see some potential correlations between the form and/or content of poems written at specific points in time and the conscious preoccupations of the poet at these times in his life. I was, therefore, led to a detailed study of the poems in chronological sequence of composition, and to an attempt at making connections between the life and the poems, thus viewing the poetry as one aspect of a larger totality.

Ideally, a study of Herbert's poetry as a totality in the sense that I have defined it, would also have to include a comparative study of works in similar genres by other poets in order to discern similarities and differences. To be true to my method, however, this would also require a close study of the lives of those other poets and the relation-

ship of shifting concepts and images in the poetry to those other lives. Quite apart from the impossible length of such a project, there is also the practical difficulty that all too often we know so little about those lives. Herbert is exceptional in that he did leave us an Autobiography as well as other prose works, and he was considered a sufficiently important figure for further biographical evidence to have come down through other channels.

In Chapter I, I shall discuss and criticize representative criticism in an attempt to show where and why it has been unable to cope satisfactorily with Herbert's poetry. We shall see that the central problem is a failure to see the poetry as an integral part of the life. I shall also outline the basic methodological approach for my thesis and show how its approach grew out of the strengths and weaknesses of established criticism. In Chapter II, I offer an essential biography. I shall argue here, that Herbert's life can be divided into three main phases, and that the poet's social and political preoccupations during these periods changed significantly. I shall also argue that Herbert's social downfall was caused by financial difficulties and a political naivety. In Chapter III, I place the dated poems of the canon within the framework of the biographical, social and historical patterns outlined in Chapter II. This chapter will attempt to achieve six objectives: First, to show the essence of each poem as a poem by revealing its literary characteristics in terms of some of its imitative and experimental (innovative) elements; essentially, this is the generic approach to which I have already referred; secondly, to show that the dated poems in the canon can be divided into three groups, each with similar styles,

images and contents; thirdly, to show literary similarities between each poem and other poems in its particular group; fourthly, to illustrate differences between each of the three groups; fifthly, to suggest that reasons for the shifting literary emphases can be found in the connections between Herbert's poetic art and his social and personal victories and defeats; and sixthly, to show why the poems will not fit into established critical views. This latter objective will be executed essentially through footnotes since the main thrust of the argument at this point in the thesis is no longer primarily concerned with the relationship of Herbert criticism to the poems but rather with treating the poems in the light of the new critical approach.

Following these three chapters are a series of appendices. In Appendix A I briefly examine textual and editorial problems and establish a working text for this thesis. The observations and conclusions in Appendix A are the result of my collation of the four major editions of Herbert's poetic canon. In Appendix B I discuss Herbert's Autobiography in relation to his poetry as well as to other biographical data, and in relation to the general history of English society in the early part of the seventeenth century.

It was my original intention to include a treatment of the undated poems in the canon and based on internal and external evidence, to suggest their approximate dates of composition. However, space did not permit me to include this and I shall return to the problem of the undated poems at a later time.

CHAPTER I

A SURVEY OF HERBERT CRITICISM

In some respects, Lord Herbert is a very important seventeenth-century figure. He is frequently looked upon as an eclectic whose academic interests led him to make significant contributions to philosophy and history, and whose other diversified interests led him to enthusiastic participation in seventeenth-century political life. Yet while his philosophical treatises, historical tracts and other minor prose works have attracted scholarly consideration, his poetry was virtually ignored for over two hundred years after his death. Only in the last two decades of the nineteenth century did his poetry suddenly begin to attract critical study, but even this interest was overshadowed by a greater concern in his Autobiographical writings. It was not until the latter part of the 1950's that the poems began to receive serious and intensive critical attention. Since then, awareness of Herbert as a poet has steadily increased although it seems fairly obvious that critical opinion will never likely acclaim him a "major" poet.

Relative to the criticism of other seventeenth-century poets little has been written on Herbert's poetry, but the small body of criticism that we do have contains an astonishing variety of conflicting opinions. Some critics argue that Herbert is an Elizabethan, some that he is a Metaphysical and some that he is an embryonic Augustan; some contend that he is a good poet, others that he is a bad one.

Despite this general dissimilarity of conclusions, the different

critical approaches share a common methodological starting point. The tendency among Herbert critics is to be comparative in a purely literary sense. Most critics arrive at their positions after having completed comparative, generic studies of various poetic modes. For instance, many critics view Donne as the central, poetical figure of the early seventeenth century. They see Lord Herbert and other minor Metaphysical poets as imitators or disciples in what George Williamson¹ calls "The Donne Tradition" or what Alfred Alvarez² calls "The School of Donne." Thus, for critics like these, Donne is responsible for the establishment of a particular type of poetry and his poetry is a sort of Platonic *Form* of Metaphysical poetry. The minor Metaphysicals are, for these critics, the followers of this type of poetry and their poems are merely imperfect *Copies* of the true *Form* of Metaphysical poetry.

Although there is nothing intrinsically wrong with comparative-generic studies, we shall see that there are some limitations to this approach, limitations which can create serious misunderstandings about Herbert's poetry. For in addition to undeniable literary influences, there were also other important forces at work which significantly influenced Herbert's poetry. In much the same way that literary influences shaped the form, the style and the content of Herbert's poems, these non-literary influences also helped to mould Herbert's style of writing. His was an evolving style which often approached, and later departed from other poets' styles.

In this chapter we shall closely examine the common starting points as well as the points of divergence of critical approaches in an attempt to resolve some of the more pressing critical issues that hinder a fuller

understanding of Lord Herbert's poetry.

One of the most obvious precedents for comparative generic studies was set by George Williamson in his book, *The Donne Tradition*. Williamson contends that Lord Herbert, like many other minor Metaphysicals, adopted one major ingredient or characteristic from the multi-faceted poetry of Donne. For Williamson, the poetry of Herbert and of others is essentially a derivative form of Donne's. He suggests that Crashaw, Vaughan and George Herbert are part of the "Sacred Line" because they tend to emphasize some of the religious elements found in Donne, while Marvell, King, Townshend and Lord Herbert are part of the "Profane Line" because they tend to emphasize some of the secular elements found in Donne. Cleveland, Benlowes and Cowley are the "Chief Offenders" because their poetry tends to move away from the Metaphysical (Donneian) style.³

Williamson (p. 135) remarks that, "While Lord Herbert's *Elegy* reflects the unhappy side of the Donne tradition his best poems reflect the happy side and miss the defects of the metaphysical qualities." He goes on to suggest that Herbert's competence as a poet is dependent upon the extent of his imitation of Donne's love lyrics: "For the Donne tradition [Lord Herbert] is important because he contributed a few lovely poems and because he was the first to imitate the love songs of Donne, just as his brother was the first to imitate the divine poems" (p. 135). Here, in addition to the oversimplified classification of Donne's poems into the "Sacred" and the "Profane," we see an implied hierarchical ranking of poets which is misleading. Herbert's poetical merits are reduced to a function of the extent to which he partakes in the Donneian *Form* of Metaphysical poetry. Such a comparative interpreta-

tion and evaluation of Herbert's (and also Donne's) poetry is deceptive because it does not allow for any significant degree of individuality among minor Metaphysical poets generally and in Herbert in particular. While it is undoubtedly true that Donne exerted a literary influence on Herbert, it is surely a most serious mistake to conclude that Herbert wished merely to imitate Donne and to do little or nothing more.

Other critics after Williamson have willingly adopted his thesis about the master-disciple relationship between Donne and Herbert, but they arrive at somewhat different conclusions with regard to the nature of Herbert's poetry. For example, Patrick Cruttwell in *The Shakespearean Moment*,⁴ (p. 167) observes that, "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." Here again, we have a superior-inferior ranking of poets; Donne is the master, Herbert, the disciple. Cruttwell notices significant differences between the master and the disciple, and he concludes that these differences are due not to any quarrel about poetics but to varying degrees of artistic competence. The differences begin, Cruttwell insists, in the rhythm. Donne's rhythm is smooth but Herbert's tends to be "depressingly nerveless; it trails on and on . . ." (p. 168). Moreover, according to Cruttwell, the poems are too abstract in thought and too "uneven" and "rough" in execution; they tend to be "expository" and seem to be written in a "lecturing manner."⁵

Finally, Cruttwell argues (p. 174) that "Lord Herbert's bent was not by nature, that of a metaphysical poet His positive qualities were those of the Restoration, the embryonic Augustan." But even Herbert's

resemblance to the Augustans does not finally save him from Cruttwell's condemnation (p. 167): "Lord Herbert appears to have had all the talents . . . to make a true poet But something, in him, went wrong; some failure in fusion there must have been, some inability to weld his various gifts into a successful achievement in art." It is by no means made clear what a "true poet" is, but for Cruttwell Herbert is apparently both a Donneian and not a Donneian, and unsuccessful at both styles.

The underlying thrust of Cruttwell's argument is that Herbert, who was not a Metaphysical poet "by nature," imitated the Metaphysical style of Donne's poetry and did so because it was fashionable. According to Cruttwell, Herbert's preoccupation with writing fashionable poetry seriously interfered with his ability to recognize his own poetic limitations, thus resulting in his failure as a poet in the Metaphysical manner.⁶

The strength of Cruttwell's argument lies in the correctness of his observations with reference to the early poems in the canon. But while it is undoubtedly true that these poems tend to be somewhat stereotyped and lacking in original thought, it is misleading to explain the presence of these elements *solely* in terms of literary experimentation, imitation and influence. Indeed, if it is true that Herbert imitated the Metaphysical style because it was fashionable, then he probably did so because at that particular point in his life he was preoccupied with impressing everyone around him with his *avant garde* attitude. As we shall see, at certain times in his life, Herbert's obsession to impress social peers and inferiors became so dominant that it permeated everything he did. This we see in his actions at court, in his personal and public relations, in his behavior on the battlefield, and even in his poetry. The obsession

manifested itself different ways, but nevertheless, its underlying essence remained the same. This argument shall be developed more fully in chapters two and three.

Douglas Bush⁷ is another critic who adopts Williamson's thesis about the master-disciple relationship between Donne and Herbert. In *English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century*, (p. 160ff.) he writes: "As George Herbert stands at the head of the metaphysical religious poets, so his eldest brother, Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1582-1648), is the first disciple of Donne on the secular side." Like Cruttwell, Bush is also aware that there are significant differences between Donne and Herbert. He observes (p. 160-1) that

Herbert has little of Donne's personal intimacy, glancing wit, everyday realism, recondite learning, verbal and metrical power, and dramatic force. He rarely raises his voice above a studied and almost prosaic quietness, and his diction is so simple that one is surprised at the effort of comprehension his close and sometimes knotted texture requires. All these negatives indicate that Herbert is not an immediately compelling poet, in the ordinary meaning of the term.⁸

Like Cruttwell, then, Bush sees that while Herbert is a "disciple" of Donne's his poetry is also unlike Donne's. Bush concludes that the differences between the two poets signify Herbert's inferiority to his "master,"⁹ and like Cruttwell he finds little of value in Herbert's poems.

Ultimately, Bush's argument is unconvincing because it is inconsistent. He says that Marvell and Herbert are both disciples of Donne but that the differences between Donne and Marvel are due to their respective personalities and poetics, whereas the differences between Donne and Herbert are due to an artistic "failure" in the latter. Surely there is

no justification for allowing Marvell his own peculiarities and individualism while simultaneously disallowing them in Herbert. This is not to suggest, however, that Herbert is of the same stature as Marvell. Critics like Bush operate from the assumption that Donne's poems are the *Forms* of Metaphysical poetry. Since one of their major aims is to see where Herbert stands in relation to Donne in the hierarchy of poets, they tend to abandon prematurely the analytical and descriptive stages of criticism for the normative and the comparative.

Bush also assumes that the characteristics of some of Herbert's poems are the characteristics of his whole canon. Certainly his complaints and accusations about the roughness, unevenness and unpleasing execution of the poems are correct in some instances, for some of Herbert's poems assuredly are "knotted," "intricate," and perhaps even "obscure" in meaning. But there are, as we shall see, many other poems in the canon, a majority in fact, which are not so. Obviously before any attempt can be made to *compare* Herbert with Donne it is essential that we have an accurate description of Herbert's poetic canon that does justice to each of his works in its own terms.

Horace Rockwood¹⁰ operates from within the same comparative framework as Cruttwell and Bush, but he quickly parts company with them over the question of the artistic merit of Herbert's poetry. Rockwood, in fact, was one of the first critics to suggest that Herbert is much more than a mere "imitator" (successful, unsuccessful or otherwise) of Donne and the Metaphysical style. Using an approach which compares and contrasts literary styles, he sets out to prove that Lord Herbert's poetry is independent of Donne's. Systematically, he describes the characteristics

of each poet's work and then proceeds to defend Herbert against the charge of obscurity¹¹ by arguing that no one has shown how or where Herbert is obscure. He observes (correctly in my view) that he has 'not found a single critic who demonstrates that Lord Herbert's poetry is obscure, let alone one who demonstrates that it is more obscure than Donne's or any other seventeenth century [sic] poet's' (p. 24). The emphasis here is on "demonstrates," and Rockwood rightly points out that many critics avoid specific textual references and a truly representative sampling of the poems when they accuse Herbert of "obscurity."

As he expands his comparative analysis Rockwood argues that in certain respects Herbert is just as close to Sidney, Spenser and Renaissance Platonism as he is to Donne, especially in the poems dedicated to black beauty: *To Mrs. Diana Cecyll*, *To her Hair*, *To her Eyes*, *Sonnet of Black Beauty* and *Another Sonnet to Black it self*. He says that, successively, these poems "constitute a ladder, apparently occasioned by the first poem, reaching in typical Platonic fashion from the visible to the invisible Thus the four poems form a perfect Platonic hierarchy, moving from physical manifestations of the power of black to its essence" (pp. 111-2). Rockwood concludes that "The only other sequence similar to Herbert's that I am aware of, in its dependence upon a Platonic hierarchy from the mere 'images' to the pure 'idea,' is, significantly, Spenser's *Foure Hymnes*" (p. 125).

For Rockwood, Herbert's poetry is sometimes Metaphysical, sometimes Elizabethan, and sometimes both.¹² He observes (p. 118) that "what Herbert does quite often is to combine Elizabethan and metaphysical

elements into a single poem." Lord Herbert's wide range of style, says Rockwood, tempts critics to compare him to other poets, especially Donne, but in actual fact "there are only two characteristics Donne and Lord Herbert have in common: a general conception of how a satire should be written (and Herbert wrote but two) and a striving for accuracy in their poems, along with most of the poets of their time" (p. 128). Rockwood's final conclusion about Lord Herbert and the nature of his poetry is that "the simultaneous tugging in various directions by his several interests also prevents him from establishing . . . his own distinct mode of poetry Most of it is derivative, but it is undeniably competent" (p. 136). Rockwood thus finishes his analysis on a positive note.

Rockwood attempts to demonstrate Lord Herbert's independence of Donne by showing that Herbert also imitated other schools of poetry. But while this generic approach is generally correct in acknowledging the literary influences of other schools of poetry, it does not take into account the possibility that the content of the poet's work was also influenced by external and personal events, as well as by literary forces. We shall see that not only were there "several [poetic] interests" "tugging" Herbert in "various directions," but that he was also being pushed by a series of interconnected personal problems in a most unstable period of English history. We shall see also that Herbert's poetry is more than simply a derivation of other schools of poetic traditions; for if Herbert was unable to establish "his own distinct mode of poetry," it was probably because he also underwent a steady transformation in his person as well as in his poetics throughout the years 1608-1648.

John Churton Collins¹³ reacts positively to Herbert's poetry and arrives at his position by a comparative method. Collins begins by attempting to re-define the question of the extent of Donne's literary influence on Lord Herbert and others. Of the minor Metaphysicals, he says, "Their origin is popularly ascribed to Dr. Donne, though it would in truth be more correct to say that in the poetry of Donne their peculiarities of sentiment and expression are most conspicuously illustrated. They owed their origin, indeed, not to the influence of Donne, but to the spirit of the age" (p. xxii).

After having denied Donne's direct influence on the minor Metaphysicals, Collins turns to a comparative-generic approach: "The style of Donne is, however, marked by certain distinctive peculiarities which no intelligent critic would be likely to mistake, and his influence on contemporary poetry was unquestionably considerable. Lord Herbert appears to have been the earliest of his disciples" (p. xxiii). Apparently aware of the dilemma in which he lands himself, Collins seeks to explain it away by concluding that "What [Lord Herbert] owes in lyric poetry to the leader of the Metaphysical school is to be found, so far as form is concerned, rather in what Donne suggested than in what he directly taught" (p. xxv). For Collins, then, Herbert is a literary disciple of Donne, yet he is not.

In one sense, Collins' position is adequate. Some of Herbert's poems exhibit characteristics which clearly link him with Donne while other poems separate him from Donne. But although it seems true that Herbert both was and was not an imitator of Donne, Collins' position does not serve as a satisfactory interpretation of Herbert's canon considered as a whole. His comparative approach explains a portion of the canon by noting

similarities between the two poets but it does not satisfactorily explain the differences. These differences must be explained without resorting to the circular argument that certain poems are "un-Donne-like." Moreover, the differences between Donne and Herbert are as important as the similarities, but in order to understand Herbert's poetry in a fuller sense it is necessary to advance beyond the rather stark conclusion that Herbert was and was not an imitator of Donne. As we shall see, this perspective can be attained by investigating the relationship between Herbert's poetry and various events in his life.

G. C. Moore Smith is notorious for his extreme views on Herbert's poetry. Although he uses a comparative approach, his opinion of the canon is radically different from those of any other Herbert critic. In the introduction to his edition of the poems¹⁴ he writes: "For my part, while admitting the unequal character of Herbert's verses, I am inclined to claim that in poetic feeling and art Edward Herbert soars above his brother George" (p. xvii). Thus, Moore Smith is not content simply to say (as Collins did) that Herbert's poetry could, at times, be *as good as* other poetry; he insists that Herbert's poetry is undoubtedly *better than* George's. There is little doubt that Moore Smith was over-enthusiastic.¹⁵

But Moore Smith is also unique in a more favourable sense because he is the first critic to emphasize the content as well as the technique of Herbert's poetry. For example, Lord Herbert's satires had long been called "feeble" and Moore Smith is willing to accept this view so far as it pertains to the actual execution of the poems. But he hastens to add that the satires are remarkable in the sense that they show "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 the monarchy and aristocracy by a young aristocrat and man of fashion living under King James I is something hardly to be paralleled" (p. xvii). It is unfortunate for subsequent students of Herbert that Moore Smith did not develop this insight further, thus establishing the connection between the satires, the individual and the social conditions under which they were composed. Had he done so he would probably have demonstrated that the satires are directly related to a conflict between Herbert and his King. He would thus have been led to perceive a relationship between the radical content and knotted style of the satires, and the poet's life. In Chapter III, I shall offer a more detailed discussion of the implications of Moore Smith's insight into the satires.

Mary Ellen Rickey¹⁶ is another critic who takes the comparative route in her analysis of Lord Herbert's poetry. But she differs from the others in the sense that she proceeds descriptively and *empirically* to analyze the form of Lord Herbert's poetry in relation to his brother George's. She compares the rhyming and metrical techniques of the two Herbert brothers by listing all the rhymes that are to be found in each poet's canon, the number of variations of each rhyme, the number of poems in which a particular rhyme appears, and the type of stanza in which it occurs (2-line, 3-line and so on). Even a cursory glance at this empirical data shows that "both men were actively interested in experimenting with form" (p. 504).

Turning specifically to Lord Herbert, Rickey examines the relationship between form and content in representative poems. The evidence of the metrics in the Echo poems,¹⁷ the use of shift in stanza forms and the use

of rare or unknown stanza forms, all lead her to conclude that, "In some areas, Lord Herbert's experimentation with rhyme is more extensive than that of his younger brother" (p. 510). Moreover, she observes that "many of the innovations that he made in his early verse appear later in the poems of his younger brother" (p. 511). Rickey uses empirical analysis to support her view that Lord Herbert was a creative and innovative poet and this seems to be a more accurate view than the one which states that his poetry is merely "derivative" (as Rockwood argued) or "imitative" (as Collins, Williamson, Bush and Cruttwell argued).¹⁸ Unfortunately, Rickey's rather mechanical methodology leaves many other important aspects of the poetry untouched.

Moreover, while rhyme was clearly an important ingredient for Herbert (and most seventeenth-century poets) content and style were also important. We have seen that most Herbert critics tend to compare Herbert's poems to the poems of other poets. Some critics, however, use a slightly different method of comparison. Basically, these critics argue that the key to understanding Herbert's poetry is to be found in his philosophical and religious beliefs, particularly as they are expressed in his prose works. Before Aloysius Gasior's dissertation, "Satiric Elements in the Poetry of Edward Herbert of Cherbury,"¹⁹ almost all critics agreed that Herbert's poetry was essentially Platonic in nature, but no one had examined this Platonic element in the light of the prose writings. Gasior compares Herbert's philosophical writings with the philosophical views that seem to him to be implied in the poetry. He finds a "serious discrepancy" between the two, for in his view, the poetry is essentially Platonic²⁰ while the prose is essentially Aristotelian. Gasior's thesis

attempts to explain this "discrepancy."²¹

For Gasior, the Aristotelian views expressed in *De Veritate*²² are Herbert's true and fixed beliefs. Since he sees what he interprets to be unchanging beliefs in the prose works leaning in one direction, and beliefs of a different kind in the poetry apparently leaning in the opposite direction, he is led to conclude that beliefs in the poems are not Herbert's true beliefs. The poetry is a game. Gasior insists that not only are the attitudes and opinions of the speaker in the poems quite separate from Herbert's own views, but that in fact, they are quite opposite to those views. Accordingly, he postulates the existence of a persona (in most of the poems) who is "debunked" for his Platonic views.²³ Thus, when Gasior speaks of "satiric elements" in the poems, he refers not only to the satires but to most of the lyrics and even some of the elegies.²⁴

Gasior's argument is not convincing for a number of reasons. First of all, it is surely unlikely that Herbert would have written some sixty poems²⁵ of such different kinds over a period of forty years with the rather simple intention of setting up a persona or a series of personae in order to jeer at their views.

Secondly, only by doing an obvious violence to individual poems can Gasior make them fit his thesis. While he accurately and in great detail delineates Herbert's philosophical position in *De Veritate* (early 1620's), he lands himself in trouble when he assumes an unchanging consistency in Herbert's thoughts and actions between the first and fifth decades of the seventeenth century. His argument is based on the supposition that the views expressed in *De Veritate* remained with Herbert throughout his life.

Thus he assumes Herbert to have been a static individual. Gasior, in fact, fails to recognize that Herbert was a dynamic and changing individual in a dynamic and changing society. When the opinions expressed in *De Veritate* are considered in the light of poems which were written concurrently or before *De Veritate*, Gasior's thesis *may* hold true, but the imposition of these views on to later poems and works is an *a priori* argument which does not allow for the possibility that Herbert might have changed.

Indeed, as we shall see, even a cursory examination of Herbert's life shows that the poet underwent a gradual but nevertheless continuous change in, for example, political opinions and affiliations. Constantly overlooked for promotion for over twenty years, Herbert's frustrations gradually increased until finally, in 1644, he switched his allegiance from the Royalists to the Parliamentarians. A change of such depth and magnitude could not have been a sudden thing; it seems reasonable to argue that this change took place gradually and that it affected Herbert's artistic, moral, philosophic and social outlook. The evidence suggests that Herbert's gradual transformation in politics is closely paralleled by corresponding shift in poetic interests and emphases, and it is for this reason that his later poems bear little or no resemblance to his earlier ones; he was not the same individual. Gasior's argument is unconvincing because its assumptions of a static individual ignore the enormously important element of change in Herbert's life.

It will be clear from this survey that Herbert criticism as a whole is characterized by confusion, disagreement and contradictions. If we put together the most significant critical comments, we arrive at the following list of characteristics of Herbert's poetry: (1) its imagery and conceits

are often Elizabethan, Petrarchan and Platonic; (2) its imagery and conceits are often anti-Elizabethan, anti-Petrarchan and, by implication, Aristotelian; (3) it is Metaphysical (like Donne's poetry); (4) it is not like Donne but like Dryden and the eighteenth century; (5) it is neither like Donne nor like Dryden and the Restoration poets; (6) its meter and rhyme are highly varied; (7) it is "bad" poetry; (8) it is "good" poetry; (9) it is superb poetry; (10) its syntax is obscure and difficult; (11) its syntax is simple and lucid; (12) it lacks emotional involvement; (13) it avoids the sensuous; (14) it is dry and abstract, unlike Donne's poetry; (15) it is derivative; (16) it is original and unique; (17) it is imitative; (18) it is innovative.

Undoubtedly it would be possible to make a list of contradictory critical views for any poet in the seventeenth century, or any other century for that matter, and it may very well be that there can be no unanimity of views amongst critics. Yet the simple fact remains that most Herbert critics examined above mistake several poems for the Herbert canon as a whole.

There can perhaps be no final word on Herbert or any other poet, but the question prompts itself as to whether there is any way of understanding the totality of the Herbert canon in all its variety and diversity. Is the eclecticism simply contradictory or can it be explained? Is there some way of going beyond the mechanical critical techniques of Mary Ellen Rickey, the intuitive approaches which see Herbert's poetry only in terms of other literary influences, and the assumptions of a static Herbert put forward by Gasior? Can we view Herbert's poetry both in terms of the literary styles which contributed to his own style and still retain

a sense of Herbert's individualism and uniqueness?

I believe that the answers to this problem can be found in the relationship between the life and the poetry. In his book *The Hidden God*, (p. 7) Lucien Goldman²⁶ articulates the methodology which forms the basis of my thesis:

I set out from the fundamental principle of dialectical materialism, that the knowledge of empirical facts remains abstract and superficial so long as it is not made concrete by its integration into a whole; and that only this act of integration can enable us to go beyond the incomplete and abstract phenomenon in order to arrive at its concrete essence, and thus, implicitly, at its meaning. I thus maintain that the ideas and the work of an author cannot be understood as long as we remain on the level of what he wrote, or even of what he read and what influenced him.

Goldman goes further than this and proposes to deal with his characters as types, as the representative figures of a social class. He goes on to observe (p. 7) that,

Ideas are only a partial aspect of a less abstract reality: that of the whole, living man. And in his turn, this man is only an element in a whole made up of the social group to which he belongs. An idea which he expresses or a book which he writes can acquire their real meaning for us, and can be fully understood, only when they are seen as integral parts of his life and mode of behavior. Moreover, it often happens that the mode of behavior which enables us to understand a particular work is not that of the author himself, but that of a whole social group.

Because of the limitations of space it is not possible to go as far as Goldman in *The Hidden God*, although the pattern of Herbert's life as we shall see in Chapter II does suggest he is a type of the rising and declining gentry and aristocracy. That Herbert was in some respects, a social type, I also suggest in Appendix B. The main thrust of my thesis,

however, is to analyze Herbert's shifting use of various poetic genres and conventions, and to relate the shifting pattern of the poetry to significant events in his life. We shall see that Herbert's selection and use of a variety of poetic styles and forms are closely connected to the ever-changing tides of his social and political position.

Patrick Cruttwell has stated that "Lord Herbert's poetry . . . is neither sensuous nor lively; *he* could not transform his personal qualities, he could only suppress them. The whole of his self is not there" (p. 182).²⁷ While it is no doubt true that the "whole" of Herbert's self is not in his poetry, it is also true, as I shall attempt to show, that *a good part* of him *is* there. Although Herbert tended to be first and foremost a politician and secondly a poet, we shall see that for him the two worlds were not far apart. The process of reading from the poems to the life and back to the poems again is difficult, but not impossible. The plain fact is that the Herbert critic is confronted with two sets of facts: there is a pattern of social rising and falling in Herbert's life, accompanied by changes in the structure of his political consciousness, and there are patterns in the shifts in image, theme and content in the poems. These patterns have not been explained, but they must be explained in terms of their relationship to each other.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER ONE

¹ George Williamson, *The Donne Tradition* (1930; rpt. New York: The Noonday Press, Inc., 1961), passim.

² Alfred Alvarez, *The School of Donne* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1961), passim.

³ The three categories which Williamson sets up, break down quickly because no one poet in fact belongs solely to any single school. Cleveland, a member of the "Chief Offenders" is said to have written poetry which lacks emotional content. This is one of the qualities which apparently separates him from the "Profane" and "Sacred" lines. Lord Herbert, on the other hand, is classified as a member of the "Profane" line and yet some critics argue that his poetry, like Cleveland's, lacks emotional content. We have, then, a situation in which a member of the "Profane" line writes poetry whose key characteristic is like that of the "Chief Offenders." If the two lines are supposed to be so different they can hardly be so similar.

⁴ Patrick Cruttwell, *The Shakespearean Moment* (1954; rpt. New York: Columbia University Press, 1970).

⁵ Cruttwell here, is exhibiting an evaluative type of criticism and his unspoken assumption is that "good" poetry (Donne's) is not too abstract, not rough, and not expository. Not all critics share his opinions.

⁶ After comparing Herbert's poems to other Metaphysical poems Cruttwell concludes that Herbert was not a very good Metaphysical: "Lord Herbert, then, would seem to fail when he writes in the metaphysical manner; but in other manners he is much more successful" (p. 172). According to Cruttwell, Lord Herbert "wrote the greater part of his verse in the metaphysical manner because that was the prevailing mode in his time and circle" (p. 174). Since, according to Cruttwell, Herbert failed in this manner, most of his poetry is also a failure.

⁷ See Douglas Bush, *English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century: 1600-1660*, 2nd ed. (1962; rpt. Ely House, London: Oxford University Press, 1973).

⁸ Again, this is a highly misleading statement. Whatever Herbert's practice was, it is certain that his poetical theory denies the validity of this statement. In the *Autobiography* (ed. Sidney Lee, 1908, p. 35),

Herbert says: "It is well said by [the schools] that there are two parts of eloquence necessary and recommendable; one is, to speak hard things plainly, so that when a knotty or intricate business, having no method or coherence in its parts, shall be presented, it will be a singular part of oratory to take those parts asunder, set them together aptly, and so exhibit them to the understanding. And this part of rhetoric I much commend to everybody; there being no true use of speech, but to make things clear, perspicuous, and manifest, which otherwise would be perplexed, doubtful, and obscure.

The other part of oratory is to speak common things ingeniously or wittily; there being no little vigour and force added to words, when they are delivered in a neat and fine way, and somewhat out of the ordinary road, common and dull language relishing more of the clown than the gentleman."

Like many critics, Bush does not accept Herbert on his own terms, preferring instead to label the characteristics he finds in the poems "negative."

⁹ I am aware of Bush's statement (p. 141), that "the degree of unlikeness among the poets who are rightly or wrongly called metaphysical --Lord Herbert, George Herbert, Crashaw, Vaughan, King, Cowley, Marvell, Cleveland, Benlowes, and others--forbids our defining metaphysical poetry simply in terms of Donne." Unfortunately, however, Bush's practical analysis contradicts his theoretical approach and the main thrust of his argument is to define Herbert in terms of Donne.

¹⁰ See Horace Rockwood, "A Reconsideration of the Poetry of Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury and of Its Supposed Conformity to the Poetry of Donne," Diss. University of Michigan 1966, pp. 87-9. Rockwood argues convincingly that *Elegy Over a Tomb* is an extremely well written poem. He also discusses further examples of well written poems in the Herbert canon and shows how they were designed.

¹¹ The charge of "obscurity" has traditionally been a favourite complaint. It has been passed down and taken up by several generations of critics. For evidence one only need consult the following partial list:

John Churton Collins, ed., *The Poems of Lord Herbert of Cherbury*, (1881; rpt. [np] Folcraft Library Editions, 1971), pp. xix, xxvi, xxxii, xxxiii.

Notes and Queries (December, 1923), 478. An anonymous review.

John Hoey, "A Study of Lord Herbert of Cherbury's Poetry," *Renaissance and Modern Studies*, xvi (1970), p. 71.

G. C. Moore Smith, ed., *The Poems English and Latin of Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury*, (1923; rpt. Ely House, London: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. xvii.

Patrick Cruttwell, op. cit. p. 169.

Rockwood, the only critic who comes to Herbert's defense, emphatically states (pp. 23-4) that,

Metaphysical poetry in general is traditionally considered obscure in that it is difficult, it requires intense concentration, it is intellectual poetry, and the poets are learned The point is that if Herbert is to be considered obscure or difficult, the term will have application only if he is more obscure than the other poets of his era.

¹² It is worth noting that Rockwood's observations also hold true for many other Metaphysical poets and are not only true of Herbert. Donne, for instance, uses the Petrarchan convention of the scornful mistress in *The Apparition*, but he also displays that intensity of feeling and colloquial tone of address that is so characteristic of the "Metaphysical" style.

¹³ *The Poems of Lord Herbert of Cherbury*, John Churton Collins, ed., (1881; rpt. [np] Folcraft Library Editions, 1971). This edition marked the first serious treatment of the poems since Lord Herbert's brother, Henry, published them in 1665. Collins' edition was the first modern edition. For a critical evaluation of his editing see Appendix A.

¹⁴ *The Poems English and Latin of Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury*, (1923; rpt. Ely House, London: Oxford University Press, 1968). This edition was applauded by the critical world because it corrected many errors found in Collins' edition. For a discussion of the scholarship and editing involved in Moore Smith's edition see Appendix A.

¹⁵ The statement by Moore Smith provoked a universal reaction against his enthusiasm and against Herbert himself. See the following:

John Hoey, "A Study of Lord Herbert of Cherbury's Poetry," *Renaissance and Modern Studies*, 54 (1970), 70.

Pierre Legouis, "A Review of 'The Poems English and Latin of Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury' by G. C. Moore Smith," *The National and the Athenaeum*, 16, no. xxxiv (January 19, 1924), 584.

H. J. C. Grierson, "A Review of 'The Poems, English and Latin, of Lord Herbert' by G. C. Moore Smith (ed) 1926," *MLR*, 21 (April, 1926), pp. 210-13.

Patrick Cruttwell, *The Shakespearean Moment*, op. cit.
p. 106, n.2.

16 Mary Ellen Rickey, "Rhymecraft in Edward and George Herbert,"
JEGP, 57 (1958), 502-11.

17 Lord Herbert wrote several Echo poems: *Ditty to the tune of A che Quanto-mio of Pesarino, Melander Suppos'd to love Susan, but did love Ann, Echo to a Rock and Echo in a Church*. These poems seem to be modelled after Sir Philip Sidney's "Fair Rocks, Goodly Rivers, Sweet Woods," in the *Arcadia*. See *Five Courtier Poets of the English Renaissance*, Robert N. Bender, ed., (New York: Washington Square Press, 1967), p. 296.

18 Rickey demonstrated what Collins had vaguely referred to as Herbert's "versatility as a poet." Although this fact is now accepted as common knowledge by most Herbert critics, Rickey's analysis is a significant one in the history of Herbert criticism. She represents a reaction against the vague and generalized type of criticism which had been too far removed from specific references to the texts of the poems themselves.

19 Aloysius Gasior, "Satiric Elements in the Poetry of Edward Herbert of Cherbury," Diss. The University of Illinois 1971.

20 It is a widely accepted view that Herbert's poetry is basically Platonic. Gasior agrees with almost all Herbert critics on this point. The Aristotelian tendencies in the prose, however, were not widely acknowledged until after Gasior's dissertation.

21 Gasior begins his analysis of the prose by stating that there are five different schools of philosophical thought which are concerned with "the relationship of the two human cognitive powers or faculties to each other . . ." (p. 26). These two faculties are intuitive understanding and discursive reasoning. The five schools concerned with this relationship of cognitive faculties, are the Platonists, the Aristotelians, the Stoics, the Sceptics and the Empiricists. In attempting to identify Herbert's philosophical stance Gasior determines that "Herbert is in no wise a classical Platonist or NeoPlatonist or Augustinian, or Cartesian" (p. 265). Proceeding further Gasior finds that Herbert rejects all forms of mysticism and the Christian notion of a dualist universe composed of Faith-Grace and corrupt nature. For Herbert, "the natural order is quasi-divine and embedded in the supernatural." Man's reasoning powers therefore, are self-sufficient and have no need of revelation and divine assistance. This view does not intend to negate the existence of revelation; it merely argues that the Church's authority on religious and theological matters is not a vital necessity. Gasior continues by saying that for Herbert, Faith is synonymous with reason. In terms of a Platonic-Aristotelian opposition, this view, says Gasior, tends to align Herbert with the latter rather than the former.

Gasior does not appear to be aware that in the poetry, Herbert's view of nature changes drastically. In the earlier poems nature is "quasi-divine" but in the later poems, Herbert presents it as a corrupt and ugly part of the universe. In Chapter III we shall investigate the significance of this change.

²² Herbert's *De Veritate* has long been considered an important "deist" work in philosophy. It was published in 1624 but Herbert worked on it intermittently for some years prior to this date.

²³ Gasior also argues that the various personae represent beliefs other than just the Platonic ones. The personae of various poems represent Papal, Anglican and Presbyterian pretensions, to name just a few, and these, according to Gasior, are also satirized by Herbert.

²⁴ See Gasior, *op. cit.*, p. 424 ff.

²⁵ These of course are the English poems only, both dated and undated. Herbert also wrote some poems in Latin. In addition, there are some five or six poems which are suspected to be his as well. *Minor Poets of the Seventeenth Century*, R. G. Howarth, ed., (New York: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1931) includes the following poems which are not present in the 1665 edition: *Ode: Our Sense of Sin, Inconstancy, Sonnet* ('Innumerable Beauties'), *To One Black and not Very Handsome who Expected Commendation, A Divine Love*, and *A Translation from Silius Italicus*.

²⁶ Lucien Goldman, *The Hidden God*. trans. Philip Thody. (London: Rutledge & Kegan Paul).

²⁷ Patrick Cruttwell, *op. cit.* p. 182.

CHAPTER II

THE LIFE OF LORD HERBERT OF CHERBURY

Edward Herbert was born in Shropshire on March 3, 1582.¹ In his autobiography, he tells us that his father was "Richard Herbert Esq., son to Edward Herbert Esq., and grandchild to Sir Richard Herbert, Knight, who was a younger son of Richard Herbert of Colebrook, in Monmouthshire."² Lord Herbert's patrilinear ancestors distinguished themselves in the service of England's monarchs. His great-grandfather (Sir Richard Herbert) served Henry VIII as an administrator of justice in North and East Wales. His grandfather assisted Edward VI (and later Queen Mary) in the suppression of several rebellions against the crown. Because of these services Herbert's grandfather "got so much money and wealth [that it] enabled him to buy the greatest part of that livelihood" (Auto. p. 3) which was then passed down from generation to generation in the Herbert family. Lord Herbert tells us that his father was a country squire who held the position of "deputy lieutenant of the county, justice of the peace, and *custos rotulorum* . . ." (p. 3). Sidney Lee believes that he was also the MP for Montgomeryshire in the Parliament of 1585-6 (p. 3, n.1).

Lord Herbert's mother was Magdalen Newport, daughter of Sir Richard Newport. Magdalen's maternal grandfather, Sir Thomas Bromely, had been a member of Henry VIII's privy council. The Newport family was wealthy but held few positions of significant political or social importance. They were landed gentry. Magdalen herself was an ambitious lady. Her first husband died in 1596 but twelve years later, in 1608, she married John

Danvers, a man twenty years her junior. This marriage brought her into the social spotlight. With part of her newly acquired wealth she increased her prestige by becoming the patroness of several men of letters and poets, including of course, John Donne.

Lord Herbert had three sisters and six brothers. Like their paternal ancestors and their mother, each of the six brothers distinguished themselves in their various ways. Richard and William fought in France and became well-known for their skill in the martial arts. Thomas invested in the trade routes to the West Indies and his mercantile endeavours rewarded him when he became captain of the *Dreadnought*. Henry was an influential courtier in France. Charles, who promised to be an excellent scholar, died suddenly in 1617. His death may have become the subject of one of Lord Herbert's poems. The other brother, George, is the clergyman and well-known poet.

At the age of twelve Lord Herbert was sent to University College, Oxford, but after a short time, his studies were interrupted by his father's death. He returned to his studies at Oxford a few months later. In 1598, at the age of sixteen, he married Mary Herbert, a distant cousin. Her dowry (land and money) was contingent upon her alliance with any man of an identical surname. The marriage was pre-arranged by Magdalen, and the terms of union were satisfactory to both families. After this wedding of family convenience, Herbert returned to Oxford with his wife. Both were under the keen supervision of his mother. During this time he went through the usual studies and taught himself Spanish, Italian and music.

Herbert's public life began in 1600 when he moved to London at his mother's request. Magdalen was always careful to provide her son with

what she considered to be the environment best suited to his advancement. There can be little doubt that Herbert was influenced strongly by the ambitious hopes of his mother, and the next twenty years of his life would be dedicated to the vigorous pursuit of a higher social position.

Herbert's preoccupation with political and social advancement began to manifest itself early in his life, and at first things went exceptionally well for him in London. From 1600 to 1604 he held the position of MP for Montgomeryshire and he spent some time in Queen Elizabeth's court. His good looks, elegant manners and his musical and linguistic talents quickly made him a well-known favourite with the ladies of the court and with the Queen herself. In 1603 he was made Knight of Bath at King James I's coronation ceremonies. Two years later he succeeded in becoming the Sheriff of Montgomeryshire. Within a period of five short years he had made substantial advancement in London's social and political circles.

But his rise to prominence was not without its setbacks. He had inherited Montgomery Castle, which had belonged to the Herbert family since the time of Herbert's grandfather, but on 9 February 1607,³ for no apparent reason, King James relieved Herbert of his prided possession and gave it to one Philip Herbert (from a different line of the Herbert family). For the next eight years the castle passed intermittently in and out of Edward Herbert's hands. Most of the time, however, he found himself disenchantedly on the outside, looking inside the castle at its proud new owner. His social ascent had been abruptly halted, and he now found himself without property.

Herbert left England to do the grand European tour in 1608. In his Autobiography (p. 46) he says that he had wearied of domestic life and felt

a need for change, but the loss of his castle affected his decision too. Herbert's departure was, in part, the effect of a growing sense of social isolation in London. As we shall see in the next chapter, Herbert's only two satires were written during this time, and significantly, they are filled with hostility towards the upper classes, and the king. Having failed to succeed as well as he would have wished in England, Herbert set sail for Europe, there to cultivate his reputation as a gentleman and courtier. Arriving first at Calais he proceeded to Paris where he quickly became friends with Sir George Carew, the English ambassador. During this time he also befriended King Henry IV of France, his divorced queen, Marguerite, and the Duc de Montmorency, the grand duke of France.

In France, as elsewhere, Herbert played the role of the fashionable gentleman of leisure, and he frequently selected his friends accordingly. He commonly attached himself to those people whose high social positions could assist him in his own attempt to improve his condition. But while it is true that these friends could and did assist him, we must not conclude that Herbert was a ruthless and calculating being. He did not make friends indiscriminately with wealthy people, but rather, he frequently made his selection of friends from a number of places where money and power existed in substantial quantities.

Shortly after July 1610, when Herbert had returned to England, he volunteered to go and serve with Sir Edward Cecil at the siege of Juliers. Herbert fought in the battle for the sake of honour, he tells us, and claims that he had no other stake in the affair. But while "honour" was undoubtedly a part of his motivations for volunteering there were other profits which could be reaped by winning the favour of this famous

general. Edward Cecil was a most important man, not only on the battlefield but in court as well. He was trusted and valued highly by the King. In May 1612, for instance, Cecil was sent as the Prince's proxy to stand sponsor to the child of Count Ernest of Nassau, and in April 1613 he was granted a royal commission to receive and pay all the royal monies for the journey of a lady Elizabeth and her husband. It was also through Cecil that Herbert met Buckingham, and as a result of this meeting, Buckingham was added to the ever-increasing list of Herbert's allies. At a later date, Buckingham's influence would secure Herbert's appointment as ambassador to Paris.

During the time that Herbert served with Cecil, he often went to outrageous extremes in flaunting his courage and chivalry.⁴ Excessive sensitivity to matters of personal "honour" and self-esteem was highly fashionable for men of leisure, and Herbert made certain that all who met him realized he was the noble and courageous cavalier who always adhered to the rules of chivalry and gentlemanly conduct. He was on his way to becoming a courtier like Sir Philip Sidney.

Late in 1614 Herbert resumed his travels again, this time visiting Cologne, Heidelberg and ultimately Rome and Turin. As before, he appears to have remained discriminating in his selection of friends. In Turin he became acquainted with the Duke of Savoy. At this time Italy was at war with Spain, and in a political gesture designed to strengthen the bonds between himself and the Duke he offered to raise an army of four thousand men to fight against the Spaniards. Herbert had hoped to raise this army in France but spies discovered his intentions and he was arrested immediately upon arrival. Outraged at this insult to his "honour" and his

social position, he hastened to challenge the governor to a duel to the death, but two friends (the Duc de Montmorency and the Earl of Sackville) managed to cool his temper. These friends interceded for him and secured his release from captivity.

Herbert then decided to begin his journey home and he reached England in 1617. Upon arrival he was pleased to find that Montgomery Castle had been restored to him. This restoration marks the beginning of his most successful period of social and political prominence. This second period, however, was to be even shorter than the first. The crown had, in fact, owed Herbert £500, and rather than pay cash at a time when funds were scarce in the royal treasury, James found it much more convenient to juggle real estate; hence the return of the castle. From this time onward, through all his disasters and minor accomplishments in the political arena, Herbert was to retain possession of the castle until his death in 1648.⁵

By 1617 Herbert's health was poor but nonetheless he spent most of his time relentlessly pursuing the fashionable activities often expected of cavaliers: studying, writing poetry and fighting duels. At all costs he insisted throughout the whole of this period on behaving like Castiglione's model courtier--English style, that is.

In 1618 Herbert began the final stage of his ascent to prestige and public acclaim. Through Buckingham James offered Herbert the post of ambassador to France. The position was eagerly accepted. Here now was the climax of nearly twenty years of ambitious striving. Herbert departed England in May of 1619 and upon arrival in Paris immediately purchased an extravagant mansion in Faubourg St. Germain. He proceeded to live in

the opulent manner appropriate--as he thought--to one of his exalted status. In terms of the harrowing financial consequences of this extravagance, he was to regret this action for the rest of his life.

Herbert lived in the grand style. His residence alone cost him £200 a year,⁶ and this did not include the expenses of a staff consisting of no less than six gentlemen,⁷ not to mention many more servants. All of these people had to be paid, but despite the fact that he could not afford it, Herbert squandered money at every turn, trying to impress those around him with his fashionable living. Just one dinner for Prince Henry of Nassau cost £100.⁸ A banquet in honour of the king cost him the astronomical sum of £1000.⁹

Life in Paris agreed with Herbert's disposition and ambitions. Unfortunately, however, the revenues from his estate fell far short of the minimum necessary to sustain such opulent living.¹⁰ Herbert, of course, was sure that he would be repaid for his services to the King. He was to be bitterly disappointed. Meanwhile, his debts continued to mount as willing suppliers gladly extended credit to his excellency, the English ambassador.¹¹

If Herbert was short of ready money he also lacked other essential qualifications for the position of ambassador. He was too quick to anger. Indeed, he argued so frequently and so vehemently with the Spanish ambassador that the two soon became the bitterest of enemies. This was an attitude that could please no one, especially when a main plank in James' foreign policy at the time was that of peace with Spain.

The Spanish ambassador, however, was not the only enemy Herbert made in the French court. The Duc de Luynes was one of the King's favourite

advisors and his political and religious opinions were directly opposed to those of Herbert. In 1621 French Protestants rebelled and Louis XIII ordered an army to dispell the insurgents. The order was due, in part, to the influence of Luynes, who was a strong Papist. Luynes could not tolerate Protestants of any kind. Herbert, on the other hand, believed that Protestants were more desirable in a state than Papists, because the former would be more willing to accept secular authority while the latter would have a tendency to reject it in favour of the authority of Rome. Herbert attempted to convince the King that the political system in France could easily accommodate variations of Protestant beliefs.¹² The order of the social hierarchy, he said, would not be disturbed if the King took necessary precautions. From this it can be seen that at this time in his life Herbert was in part a traditionalist and in part a liberal. Various religions could be tolerated no matter what they preached, provided they did not in any way, threaten to disturb the hierarchical order in the established political system. Thus, at this point in his career Herbert tended to be a traditionalist in politics but in religion he was inclined to be an independent thinker.¹³

Luynes and Herbert continued their argument out of court and within a short time the two men became physically violent. The outcome of this public quarrel was that Herbert rather undiplomatically challenged Luynes to a duel to the death, but as was so often the case with Herbert the duel never took place. Nevertheless, a major complaint about Herbert's volatile and abrasive nature reached James I who immediately recalled Herbert to account for his all too frequent arguments with Luynes and the Spanish ambassador. He returned home in July 1621 and remained in London,

out of favour until December of that same year when Luynes died. In February 1622 James gave Herbert a second chance and sent him back to Paris. It was obviously assumed by James that Herbert would control his quick temper and his impetuosity. But Herbert was not to change.

Upon his return, Herbert found himself in a delicate situation. Prince Charles had expressed a wish to marry a Spanish princess and James was in favour of such a marriage.¹⁴ Although Louis XIII wanted an alliance with England through marriage, James all but forgot about the French. Herbert's new task was to smooth out Anglo-French relations in the light of these new developments and the task was not an easy one. Nor was it made easier when James changed his mind once again and decided it would, after all, be better for Charles (and England) to marry the French princess. Herbert was asked to present a conditional offer to Louis: only if France would interfere in the disputes between England and Germany would the marriage be allowed. Herbert did not think the French would betray their German allies for the sake of an alliance with England. Moreover, Herbert was aware of James' political manoeuvrings and indelicately expressed a contempt for them. This was hardly the most prudent reaction for an ambassador. The result was Herbert's immediate dismissal and recall to England. He left France in April 1624, but not before he managed to publish his philosophical treatise, *De Veritate*.¹⁵

Although he was not to know it at the time, Herbert's return to England marked the end of his political career. He had fallen out of favour with the King for the second and final time. His problems though, were just beginning for he was now in debt to the tune of well over £3000.

This was a large sum for the day, but one that is not at all surprising considering his extravagant manner of living in Paris.¹⁶ He had no hope of paying it without subsidy. While Herbert was to send reminders to the King at regular intervals for the next twenty years, he was to receive nothing.¹⁷ He had spent these fantastic sums of money in Paris because he had believed that James would reimburse him. It was a naive belief.

Yet Herbert had not lost any of the ambition inherited from his mother. Out of favour as he was, he still felt he deserved promotion. Finally, after much pestering, in a characteristic token gesture James offered Herbert a title of Baron in the Irish peerage: Lord of Castle Island. Herbert's first impulse was to refuse it but he later accepted because Buckingham hinted that the Irish title might quickly be transferred to a more prestigious title in the English peerage.

After the death of James and the ascension of Charles I on 27 March 1625, Herbert's hopes rose again and the prospect of financial repayment seemed to become more possible than ever. But by this time Herbert was being hard pressed by creditors and his anger towards Charles increased daily. His pride was injured, his ambitions thwarted by an ungracious King. Accordingly, on 8 May 1626 he wrote the following letter (p. 139) to Charles:

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTIE, ---Havinge given my most faithfull attendance to your Majesties father of blessed memorie from the beginnige of his reigne to the latter ende, and in all that time havinge neyther demanded suite nor had any, your Majestie will easily knowe how small advantage I made of his service; yet, I must confesse, I was chosen Ambassador when I least thought of it. But as I lived in a more chargeable fashion than any before mee, and notwithstanding saved his Majestie a 1000li yearly *wch* others spent him, and havinge withall done all marchant's business freely . . . I spent not only all the means I had from his Majestie, together *wth* my owne annuall rents, but somethinge above, so that still your Majestie may be pleas'd to consider mee as a looser. But yf the losse had beene

only to my purse I could better have endured it, but it was . . . in my name and estimation too . . . [and] . . . I hoped in this later treaty of marriage to bee admitted to the same honor *wch* was granted to *Sr* Thomas Edmonds in the former, I was not only excluded, but repeald, *wch* was the most publique disgrace that ever minister in my place did suffer; neyther have I anythinge to comfort mee, but your Majesties many gracious promises, both in your blessed father's time and sithence, the effect of *wch* I cannot doubt of, not only in regard of my many services and suffrings, but that no man in the memory of man ever return'd from the charge I had in that cuntrey that had not some place of honor and preferment given him. In the meane while I shall crave leave to present these my most humble suites: 1. That whereas his late Majestie made mee a Baron in Ireland, as in the way of beinge made a Baron of Englande . . . your Majestie would be graciously pleas'd to make good that promise. 2. Whereas all his late Majesties Ambassadors in France have at their returne beene sworne of the Privy Counseile your good Majestie may be graciously pleas'd not to thinke mee lesse worthy that honor. 3. Whereas I am so farre from beinge payd that *wch* was promised by my privy seale, that I am not a saver yet by 3000*il*, your good Majestie some way or other would recompense mee; and for the present to continue mee in your Counseile of Warre, both that I am the sole elder brother of my estate, who have beene on all occasions of that kind, since my minority untill my imployment in France (where I saw the seige of St. Jean d'Angely and other memorable services); . . . I could add other services, and doubt not but your Majestie may bee pleas'd to thinke on some, . . . your most excellent Majesties most obedient, most faithfull, and most affectionate subject and servant,

E. Herbert.

Here, in this one letter, we see the pattern of Herbert's life. His "chivalrous" and "honourable" deeds were motivated not only by altruistic or lofty reasons. In this letter he uses his deeds as reminders of loyal service that has gone unrecognized and unpaid.¹⁸ However, Herbert's catalogue of problems and accomplishments was ineffective. We see from the letter that even as early as 1626 Herbert conceived himself to be isolated from other members of the court because he felt that he alone had received no recognition in any form whatsoever. This feeling of isolation grew and grew until it became a major source of frustration. Later, we shall see this reflected in his poetry, particularly in his elegy for Donne (1631).

Herbert, by now, knew of his mistake in assuming that he could spend money in Paris and have James foot the bill. Like so many other seventeenth-century aristocrats he had fallen victim to personal inclinations to squander money in a society which dictated extravagant spending as a necessity.¹⁹ Not until his return from France did he realize that he had lived with the mere appearance of high rank, but had lacked the basic substance, money. Yet his public image remained important to him, even though by 1626 he knew that he could not possibly support the lifestyle of an aristocrat. His debt became to him a "publique disgrace," the worst insult of all to a man of his proud ambitions. Moreover, he made little effort to disguise his hostility, and by 1626 Herbert's attitudes towards Charles began to change drastically. He saw himself now, not as a young, rising and dashing cavalier, but as a loyal subject grossly mistreated by his king. All the hopes of earlier years degenerated into bitterness. His public displays of "courteous" behavior and duelling gave way to an intense preoccupation with procuring the cash that was owed to him.

After Charles ascended to the throne Buckingham became even closer to Herbert. Together, they set out to beg, coerce, do anything necessary to solve Herbert's financial problems. But with Buckingham's assassination in 1628 Herbert's hopes were even further deflated. He was now without a patron and completely dependent on his own devices for securing recognition and cash. In spite of his increasing disillusionment, however, Herbert did not completely give up. He stubbornly and persistently sent reminders to the King at every available opportunity.

In 1629 he was finally rewarded with a title in the English peerage:

Lord Herbert, First Baron of Cherbury. At least he was now assured of a higher and more "respectable" social position. But while this title soothed his injured pride it did nothing to help his wallet. Those persistent, ever-present, ever-threatening creditors pressed even more heavily upon him.²⁰

For the next decade of his life Herbert occupied himself with very insignificant and largely unrenumerative tasks which he dutifully carried out for his sovereign. Yet despite all his disenchantment and hostility Herbert remained, superficially at least, still loyal to Charles. But he could not forget--nor would his creditors allow him to forget--the money that was owed to him. In 1630 he wrote a short untitled piece defending Buckingham's actions at La Rochelle²¹ and dedicated it to Charles, hoping that this might bring him the King's favour and some of his money. When this failed to produce the desired financial effect, he proceeded to write *The Life and Reign of Henry VIII* in which he praised both the life and deeds of Henry and the subsequent line of British kings, and Charles was included, of course. But this too failed to bring forth funds. In 1635 he tried yet again and wrote a short piece advocating that the King be invested with complete supremacy in religious and theological matters.²² But, again, this failed to bring him the money he so desperately needed.

Although Herbert was not completely severed from the court, he was constantly overlooked when important positions or royal funds were being distributed. Indeed, after ten years his predicament in 1635 was worse than if he had been completely cut off from Charles' court. Like Tantalus, Herbert was so very close and yet so very far from gaining his desired

goal. He was teased and tormented as he watched many of those around him reap their rewards (often unfairly) while he, a man who considered himself to be worth so much, went unnoticed or, worse yet, was simply ignored. The long years of stress inevitably took their toll as frustration piled upon frustration, and by 1639 Herbert had finally been pushed to his limit.

When dues and favours were requested Charles could be remarkably deaf. When he needed assistance, however, he did not hesitate to call upon Herbert. In fact, during a time of royal troubles Herbert was asked to give support (money, supplies and service) to the King. In reply to a royal request in 1639 Herbert wrote the following letter (p. 145):²³

Having . . . attended, since my return in 1624, some recompense through his Majesty's goodness for extraordinary expenses of about £5300 upon occasion of my embassy there, £2500 whereof rest due to me upon my privy seal . . . you may easily collect how much I have suffered these many years without presuming to trouble his Majesty with any large complaint, as hoping indeed his Majesty would before this time have bestowed upon me such honourable place as my predecessors in that employment have enjoyed, as I desire to be represented to his majesty, not forgetting to inform him how much this reflects upon my reputation. Besides which, my charges for writing the expedition to the Isle of Rhé in Latin and English, as also keeping scholars and clerks for copying records and making transcripts of the history of Henry VIII, having caused for these last seven years divers new expenses, and having paid the debts of an unthrifty son, you see how many ways I am disabled from bringing up the equipage I desire to at the rendezvous at York.

The letter is by Herbert the diplomat and he takes advantage of the King's predicament. His bitter experiences as ambassador in Paris had at least taught him something about the art of diplomacy and about not trusting the King. The lengthy catalogue of financial woes is designed to impress upon Charles the urgency of his needs. As we shall see later, the poetry of this period in his life is permeated with an abundance of monetary and legal images.

In his long tale of woe Herbert portrays himself as a martyr who has suffered in silence for many years, and this scarcely veiled threat comes abruptly and forcefully to a conclusion. The message is clear: no money, no service. The letter differs from the letter of 1626 for the simple reason that the roles have been reversed. Whereas Herbert had been the unrequited suitor before, now it was Charles' turn. Although Herbert's response may have been made partially out of spite, there is another more significant motive. Herbert found himself entangled in a chain reaction of pressures and counter-pressures. The plain fact is that by the late 1630's Herbert's creditors were giving him no peace whatsoever. His creditors pressed him; he in turn had no alternative but to press the King for his due. As we shall see, this type of pressure contributed significantly to his decision to shift allegiances several years later.

Like the earlier letter, this one of 1639 shows that some of Herbert's attitudes had not changed. In 1626 he had expressed the angry feelings of his insulted dignity when he hotly wrote that his social predicament was a "publique disgrace." The letter of 1639 shows that his concern about his creditors still grew not out of a fear of any legal procedures which might be taken against him, but out of a fear that the ever-increasing debt "reflects upon my reputation." Herbert, like all those who held titles, was immune to prosecution except for charges of treason, felony, or breach of the peace.²⁴ He had nothing to fear in the way of actual prosecution. But he did know that he was a member of the peerage in name only and he did not wish his creditors to expose him and tarnish his "reputation." Shortly after returning from Paris in 1624 he had discovered that he could not possibly live extravagantly and



his social peers and inferiors. By 1639 we see that even after fifteen years of financial problems he was still eager to present himself to the public in the manner in which he thought an aristocrat should expose himself. The concern in 1626 for "publique disgrace" is the same as the later concern in 1639 for "my reputation."

Herbert loved his high social position. He had laboured strenuously all his life to attain it. He enjoyed the banquets, the pomp, the ceremony, the chivalry, the prestige and the glitter of court life. But the problem was Charles' reluctance (and inability) to pay debts in cash. This lack of funds prevented Herbert from putting some glitter and glamour into the title: "Lord Herbert, First Baron of Cherbury and Castle-Island." This in turn, meant that he could not move into higher social circles. Promises, words, or more titles could not help him. The key to his problem lay in the remittance by Charles of the cold hard cash that was his due. It was not forthcoming.

In the years of civil trouble and war between 1639 and 1644 Herbert was forced into an excruciatingly awkward personal predicament. Since he could not rise socially, and since he could not remain in his financially deprived state he had only one direction to go, and that was down. His letter to Charles in 1639 represents his frantic attempts to prevent an inevitable social downfall. Between 1639 and 1644 Herbert was pushed, pulled, stretched and torn. He recognized that he could not depend on his King to provide the *deus ex machina* (cash) to prevent his impending disaster. At the same time, however, he seemed to have an unshaken faith in Charles. Thus Herbert was ravaged by a conflict between the necessity of looking after his own interests on the one hand, and his desire to be

loyal to King Charles on the other.

By the early 1640's Herbert also found himself caught in the conflict between Charles and Parliament. Notwithstanding the 1608 satires, Herbert had always been a Royalist²⁵ but by now he found it increasingly difficult to give his political support to a King who idly stood by and watched one of his loyal subjects slide into more debt and public humiliation. During this period the individual and social conflicts converged, causing Herbert to waver first towards neutrality in the Civil War, then towards the King, and finally towards Parliament.

By 1640 England was in an extremely volatile state. Public opinion for the most part recognized the possibility (if not probability) that England would have to face both a civil war and a war with the Scots. In 1640 relations between England and Scotland had collapsed into bitterness and hatred. Archbishop Laud's rigid campaign to make church regulations more uniform had brought to a head many Scots Presbyterian grievances and the Scots began to threaten England with war. Charles called upon his council to advise him about his plans to make war on Scotland. Herbert attended the council. Unlike his behavior of 1639, Herbert now offered his services free of charge and without threats. His oscillation between neutrality and the two extremes of Monarchist and Parliamentarian had already begun. Herbert was against the signing of the Treaty of Ripon with the Scots and considered it to be an unnecessary compromise.²⁶ He saw the Scottish demands as a threat both to the authority of the King and to the order and equilibrium of the political hierarchy. However, Charles rejected his advice and signed the treaty.

By 1642 Charles began to have second thoughts about his oath to keep

peace with his restless subjects; they were becoming increasingly troublesome to him. The Commons insisted that Charles had no authority to break the treaty and so they agreed to take any steps necessary in order to prevent the King from changing his mind. By 1642 Herbert's sympathies were shifting in the direction of Parliament, although he was not yet fully committed. He agreed to support Parliament's anti-monarchist opinions if, and only if, it was clearly demonstrated that the King was acting "without cause." This cautious attitude aggravated an already disgruntled and irritated House of Commons, and the Parliamentarians immediately overreacted to his statement. Reluctance to give full, enthusiastic support was considered to be synonymous with withholding all support, and Herbert was thrown into the Tower of London. Unlike his earlier imprisonment in France in 1614, Herbert could no longer depend upon friends to release him from captivity. The risk was too great in times of such political agitation.

Herbert was released a few days later, but only after he had written an eloquent apology. During the 1630's after Buckingham's death had left Herbert without a patron and dependent upon his own resources, he demonstrated his talents for praise and flattery in poetry and prose. Now, in 1642, he was forced once again to depend upon his own resources. But this time the praise took the form of an apology which was addressed to Charles' Parliamentary political adversaries, who also controlled purse strings. Herbert's shift from Royalist to Parliamentarian was well over half completed.

Amidst the increasing tension and dividedness of the country Herbert remained reluctant to assert his political position voluntarily. Sidney

Lee somewhat misleadingly says that "He resolved, as long as it was practicable, to observe a strict neutrality in the coming struggle, and to wait on the result. He cared no longer for his country but for himself" (p. 148). While there is little doubt that Herbert was always looking after his own interests, this does not necessarily mean that he chose to commit himself to neutrality throughout the whole of this period. During 1643-1644 Charles often requested Herbert's assistance but Herbert sometimes flatly refused, just as he had done in 1639. At other times he agreed unhesitatingly. The fact of the matter is that not only was he alert to opportunities which would stabilize or improve his own condition, but he was also fluctuating between King and Parliament, between his ideals and ambitions on one hand, and the reality that Charles would not give him money on the other. Herbert was not "neutral;" he was torn, undecided, unsure.

In 1644 Herbert was compelled to make up his mind. In the fall of that year, Parliamentary troops besieged Montgomery Castle, for they suspected the castle was Royalist. Unwilling to give him the benefit of the doubt, the Commons had confiscated most of his books and belongings, and Herbert was told that unless he bowed to their demands they would sell all his property and use the money to support the army. Finally, "after some parleying he determined to save his property at the expense of his honour" (p. 153) and consented to Parliament's condition that twenty troops be stationed there permanently. All of his life Herbert had been subjected to various pressures, first from his creditors, then from the conflict within himself, and finally through the threat from Parliament. The latter promised violence and the total loss of property.

Herbert's troubles were far from over with the surrender of his castle. When the irate Royalists discovered that he had surrendered without resistance the most important stronghold on the Welsh frontier, they immediately launched a retaliatory attack on Montgomery Castle and almost succeeded in capturing it. Parliamentary troops, however, came to Herbert's rescue. This incident finally awoke him to the extreme gravity of his situation. Over and above the personal conflict between his love of a prestigious aristocratic lifestyle and the blunt reality that he had no money to live up to these expectations, he was now threatened with violence by both powerful external forces: by King and by Parliament. In other words, his personal problems became linked solidly with the political turmoil in England. His personal problems of 1639 could at least be temporarily eased by threatening Charles (no money, no service) but now, in 1644 he was backed into a corner. Any action would be interpreted as treason by either King or Parliament. Torn between self interest and loyalty, between a Parliament with money and a financially embarrassed King who had overlooked him for fifteen years, protected by Parliamentary troops (and therefore committed to them), and labelled "the treacherous Lord Herbert" by his former loyalist friends, there was only one plausible direction in which he could move. Accordingly, "On 27th September 1644 *The Court Mercurie*, a Parliamentary newspaper, announced: 'The Lord of Cherbury, late Governour of Montgomery Castle, with Sir John Price . . . are come as farr as Coventry, and intend for London and to offer their persons to the Parliament'" (p. 157). The period of indecision and reluctance had come to an end with Herbert the Parliamentarian. During the early 1640's Herbert was moving in the direction

of Parliament; the final episodes at Montgomery Castle provided the necessary momentum and pressure to push him over his period of indecision.

For a man who supposedly "sacrificed his honour" Herbert remained remarkably unaffected, or at least he appeared so in public. By supporting Parliament fully, both in word and deed, he severed himself from family and friends, all of whom were strong, dedicated Royalists. To them he was simply "the treacherous Lord Herbert." But he remained undaunted. Honour of that kind was not the issue at hand any more, nor was it political or religious dissatisfaction. It was the old problem of money. Herbert was still in debt and on 2 November 1644 he asked Parliament to support him financially so that once and for all he could rid himself of his creditors. Lee correctly observes that his pleas for money "closely resembled his former appeals to Charles I."²⁷ Here again is Herbert the diplomat serving his own interests. While his Royalist friends and relatives paid astronomically high taxes and suffered a great many restrictions on their personal liberties, Herbert received a salary from Parliament and moved freely inside and outside the country.

There is little doubt that Herbert was in some respects a "money-hungry opportunist" but he was clearly also more than this. He had spent considerable time and money over the years, faithfully serving his sovereign without receiving any significant payment in return. While in 1639 it seemed as though he would rigidly adhere to his no-money-no-service policy, he nonetheless volunteered his unconditional support to Charles only a few days later. His continual oscillation between King and Parliament, his indecisiveness and his postponement of a decision until he was backed into a corner, all indicate that his shift in politics was

not an easy one free from pain and stress, nor was it confined solely to financial concerns. We shall see that his poems written during these years contain strong traces of personal struggle and conflict. The Autobiography, which was also written during this period, illustrates in another way Herbert's mental and psychological condition in the early 1640's.²⁸

Herbert's decision to support Parliament was neither spontaneous nor sudden. His attitudes had been developing in that direction for some time. They evolved slowly, but steadily, and his life can, in fact, be divided into three main periods: The first period (1600-1619) is that of his initial rising to social prominence. Although the early stages of this period were not without their setbacks and difficulties, hopefulness, optimism, idealism and ambition characterized Herbert during these years. Methodically, he went about the business of creating his public image as a courtier. He was very much a part of court activities, and the darling of many influential ladies. Through his duelling episodes he attempted to assert both his equality with the higher social classes and his worthiness for promotion. Yet he was to have no significant political influence until the climax of this period when he was appointed ambassador to Paris. During this period all his ambitions and most of his actions revolved around the goal of ascension into high society and court life. As we shall see, his poetry reflects this.

The period of transition (1620-1644) is characterized by extremes of happiness and satisfaction on the one hand, and disillusionment, bitterness and hostility on the other. During this period Herbert fell out of favour with the King and remained basically in that condition despite all

his efforts to rectify the situation. The transition takes place in three successive stages which lead up to his major political shift in 1644. This period is generally characterized by a movement away from the courtly code of conduct and towards both a stronger sense of self-worth and a sense of resentment towards the establishment.

The first stage of the transition is between the time of his first recall from Paris until the assassination of Buckingham (1620-1628). For Herbert these years were filled with frustration and anger. While in Paris he had assumed that James would pay his expenses but this did not happen. Herbert also assumed his service would warrant other appropriate rewards, but this did not happen either. This first stage marks the biggest turning point in Herbert's life for it was here that he came to see and understand the naivety of his belief that his expenses would be subsidized.

In the second stage of the transition (1629-1638) Herbert set out to regain his losses on his own by writing historical and philosophical tracts which were dedicated to Charles. Throughout these years Herbert became increasingly desperate. With Buckingham's assassination he could depend on no one but himself. His philosophical tracts and, as we shall see, his poetry, took on a new function. His art *per se* became even more subservient than ever to his suits for social prestige and money. He had the titles of "Baron" (in Ireland and England) but was virtually unable to survive in this new social class because of his lack of cash.

In the third stage of the transition (1639-1644) Herbert was forced into realizing that Parliament could offer him the money Charles could or would not, and that his best interests would be served by abandoning

Charles and the Royalist cause. These were the years in which his notions of loyalty began to give way to his desires for self preservation. This was the critical stage, for Herbert was besieged on all sides by conflicting and opposing forces. His personal, inner conflict was intensified by the volatile political atmosphere which was fast developing into a serious national crisis.

During the third and final period of his life (1644-1648) Herbert remained in the service of Parliament.²⁹ The shift had been completed and the man who had once been an ambitious courtier and loyal servant of the King became a Parliamentarian. Publicly at least, the poet showed no signs of remorse for his political shift but resolutely carried on with his usual interests and activities in study and scholarship.

As a poet, and as a philosopher, Herbert was highly sensitive to the events in his life. For a man so actively and so intensely involved in politics and court life, the numerous disappointments and frustrations must have involved the whole of his being. In the next chapter we shall examine the effects these events had on Herbert's poetry, particularly in terms of how each new major event helped shape his constantly shifting poetry into a canon which, in some respects, resembles other poets' works, but which in fact, is also as unique as Herbert himself.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER TWO

¹ The date is conjectural. H. Carrington Lancaster, in *MLN*, 63 (February, 1948), suggests 3 March 1582 while Don A. Keister, "The Birth Date of Lord Herbert of Cherbury," *MLN*, 62 (June, 1947), 383-93, suggests 14 October 1585. Lancaster's date seems most likely.

² Autobiography, Sidney Lee, ed., 1906, rpt. 1970, p. 2.

³ The year is not certain. It may have been 1606, but 1607 appears to be more likely. See Autobiography, p. 46.

⁴ At the siege of Juliers in 1610, one Monsieur de Balagnay challenged Herbert, saying, "'They say you are one of the bravest of your nation, and I am Balagnay, let us see who will be the best.'" On hearing this challenge Herbert walked upright across an open field in the middle of a battle, just to demonstrate his courage. (Auto. p. 61 ff). There are countless other examples throughout the entire Autobiography. Such behavior was in keeping with the behavior of many young fashionable gentlemen of the period.

⁵ In 1644, Parliamentary troops confiscated his castle and used it as a garrison. Although he still owned it, Herbert had no control over its use for several months.

⁶ Autobiography, p. 103.

⁷ Ibid. p. 106.

⁸ Ibid. p. 108.

⁹ loc. cit.

¹⁰ Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy: 1588-1641*, abridged ed., (1965; rpt. London: Oxford University Press, 1967) p. 249, shows that this kind of spending was not uncommon among seventeenth-century aristocrats:

. . . the most important factors working for an abnormally high level of expenditure were the moral obligations imposed upon the nobleman by society to live in a style commensurate with his dignity; and confusion between the feudal ideal of generous hospitality and stately living in the country and the Renaissance ideal of sophisticated patronage and display in the town.

Stone also offers the following statistics (p. 254-5)

Aristocratic households consumed tremendous quantities of meat, especially beef and mutton, usually in about equal quantities. All the figures we have tally perfectly with an estimate of the Earl of Bath in the middle of the seventeenth century that a household of 80 persons consumed 1 ox and 5 sheep a week. Nor was this all, for the household also ate pork, about 25 to 30 animals a year in a large establishment, veal and lamb, 30 to 40 animals a year, and huge quantities of rabbits and poultry. In the Christmas week of 1588 [the household of] George Earl of Shrewsbury consumed 3 quarters of wheat, 441 gallons of beer, 12 sheep, 10 capons, 26 hens, 7 pigs, 6 geese, 7 cygnets, 1 turkey, and 118 rabbits The normal household diet thus consisted basically of huge quantities of meat and bread washed down in oceans of beer and wine.

In terms of both extravagant spending and the reasons behind it, Herbert fits into this pattern, and in these particular respects he is a social type. Cf. Appendix B.

¹¹ In the Autobiography Herbert says he was between £3,000 and £4,000 in debt. This was in 1621. He somehow managed to pay this, but soon fell back by about the same amount.

¹² In the Autobiography (p. 116-17) Herbert writes:

Monsieur de Luynes continuing still the King's favourite, advised him to war against his subjects of the reformed religion in France, saying, he would neither be a great prince as long as he suffered so puissant a party to remain with in [sic] his dominions, nor could he justly style himself the most Christian king, as long as he permitted such heretics to be in that great number they were, or to hold those strong places which by public edict were assigned to them: and therefore that he should extirpate them as the Spaniards had done the Moors, who are all banished into other countries, as we may find in their histories Howbeit, the design of Luynes was applauded I answered, that I wondered to hear him say so: and the Duke demanding why, I replied, that whensoever those of the religion were put down, the turn of the great persons, and governors of provinces of that kingdom, would be next: and that, though the present King were a good prince, yet that their successors may be otherwise, and that men did not know how soon princes might prove tyrants, when they had nothing to fear I was told often, that if the reformation in France had been like that in England, where, they observed, we retained the hierarchy, together with decent rites and ceremonies in the church, as also holidays in the memory of saints, music in churches, and divers other testimonies, both of glorifying God, and giving honour and reward to learning, they could much better have tolerated it; but such a rash and violent reformation as theirs was, ought by no means to be approved; whereunto I answered, that, though the causes of departing from the Church of Rome were taught and delivered by many sober and modest

persons, yet that the reformation in great part was acted by the common people I added further then, that the reformed religion in France would easily enough admit an hierarchy, if they had sufficient means among them to maintain it

Herbert firmly believed that France's religious difficulties could be solved peacefully, provided the King never let his subjects forget his power.

¹³ Herbert did not, by any means, (as Gasior's argument suggests), retain these beliefs throughout his entire life. For instance, his two satires show that in 1608 he was opposed to traditional forms of government, or more specifically, that he was opposed to the monarchy. In 1644 he gave his support to a Parliament which in many people's minds was radically opposed to the idea of Divine Right of Kings. When Herbert was ambassador in France, however, his political views tended to be traditionalist. These views shifted again in later years when he joined Parliament and opposed the authority of the King.

¹⁴ Herbert had, for some time, attempted to negotiate this marriage. On 1 October 1619 he wrote to Buckingham, proposing this alliance between the young Prince Charles of England and the French princess, Henrietta Maria. If he could single-handedly bring about a successful alliance between England and France, how could he fail to advance further in the King's service? His plans, however, never materialized. Instead he fell out of favour.

¹⁵ It is not known precisely when Herbert began writing this piece, but it is certain that he worked on it intermittently for several years before its publication. Like so many other seventeenth-century manuscripts, *De Veritate* was fairly well circulated before it was published. For an account of some of the circumstances surrounding its publication, see *Autobiography* (p. 132-4). For a discussion of editorial problems and manuscript circulation problems, see R. I. Aaron, "The 'Autobiography' of Edward, First Lord Herbert of Cherbury: The Original Manuscript Material," *MLR*, 36 (April, 1941), pp. 184-94.

¹⁶ Lord Herbert made the same mistake as many other seventeenth-century aristocrats. Living beyond one's means became a fashionable obsession, and the only way to continue in high lifestyle was to borrow money and go into debt. Lawrence Stone offers the following statistics: In 1611 the earls of Salisbury had amassed a debt of £53,000. In 1628 the dukes of Buckingham were in debt to the tune of £58,000 and the earls of Dorset owed £60,000 in 1624. Others were even worse: the Earl of Suffolk was in for £99,000, the Earl of Strafford for £107,000 and the Earl of Arundel for £121,000.

This extravagant spending was increased by what Stone calls "The inflation of honours" in the peerage and other classes. For instance, before James I ascended the throne, England created, on the average, less than forty new knights a year. In the year of James' coronation alone,

934 new knights were created. Between 1603 and 1641 England, under the rule of the Stuarts, created on an average, between fifty and one hundred knights a year. This sharp increase held true for almost all other honours and titles as well. By comparison to the numbers of new peers created in Elizabeth's time, the Stuart rule almost tripled the number of new titles. For a more detailed account, see Stone p. 37 ff.

The eagerness of these newly titled individuals to impress their social equals and inferiors contributed to the ever-increasing debts that many aristocrats and would-be aristocrats began to amass. Herbert's extravagant spending and his eagerness to impress those around him, link him with this fashionable social trend.

17 Herbert had, in fact, begun sending these reminders as early as 31 October 1619. In the Autobiography Lee says Herbert sent a bill "'for secret services' to the amount of £340 . . . and on 5 November for his 'late travelling between Merlou, Compiègne, and Champagne' amounting to £400" (p. 196). Herbert's requests for money were always moderate; they were never representative of his total debts.

18 It is perhaps necessary to make some observations about two of Herbert's statements in this letter. First, his claim that he had always held James I in esteem is not actually true, for as we shall see, the first satire entitled *The State-progress of III* condemns and opposes James himself, as well as the whole tradition of the monarchy. Naturally the poem was never intended for publication.

Secondly, Herbert's first item in his "most humble suites," namely, that he was given the Irish title "in the way of being made a Baron in England," was a promise made by Buckingham and not by the King. Herbert's eagerness for promotion is very evident here.

19 Stone (p. 27) accurately and astutely explains the relationship between money and other indicators of status:

"Money was the means of acquiring and retaining wealth, but it was not the essence of it: the acid test was the mode of life, a concept that involved many factors. Living on a private income was one, but more important was spending liberally, dressing elegantly, and entertaining lavishly. Another was having sufficient education to display a reasonable knowledge of public affairs, and to be able to perform gracefully on the dance floor and on horseback, in the tennis-court and the fencing school."

Stone's analysis of aristocratic behavior in relation to status symbols describes perfectly, Herbert's behavior in Paris. For a further discussion of Herbert's preoccupation with horses, dancing, fencing and other status symbols mentioned here, see Appendix B.

20 Herbert's financial problems were further complicated by his son Richard, who inherited his father's love of extravagant spending. Richard had a guaranteed annual income of £600 and his father promised to pay any

debts in excess of this amount. It is estimated that by 1631 Richard's debts were close to £1000. To make matters worse, when Lord Herbert's wife, Mary, died on 29 October 1634 she left her property to Richard, thus restricting Lord Herbert's chances for a secure income. For a more detailed account of Lord Herbert's financial problems with his son, see James H. Hanford, "Lord Herbert of Cherbury and his Son," *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 5 (April, 1942), 317-32.

²¹ In the Autobiography (p. 141) Lee states that,

"Buckingham, on his return from the Isle of Rhé in 1627, had drawn up 'certain commentaries (hastily written)' concerning his conduct of the expedition. His enemies had charged him with gross mismanagement throughout his command, and with personal cowardice. A vindication was necessary, and he handed his notes over to Lord Herbert, who was importunate for the honour of retrieving his patron's reputation, and saw in the endeavour a means of increasing his own influence at court."

Herbert was at work on this when Buckingham was assassinated. He was ready to abandon his task of vindication at this point but "a Frenchman named Isnard and a Jesuit named Monat" wrote several short pieces condemning Buckingham's actions at La Rochelle. Spurred on by this, Herbert resumed work on it, completed it, and dedicated it to Charles. The revisions of this work occupied Herbert even as late as the early 1640's.

²² Lee correctly calls this piece "a very imperfect and servile version of his own theological opinions" (p. 143). We see here, how Herbert's social position directly affected his writings. This particular instance illustrates Goldman's statement that we cannot understand an author as long as we remain only on the level of what he wrote. In this case, a knowledge of Herbert's psychological constitution, combined with an investigation of the circumstances surrounding the work's creation both help to illuminate a more accurate understanding of the text.

²³ It is significant that one year before this letter was written Charles dictatorially announced that he was opening a lead mine on a piece of Herbert's property. To make matters worse, Charles offered Herbert a meagre 10% of the total profits. Such a gesture could only add insult to injury, especially since Charles already owed Herbert a considerable sum of money. See Stone, p. 164.

²⁴ Lawrence Stone (p. 29) says that, "With the bare title went a number of privileges legal, financial, and political, which distinguished the aristocracy from the lesser nobility below them. They were favoured before the law in that they could not be arrested except for treason, felony, or breach of the peace. They could not be outlawed, they were

free of various writs designed to force men to appear in court, they were not obliged to testify under oath."

²⁵ Except in the early years, Herbert appears to have been a Royalist. As we shall see, the evidence suggests that the hostility and aversion to the monarchy in the satires was caused by very special and extreme circumstances.

²⁶ See Autobiography, p. 146. The Scots demanded £40,000 as proof of English sincerity and good faith. Herbert argued here as he had argued in France when Louis XIII put down the Protestant rebellion, except here, Herbert believed the Scots were a threat to political authority, and that therefore they could not be tolerated. Herbert believed the King would be stooping beneath his dignity in signing the treaty with the Scots. This was an instance where, according to Herbert, religious toleration was gravely outweighed by political threats. There also remains the very distinct possibility that Herbert cast a longing eye on some of that £40,000, which he may have felt should have gone to him.

²⁷ Auto., p. 157. As earlier, Herbert had the same problem, so he used the same formulaic solution, only now he was on the other side of the fence.

²⁸ Herbert's Autobiography was written between 1640 and 1643. The account of his life ends abruptly in the year 1624. This autobiographical account gives some valuable insights into Herbert's attitudes during his early years as a rising courtier, but more importantly, its dual consciousness of aristocratic and anti-aristocratic sentiments reflects the transitional Herbert caught halfway between his former values and the new ones into which he was growing. For a more detailed account see Appendix B.

²⁹ Herbert spent a small proportion of his time on the history of Henry VIII and the rest of his leisure time in study and in the revision of some of his earlier prose works. He also pursued his literary interests and began collecting manuscripts of his poems which he hoped to have printed. They were not to be published, in fact, until 1665. It is to be noted that the publication of the 1608 anti-monarchical satire of this time, would not have been inconsistent with Herbert's Parliamentary attitudes during the 1640's

In May of 1648, the year of his death, he found himself asking Parliament for money which was owed him for six months service. It is ironic that just four years after his political shift, he found himself in a predicament not unlike the one in 1624. He died shortly after making this financial request to a Parliament that was beginning to treat him as Charles had done.

CHAPTER III

THE LIFE AND THE POETRY

The aim of this chapter is to examine a variety of literary influences and styles in the dated poems of Herbert's canon, and to interpret and explain these variations. However, in the light of the limitations of the critical methodologies previously discussed in Chapter I, it is apparent that the use of a purely literary and generic approach to Herbert's poetry would be inadequate. Consequently, in this chapter we shall also attempt to enhance and to augment the existing understanding of Herbert's poetry by integrating literary analysis with biographical, social and historical data. Our first and foremost concern will be with the poems, but we must constantly be aware of the fact that these poems, these literary artifacts, were created in many different changing circumstances. It was also these circumstances which helped mould the canon into its existing diversified form.

Part I: 1600-1619

The first phase of Herbert's poetry corresponds to the years from 1608 to 1619, when the ambitious young poet had great hopes of rising to social and political prominence. Initially he rose quickly but his first setback came in 1606-7 when James I gave Montgomery Castle, Herbert's most important status symbol, to Philip Herbert. Shortly after this Lord Herbert turned to the writing of poetry. The loss of his castle and the turning to poetry near enough coincide with his decision to take the grand tour. As we have seen, part of Herbert's motivation for the journey to Europe had been to establish a reputation for himself as a fashionable

courtier. He fought in battles and engaged in duels only when he had a sufficiently large audience to make certain his reputation would be improved. He moved in high circles and laboured strenuously, often at the expense of his health and personal safety, in order to impress social peers and superiors with his courageous and honourable deeds of chivalry. He became the gay, witty, dashing cavalier in the true courtier tradition. In short, he adopted a fashionable lifestyle of the times and was, as Basil Willey says, a "Quixotic" figure.¹

In the early part of the first period Herbert wrote three lyrics: "I must depart," *Madrigal* and *Another* [Madrigal]. All of these poems contain certain conceptual, formal and stylistic characteristics which show that Herbert drew heavily upon Petrarchan and Elizabethan concepts as well as on ideas from other appropriate European courtly sources. The Madrigal itself, for instance, was originally a European genre which Herbert incorporated whole-heartedly into his early poetic style. He abandoned the use of this genre in his later years. However, these early poems are quite clearly the product of very young Herbert who had not formed a unique style of his own, and who consequently spent time imitating a number of his literary predecessors.

In these early lyrics Herbert also tends to imitate his fashionable contemporaries, most notably Donne. In fact, these three early lyrics are united not only by their respective dates of composition² and Petrarchan and Elizabethan elements, but also by their similarity to certain aspects of the "Metaphysical style." In technique and execution they tend to be like some of Donne's lyrics, insofar as they are colloquial in tone, sometimes highly intellectual in content, and structured like an argument.

The predominating images, themes and styles of these early lyrics quite clearly reflect both the courtly and the fashionable preoccupations of the poet during this first period.

The first of the two Madrigals (?1608)³ is an example of Herbert's early, light-hearted love lyrics, and in this poem he carefully combines a locker-room wit with theories of love found in *The Book of the Courtier*. Since seventeenth-century poetry was customarily circulated in manuscript form among a circle of friends, it seems probable that this particular poem was meant to be shared as a joke by Herbert and his friends. The poem is clearly the product of the young Herbert. It is erudite, witty and sophisticated; a bawdy and clever exercise in lyric poetry.

Like some of Donne's personae, Herbert's persona has a strongly developed character all his own. The persona in this poem complains to his mistress that he is not entirely satisfied with their present relationship. He is torn between a desire to love only one woman, and an equal and opposite desire to love as many different women as possible. He is unable to decide whether he should remain with his mistress or leave her. Although the theme of the persona's indecision runs throughout each of the four stanzas, there is a subtle change in the persona's attitude which takes place midway through the poem. This subtle change is reflected not only within the actual content, but also in the relationship between the number of lines devoted to the idea of remaining and to that of leaving. In each of the two opening stanzas, the first four lines express the persona's wish to remain with his lady while the last three describe his urge to desert her. This imbalance in the

division of lines suggests the persona's slight partiality to remaining faithful. In each of the two concluding stanzas, however, the pattern is reversed, for the first four lines now express his wish to leave, while the other three lines express his wish to remain.

Although the first stanza is ambiguous in the *kind* of love it refers to, there are fairly obvious sexual implications present as we see in the following passage with its suggestions of tumescence:

How should I love my best?
 What though my love unto that height be grown,
 That taking joy in you alone
 I utterly this world detest,
 Should I not love it yet as th'only place
 Where Beauty hath his perfect grace,
 And is possest?

There is a suggestion here that the persona is a sensualist, or at least that he is inclined towards sensualism.

This sensualism forms the basis for his philosophical argument, as we see in the second stanza. Although he is still somewhat inclined to remain, the persona begins to set forth his argument:

But I beauties despise,
 You, universal beauty seem to me,
 Giving and shewing form and degree
 To all the rest, in your fair eyes,
 Yet should I not love them as parts whereon
 Your beauty, their perfection
 And top, doth rise.

He cannot decide whether he should remain faithful to this one "universal," or sample all other particulars, considering these particulars to be the totality of the "parts" which constitute his mistress' universal beauty.

Herbert is playing with combinations of Platonism and Aristotelianism. His persona uses philosophical arguments to justify a lust for other women. In the first four lines of this second stanza, for instance, the persona

favours the idea of remaining faithful to his lady, and he justifies this position by Platonic reasoning. The persona sees his mistress as that which gives "form and degree" to all other particular beauties, which, in turn, reflect their inferior version of her perfect beauty. He sees beauty as a pattern descending from a perfect beauty above, and his mistress, the embodiment of the Platonic *Form* of beauty, is the model upon which all other less perfect beauties are based. In the last three lines of this second stanza, the argument is reversed. The persona contemplates the idea of leaving his mistress for another woman, and the argument here, follows an Aristotelian thinking process. The particular "parts" or the beauties of other women, are perfected in her "universal" beauty, and the movement now is upwards from particulars to a universal which is not transcendent.

The stanza, however, is predominantly Aristotelian in its conceptual structure, despite its Platonic elements. Strictly speaking, a Platonic *Form* cannot be "embodied," for, by definition it is transcendent. When the persona speaks of his lady's perfect beauty in itself, he uses the Aristotelian notion of a universal but when he speaks of the relationship between this perfect beauty and the beauty of other women, he describes the relationship in a mixture of Platonic and Aristotelian language. The "Platonic" and "Aristotelian" language, however, have a source close to Herbert's time in history. This notion that the sum of the particulars equals the universal (the argument which the persona uses to justify his leaving) can be found in Castiglione,⁴ and its presence in the poem helps illustrate the extent to which Herbert was writing imitative poetry and borrowing from Elizabethan and courtly ideas. But Herbert's persona is

too much of a sensualist to endorse fully, the non-physical kind of love described by Castiglione.

The third stanza marks the beginning of the persona's change in attitude. He complains that,

So far is my love from the least delight
That at my very self I spite,
Senseless of any happy state.

His realization that his love is unsatisfied (probably in a physical sense) continues to grow until finally, in the fourth stanza, he wittily convinces himself that by loving others he is actually loving his mistress. Although it is not the best possible solution to his problem, with tongue-in-cheek he still finds himself able to accept it:

Thus unresolved still
Although world, life, nay what is fair beside
I cannot for your sake abide,
Methinks I love not to my fill,

Yet if a greater love you can devise,
In loving you some otherwise,
Believe't, I will.

For the time being at least, he is content to justify his leaving by arguing that in loving others he is actually loving his mistress. In a burlesque manner he triumphantly licenses his own promiscuity. The style of the poem is colloquial and informal, and very much within the Metaphysical style of writing. The poem also has the strong sense of a dramatic setting; the reader feels as though he is looking in on the persona and his mistress. This strong sense of a dramatic setting is also present in many of Donne's lyrics. In *Madrigal*, we see a playful Herbert, witty, learned and sophisticated; a rising courtier having fun with poetry, erudition and sexual innuendo.

The second Madrigal (?1608),⁵ entitled simply *Another*, is addressed

to a mistress who is physically separated from the persona. In this poem Herbert bases the imagery on Ptolemaic cosmology, and this old, scientific ordering of the universe is used by the persona as an argument to demonstrate his undying love:

Dear, when I did from you remove,
I left my Joy, but not my Love,
 That never can depart,
It neither higher can ascend
 Nor lower bend
Fixt in the center of my heart
 As in his place,
And lodged so, how can it change,
 Or you grow strange?
Those are earth's properties, and base
 Each where, as the bodies divine
 Heav'ns lights and you to me will shine.

In this poem, the deceptively simple cosmological imagery contains a high degree of complexity. The persona argues that his love lies "Fixt in the center of [his] heart." It is like the unmoving planet earth in the center of the Ptolemaic universe. The microcosm-macrocosm analogy indicates an association between his heart and the universe, and his love and the earth, the center of that universe. The complexity of the imagery, however, becomes more intricate when Herbert begins to play with a cosmological paradox. Since the earth was considered to be the fixed center in the old Ptolemaic system, its properties were those of stability, constancy and perfection. Yet, although the earth was unmoving, it was not unchanging for the simple reason that it existed beneath the sublunary sphere and was therefore susceptible to mutability. The persona is aware of this inconsistency and clarifies it by stating that their love is not subject to "change" or estrangement because "Those are earth's properties, and base." There are two significant implications attached to this statement: First, that their love does not possess "earth's

properties" in the sense of the planet's sublunary imperfections, and secondly that their love does not share in the mutability of the base element earth, of the four elements earth, water, air and fire. Thus, the center of the persona's heart (his love) stands in ironic contrast with the center of the Ptolemaic universe; his love is not only without movement, but without change as well.

The final image in the poem is again taken from Ptolemaic cosmology:

Each where, as bodies divine
Heav'ns lights and you to me will shine.

The persona is confident he will find stability and security in a world which is ever-changing. He looks to the constant, very real, unchanging patterns in the heavens and relies upon this Platonic view of the universe for his strength to endure separation from his loved one. She is, in fact, equated to the stars and he to the earth-bound order of things. This is a traditional piece of complimentary hyperbole found elsewhere in earlier literature, most notably, in Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella*.

In "I must depart" (May 1608)⁶ Herbert utilizes another popular theme of love poetry; the sorrow felt at the parting of two lovers. The persona offers his mistress an argument in which he hopes to convince her that their separation means not the end, but the beginning of their love. Although his argument is intended to console the persona's mistress, it also soothes the sorrow that he himself feels in parting, and once again, Herbert makes the reader very aware of the dramatic setting of the poem. Like the two Madrigals, and like Donne's *The Good Morrow*, *The Flea* and *The Apparition*, "I must depart" is characterized by colloquial diction. Thus, in terms of its style, it resembles some aspects of Metaphysical poetry.

In terms of its structure, the poem is shaped like a logical argument, containing a series of premises and conclusions arranged in proper sequence. The use of such conjunctions such as "But since" and "thus" and "when" is very effective in linking one stanza to another, thus giving the argument a structural cohesion. Although this logical type of structure is by no means unique to Herbert's poetry, we see here one of the characteristics of his poetry which he continued to use throughout the remainder of the first period, and even into the early part of the second. In "I must depart," Herbert takes the very emotional theme of parting lovers and frames it in this very rigid, intellectual format. It is this rigidity which contributes to the poem's so-called "dryness." This intellectual cleverness is Herbert's way of innovating a common poetic theme, and his choice of this particular type of modification connects him to the erudition, the intellectual ingenuity and the love of formalized argument sometimes associated with the Metaphysical school. However, it should also be noted that the extent of Herbert's use of a cerebral type poetry sometimes exceeds that of his contemporaries, and this is one of the unique elements in his work. As we shall see, it is not until the final period of his life that he totally abandoned this style.

Throughout most of "I must depart" the persona remains downcast at the mere thought of his departure. The poem begins,

I must depart, but like to his last breath
 That leaves the seat of life, for liberty
 I go, but dying, and in this our death,
 Where soul and soul is parted, it is I
 The deader part yet fly away,
 While she alas, in whom before
 I liv'd, dyes her own death and more,
 I feeling mine too much, and her own stay.

This notion of "soul and soul" parted is suggestive of Donne's image of the two hemispheres separated and then joined together again after death.⁷ The physical separation from the lady is associated with death and this association appears frequently in Petrarchan poetry. The lady is the animating force, the life-giver in their relationship, and when the two lovers are physically separated the persona becomes "the deader part." Herbert forces the analogy between death and parting lovers, for in death it is the soul (the animator) which flies away from the body, but here, the persona (the deader part) is the active element which flies away. This type of strained analogy is characteristic of Metaphysical poetry and is, in fact, a part of what critics call "Metaphysical wit" or "Metaphysical conceit." Thus we see, as Rockwood did, that although Herbert uses Elizabethan and Petrarchan concepts, his innovations tend to be in keeping with those of the Metaphysical style.

In the central stanza the persona begins to develop his argument and as he does, his optimism and confidence in the permanence of their love begins to strengthen. The certainty that he must depart, together with the fact that "our love/Springing at first but in an earthly mould,/ Transplanted to our souls, now doth remove/Earthly effects," combine to form a premise which in turn, leads him to the conclusion that "Nothing now can our loves allay." Indeed, since their love unfolds and develops in an ascending movement, it eventually transcends the physical, and the persona argues that nothing can corrupt or decay it once it has achieved that height. The imagery here is metaphysical and implies that at least the substance of their love is immutable in its present state of earthly transcendence.

The doctrine that love by necessity must begin in the flesh and in the world of the senses, and then must be purified to a more spiritual (perfect) one, can be found in Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier*.⁸ In "I must depart" as elsewhere in the early lyrics in the canon, Herbert creates a persona who thinks within a framework of ideas based upon out-dated Renaissance Platonism but who also speaks in a colloquial manner, unlike the more artificial styles of diction of the early English champions of Renaissance Platonism.⁹

In the third stanza the immutability of their love is used as a buttressing argument to support the final conclusion that neither they nor their love can die, and that their souls,

shall be free
 Unto their open and eternal peace,
 Sleep, Death's Embassadour, and best
 Image, doth yours often so show,
 That I thereby must plainly know,
 Death unto us must be freedom and rest.

The persona has not only convinced his mistress, but himself as well. Their parting is undeniably the beginning of a more perfect love. The reluctance and uncertainty of the first stanza have disappeared.

The familiar association of death with rest and life with motion, grows out of the Renaissance belief that motion within the sublunary sphere was unnatural. Rest was considered man's most "natural" state and that is the direction in which the lovers are moving. Hence, conceptually as well as stylistically, this early lyric adopts conventions of Metaphysical poetry insofar as it works within traditional concepts, yet simultaneously reacts against traditional styles by its calculated informality of language, strained analogies, and intellectual qualities.

We have seen then, that in some respects these early lyrics tend to

be conservative in their literary constitution. As Cruttwell has observed, these (and other early poems) sometimes tend to be flat, unoriginal and unimaginative. Their ideas are either taken from or based upon courtly and Elizabethan conventions. Yet at the same time, in terms of their style and execution they are Metaphysical in character. During the early portion of the first period Herbert imitated both the outdated courtly themes and concepts, and the fashionable Metaphysical style. This is not to say, however, that Herbert imitated and did not innovate, for while he follows the intellectuality of Metaphysical poetry in spirit, the specific style he uses is all his own. It is his unusual rigidity of form and his preoccupation with traditional content which have provoked critics into calling him a "dry" and "abstract" poet. But we shall see that not all his poems are this way.

It is important that we seek explanations which account for the various literary elements which appear in these early lyrics. There are at least two explanations for the conservative ideas found in these poems. The first, and the most obvious, is that as a young poet, Herbert had not yet fully developed a unique style of his own and, like many other young poets of his era, he began his career by imitating his predecessors.

As indicated in Chapter I, however, we can better understand the poems if we examine them with Lucien Goldman's *The Hidden God* in mind. The relationship between the poetry and the life becomes apparent when we recall that during these early years Herbert lived what might well be termed a conservative lifestyle, conservative that is, in the sense that he, like many fashionable seventeenth-century aristocrats and gentry,

adhered rigidly to old, outdated values of chivalrous behavior. We have already seen that Herbert modelled his behavior after his cousin, Sir Philip Sidney, the most famous of English courtiers. The ideas in Herbert's early lyrics are based on courtly ideas in the same way that his daily behavior and mode of conduct was based on courtly ideals. As for the Metaphysical elements in these early lyrics, we see that there is also a consistent pattern when we recall that Herbert moved within the Donne circle and that many of his poems were circulated in manuscript form amongst his Metaphysical friends, to be read and shared by them. The poetical link between Herbert and Donne is further strengthened by the fact that Herbert's mother was Donne's patron. Even this non-literary connection between the two men contributed to certain similarities in their styles of poetry.

There may also be a connection of a more particular sort between the life and the poetry at this particular point in Herbert's life. Significantly, Herbert wrote three lyrics with the similar theme of a parting lover just at the time of his own departure for his European tour.¹⁰

There was also another, more serious side to this sophisticated and playful man of fashion. The two epitaphs of 1609 are Herbert's personal attempts to come to terms with death. Over and above the sharp contrast between the seriousness in theme of these two poems and the playful intellectual gymnastics of the lyrics, the epitaphs, through their imagery, suggest Herbert's social and political ambitions to rise within the system.

Epitaph. Guli. Herbert de Swansey (1609)¹¹ was written on the occasion of the death of this distant cousin of Lord Herbert's. In this

poem, the soul, which has life (and therefore motion) within it, strives to ascend to the top of a vertical universe (heaven) where it finally receives its "inheritance," and the long-sought-after state of rest.

The poem begins,

Great Spirit, that in new ambition,
 Stoop'd not below his merit.
 But with his proper worth being carry'd on,
 Stoop'd at no second place, till now in one
 He doth all place inherit:
 Live endless here in such brave memory,
 The best tongue cannot spot it.

The verb "stoop'd" is a hawking term which describes the falcon swooping down upon its prey. There are perhaps remote connotations of the Holy Spirit here, but more importantly, the verb describes a predatory bird actively seeking out its prey. The soul pursues the object of its desires with the same determination and swiftness as the falcon.

The conceptual basis of the epitaph is distinctly Elizabethan in its assumptions. The phrase "proper worth" is synonymous in one sense with "proper place," since theoretically an individual's temporal "proper worth" (or a soul's spiritual "proper worth") will find its "proper place" in an ordered, hierarchical universe. In the Epitaph, the soul seeks out the place where it naturally belongs. The soul of Herbert de Swansay has achieved its reward and thus remains "endlessly" happy. Once it has reached the top, it has achieved a state of rest and is forever free from slander and gossip so that even "The best tongue cannot spot it." The soul, then, struggles to ascend from a less desirable place to a more desirable position at the summit of a vertical universe.

This epitaph is perhaps much more than the merely occasional verse it is frequently considered to be. The metaphysical hierarchy in the next

world forms the pattern for the social hierarchy in this world. Just as the universe is split between top and bottom, and between those who merit spiritual reward and those who do not, so too is the social system split between the upper and lower classes, the former usually claiming natural, hereditary and qualitative superiority to the latter. In other words, the religious vocabulary of this epitaph is ambiguous in one sense because it addresses itself both to the material, secular world and to the heavenly, spiritual one as well. There can, of course, be no doubt that the main thrust of the poem is religious, but the social dimension to the poem is also a reality.

In his selection of concepts and words Herbert seems to reflect his own aspiration to "rise" again after the expropriation of his property. The soul in the Epitaph also struggles to regain its "inheritance" and we cannot help but be reminded that when Herbert wrote this poem, he had lost his own particular "inheritance." It is difficult to ascertain whether or not Herbert deliberately intended to include this alternative meaning, but it at least appears that he made a subconscious connection between his "inheritance" and the soul's "inheritance."

The secular reading of the poem does not, in any way, destroy or detract from the meaning of the spiritual reading. On the contrary, both readings taken simultaneously provide us with a deeper understanding of the Epitaph. We can see that Herbert was significantly moved by the death of de Swansey, and that his faith that de Swansey's virtue would be rewarded was deeply felt. Yet this same Herbert who felt these emotions was also a very ambitious young man, eager to promote himself within the social system. Consequently, it is not surprising to find the

presence of both spiritual and secular dimensions in the poem. Although Herbert used a conventional form of poetry (the epitaph) and a conventional style of hyperbolic compliment to express his sincere grief, the choice of vocabulary, images and ideas is consistent with his frame of mind during the early part of this first period. The notion of a soul "rising" and the reference to a spiritual "inheritance" are, of course, commonplace features in epitaphs. Nevertheless, Herbert did not *have* to choose these particular images. The fact that he *did* choose them, however, can be explained not *only* generically, by arguing that he was "imitating" various literary conventions, but also by arguing that the particular choice of images was consonant with the poet's own frame of mind at this time in his life.

Epitaph. Caecil. Boulser. (Aug. 1609)¹² was written on the occasion of the death of Cecilia Boulser. She was related to the Lady Bedford and was known by Herbert and by John Donne as well. The epitaph consists of three stanzas of five lines each and a concluding stanza of six lines. Through extended use of military imagery Herbert presents the heroic Cecilia Boulser and Death as two opposing forces fighting for supremacy. Cecilia Boulser is, of course, portrayed as the ultimate victor in the battle although she is not shown to be so at the beginning of the poem. The dominating focus of the poem gradually shifts from Death to Cecilia Boulser; as we progress through the middle stanzas we move away from the menacing figure of Death and towards a triumphant vision of the heroine.

The poem opens with a vision of Death. He has gloatingly come for Cecilia Boulser. Death is portrayed in an unusual manner here, for although we have no concrete impression of what he looks like, we see his

two stanzas of the poem we have a description of Death (stanza one), and on the other side (stanza four) we have the expression of a quiet confidence that the deceased has transcended "the low pitch of earthly things":¹³

Till that her noble soul, by these, as wings,
Transcending the low pitch of earthly things,
As b'ing reliev'd by God, and set at large,
And grown by this worthy a higher charge,
Triumphing over Death, to Heaven fled,
And did not dye, but left her body dead.

Since she led an exemplary life in this world, her ascent into the next world is graceful and certain. Since she *chose* to leave "her body dead," she does not allow Death to defeat her on his terms.

As in the epitaph for Herbert de Swansey, the conceptual framework of the poem is based upon the traditional idea of a vertically structured universe, a universe which contains the dichotomy of an inferior "low pitch of earthly things" and a perfection and superiority of a "higher charge." Cecilia Boulser's body is likened to a fortress under attack, and together the military and sexual images are used to convey her moral strength and virtue. The triumphant victor in the battle is the lady, even though she has apparently lost the battle by dying. Herbert's resolute denial of Death's power (she "did not dye, but left her body dead") is like Donne's denial of his power in *Death be not Proud*. Herbert's poem, like Donne's, is an assertion of the meaning of Christianity. Through Christ, humanity is able to conquer Death and transform it from a sorrow and a loss, to triumphant victory. Herbert's poem, however, has an added dimension. Through hyperbolic compliment he pays tribute to a particular lady.

The epitaph for Cecilia Boulser (like the one for de Swansey) is first and foremost, the expression of Herbert's grief over the loss of a

friend. The poem's images and metaphors are all traditional and imitative. If, however, we continue to investigate the motivations for Herbert's selection of particular elements in the poem, several other possibilities become apparent. For instance, in the epitaph for Boulser, Herbert's decision to use the notion of apparent victory in defeat, especially at this time in his life, may be indirectly connected with his social problems during the early part of this first period and to his own personal aspirations to succeed in a final victory. As Cecilia Boulser triumphs by rising above low, common and earthly things and thus achieves her reward in heaven (the top), so too did Herbert himself wish to rise above his own reduced, low state and finally be established within the social system of this life, or if not that, at least achieve his reward in the next life since he could not procure rewards in this one. This possibility appears to be supported by the fact that only in the epitaphs of the first period (when Herbert was obsessed with the notion of rising) do we find such a consistent repetition of references to a vertical universe. The epitaph written in the second period, when the poet's social position had changed, is completely different in style, theme and content, from anything he had written previously.

In the very early epitaphs we see Herbert's preoccupation with the notion of *rising*, and this may well have been the spiritual reflection of his own secular ambitions. However, if there is a possibility that the epitaphs indirectly reflect Herbert's reaction to his unfortunate social position between 1608 and 1612, there is little doubt that the two satires are the product of frustrations and bitterness which developed after the loss of his property. Until 1608 Herbert had been steadily rising: Knight

of Bath, Sheriff of Montgomeryshire, and a favourite at court; the ambitious young poet was doing well for himself. But with the expropriation of his castle in 1608 he suddenly found himself on the outside of the system. From this unenviable position he could easily criticize the social standards and the government in which he no longer played any significant part.

A partially correct Moore Smith (p. xvii) does not look deeply enough into the background of the satires when he writes:

Herbert's satires, written at the age of twenty-five, have been almost universally condemned, and certainly they are carelessly put together. But the first satire cannot be called "feeble", except in execution. On the contrary it 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 the monarchy and aristocracy by a young aristocrat and man of fashion living under King James I is something hardly to be paralleled.

Moore Smith forgets that in 1608 Herbert was *not* an "aristocrat;" he was rather, a part of the landed gentry who had had his property unjustly confiscated by his King. Moreover, his "extraordinary independence of the influences of high birth and courtiership" was neither due to his own choosing nor was it a fact in which he took any comfort if we are to judge by his impatient desires to rise to positions of power and influence. Unjustly stripped of his inherited property, thwarted in his ambitions, and helpless to do anything to regain his losses, it is not surprising that the poet should have felt acrid resentment towards a king who placed him in his socially embarrassing predicament.

In the satires Herbert takes up an extreme radical stance against the institution of monarchy, against James himself, against the social superiors he envied, and in general against the entire ruling establishment.

Thus, while the satires may occasionally be obscure in meaning, they are never obscure as totalities in their intent. In terms of content, the satires are a clear manifestation of the poet's intense bitterness and they seem to be his own way of retaliating against the institutions which had ruined his fortunes and his aspirations. That the satires were not intended for publication will be obvious after we have studied their radical content.

In *The State-progress of Ill* (1608)¹⁴ Herbert begins by claiming that he intends to examine the nature and the origins of evil:

I Say, 'tis hard to write Satyrs. Though *Ill*
Great'ned in his long course, and swelling still,
Be now 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. Now in this state
Of things, what is least like Good, men hate,
Since 'twill be the less sin.

Evil, like the Nile, has swollen to monstrous proportions, but its source and its real cause for existence are yet unknown. Given the circumstances in which evil is clearly discernible, Herbert suggests that human nature is basically good. He argues first, that evil exists universally as a context within which men operate, and that whatever the original cause or source of evil, man is a fallen creature living in a fallen world. But man is also naturally inclined to virtue; he hates "what is least like Good" and is thus able to perceive the evil that surrounds him and to choose between it and good. Thus, the paradoxical kind of world which Herbert describes to us is one which is predominantly evil, yet one in which men are essentially good. Considering that Herbert was living in an England where the King had absolute power to give and take away property

at will, the appearance in his art of a world flooded with evil, is quite clearly consistent with his attitude towards his real life experiences.

There is a distinction in the satire between "state" (a condition) and the "State" (the political institution). In an attempt to overcome the evil context in which he operates, man creates laws and governments (the "State"). But in so doing, he unwittingly creates a new context within which evil can work:

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.

As vaccination (a late eighteenth-century development) will make a person immune to smallpox, so is the "State" supposed to lessen the evils of the "state" in which men operate. The development is from the lower case "state" which is a non-political condition, to the upper case "State" which is the socio-political creation of man. Yet the medicinal image cannot be taken too far because, unlike vaccinations, the "State" does not do away with the evils of man's "state;" it merely provides a new context for them. Thus, the "State" itself becomes another evil, but one which will now tolerate "no other evil but itself."¹⁵ In extended medicinal terms, the "State" (the cure) becomes the evil which must now be destroyed (the disease).

But Herbert was not an anarchist. He does not advocate the annihilation of the "State" nor does he call for the removal of all forms of government whatsoever. Rather, his attack is upon a particular concept of the State: the view that the king *is* the State and may rule as he pleases. Since history tells us that James I was a man who firmly believed

himself to be a Divine Right Monarch, and since he had exercised his royal powers to expropriate Montgomery Castle from a highly ambitious Herbert, it seems reasonable to argue that this hostility towards a tyrannical "State" is an attack not only upon the principle of kingship, but in particular upon James himself. The satire, then, operates on a very concrete level as well as a more abstract one.

One of the paradoxes in man's attempt to annihilate evil, then, is that he actually sets another context for it, and this institutionalization merely re-routes the powers of evil. Therefore, the basically good nature which tells man to suppress, control and avoid evil leads him to understand that he has only created a new "State" of evil and the implication is that as he does not have to endure evil, so does he not have to endure the "State."

The most startling and the most significant image in the satire is a metaphysical conceit in which two unlike ideas are "yoked by violence together."¹⁶ After having equated the present form of evil with the State, Herbert says that evil is, in many respects, like God in its mode of operating; it is a sort of anti-God:

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 (sic) 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 grown 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.

In its disguised form, evil, like the trinity, has a tripartite nature. Evil is like God the Father because "it made it self." It is like Christ because it bears "the rod/Of all our punishments," and it is like the Holy Spirit because it "Reign[s]/Great in the hearts of men." Evil, or the State (the monarch) is perverse. Disguised in the form of good, it (he) is actually an inverted diabolical trinity.¹⁷

When we recall that the Divine Right Monarch considered himself to be God's vice regent on earth, we see very clearly what is happening in these lines. There is a transcendent God of good whose powers descend, but in the transmittance through a corrupt monarch, the intentions of God are perverted through reversal. What therefore was originally Mercy becomes the arrogant pride of a puffed-up king and tyrant. In this inverted moral world, essential "Goodness" is seen as pride which must be stamped out. Instead of God and Good ruling the world, "Ill" reigns. This brings us back to the early lines in the poem which describe the rule of evil in terms of the flooding river that overpowers the earth. Herbert rejects the view that the monarch's control of the powers of the State are his by right. These powers do not descend from the heavens above, but come by *choice* from men below.

Ill claims that, like Mercy, it possesses some divine attributes:

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 grown 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.

In this inverted State, Mercy is like a limited supply of money which will inevitably be used up ("numbered out"). The State debases the quality of

Mercy by administering it and treating it like money. There may also be a satiric dig here at a corrupt court where the King's mercy can be purchased by those who can afford it.

Herbert proceeds to analyze in greater detail the type of evil that comes disguised in the form of good:

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

Since man's basic nature is good and he tends to avoid evil, evil must appear as something other than what it actually is in order to survive. It must deceive. In the same manner, the State, which is contained in the monarchy, must also turn to deception in order to conceal its real, perverse nature. The state disguises mischief and sin as "Agents" and "Intelligencers" and these spies actively enforce and perpetuate its underhanded political machinations. These same "Agents" and "Intelligencers" are "now such poisons, that though they may lurk/In secret parts awhile, yet they will work,/Though after death: Nor ever come alone,/ But sudden fruitful multiply e'er done." Herbert sees England in the same way that Hamlet saw Denmark: as a country, a single body politic poisoned, corrupted and infected by the government.¹⁸ This image of infection spreading all over is, in a sense, a continuation of the image of the Nile overflowing its banks.

Having painted this very bleak picture of an infected England Herbert

proceeds to attack the King much more directly and fiercely than he did before. Up till now Herbert has used the more indirect term "State" to criticize the holder of power. The satire now sharpens its focus and turns directly to the institution of kingship by attacking the policy of hereditary succession:

amongst Kings, he
 Who first wanted succession to be
 A Tyrant, was wise enough to have chose
 An honest man for King, which should dispose
 Those beasts, which being so tame, yet otherwise,
 As it seems, could not heard: And with advise
 Somewhat indifferent for both, he might
 Yet have provided for their Childrens right.
 If they grew wiser, not his own, that so
 They might repent, yet under treason, who
 Ne'r promis'd faith: though 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.

The institution of kingship, according to Herbert, was established *not* by God but by man, and the real power originates from below, not from above. Hereditary succession is a "Tyrant" because it does not provide for a change of mind on the part of the subjects who are being ruled. When a king was first chosen, an "honest" man was given power. Yet from what Herbert has said in the first part of the satire, it is evident that in its present condition the "State" (embodied in the king himself) is evil and corrupt. The implication is that somewhere in the development of history, "Ill" has infiltrated the once honest institution of kingship. Those who originally favoured hereditary succession did not foresee that "Ill" could, and would infect the subsequent line of kings.¹⁹ Indeed, in the same way that the Nile overflows its banks, evil spills into "Good." We see that "succession" has become a tyrant because it has a built-in protection against the crime of revolts and uprisings. This built-in

protection can be either advantageous or disadvantageous, depending upon the moral standing of the king in question. This protection is called treason. Treason is the ambivalent law which simultaneously protects "honest" kings from evil men, and gives evil kings (the evil "State") legal justification for maintaining their own dynasty against the people's true wishes. Hereditary succession, by implication, would only work if kings would not become corrupted. In the inverted world of the satire, then, treason is the name given to the act of attempting to rid the country of a corrupt tyrant. That we can no more "spare" kings than we can original sin is, to say the least, a radical doctrine for the early seventeenth century, even though the idea had already begun to increase in popularity.

The statement that monarchs have never "yet" understood the source of their power nor its limitations implies that the time will come when they will be made to understand:

Since, then, we may consider now, as fit,
 State-government, and all the Arts of it,
 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.

There is something ominous in this statement, especially since Herbert has just stated that corrupt kings cannot be tolerated. Again, when we recall that James was notorious for his obstinate insistence that his powers came from above, we see that the satire is operating on a very concrete, specific level as well as a more abstract one.

After having criticized the notion of hereditary succession and the problems that arise from it, Herbert turns to the aristocracy:

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.

The nobility, like a picture of distant hills, only seem higher because the painter's art has distorted the perspective. In reality, the hills (nobility) are often inferior to what is below them; they are not as large or as important as they seem.

The nobility are also characteristic of the perverseness in the State, for they pride themselves on their corruption:

though this

Exalted Spirit that's sure a free Soul, is
 A greater privelege, 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.

Some noblemen, says Herbert, are proud, and their "Exalted Spirit" considers noble birth a greater privilege than to be born in Venice, which at this time was a republic, and therefore free from the rule of a monarch. Venice, of course, was also frequently considered the city of sin in the seventeenth century, and these arrogant noblemen exalt in their corruption more than if they had been born there. The proud nobleman can afford to be content with his fortunate position in the State, for "although [he] seek not rule, [he] doth scorn/Subjection." The nobility have the power and the prestige but not the responsibilities of the King. They serve no useful function within the State, other than to advance its degeneration. They are, therefore, insidious and repulsive.

Moreover, the nobleman is not qualitatively superior to those below him because he, like the lowest pauper, "is flesh, and so/He is to dulness, shame, and many moe/Such properties." This denial of a qualitative basis for class distinction (birth rights) suggests that Herbert rejects birth in favour of true merit. Since Herbert was not an aristocrat (and therefore had no birth rights to social superiority) and since he was most eager to rise within the system by demonstrating his abilities as a courtier, it is not surprising that we should see reflected in his poetry, a bias towards merit; or if not that, at least a definite rejection of birth rights as a means of evaluating social worth.

Herbert shifts his focus from the aristocracy to the other estate, the clergy and the church:

Mean while, sugred Divines, next place to this,
 Tell us, Humility and Patience is,
 The way to Heaven, and that we must there
 Look for our Kingdom, that the great'st rule here
 Is for to rule our selves; and that they might
 Say this the better, they to no place have right
 B'inheritance, while whom Ambition swayes,
 Their office is to turn it other wayes.

These "sugred Divines" or members of the clergy become the puppets of the government. They are employed to perform certain political tasks which they disguise as religion. They are connected to the evil which must disguise itself in order to appear acceptable to men. These "Divines" tell the subjects of the State that they must not entertain ambitions which overstep the established bounds of propriety and authority in the socio-political hierarchy. The subjects are advised to show "Humility and Patience" and a concern only for the kingdom in the next world, not for earthly ones. They should only be concerned with being ruled, not with whom they would like to have rule them, nor with any other form of treason.

The "sugred Divines" remind the people that if they wish to rule themselves it should only be in a religious sense so that they can find the "way to Heaven." In the corrupt world which Herbert depicts, we see that Church and State have formed an alliance for the purpose of controlling the people.

In order to ensure that these "sugred Divines" perform their jobs correctly and satisfactorily, the State selects only those who have no rights to property. Thus, they are dependent upon the State for appointment and for support. They receive their rewards, but without inheritance rights the threat of over-ambitious clergy is diminished, and therefore they present no real threat to the security of the State. It is also important to notice that Herbert draws a significant distinction between the We's and the They's. *They* (the Divines) he says, have no "inheritance" so it is very easy for *them* to tell *us* not to be ambitious for rewards in this world. In this passage, Herbert very definitely aligns himself with those who have some rights to property but who are being suppressed by the State and prevented from obtaining what should rightfully be theirs. Here again we see the social and personal circumstances of Herbert's life protruding through the poem.

Herbert concludes the satire by saying,

Thus brief, since that the infinite of *Ill*
 Is neither easie told, nor safe, I will
 But only note, how freeborn 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.

In seventeenth-century England, ownership of land was frequently the measure of a man and "Freeborn men" here refers only to those who held land. The landed gentry would most likely be included in this term as well as the aristocrats. If so many strong "Freeborn men" can submit themselves to the rule of so few, is it any wonder, asks Herbert, that mankind can dominate a species (the horse) far more powerful than himself? Herbert's political position is clear. "Freeborn men" (especially the landed gentry who in this period of history opposed the aristocratic interests) have the strength, the power and the justification to overthrow or reform the evil King and the corrupt State; it is only their passive attitude which prevents them from destroying the evil to which their natures are so violently opposed. As we have seen in Chapter II, Herbert himself at this time was a member of the gentry who had been stepped on by the heavy foot of the aristocratic establishment. Thus, reflected in the satire we see a radical and very bitter Herbert who had lost his castle and who had had his social dilemma very much in mind when he wrote *The State-progress of Ill*. This hostility and bitterness was yet another side to the playful and witty young courtier who was struggling to succeed within the system.

When Herbert says of "The infinite of Ill," that it "is neither easie told, nor *safe*" (my emphasis) we are reminded of the dangers of the times when spies were everywhere, and we also have a key to an understanding of the cryptic *style* which glares in contrast with the lucidity of so many of Herbert's other poems. The difficult style is a poetical cover for a very perilous content. Even if the satire were only available (which it was) in manuscript, manuscripts could easily fall into the wrong hands.²⁰ Many satires, and most notably, those of Donne, were also written in a

highly uneven, rough, cryptic style. But in the cryptic style of this first satire, Herbert is doing much more than merely imitating or adhering to the established conventions of a particular genre (satire); he is building in a defense mechanism to cover a radical content which might easily be construed as treason if it fell into the wrong hands.

It should be noted that the kind of connection between Herbert's life and the literary style and content of this first satire is quite different from the connection between the life and the early lyrics and epitaphs. The content of the satire grew directly out of very particular events in Herbert's life. *The State-progress of Ill* addresses itself specifically to these problems in 1608. With the lyrics and the epitaphs, however, the connection between the poetic art form and Herbert's frame of mind is much less direct. In these poems, theme, content and style are not specifically involved with Herbert's social problems; they extend in a more general way, to other external events. Thus, the epitaphs and lyrics tend to reflect the spirit of Herbert's preoccupations during this first period, but the satire reflects a more specific kind of reaction to the problem of his confiscated property.

*Satyra Secunda: Of Travellers from Paris*²¹ was also written in 1608. This satire simultaneously attacks the follies of fashionable English tourists and the vices of a corrupt Europe. Given Herbert's social position in 1608 it seems likely that the satire is an open attack on the moral sickness of sophisticated social circles. The attack on a corrupt Europe probably induced Herbert to dedicate the poem to Ben Jonson who also flagellates the same vices. The dedication to Jonson again suggests that the manuscript was intended to be circulated among Herbert's circle

of friends. The poem begins,

Ben Johnson, Travel is a second birth,
 Unto the Children of another earth,
 Only as our King *Richard* was, so they appear,
 New born to another World, with teeth and hair,
 While got by *English* parents carried in
 Some Womb of thirty tun, and lightly twin,
 They are delivered at *Callis*, or at *Diep*,
 And strangely stand, go, feed themselves, nay keep
 Their own money streightwayes; but that is all,
 For none can understand them, when they call
 For any thing. No more then *Badger*,
 That call'd the Queen *Monsieur*, laid a wager
 With the King of his Dogs, who understood
 Them all alike, which, *Badger* thought, was good.

But that I may proceed, since their birth is
 Only a kind of *Metempsychosis*;
 Such Knowledge, as their memory could give,
 They have for help, what time these Souls do live
 In English Clothes, a body which again
 They never rise unto: but as you see,
 When they come home, like Children yet that be
 Of their own bringing up; all they learn, is
 Toyes, and the Language.

The central image of the satire is the metaphor of birth. Foppish Englishmen sail over to Europe on a ship, which Herbert likens to a womb. By the time they arrive in France they are born fully matured in a physical sense but they remain children in other ways. They are, in fact, re-born into a new social childhood and like orphans ("Children . . . Of their own bringing up") they imitate superficialities which they do not or cannot understand; "all they learn is/Toyos, and the Language." A sort of metempsychosis has taken place, but the change has been for the worse. Instead of progressing to a higher or more praiseworthy condition, these English travellers degenerate. Once again we are looking at an inverted (and therefore perverted) world.

The satire is directed against those who pompously display the glamorous trappings of the upper classes. These vain and foolish travellers

come

To *Fauxbourgs*, *St. Germans*, [sic] there to take a Room
 Lightly about th'Ambassadors, and where,
 Having no Church, they come, *Sundays*, to hear
 An invitation, which they have most part,
 If their outside but promise a desert,
 To sit above the Secretaries place,
 Although it be almost as rare a case,
 To see *English* well cloth'd here, as with you
 At *London*, *Indians*: But that your view
 May comprehend at once them gone for *Bloys*,
 Or *Orleans*; learn'd French, now no more Boys,
 But perfect Men at *Paris*, putting on
 Some forc'd disguise, or labour'd fashion,
 To appear strange at home, besides their stay,
 Laugh and look on with me, to see what they
 Are now become; but that the poorer sort,
 A subject not fit for my Muse nor sport,
 May pass untouch'd.

These Englishmen attend Sunday public meetings²² dressed in what they believe to be fashionable clothes, but they are as conspicuously out of fashion and ridiculous as an Indian's dress would appear to be in the streets of London. "Fauxbourg St. Germans" is the place where these gaudy peacocks go to display their wealth and taste (exactly what Herbert himself was to do twelve years later).²³ We are invited to stand back, "laugh, and look on" with Herbert as he announces his satirical intentions. Significantly, he states that his comments and ridicule will be directed only against the wealthy travellers, not the "poorer sort." Herbert's alignment with the "poorer sort" is in keeping with his feelings of social isolation and hostility towards the upper classes during the early part of this first period of his life.

Herbert starts a meticulous analysis of one particular aristocrat whose name is Elpus:²⁴

let's but consider what
Elpus is now become, once young, handsom, and that
 Was such a Wit, as very well with four
 Of the six might have made one, and no more.

He proceeds in his satirical description by carefully noting all features and defects. After living in Europe, this traveller returns "season'd and dry'd, as in/His face, by this you see, which would perplex/A stranger to define his years or sex." There has been a degeneration here, not only physically, but morally as well. The traveller who was once young and handsome returns as an indistinguishable mass of dried wrinkles. Moreover, he has less than one fourth the wit of a "normal" person since it takes the best four of any six such travellers to make up one whole "wit."

After living in France this traveller returns with the knack for eloquence and complimentary speeches, but he is also as treacherous as a serpent since he carries an armoury of

loose French words, which he doth string,
Windeth about the arms, the legs, and sides,
Most serpent-like, of any man that bides
His indirect approach, which being done
Almost without an introduction,
If he have heard but any bragging French
Boast of the favour of some noble Wench,
He'll swear, 'twas he did her Graces possess,
And damn his own soul for the wickedness
Of other men.

Significantly, it is only the English travellers that Herbert attacks, and he was probably provided with enough material for this satire on his first visit to France. The corruption in England is, according to Herbert, being augmented by these newly arrived synchophants who carry with them the moral diseases of an infected Europe. As in the first satire, Herbert presents us with a highly corrupted and perverted world. His own world vision in 1608, was also bleak and pessimistic and bitter.

Because it is fashionable, the returned traveller admits even to sins which he has not committed, and thus assumes vices over and above those which

he already possesses. Gasior says that "They are taught, in order to advance and please, to become synchophants and flatterers; they are valued on their external appearance alone and learn to judge others on the same basis; they learn to regard status and wealth (not virtue) as the only meaningful objects of human endeavour."²⁵ They represent perversity in glamorous and fashionable lifestyles and are reminiscent of the aristocrats in the first satire who serve no other function in the State than to further its perversity and corruption.

The second satire concludes with allusions to "that swoln and vitious Queen, Margret," (of France) and the obscenities and vices of Italian comedies "wherein/Women play boys-----." Elpus returns to England carrying the same type of corruption that Herbert exposed in the first satire; it is an evil which dissembles. This kind of corruption is applauded by the perverted fashion of the times in England, since England has become as bad as, if not worse than Italy.

In the two satires, then, the strong protestations of the evil in the State as well as the abhorrence of the fashions of high society appear to be a direct poetical reflection of Herbert's psychological reaction to a tyrannical king who had interrupted his rise into the upper regions of society. The poet's belief that he had been separated from this society enables him to isolate and detach himself from it in order to ridicule and condemn it.

Within the seven earliest poems in the Herbert canon, then, we are faced with a variety of styles, techniques, genres and concepts. Within the first few years of his poetical career Herbert had already made eclecticism a trademark of his work. The two satires, two epitaphs and

three lyrics were written within a period of two years yet they are very unlike in style and content. In the satires, as far as content is concerned, we see a progressive Herbert who seems to be anti-monarchist and anti-aristocrat; yet in the lyrics he writes conservative poetry which smacks of traditional ideas found in courtly poetry. In terms of style, the satires are heavy-handed and difficult to interpret, yet we cannot conclude from this that Herbert was a poor poet, for, in the lyrics and epitaphs, he writes in a simple and clear style. In summary form, these early poems are:

	Satires	Lyrics	Epitaphs
Content:	Individual, independent, radical	Common love themes Largely imitative	Common themes
Style:	Intricate, difficult to interpret	Simple, lucid	Simple, lucid
Image:	Metaphysical conceits, Largely innovative	Conventional	Conventional though with some innovations

When we recall that all of these poems were written at approximately the same time, it becomes obvious that there is a certain complexity attached to Herbert's diverse poetic style. For instance, the conservative, simple, and imitative elements of the lyrics and epitaphs could be explained by arguing that Herbert, as a young poet, was experimenting with his literary talents, and, like many poets, his early poetry is based upon the works of great poets who preceded him. In spite of its general correctness in approach, such an explanation can only be partially accurate, for the satires, also written at the same time, show that Herbert was capable of producing much more complex, intricate and original work. We

need only recall that shocking comparison between God and evil in the first satire to confirm this. To base an evaluation of Herbert on one or any portion of these poems would be highly misleading.

Why then, did Herbert show such a wide variety in his work? If we accept the probability that there is more to Herbert's poetic variety than a simple accidental result of poetic experimentation, then the diversity must be explained. If we turn to the essential pattern of Herbert's life at this point, we see a plausible explanation. Herbert had risen to the extent that he had gained a knighthood but his social ascent had stopped when he had lost his castle and the prestige that accompanied it. This loss accounts for the particular hostility towards the establishment in the satires and the hostile content would, in turn, explain the obscure style which served as a cover for his radical opinions. At this point in time, the function of poetry, for Herbert, was therapeutic; it served as a release for his bitterness and hostility. Despite his hostility and disillusionment, however, Herbert by all accounts, remained ambitious and still hoped to rise in the system. He still worked to be the successful courtier in England and on the continent, and one of the talents expected of a courtier was that he should write poetry in the manner that would most likely be pleasing to a courtly audience. Writing in this style was completely compatible with his lifestyle. This seems to explain why his lyrics and epitaphs are based on the poetry of his courtly predecessors. In his daily routine Herbert lived out the life of a courtier, as he perceived it. But in spite of his conservative tendencies which favoured the old sixteenth-century courtly ideals, Herbert was very much involved in the contemporary scene. His interest in politics was very

strong and he also retained a close contact with his friends in the Donne circle. It is not surprising therefore, that Herbert himself (and consequently his poetry) should have been influenced by Donne and the Metaphysical style of poetry. The complexity of styles and ideas in the early part of the first period are perfectly consistent with the complexity of Herbert himself during these years.

During the latter half of this first period (1610-1619) Herbert began to rise once more. He became an illustrious dueller, soldier, poet, gallant and close friend to many influential people. His increased partiality to chivalric behavior and his carefully selected group of friends contributed to his success and toward what would be the climax of his political career. As always, politics took precedence over literary interests and many of the poems in this period are dedicated to influential people, a common way in the period of winning favours. As he rose in the system it seems natural enough that both the anti-monarchist attitudes in the satires and the poetic use of the satiric genre itself, should have been laid aside. There are at least two reasons for this. The first is that his injured pride was appeased by an increase of favours and promotions. The second was that an ambitious rising courtier would not wish to jeopardize his future by committing himself to anti-monarchist values which would be viewed as treason. It also appears natural enough that the poetry at this time should be almost wholly conservative in the sense that Herbert selected poetic elements almost exclusively from the courtly tradition. Both style and content become, as we shall see, very pleasing to aristocratic and royal ears.

The four lyrics of this first period borrow quite heavily from

traditional notions of love, particularly from those ideas found in *The Book of the Courtier*. These lyrics are basically love poems. Most critics treat them lightly, if at all, without ever attempting to discover why Herbert dropped satire with its obscure and difficult style, and developed only the courtly element of his poetry.

To a Lady who did sing Excellently (1618)²⁶ is essentially a complimentary poem. The lady is portrayed as a kind of creator who animates and inspires words with her perfection and powers:

I.

When our rude & unfashion'd words, that long
 A being in their elements enjoy'd,
 Senseless and void,
 Come at last to be formed by thy tongue,
 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 she speaks the lady's words inspire men to love. But more than this, the words lift men into a "second state," a higher level of existence, 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." Through the lady (the physical world), mankind is able to ascend to a purer world, and this upward movement is not unlike Castiglione's ladder which the soul must climb in order to transcend the imperfections of earthly love.

The first two stanzas describe the powers of the lady's voice and it is through the sense of hearing that her wonders are perceived. But in the third stanza, more of her "rare perfections" are manifest through the sense of sight.²⁷ The "circle of [her] face" suggests, of course, a

physical and a corresponding spiritual perfection. Together, the beauties of her voice and face confound the senses of those who gaze upon her while she is singing:

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 lady's powers and beauties appeal most to sight and hearing, the two highest and most pure of the senses according to Castiglione.²⁸ The lady does not attract or stimulate the baser senses and appetities, only the higher ones, and those who listen to her are thrown into ecstasy.

In "Tears Flow no More" (1614)²⁹ the persona is an unrequited lover. The poem is Petrarchan in theme and style, and presents no unusual or difficult images, but perhaps the most striking aspect of the poem is the strongly developed microcosm-macrocosm analogy. It also has, as we shall see, that well-developed logical structure, so characteristic of Herbert's work. No critic ever quotes this poem when he wishes to show that Herbert wrote "obscure" poetry, because it is an example of Herbert's ability to write simply and lucidly. The poem begins,

Tears, flow no more, or if you needs must flow
 Fall yet more slow,
 Do not the world invade,
 From smaller springs than yours rivers have grown,
 And they again a Sea have made,
 Brackish like you, and which like you hath flown.

The lover is disappointed and unhappy because he cannot satisfy his desires nor bring his passions under control. The poem plays with microcosm-macrocosm analogies; three of the four elements are likened to various human emotions: tears-rivers (water), sighs-tempests (air) and desire-

passion (fire). In the first stanza the persona addresses his tears, asking them to cease falling, or if that cannot be, to "Fall yet more slow." He commands his tears "Do not the world invade," by which he means the external world.

In the second stanza the water imagery is coupled with the imagery of fire and passion:

Ebb to my heart, and on the burning fires
 Of my desires,
 Let your torrents fall,
 From smaller sparks then theirs such sparks arise
 As into flame converting all,
 This world might be but my love's sacrifice.

Both the persona's tears and his disappointment have been personified. He asks the former to drown the burning passions of his heart and the latter to rid him of his burning desires. He collapses the metaphorical and the literal meanings of his words when he entreats his tears to drown the fires of his heart. Moreover, the pattern of the first stanza, in which the last three lines envision the destruction of the world because of one lover's disappointment, is repeated again in the second stanza's final three lines. In both instances the persona sees the world as a burning or drowning sacrifice to his love. In other words, the feelings of the first stanza are echoed when they are repeated in the same manner in the second stanza.

In the final stanza the persona observes that just as the winds make waters rise and fires burn, so too do his sighs increase his desires and his disappointments (tears). He has taken the realities of the macrocosm and attributed them to the microcosm. Once again, the literal and the figurative meanings of words are collapsed in microcosm-macrocosm analogies. The imagery and theme of this poem, then, are largely imitative

and we see Herbert's whole-hearted adoption of courtly and traditional elements in his poetry.

A *Ditty to the tune of Coseferite* (?1615)³⁰ is also highly traditional in theme and image. At the beginning of the poem the persona is in the darkness of night. He is puzzled because there are no stars shining:

<i>Ah wonder.</i>	
So fair a Heaven	And no Starr shining,
So fair, etc.	Ay me, and no Starr etc.
	'Tis past my divining.

Yet stay.
 May not perchance this be some rising Morn?
 Which in the scorn
 Of our Worlds light discloses,
 This Air of Violets, that Sky of Roses?
'Tis so.
 An Oriental Sphere
 Doth open and appear,
 Ascending bright.
 Then since thy hymen I chant
 May'st thou new pleasures grant.
 Admired light.

As the light of the sun becomes stronger it reveals the beauties of the earth. The higher order of the universe shines down upon the lower, making its beauties perceptible. Light, which is often associated with divine revelation and wisdom, is to be "admired" (in later poems we shall see this symbolic use of light inverted). The persona celebrates the sunrise by singing a hymn to it. It is difficult to ascertain whether there is any intended pun on "hymn" and "hymen." On the one hand it may be a figurative way of addressing the dawn (Aurora) as a beautiful maiden who gives "new pleasures." This sexual innuendo would be typical of the youthful, playful Herbert. On the other hand, however, the apparent pun may simply be a printing error; but regardless of the real or apparent

pun, this lyric's conventional imagery reflects a youthful Herbert, the aspect of Herbert's first period which was conservative and imitative. It is important to note that like so many of his early lyrics, *Coseferite* is based on a European style of lyrics, and that Herbert is writing essentially imitative poetry.

The formal design of *Ditty to the tune of A che del Quantomio of Pesarino* (?1615)³¹ suggests the possibility that Herbert borrowed the idea from Sir Philip Sidney. In *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*³² we find an untitled echo poem that begins:

Fair rocks, goodly rivers, sweet woods, when shall I see peace?	Peace
Peace? what bars me my tongue? who is that comes me so nigh?	I.
Oh! I do know what guest I have met; it is Echo.	'Tis Echo.
Well met, Echo, approach; then tell me thy will too.	I will too.
Echo, what do I get yielding my sprite to my griefs?	Griefs.
What medicine may I find for a pain that draws me to death?	Death.

Herbert's *Ditty* follows a similar format:

Where now shall these Accents go?
 At which Creatures silent grow
 While Woods and Rocks do speak?
 And seem to break
 Complaints too long for them to hear,
 Saying, I call in vain: *Echo* - All in vain.
 : : : : : :
 Where there is no relief; *Ec.* Here is no relief.

Ah why then should I fear
 Unto her rocky heart to speak that grief,
 In whose laments these bear a part?
 Then cruel heart
 Do but some answer give,
 I do but crave Do you forbid to live, or bid to live.
Echo Live.

Although it is not absolutely certain that Herbert borrowed the idea

directly from his admired cousin, Sir Philip Sidney, it is clear that in keeping with most of Herbert's poems during the latter part of this period, *Ditty* is almost wholly imitative in form and theme, and Petrarchan in content.

The persona, who is unrequited in his love, speaks to the woods and rocks which echo his words. Like the Petrarchan lover, he seeks relief from his dilemma by isolation and contemplation of suicide. The answer to his question is "Here is no relief," which he interprets to mean that he must return to the wooing of his mistress. He must abandon the passive for the active. She, of course, is the typical Petrarchan lady: cold, distant, unmoved and possessing a "rocky heart." Re-inspired by the words which the woods and rocks have spoken, the persona returns to continue wooing his frigid lady. In this lyric, then, as well as the others, Herbert adheres strictly to Elizabethan and courtly conventions and his poetry is obviously "imitative."

In the later elegies and epitaphs of this first period, the same traditional elements found in the earlier epitaphs are apparent. Part of the motivation for these poems (as in the earlier epitaphs) undoubtedly sprang from sincere feelings of grief, but the occasions of these poems were also opportunities to gain promotions, and Herbert took advantage of them, in the manner of the day, by dedicating his most complimentary verses to influential persons.³³ As Howarth correctly observes, "The Court, not the people, was the patron of literature But the dependence upon the King, the nobles, and a small circle of educated and wealthy men made compliment a condition of existence."³⁴ Elegies tended to be more designed for public consumption than epitaphs. Sometimes

the former were written purely for promotion, other times purely as a testament to the deceased. Often, however, they were written for both reasons.

In Herbert's case it appears that both grief and the chance for self-improvement were the stimuli for the *Elegy*. During the latter years of this first period, Herbert remained particularly close to a select group of friends. Poetically, he overtly directed his talents towards those who were in a position to assist him. Thus, in the elegies and epitaphs of the latter portion of the first period, Herbert gingerly sets his foot back on that slippery first rung of the ladder of success and his poetry hardly deviates from the established norms. He is extremely cautious in the selection and presentation of his topics.

*Elegy for the Prince*³⁵ was written on 12 November 1612, on the occasion of the death of James' son, Prince Henry. In the *Elegy* Herbert examines a number of alternative philosophical positions on the nature of death and dying, but he is totally without commitment to any one of them. Most of the *Elegy* takes the form of rhetorical questions, and whatever Herbert's real feelings were, it is obvious that the poem is geared to the values of a very select audience. All of the philosophical positions are based on courtly ideals and very conventional, standard responses to death. Significantly, this elegy was one of the few poems which Herbert consented to have published during his lifetime,³⁶ and it was, as Moore Smith indicates, (p. 127) "appended to the third edition of Sylvester's *Lachrymae Lachrymarum* (1613), where it is headed 'Elegie on the vntimely Death of the incomparable Prince, Henry.'"

If we compare the content of the *Elegy* with the two satires, it will become obvious why Herbert wished the former to be published and the latter

to remain in manuscript form. The concept which forms the basis of the *Elegy* is that the body of the State is contained within the body of the prince (the potential king), and in his death the State also dies:

Must he be ever dead? Cannot we add
Another life unto that Prince that had
Our souls laid up in him? 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?

This concept of the King being the State, was one of the values which Herbert so vigorously attacked in his first satire, yet here all traces of that hostility have either disappeared or been deliberately suppressed. As Elegist, Herbert assumes the role of the individual who speaks on behalf of the masses. This does not necessarily mean, however, that Herbert's personal views coincide with those of the people, nor does it mean that the views expressed in the *Elegy* can be taken as truly representative of his own. When we recall that this was one of the few poems which Herbert had ever wanted to be published, we can be quite certain in concluding that he felt safe and comfortable with the fact that his ideas were being presented for public scrutiny and consumption. There was no danger here, of being accused of treason. There would have been dangers if the satires had been published.

In this poem then, we find a distinctly different attitude from that in the satires (1608), where Herbert was definitely aware that every subject did not love his king. What Herbert's true opinions were on this subject in 1612 we cannot know for certain, but the sentiments in the poem are clearly slanted for a court audience and suggest his desire to be considered part of the courtly group and to be seen as a man who shared their opinions. *Elegy for the Prince* and the satires present us with two

apparently incompatible views on the concept of monarchy. Yet, these two views illustrate Herbert's ambivalent feelings about this institution. In 1612 he was still close enough in time to feel at least some of the hostility expressed in the satires. Yet at the same time he was actively pursuing various means of advancing himself socially. He wanted desperately to enjoy the benefits of the more sophisticated social circles. One way to achieve this, was through his poetry.

If we investigate *Elegy for the Prince* strictly from a literary perspective we see that, in keeping with many of his poems in this first period, Herbert was highly conservative and very unimaginative in his selection of images. The poem is filled with many elegiac commonplaces, such as the metaphor of the cyclical pattern of the seasons as it pertains to human life-death cycles:

See we not Autumn give
Back to 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?

The meaning of this passage is partially based on the Christian interpretation of death. Death and degeneration imply regeneration and re-birth. Autumn and death, Spring and renewed life, and sleep and death are associations which can be found in many elegies and Herbert is borrowing extensively here.

As spokesman for the prince's subjects, Herbert's persona says that his own particular inability to distinguish between sleep and death is like the nation's inability to do the same. Sleep sometimes looks like

death. However, since all subjects of the State are contained within the body of the Prince, and since these subjects are not certain whether the prince is dead or sleeping, they cannot even be certain about their own condition. As potential head of State, the prince was an animating and unifying force in the world. His death is followed by a universal degeneration into chaos and uncertainty.

Herbert offers a compliment to the dead prince (and to James as well):

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 seem yet 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.

Here we have the image of all the subjects in the State, collectively sighing the remainder of their lives away in unison in order to keep alive the memory of the dead prince. This type of melodramatic claim was by no means unique among seventeenth-century elegies and once again we see Herbert expressing a type of hyperbolic praise in poetry that would be expected of a loyal subject and courtier. From a purely literary perspective Herbert is imitating the styles of his contemporaries and predecessors, but if we view the poem from a personal and social perspective as well, it becomes apparent that Herbert was also writing the type of poetry most likely to bolster his influence at court. This seems to be a likely reason *why* he chose to imitate this particular poetic style and content at this time in his life.

The death of the prince becomes, according to Herbert, the momentous

event in everyone's life:

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 else doth make
 Diff'rence in life and death, but to partake
 Nor joy, nor pain?

Here is the elegist's final acceptance of the notion that the prince is the embodiment of the State. The poem, then, is an exercise in hyperbolic compliment of the common kind. It is totally imitative and unimaginative, and consequently somewhat artificial. Just how much of this poem represents Herbert's true feelings is impossible to ascertain; however, given Herbert's social position in 1612 (still without his castle), it is most likely that the poem was more designed to reflect the values that the court would read into it, rather than to be a true representation of his own opinions.

Epitaph on Sir Edward Sackville's Child (?1616)³⁷ was written for one of the many influential people whom Herbert befriended. In a purely literary sense the poem offers little to excite critics but in terms of how it fits into the pattern of Herbert's life, this epitaph takes on more significance. Sackville, along with the Duc de Montmorency, had secured Herbert's release from a French prison in 1614. Handsome, famous as a dueller, friend of the famous general Horatio Vere, and a favourite at court, Sackville was a man who could and did assist Herbert in his social advancement. In addition to the obvious sentiments of the poem, this epitaph was composed in honour of a deceased member of a wealthy and influential family. It is an offering of consolation to the parents as well as Herbert's own way of demonstrating his affection for one of his benevolent patrons.

The poem is short and clear in its meaning:

Reader, here lies a Child that never cry'd,
 And therefore never dy'd,
 'Twas neither old nor yong,
 Born to this and the other world in one;
 Let us then cease to mone,
 Nothing that ever dy'd hath liv'd so long.

This epitaph reiterates the Christian paradox that death is a birth into a new and better life. Since the child died at birth he experienced a double birth: "Born to this and the other world in one." The child was simultaneously born into the physical world and the eternal world and therefore there should be no mourning. The tone of this poem is, to a large extent, governed by a firm, rational control over the grief caused by the death of a loved one. Herbert writes with a great, unshaken faith. In this latter respect the poem is like the epitaph for Swansey.

Herbert wrote *Elegy Over a Tomb*³⁸ in 1617. Of all the elegies and epitaphs in his English canon it is the only one which is not dedicated to a specific person.³⁹ This suggests that politically, socially and career-wise, Herbert had little or nothing to gain by writing it. This is not to imply, however, that Herbert's other elegies and epitaphs were written solely with the callous intention of self-gain. Of all the death-related poems, this one is the freest from all possible selfish intentions. In fact, of all Herbert's elegies and epitaphs, this one appears to have been written purely and solely for emotional reasons. Significantly, this elegy is the only one which is not burdened with an over-abundance of literary convention and complimentary hyperbole. No other elegy in the canon contains such a strikingly intense and genuine emotional involvement.

The elegy begins by associating death with darkness:

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?

Heat is connected with love (the passions) and light with reason and knowledge (Apollo). The persona is forced to "see" death and he is reluctant to accept it. There is also an increasing sense of a growing isolation between the persona and his departed loved one as the poem progresses. The persona begins in the first person singular, "I," which reflects his subjectivity. He concludes with "Tell us," (my emphasis) implying that he has universalized his grief and has objectified his personal sorrow, so that the one particular death which is the subject of the poem becomes more of a philosophical issue.

In the ensuing stanza the persona attempts to account for the disappearance of the deceased's beauties. The search for these lost beauties is based on microcosm-macrocosm analogies and the persona looks to the world around him for empirical evidence that these lost beauties still exist in some form or another:

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?

Implicit in the imagery here, are the four elements: "sun" (fire), "waves" (water), "Sky and Air" (air) and "flowrs" (which grow in earth). In his grief the persona attempts to extend the microcosm-macrocosm analogy so that these physical beauties appear not to be lost but merely transferred to other places in the universe. It is significant that

Herbert's persona exhibits a preoccupation with the physical world around him and that he considers this physical world beautiful. In some of the later poems, written at a time when Herbert was very disillusioned, his personae envision nature as imperfect, deformed and repulsive.

Ultimately, the persona of *Elegy* falls back into despair; he cannot make the argument of analogy work. He cannot satisfactorily answer his own questions and concludes the poem with the same sense of hopelessness and despair with which it began:

But thus enrich'd may we not yield some cause
 Why they themselves lament no more?
 That must have changed course they held before,
 And broke their proper Laws,
 Had not your beauties giv'n this second birth
 To Heaven and Earth?

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.

The poem is circular in the sense that it concludes the same way it began. The oracle remains silent, offering the persona no answer and leaving him in a state of bewilderment and grief. The beginning line, "Must I then see, alas" is echoed again and again in the lines of the last stanza: "Tell us." The persona recognizes his inability to understand death and resigns himself to the fact that neither he, nor mankind will receive answers to his questions.

Elegy Over a Tomb is almost unique in the Herbert canon because of the emotions it expresses. It is more moving than the other elegies because it does not contain the same stereotyped responses to death. It voices a more spontaneous reaction to death and conveys an unmistakably

genuine sense of grief. These literary elements, (unusual for Herbert), along with the fact that this elegy is not dedicated to a particular individual, seem to suggest that the personal element in the poem was a part of Herbert's reaction to the death of someone particularly close to him. It was not meant for public spectacle. Since his brother Charles died in the same year of the poem's composition, there may well be connections between the poem and his death. The presence of this poem in the canon demonstrates that Herbert was capable of producing imaginative and intensely emotional poetry. Not all of his poems are "dry and abstract."

The poems in the first period (1608-1619), with the notable exception of the satires and one elegy, tend to be highly traditional in image and theme and often imitative in style. By the latter half of this period the loss of Montgomery Castle appears to have been forgotten. The courtly elements coincide with Herbert's courtly and fashionable real-life inclinations, while the epitaphs and elegies tend to reflect his social ambitions in an indirect manner.

Part II: 1620-1644

The poems written during the transition period reveal a qualitative difference in style, concept and imagery. But while these poems tend to move away from Herbert's earlier precedents, the form sometimes tends to be more traditional. This period was the most significant in Herbert's life because it was during these years that his loyalty to the King slowly began to degenerate and his frustrations began to intensify. At the beginning of this period Herbert was at the zenith of his career, and his ambassadorship to Paris placed him in that long-sought-after position of considerable social prestige. During the following years,

however, his creditors pressed him heavily and constantly pestered him for payment of the debts which he had accumulated as ambassador. To make matters worse he was out of favour with the King and was severed from an important source of funds. He also sought a title as a reward for his services. Yet although he was separated from Charles, he was still united to King and the court, and he performed his duties with unmatched faithfulness. He thus appears to have been halfway between establishment and anti-establishment, between insider and outsider.

Herbert's poetry shifts and reflects these new circumstances. He writes like a courtier yet he does not write like a courtier. In contrast to the poems of the first period, the poems of the second period show a dominant presence of monetary and titular images. This change in imagery reflects the poet's ever-increasing preoccupations with obtaining the wealth and prestige he felt was owed to him. In several instances, Herbert's poetry during this period became completely subservient to his political and social interests. He continued the tendency to use poetry as a means of soliciting social and financial support.

By 1620 when he wrote *Sonnet* ("You well compacted Groves")⁴⁰ Herbert had been completely absorbed into the establishment that had once confiscated his castle and had made him a social misfit. His lifestyle was now markedly different from anything else that it had ever been earlier, primarily because he now had money (or thought he had) and social prestige. This change in lifestyle was accompanied by a corresponding change in his poetry. In 1620 his poetry became markedly different from anything he had written earlier, and in *Sonnet* we find a preoccupation with opulence, bliss, harmony, wealth and stability. The presence of these

elements in his poetry must have been caused partially by the favourable environment and satisfactory conditions in which Herbert now found himself, as the ambassador to France.

In its rhyme scheme, *Sonnet* combines the Petrarchan form with a variation of the Spenserian one. The octave (abbaabba) is Petrarchan and the sestet (cdccdd) is Spenserian. Formally, Herbert was still writing conservative poetry within established conventions. The sonnet begins,

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

Nature is seen as perfection and the Grove is an Eden-like place which resolves the opposites of "light and shade" and "heat and cold." It is a pristine environment in which these opposites are reconciled into "one even temper." There is a very strong emphasis on balance and on the resolution of extremes into a mean.

The Grove is a place where

An Airy Silver, and a Sunny Gold,
 So cloath the poorest that they do behold
 Themselves, in riches which can never fade.

In this Eden, poverty is non-existent and wealth abundant. Nature clothes all the inhabitants of the Grove in rich garments.⁴¹ The whole Grove is one living organism, dependent only upon itself for the procreation and perpetuation of "A self-renewing vegetable bliss."⁴²

In essence, the poem's emphases reflect Herbert's own state in 1620. Having a knowledge of his "proper worth" and having advanced to his "proper place," the emphasis is on resolution, balance, harmony. It was

a happy state he enjoyed in Paris, but it was not to last long. The theme and content of this poem mark a significant departure from earlier poems because Herbert's social position had also changed.

The composition date (1621) of Herbert's five poems to black beauty⁴³ (*To Mrs. Diana Cecyll, To her Eyes, To her Hair, Sonnet of Black Beauty* and *Another Sonnet to Black it self*) roughly coincides with his first recall from Paris when he returned to England out of favour with James I. In the dedication of these poems we see Herbert in his typical role of suppliant. Diana Cecyll was the daughter of William, second Earl of Exeter, famous for her "black beauty" and her family name. Most importantly, however, she was also famous for the vast sums of money she had inherited and for her weighty influence at the court of James I. Herbert's motives for dedicating these black beauty poems to her cannot have been altogether confined simply to an overwhelming awe for her beauty, although this was undoubtedly a part of it. The compliments paid to this wealthy heiress are a part of his attempt to preserve, secure and regain his declining fortunes.

These black beauty poems are unique in the Herbert canon. United by their common exultation in the mysteries and powers of black, the first three poems reveal an ambivalent attitude towards courtly ideals, while the last two reject certain common elements of traditional poetry but still represent Herbert's closest imitation of the Petrarchan sonnet form. In all five poems Herbert is simultaneously an imitator and an innovator, a traditionalist and an anti-traditionalist, and Elizabethan and an anti-Elizabethan. In contrast to his earlier poems, however, his innovations outweigh his imitations. Although critics have observed these differences

meanings of black and white, and their relationships to each other are perhaps best defined by Gasior (p. 470) who says that,

White [light] was traditionally associated with the Mind, the soul, the purely spiritual, the transcendental, asceticism, virginity, other-worldliness, the Absolute, completely disinterested affection or *agape*, mysticism, the Ideal, the transcendental dialect, and also Grace. On the other hand, black [darkness] traditionally represented the corrupt order of Nature and prime matter, the perverting existentiality, the skeptical-empirical tradition, "opinion", passion, erotic love, libertinism, and discursive reasoning.

In the poetry of the first period, Herbert's imagery adheres to the traditional values of black and white outlined by Gasior. By the second period, however, Herbert had abandoned his earlier uses of these same images. While it is true that these conventions are inverted, it should also be understood that Herbert was not establishing an entirely new literary precedent. As we shall see shortly, though, he did establish a sort of precedent insofar as he elevated black beauty to *absolute* supremacy. Shakespeare had praised his lady for her dark beauty, but not to the same extent, nor in the same way that Herbert did.

If we examine the poem from within the framework of Herbert's canon we see that he inverts the meanings of his earlier imagery. The black beauty poems mark a radical departure from his earlier poetic practice. For instance, in *Elegy Over a Tomb*, blackness had been a symbol for death and for the destruction of all things beautiful. It was associated with a negative, destructive force:

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?

Black eyes, if you seem dark,
 It is because your beams are deep,
 And with your soul united keep:
 Who could discern
 Enough into 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.

The eyes are dark, says Herbert, because they are connected to the soul. This implies that the soul, too, possesses its own darkness.⁴⁷ Here, black is the colour of mystery, a colour which leads to incomprehensible "wonders" far beyond itself. Blackness hides a power that affects not the senses, but the mind itself. It is a power which transcends the senses and is perceived directly and intuitively by the mind. Black does not require the senses as intermediaries in order to be understood. Its power is invisible.

In his poetry of the second period, Herbert retains the use of the microcosm-macrocosm analogy as a part of his conceptual framework. In the same way that the blackness of her eyes is a gateway to the soul, so too is the blackness of the heavens a gateway to that powerful force, the Prime Mover, who lies behind it. Thus the lady's soul is analogous to the Prime Mover and her body is analogous to the world. The second stanza elaborates further on this microcosm-macrocosm analogy:

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'ing hid
 Within the veil of an eternal night,
 Did frame for us a second light,
 And after bid
 It serve for ordinary sight.

The "proper laws" and harmonious movements of the heavens are evidence that the Prime Mover is in control of the world. Similarly, the harmony of parts in her person is evidence that her Prime Mover (her soul) is in control of her beauties and her whole person. Her body is a universe in its own right.

Herbert concludes that because of this analogous relationship between eyes and soul, and soul and Prime Mover, the lady is made in the divine image:

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, (shine,
 And that through them, though sight or soul might
 He must yet, and the last define,
 That beams which pass
 Through black, cannot but be divine.

Black, then, in addition to its superiority, rarity and value, is also a medium for divine rays. Hence black also partakes in the transcendental. This participation in the divine was traditionally associated with the colour white, as Gasior has pointed out and as is commonly understood.

To her Hair, the third black beauty poem in the sequence, goes a step further than the previous poem, and assigns to the colour black additional mystical powers often associated with hair:

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.

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

Herbert associates the powers of black hair with powers of the three sisters of fate who spin and snip the threads of human life. The persona perceives that the lady's hair appears to ascend to her temples where it becomes the crowing glory of love which is then only debased by "vulgar light and praise."

In the third stanza Herbert reiterates his theory of black's significance by asserting that black is the colour of revelation:

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 turneth back again,
 And doth, as 'twere in vain,
 It self to you extend.

Blackness is the light of knowledge. This, of course, completely inverts the traditional association of knowledge with light and Apollo. It also marks a radical departure from his earlier uses of these symbols. Herbert is playing with mixtures of literal and figurative meanings. Blackness does not literally enlighten but rather, metaphorically lightens. Paradoxically, however, Herbert uses traditional meanings of light and dark in order to convey the figurative meaning that black enlightens and that blackness is the source of wisdom. In this stanza we also see that black is like the divine in another way: it simultaneously attracts and yet forces the eyes to "recoil" and turn away because of its intense brightness.

Black is also a symbol for the infinite and can only be intuitively

grasped:

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 hand to hold
 Somewhat of infinite?

In the final stanza Herbert again plays with literal and figurative meanings:

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.

When Lady Cecyll's black hair is seen reflected in her eyes, it is the source of knowledge. Although the final two lines in the stanza are not perfectly clear, they seem to suggest that the divine inspiration or knowledge of "That shining light in Darkness" (enlightenment) of her hair is hindered by the "light" of her black eyes which are below the curls that crown her temples. In other words, the power of her black hair is made to seem less than it actually is, because her eyes, which are also black, blind the perceiver's eyes.

Sonnet of Black Beauty is essentially Petrarchan in form (abba abba cdcdcd) but anti-Petrarchan in its content, and there is a tension here between the innovative content and the traditional form which contains that content. Although this poem is much more abstract than the previous three, it also praises blackness and reiterates its superiority over light. The poem begins,

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,
 And neither chang'd with day, nor hid with night,
 When all these colours which the world call bright,
 And which old Poetry doth so persue,

The subject is no longer Lady Cecyll's black beauty but all black beauty in general. Black is eternal and unchanging, and Herbert, who still exults in this inversion, praises blackness over light, demeaning light and colour as the more primitive fascination of "old Poetry." This is a continuation of the same theme which was begun in *To Mrs. Diana Cecyll*, and its theme is similar to the scorn of "the vulgar poet's theme" of an inferior symmetry, unity and whiteness, which was so condemned in that first poem.

Again Herbert plays with various ambiguities of black and white.

He writes,

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.

There are important epistemological implications in Herbert's assertion of the cosmic importance of black. Herbert, in fact, draws a distinction between an objective reality which exists outside of the mind (the physical world) and a subjective "reality" inside the mind (the perception and interpretation of physical data). The distinction operates like this: Men take "darkness" or black to mean a lack of knowledge in the understanding. But they forget that "darkness" in the intellectual context of the perceiving *subject*, is simply a metaphor drawn from the perceived *object*, the physical world. They conceptualize physical data without realizing that connections between objective physical realities and subjective interpretations can be erroneous. The mistake occurs when men forget they are only using metaphor derived from physical nature and incorrectly project back their subjective misunderstandings onto the external object so that

for them, darkness *literally* becomes ignorance. The *real* "darkness" of ignorance, argues Herbert, lies in the fallibility of human perception and consequent transference of incorrect interpretations onto physical realities. Implicit in Herbert's praise of darkness, is the view that black (and darkness) can become anything the mind wishes it to become.

Another Sonnet to Black it self is addressed not to the colour black, or to a specific or general black beauty, but rather to a metaphysical notion of "black-ness:"

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,

This final sonnet summarizes all that has been said about black in the other poems in the sequence. Black contains all things. It represents divine mystery and possesses "hidden power," for it is through black that "The characters of fate shine in the Skies,/And tell us what the Heavens do ordain." Light does not dispell darkness but rather, darkness willingly retires:

But when Earth's common light shines to our eys,
Thou so retir'st thy self, that thy disdain
All revelation unto Man denys.

This passage contains that same distinction between "common light" and the transcendent quality of blackness. Black is the non-sensual *colour* of revelation and if we allow "Earth's common light" to shine "to our eys" we can never perceive black's powers. Consequently, we never transcend but remain like the "vulgar poets" who do not realize the inaccuracy involved in equating subjective interpretations (metaphor) to physical objects.

While it is easy to read too much into a sudden change in a poet's

use of concepts and images, we cannot help but note that the sudden change in Herbert's poetic practice in the black beauty poems occurs only once in the whole canon, and that this sudden reversal coincides exactly with the drastic reversal in his personal fortunes. The black beauty poems were written in his unstable position in 1621 when he was recalled from Paris and his glorious days as ambassador were abruptly terminated. One cannot help but note that the chivalric behavior, and the world of light which so characterized Herbert's earlier years had in a very real sense, been "eclipsed" in 1621. Herbert was beginning to feel the unpleasant side of James' authority and this was not the first time he had experienced these feelings. His exultation and his departure from his own earlier uses of black symbolism, and his strong adherence to more traditional forms of poetry (the sonnet) suggest an ambivalent reaction to his recall. The content, on the one hand, quite possibly reflects a hostile reaction towards a political establishment (the "State") which could give and take away at whim, while adherence to traditional concepts and forms, on the other hand, could be symptomatic of his desire to remain a part of that establishment. Herbert was presumably not in the state of despair that appeared to have been his lot in 1608 when he had lost his castle and wrote the satires. In 1621 he could still believe that all was not lost for him since he still thought he would be paid and rewarded for his services. Perhaps this explains the absence of any sign of bitterness in the black beauty poems while at the same time we meet an inverted world there.

In *A Merry Rime sent to the Lady Wroth* (?1621)⁴⁸ we find Herbert in one of his most complimentary moods, but he was probably so for a purpose. Lady Wroth was born Lady Mary Sidney, a niece to Sir Philip Sidney. The

Lady Wroth was an accomplished poet and a ruthless satirist. She was also an extremely wealthy patroness of men of letters, and very influential at court. Herbert's poem was written on the occasion of the birth of Lord Pembroke's child.⁴⁹ But Herbert spends thirteen out of fifteen lines praising the Lady Wroth and only two on the child itself. Apparently, Lady Wroth was not the mother of the child in question and Moore Smith (p. 154) believes that "Herbert seems to have sent his verses of inquiry about the child to Lady Wroth and have paid her the compliment of asking her to polish his verses and give them lightness of movement and beauty before presenting them." In its entirety, the poem reads,

Madam, though I am one of those
That every Spring use to compose,
That is, add feet unto round Prose:
Yet you a further art disclose,
And can, as everybody knows,
Add to those feet fine dainty toes,
Satyrs add nails, but they are shrews,
My Muse therefore no further goes.
But for her feet craves shoes and hose.
Let a fair season add a Rose,
While thus attired wee'l oppose
The tragick buskins of our foes.
And herewith, Madam, I will close,
And 'tis no matter how it shews,
All I care is, if the child grows.

Herbert first praises her, saying that her poetical talents surpass his own by far, and then he allies himself with her by suggesting that together they "oppose" their foes. We see Herbert indulging in his typical tactics by attempting, through poetry, to win the favours of those who might be able to help him financially as well as politically. The poem was written in the year of Herbert's recall from Paris and most likely represents one of his bids to regain some of his lost social prestige.

In this first stage of the transition period, Herbert fell from a high

social position to one which he believed to be beneath his dignity. During this stage, he writes three different styles of poetry. His work is characterized by a preoccupation with bliss, harmony and the attainment of his "proper place;" secondly, his work is characterized by a significant turning away from his former conceptual frameworks and by a parallel adoption of traditional elements; the third characteristic is that the lyrics develop a very strong preoccupation with compliments directed to specific individuals. In the first period (1608-1619) it was the elegies and epitaphs that contained this dedicatory element. By the beginning of the transition period Herbert was utilizing other occasions in order to obtain subject matter for his poetry.

During the second stage of the transition period (1629-1639) Herbert relied more and more heavily upon his scholarly and poetic talents to win the King's favours and money. Since the time of his second recall from Paris (1624) he had received nothing but empty promises and, after much petitioning, a title in the English peerage which temporarily soothed his burning ambitions but had no lasting effect in cooling them. With Buckingham's assassination in 1628 Herbert found himself without a patron to intercede on his behalf with the King. Thus, the poet was left to his own devices to achieve his desired ends.

During the second stage of the transition period Herbert practised the poetry of flattery and compliment, but it is poetry qualitatively different from any of his earlier efforts. *Elegy for Doctor Dunn*⁵⁰ (1631) is not concerned, as the earlier elegies were, with the question of what happens to the soul after death, nor with the nature of death. It contains neither the emotional involvement found in *Elegy Over a Tomb* nor the

rationality and the unshaken faith that we have seen in the *Elegy for the Prince* or other epitaphs. There is also a considerable reduction in the number of elegiac commonplaces.⁵¹ Critics have been greatly puzzled by this poem because they have assumed that Donne's death is the sole theme in it. A careful study of the text, however, suggests that Donne's death is actually incidental to the real meaning of the poem and that Herbert uses Donne's death as a means of begging, threatening, pleading and asking Charles to settle his outstanding debts. The poem is an unabashed statement of Herbert's disgruntlement with his social and political position in 1631.

The poem divides into three parts: an introduction which is concerned with the nature of praise, a central section praising Donne's poetical talents, and a third section in which Herbert tells Charles that he must be more fair in his dealings with his subjects and that he must put an end to the injustice of passively watching undeserving subjects reach their improper place high up in the social hierarchy.

The first forty-five lines discuss the nature of praise, what it is, what it is not, and how it should be delivered. He knew very well what praise was, and how to use it. He begins by observing that praise can be meaningless if not delivered properly and only to people who deserve it:

What though the vulgar and received praise,
 With which each common Poet strives to raise
 His worthless Patron, seem to give the height
 Of a true Excellence; yet as the weight
 Forc'd from his Centre, must again recoil,
 So every praise, as if it took some foil,
 Only because it was not well imploy'd,
 Turns to those senseless principles and void,
 Which in some broken syllables being couch'd,
 Cannot above an Alphabet be vouch'd.

In which dissolved state, they use to rest,
 Until some other in new forms invest
 Their easie matter, striving so to fix
 Glory with words, and make the parts to mix.

The central metaphor in this passage is that of a struggle between a man and a physical or mechanical force. "Each common poet" attempts to raise or lift his patron to greater heights of "true Excellence" but the patron, who is earthbound and heavy by nature, cannot possibly be supported at that height for an indefinite period of time. Under the strain of this great weight, words of praise simply disintegrate into their more elemental forms of syllables and letters. The heavy patron crashes to earth and comes to rest in his naturally inferior state.

These common poets struggle "to fix/Glory with words and make the parts to mix," but the task is impossible; it is doomed to failure because the patron (subject matter of the poem) is worth-less. By implication, false praise is an attempt to make a lie appear as truth. In his first satire, this type of perversion is what Herbert called the evil of the "State." The implicit connection with the satire becomes more explicit in the next passage:

But since praise that wants truth, like words that
 Their proper meaning, doth it self recant; (want
 Such tearms, however elevate and high,
 Are but like Meteors, which the pregnant Sky
 Varies in divers figures, till at last
 They either be by some dark Cloud o'rcast,
 Or wanting inward sustenance do devolve,
 And into their first Elements resolve.

Praises, like Garments then, if loose and wide,
 Are subject to fall off; if gay and py'd,
 Make men ridiculous; the just and grave
 Are those alone, which men may wear and have.

The metaphor of the common poet struggling to raise his "worthless" patron, and the consequent disintegration of words and praise, is extended to the metaphor of falling meteors which appear "elevate and high" but which are, in fact, doomed to fall to the earth. The patrons are, like the "nobility" in the first satire, hollow inside and no different from even the lowest peasant. Praise, says Herbert, should be like clothes; well-fitting and not overly-gaudy. In a negative sense, rich clothes are associated with foppery, artificiality, and with that which is to be mocked and ridiculed. The negative meaning attached to gaudy clothes is like the attitude in the satires, but quite different from Herbert's attitude to clothes in 1620 when he wrote *Sonnet* ("You well compacted Groves"). As Herbert's social position changes, his poetical treatment of clothing imagery also changes.⁵²

Having demolished the false facade of praises, Herbert proceeds to offer a definition of a more ideal type of praise, and to describe the ideal recipient of that praise. Praise is public domain, and everyone has a right to it, provided he does not take what is not justly his:

How fitting were it then, each had that part
Which is their due: And that no fraudulent art
Could so disguise the truth, but they might own
Their rights, and by that property be known,
For since praise is publick inheritance,
If any Inter-Commoner do chance
To give or take more praise then doth belong
Unto his part, he doth so great a wrong,
That all who claim an equal interest,
May him implead untill he do devest
His usurpations, and again restore
Unto the publick what was theirs before.

The passage is filled with pecuniary and legal terms such as "due," "own," "rights," "property," "Inheritance," "claim," "interest," "devest," and

"usurpations." Here there is a strong suggestion of the disgruntled Herbert who was tantalized by the promotions and money other people around him were receiving. His poetical request that rightful heirs be granted their proper due seems manifestly to be related to an obsession with money and rewards. This obsession, as we have seen from his letter to Charles in 1626, stemmed from a high self-esteem which was constantly at odds with the ill-treatment he received at the hands of his King. In the above passage we see Herbert's social position affecting his selection and use of poetical images.

The first section of the poem concludes with a concise definition of what praise should be:

Praises should then like definitions be
Round, neat, convertible, such as agree
To persons so, that, were their names conceal'd;
Must make them known as well as if reveal'd:

By stripping away the false praises from the true ones and thereby setting up an ideal, Herbert establishes a credibility for what he is about to say in the middle section. Here, in a passage of only twenty lines, Herbert praises the great Donne:

Having deliver'd now, what praises are,
It rests that I should to the world declare
Thy praises, DUNN, whom I so lov'd alive.
That with my witty *Carew* I should strive
To celebrate the dead, did I not need
A language by it self, which should exceed
All those which are in use: I or while I take
Those common words, which men may even rake
From Dunghil-wits, I find them so defil'd,
Slubber'd and false, as if they had exil'd
Truth and propriety, such as do tell
So little other things, they hardly spell
Their proper meaning, and therefore unfit
To blazon forth thy merits, or thy wit.

Nor will it serve, that thou did'st so refine
Matter with words, that both did seem divine,
When thy breath utter'd them: for thou b'ing gone,
They streight did follow thee; Let therefore none

Hope to find out an Idiom and sence,
Equal to thee, and to thy Eminence.

By implication, Herbert's own treatment of Donne is the true type of praise; it is "the just and grave," and it is free from the "fraudulent art" which disguises truth. This praise justly gives Donne his "proper due" and elevates him to his proper place. The central section in praise of Donne is written completely in superlatives. Herbert says that in order to praise Donne adequately he would require "A language by it self" because "Dunghil-wits" have corrupted and "so defil'd" the English language that they have "exil'd/Truth and propriety." Equating Donne with the "divine," Herbert states that with Donne's death "Idiom and sence" in poetry have died.

The important developments in the third and final section of the poem, however, tend to deny any claims to complete sincerity on Herbert's part. After showing us what praise should be, and after praising Donne as the master of truth in words of "Idiom and sence," Herbert makes one exception to his assertion that Donne is peerless. The one exceptional individual who possesses the capabilities to equal if not surpass Donne is none other than King Charles himself:

Unless our Gracious King give words their bound,
Call in false titles, which each where are found,
In Prose and Verse, and as bad Coin and light
Suppress them and their values, till the right
Take place, and do appear, and then in lieu
Of those forg'd Attributes stamp some anew,
Which being currant, and by all allow'd,
In Epitaphs and Tombs might be avow'd
More then their Escocheons.

False praise is now associated with false titles, forged coins and illegitimate coats of arms. The imagery is strictly titular and monetary.

Herbert, who had been living on empty promises for more than five years, challenges Charles to make good his promises, and urges him to recall all false titles and promises. This is Herbert's bid for "praise" (recognition and cash). There is little doubt that Herbert's art form here, was subservient to his political interest. Throughout the poem, Herbert has argued in the following manner: Praise is often deceptive. It lies when it should be truthful. He, as poet, is truthful and not like those "Dunghil-wits." As for Donne, he was the greatest poet to give words a truthful meaning, and he is unmatched except for his gracious majesty who could become Donne's equal if he gave his words truth and rewarded "proper worth" with "proper place."

In this third section Herbert exposes a kingdom which is degenerate and corrupt. The kingdom is a world which contains little if any justice, and a world in which falsehoods cannot be distinguished from truths. The perversity in the kingdom is not unlike the perversity we saw in the world described in *The State-progress of Ill*. But at this time, Herbert could not afford a direct attack upon the King in print (the genre of satire). The King owed him money which he desperately needed, so he used the elegiac form of poetry as a means of reminding the King of his obligations. Herbert is careful to say "Gracious King" and equally careful to imply that Charles was not responsible for the creation of false titles (which were largely the product of James' reign).

The monetary and titular imagery of the poem, along with Herbert's request that Charles call in "false titles . . . till the right/Take place, and do appear," reflect not only Herbert's state of mind at the turn of the decade but also a series of social innovations. During the late 1620's

and early 1630's Charles meddled so extensively in social and economic affairs ("Thorougs") that his new decrees caused considerable dissatisfaction and resentment among his subjects. Under royal command, titles could no longer be sold (as they had been under James I), rural commercial interests were all but stifled and taxes were levied indiscriminately. Taxes and promotions were heavily balanced in favour of aristocrats and against gentry and mercantile interests. Thus, while the King's tactless favouritism won him some friends, it also caused jealousy and resentment among those who were not lucky enough to receive his graces.⁵³ From the pattern of Herbert's life, it is clear that the poet's feelings of resentment towards the King align his sympathies with those members of social classes who had been injured or offended by Charles' new policies. In the poem, Herbert seems to make one thing clear: he knows his proper worth and feels he has not achieved his proper place. Coins (people) of true "values" should not be set aside in favour of forged coins. Self-interest seems to be the motive of this poem, and this was prompted by financial necessity.

During the final stage of the transition period (1639-1644) Herbert's problems came to a peak. Caught in a squeeze between creditors and King, and undecided as to whether or not he should support either King or Parliament in times of trouble or whether he should remain neutral, Herbert wavered at the political crossroads. No matter which way he looked the road seemed to lead to inevitable disaster. Intense frustration, immobility, uncertainty and increased dissatisfaction characterized his condition at this time.

*The Idea*⁵⁴ is considered correctly by most critics to be a straight-

forward piece of Platonism,⁵⁵ but what must be stressed is that Herbert's persona endorses a most extreme form of Platonism which involves a complete rejection of all things sensual, sensory or earth-bound. He will have nothing (or as little as possible) to do with earthly things, and his fierce desire to transcend is plainly an obsession:

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.

For who still cover'd with their earth would ly?
 Who would not shake their fetters off, and fly,
 And be, at least, next to, a Deity?

Given Herbert's uncomfortable position at this time, it seems likely that the Platonism in the poem is the reflection of a desire on his part to escape from the secular realm and from the steadily increasing financial, social and political pressures which were weighing heavier and heavier upon his shoulders. This suggested connection between the poetry and the life will become more evident as we examine the text of the poem.

At the beginning of *The Idea* the speaker describes the dual universe which he perceives:

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

For though th'Idea's of each sev'ral kind,
 Conceiv'd above by the Eternal Mind,
 Are such, as none can error in them find.

Since from his thoughts and presence he doth bear,
 And shut out all deformity so farr,
 That the least beauty near him is a Starr.

As Nature yet from far th'Idea's views,
 And doth besides but vile materials chuse,
 We in her works observe no small abuse:

Some of her figures therefore, foil'd and blurr'd.
 Shew as if Heaven had no way concurr'd
 In shapes so disproportion'd and absurd.

There is a Platonic split here between the beauty and the perfection of heavenly spheres and the deformity and disproportion of earthly beauties which we do not find in the earlier poems. In contrast to the "Eternal Mind," nature is an imperfect craftsman working with defective and flawed materials. This view of nature is disparate with Herbert's presentation of nature in *Sonnet* ("You well compacted Groves"), written in 1621 when he felt secure in his prestigious position. But by 1639, Herbert's garden of the world, like Hamlet's had grown to seed. Nature in *The Idea*, then, is characterized by "ugliness and stain," and "wrinkles interlin'd." Having said this Herbert then expresses a philosophical maxim which, by implication, totally condemns nature and her imperfections:

Fair is the mark of Good, foul of Ill,
 Although not so infallibly, but still
 The proof depends most on the mind and will:

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.

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.

Since "Foul" is the mark of "Ill" and since nature herself is "deformed" and ugly, nature is almost always evil ("Ill"). Here again is that duality in the thinking process. All things are separated into their

opposites: the transcendent world-nature, good-ill, perfect-imperfect, and fair-foul. These opposites "rarely" co-exist and even if they do they have little value in their unity. For the persona, nature and earth-bound things are to be avoided.

The maxim that "Fair's the true outside to the Good Within" can be found in Castiglione,⁵⁶ but here, in direct opposition to *The State-progress of Ill* where evil by necessity must disguise itself in the outward form of good, the two are separate entities which are never (or rarely) mixed. Conceptually, Herbert's poetry has undergone a complete about-face.

The Idea is also different from the earlier poems because the order of presentation of philosophical ideas has been inverted from the usual Herbert pattern. In *Madrigal*, for instance, Herbert played with Aristotelian concepts (ascending from the "particulars" in the physical world to the "universal"), and with Platonic concepts and processes (descending from his mistress' beauty which gives "form and degree" to all other inferior copies). In the black beauty poems he began, as Rockwood points out,⁵⁷ by praising Diana Cecyll's black beauty, but as the poems progress the topic of discussion shifts to black beauty in general, and finally, in the last poem of the sequence, to a discussion of a metaphysical and abstracted idea of black-ness. In *The Idea*, however, both of these patterns are abandoned and the poem's argument moves, not in an ascending movement (as in black beauty), nor in a simultaneously ascending-descending one (as in *Madrigal*) but in a strictly descending pattern. *The Idea* begins with a general statement that "All beauties vulgar eyes on earth do see." Then the poem demonstrates nature's imperfection, asserts

that external beauties reflect inner beauties, and finally comes to rest on the image of one particular woman:

That Beauty so accompani'd with Grace,
And equally conspicuous in the face,
In a fair Womans outside takes the place.

Thus while in her all rare perfection meets,
Each, as with joy, its fellow beauty greets,
And varies so into a thousand sweets.

Or if some tempting thought do so assault,
As doubtful she 'twixt two opinions halt,
A gentle blush corrects and mends the fault,

That so she still fairer and better grows,
Without that thus she more to passion ows,
Then what fresh colour on her cheeks bestows.

To which again her lips such help can add,
As both will chase all grievous thoughts and sad:
And give what else can make her good or glad.

Since all that is beautiful is good (for the most part), since nature is deformed and evil, and since the lady is beautiful, she is perfect and she transcends nature even though she is earth-bound for the duration of her lifetime. The lady, then, is quite literally the incarnation of a Platonic ideal. She is a redeeming element in the corrupt order of nature.

Here we note that despite his extreme Platonic views the persona attempts to see the higher order of the universe (the lady) reconciled with the lower one (the earth). He is aware that inevitably the two must separate and that the union between the two is not a "natural" one. Thus, although the persona tends to be an extreme Platonist in the sense that he seeks to escape from his "earthly mould" and views the lower order of nature as corrupt, he is forced to recognize a union between the two:

Thus from above I doubt not to behold
 You second self renew'd in your old mold,
 And rising thence fairer then can be told.

From whence ascending to the Elect and Blest
 In your true joys you will not find it least,
 That I in Heav'n shall know and love you best.

For while I do your coming there attend,
 I shall much time on your Idea spend.
 And note how far all others you transcend.

And thus, though you more then an Angel be,
 Since being here to sin and mischief free,
 You will have rais'd your self to their degree:

That so victorious over Death and Fate,
 And happy in your everlasting state,
 You shall triumphant enter Heaven gate.

Hasten not thither yet, for as you are
 A Beauty upon Earth without compare,
 You will shew best still where you are most rare.

Live all our lives then: If the picture can
 Here entertain a loving absent man,
 Much more th' Idea where you first began.

The persona, who looks essentially toward the higher order of things, discovers that through the lady who is earth-bound yet transcendent he can at least tolerate the lower order until he himself is capable of transcending.

There are significant similarities between Herbert and his persona. The persona is ambivalent about the order of earthly, corrupt things. He wants to be unshackled from them, yet at the same time he somehow wants to remain attached. The persona's ambivalence parallels Herbert's own mixed feelings in 1639. Like his persona, Herbert too was caught between a higher order and a lower one. In the socio-political context of his life, Herbert felt simultaneously attracted and repulsed by the lower order (Parliament). At the same time, his sense of loyalty urged him to

remain faithful to the higher order (the King). Both Herbert and the persona of *The Idea* are aware of two opposing orders in their respective worlds, and both attempt to resolve their dilemmas by envisioning both orders reconciled. In both cases, a harmonious resolution was impossible.

Part III: 1644-1648

In the third period of this life Herbert became a Parliamentarian. The choice was, as we have seen, not an easy one, but nonetheless it had to be made. The poet had been wavering for some years prior to 1644, but after Parliamentary troops seized his castle and he was called "the treacherous Lord Herbert" by Royalists, he gave his full support to Parliament. During the remaining years after this important shift, he collected a pension from Parliament and his financial difficulties appear to have been resolved. The pressures were beginning to subside.

By 1644 Herbert's poetry took on a different character. Until this time it had rarely, if ever, functioned as a means of purging himself of frustrations and problems. He had ceased to use his poetry as a means of gaining favours. The poetry of this last period in the life is unlike anything that precedes it because it is subjective, introverted, emotional and highly personal.

*October 14, 1664, [sic]*⁵⁸ which Moore Smith dates 1644, was written two weeks after Herbert had given his full support to Parliament. The poem begins,

Enraging Griefs, though you most divers be,
 In your first Causes, you may yet agree
 To take an equal share within my heart,
 Since if each grief strive for the greatest part,
 You needs must vex your selves as well as me.

The theme of conflict or of a struggle for dominance between two opposing forces was present in the black-white conflict of the black beauty sequence, but by 1644 this theme had risen to unprecedented prominence. The persona's heart is the prize for which these griefs are striving and they are in conflict with his will. His reference to his "heart" is perhaps an allusion to Herbert's own sentiments in the King-Parliament conflict which had ravaged him for so many years.

In the second stanza the theme of a struggle is emphasized and re-emphasized:

For your own sakes and mine make an end,
In vain you do about a Heart contend,
Which though it seem in greatness to dilate,
Is but a tumor, which in this its state
The choicest remedies would but offend.

The image of these griefs surrounding his heart suggests an army besieging a castle or fortress and, in fact, the reference to "contention" anticipates the siege imagery of the next stanza. In this second stanza, however, there is a recognizably resolute position taken in opposition to these "enraging griefs" which are, at times, almost impossible to withstand. His heart has become swollen not with greatness but with a bitterness which cannot be cured even by the "choicest remedies."

In the third stanza the siege metaphor is developed fully:

Then storm't at once, I neither feel constraint
Scorning your worst, nor suffer any taint
Dying by multitudes, though if you strive,
I fear my heart may thus be kept alive,
Until it under its own burden faint.

As when a castle is besieged and those inside prefer to die "by multitudes" rather than yield, so too does the persona resolve never to yield even though he fears the strain of the battle may be too much for his heart

to bear. Herbert's choice of imagery here, reflects a part of his personal experiences in the final period.

In the fourth stanza Herbert draws the imagery from alchemy:

What is't not done? Why then, my God, I find,
 Would have me use you to reform my mind:
 Since through his help I may from you extract
 An essence pure, so spriteful and compact,
 As it will be from grosser parts refin'd:

Here, the persona looks to God for assistance, and although this passage is more religious than philosophical, it bears some resemblance to *The Idea*. In both instances the persona looks upwards to a transcendent world which he hopes will rescue him from his burdens. The difference between the poems, however, is also important, for, in 1644, the plea for help is highly religious. In his poetry, Herbert is no longer interested in the question of philosophy but rather concerned with the consolations of faith. Through divine intercession the persona's griefs are transubstantiated just as base metals are "from grosser parts refin'd." The transformation is not physical but mental, psychological and emotional, and this refinement is a response to Herbert's own political and personal transformation.

By this divine alchemical process "enraging griefs" are transformed into contrition ("godly sorrow"), and their frightening lethality into benevolent and desired blessings:

Which b'ing again converted by his Grace
 To godly sorrow, I may both efface
 Those sins first caus'd you, and together have
 Your pow'r to kill turn'd to a power to save,
 And bring my soul to its desired place.

The soul now has the potential to find its just reward and to bring itself to a state of rest.

While it is true that Lord Herbert's poems tend to be secular, it would be a mistake to dismiss this religious poem as simply an "exception" in the Herbert canon or to label it a part of his "eclecticism" without further analysis. In its specific preoccupations it reflects a changed Herbert disillusioned with the world in the final period of his life. Premonitions of this change from secular and philosophical emphases to religious emphasis can be sensed in *The Idea*, where the persona exhibits very strong inclinations to transcend this world. Somewhere between 1639 and 1644 the extreme Platonism of *The Idea* was changed into the religious fervour of *Oct. 14, 1664* (sic). Herbert's poetry changed once more because his social position had also changed, though for the last time. Reflected in this poem we see Herbert burdened by "griefs" but confident that he will overcome them only when his soul reaches its "desired place" in the next world.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER III

¹ Basil Willey, "Lord Herbert of Cherbury: A Spiritual Quixote of the Seventeenth Century," *Essays and Studies*, 27 (1941), 22-9.

² G. C. Moore Smith, in *The Poems English and Latin of Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury*, (1923; rpt. Ely House, London: Oxford University Press, 1968), suggests the following dates for some of the poems in the canon:

"I must depart"	May 1608
Madrigal	?1608
Another	?1608
The State-progress of Ill	Aug. 1608
Satyra Secunda: Of Travellers	Sept. 1608
Epitaph. Caecil. Boulser	Aug. 1609
Epitaph. Guli. Herbert	Aug. 1609
To his friend Ben Jonson	?1609
Elegy for the Prince	Nov. 1612
"Tears Flow no More"	1614
Ditty . . . Pesarino	?1615
Ditty . . . Coseferite	?1615
Epitaph on Saquevile's Child	?1616
Elegy Over a Tomb	1617
To a Lady who did sing Excellently	1618
Epitaph . . . Francis Vere	?1618
Sonnet ("You well compacted Groves")	1620
To Mrs. Diana Cecyll	?1621
To her Eyes	?1621
To her Hair	?1621
Sonnet of Black Beauty	?1621
Another Sonnet to Black it self	?1621
A Merry Rime . . . Lady Wroth	?1621
Elegy for Dr. Dunn	1631
The Idea	1639
Oct. 14, 1664 ("Enraging griefs")	1644

I accept Moore Smith's dating firstly because he has had the benefit of examining manuscripts, secondly because he is the only individual who has attempted to date the poems, and thirdly because internal evidence in the poems does not suggest him wrong.

In pagination, Moore Smith has followed the 1665 edition exactly and consequently page numbers are synonymous in both editions. Although I always refer to the page numbers in the 1665 edition, the poems can be found in the same location in Moore Smith.

⁴ See Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. Thomas Hoby. Everyman's Library no. 807, (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1928), 319. The argument, which can be found in Book IV, runs thus:

For like as though the particular beautie of one bodie
he guideth her [the soul] to the universall beautie of
all bodies; Even so in the least degree of perfection
through particular understanding hee guideth her to the
universall understanding.

⁵ Page 19.

⁶ Page 17. In the 1665 edition the poem is untitled. Moore Smith entitles it "Parted Souls." Collins leaves it untitled while Howarth titles it "I must depart."

⁷ For a discussion of "I must depart" and of its similarity to parts of Donne's style of poetry see John Hoey, "A Study of Lord Herbert of Cherbury's Poetry," *Renaissance and Modern Studies*, 14 (1970), 69-89. Gasior believes that "This poem is an imitation of Donne's 'A Valediction Forbidding Mourning,' 'The Legacy' . . . and 'The Good Morrow'" (p. 439). The image of the two hemispheres can be found in *The Good Morrow*.

⁸ There are many articulators of this doctrine in Castiglione, especially in Book IV. Perhaps the most well known passage which describes the movement from the physical world to the spiritual world, is the one which uses the analogy of stairs:

Let us therefore bend all our force and thoughtes of
soule to this most holy light, that sheweth us the
way which leadeth to heaven: and after it, putting
off the affections we were clad at our coming downe,
let us climbe the stairs, which at the lowermost
steppe have the shadow of sensuall beautie, to the high
mansion place where the heavenly, amiable and right
beautie dwelleth . . . and there shall wee finde true
rest for our travels, certaine remedies for our
miseries

(Book IV, p. 319)

⁹ According to Gasior, Herbert intended the persona of "I must depart" to be criticized and ridiculed for his views. Given that by the early seventeenth century many Petrarchan and courtly ideals were held in various degrees of contempt, it is possible that Herbert intended his persona (who adheres to these views) to be ridiculed. However, it is also imperative to recognize that condemnation of things courtly and Petrarchan was not universal by the early seventeenth century, and it is quite possible that Herbert himself adhered to these outdated principles to a certain extent. This possibility seems to be confirmed when we recall that at this time, Herbert's whole lifestyle was dominated by his love for the courtly tradition. His chivalric deeds and duelling were

activities in which he engaged himself fully. In short, it seems that the relationships between the persona's courtly beliefs and Herbert's are more harmonious than Gasior suggests.

¹⁰ Moore Smith (p. 147) notes a similar though more specific connection between Herbert's life and his poetry:

The date of ["I must depart"], May, 1608, shows almost incontestably that it was written, before Herbert's first foreign journey--we must hope, to his wife. This gives a great interest, which is increased if we may consider the two following poems [*Madrigal* and *Another*] to belong to the same time.

Moore Smith is proceeding in the right direction when he investigates the social and personal circumstances under which the poems were written, and then connects them with the content of the poems. However, Moore Smith does not see a connection between Herbert's literary *style* and his general frame of mind during the early years.

¹¹ Page 21.

¹² Page 20. There is considerable editorial disagreement over the poem's title. Moore Smith entitles it, *Epitaph. Caecil. Boulstr.*, Howarth entitles it *Epitaphium Caeciliae Boulstred*, and Collins entitles it *Epitaph. Caecil.-Boulser*,

¹³ For a discussion of the relationship between the form and content, particularly in terms of this movement from uneasiness to a "quiet confidence," see Mary Ellen Rickey, "Rhymecraft in Edward and George Herbert," *JEGP*, 57 (1958), 508.

¹⁴ Page 9.

¹⁵ See Moore Smith, p. 143.

¹⁶ This is Samuel Johnson's famous remark about the nature of Metaphysical wit, particularly as it applies to Cowley. See *Samuel Johnson: Rasselas, Poems and Selected Prose*, Bertrand H. Bronson ed., "The Life of Cowley," (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., 1952) 470.

¹⁷ Gasior (p. 384) argues that "the persona of the satire is not Herbert: each works from a different epistemology and human psychology." Moreover, "the persona of the satire [is] . . . a despairing Christian who dichotomizes the regenerate and degenerate, the fallen world and 'paradise regained,' but who, like the persona of Donne's satire sequence,

employs the conceptual language of Platonic and Stoic philosophies to express his ideas. The conflict of the poem is not philosophical, but theological, and is between Nature and Grace . . ." (p. 385).

Casior's interpretation here, is incorrect because he has not taken into account the personal and social changes that Herbert underwent. The poem is neither philosophical nor theological but, in the broadest sense of the term, political. The religious vocabulary has a meaning much more significant than only theological tension. One of the images in the poem is an inverted trinity. The inverted trinity, however, is one of the marks associated with witchcraft. Herbert's connection of evil (the State) with witchcraft has a specific significance which can be found in seventeenth-century history. In continental Europe, the persecution of witches was handled by the institution of the Church but in England witches were sought out, captured, tried and executed by a special branch of the government. Thus, witch hunts in England fell under secular jurisdiction. Under the rule of James I, the Essex Assizes (1604) tried four hundred "witches" and this was an attempt to rid England of some of its "evils." Moreover, James' *Daemonology* became an important, well-read document and the King's attitudes towards witches were well known. In short, with James' ascension to the throne, England embarked upon a massive campaign to destroy witches, the enemies of Church and State.

Now, by asserting that evil (the State), disguised in the form of good is an inverted trinity, Herbert suggests that James' persecution of witches was a means of enforcing his own brand of evil. Thus, we are brought back to the beginning lines of the poem where Herbert says that man's attempt to rid himself of evil (witches) produces only another type of evil (tyranny). England had a choice between the evil of witches or the evil of a tyrannical King who sought absolute power in destroying the enemies of an evil crown. The significance of the religious imagery and language then, is that they are used as a device, as a means of exposing a hypocritical and tyrannical element in James' reign of power. James himself is the evil who tolerates no other evil but himself.

18 The seventeenth-century reader would most likely make an immediate connection between poison and the corruptions of Italy. The Italians were reputed to be very talented in the art of poisoning people. Webster's *Duchess of Malfi* and *The White Devil* are representative of many Englishmen's opinions and views of this. Italy is also referred to at the end of *Satyra Secunda* and there is no mistaking its significance there.

The mention of "Agents" and "Intelligencers" reminds us of the reality of life in Jacobean England when spies were everywhere.

19 By the early 1630's Herbert was writing a very different type of analysis of the line of British Kings. But his social position had changed significantly too. His *History and Reign of King Henry VIII* was dedicated to Charles in hopes of receiving money, and in this work Herbert praises the line of English Kings who succeeded Henry. King Charles was, of course, included in this list.

20 The efficiency of Elizabethan and Jacobean espionage is remarkable. See Allen Dulles, *The Craft of Intelligence* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1963). According to Dulles (p. 19), "it became established practice for Her Majesty's Secretary of State to intercept domestic and foreign correspondence, to open it, read it, reseal it and send it on its way." The same kinds of standards and procedures were maintained throughout Cromwell's time as well. The Parliamentarians discovered many Royalist plots through the use of spies but the Royalists also had their share of "Agents." It is not surprising that Herbert should have been so cautious in masking his radical content with such a gnarled style.

21 Page 14.

22 Herbert is alluding to some type of public meeting or secular gathering. The presence of a secretary may perhaps imply a legal gathering of sorts, but the reference is too topical and too obscure to hazard a further guess to what he speaks of here.

23 It is supremely ironic that "Fauxbourgs St. Germans," which Herbert so ruthlessly attacks here, should later become his place of residence during the time when he was spending money extravagantly in order to impress people in the same manner that the satirized travellers do in his poem. It is important to remember that in 1608, when this satire was written, Herbert was an outsider to fashionable and elegant living in England. By 1619, however, his position had *changed* significantly and he was a member of the establishment. Consequently, he adopted the new lifestyle and attitudes expected of him.

24 The name Elpus may come from the Greek, ελπος, meaning hope or expectation (for promotion in court).

25 Gasior, op. cit., p. 391. Like his interpretation of the first satire, Gasior sees *Satyra Secunda* as essentially a theological poem, although he admits that the second satire has greater social implications. In fact, both poems are equally socially oriented.

26 Page 44. In the Autobiography (p. 84-5) Herbert makes an interesting reference to a nun who sang so beautifully that all who listened were "ravished . . . into admiration." The year was 1615. She may have been the basis for this poem.

27 The form of the poem itself, which consists of three stanzas, may have been intended to suggest the perfection and transcendence of the trinity. Significantly, the third stanza is based upon sight, the most perfect of the senses. Thus, the poem begins in the lower senses and culminates in the highest of senses.

28 The passage from Castiglione (p. 313) reads:
 And first consider that the body, where that beautie
 shineth, is not the fountaine from whence beauty
 springeth, but rather because beauty is bodillesse,
 and (as wee have saide) an heavenly shining beame,
 she loseth much of her honour when she is coupled
 with that vile subject and full of corruption,
 because the lesse she is a partner thereof, the
 more perfect she is, and clean sundred from it, is
 most perfect.

And as a man heareth not with his mouth, nor
 smelleth with his ears: no more can he also in any manner
 wise enjoy beautie, nor satisfy the desire that she stirreth
 in our mindes, with feeling, but with the sense, unto whom
 beautie is the very butte to level at: namely, the virtue
 of seeing.

Let him lay aside therefore the blinde judgement of the
 sense, and enjoy with his eyes ye brightnesse, the comliness,
 the loving sparkels, laughters, gestures, and all the other
 pleasant furnitures of beautie; especially with hearing
 the sweetness of her voice, the tunableness of her wordes,
 the melody of her singing and playing on instruments (in
 case the woman beloved bee a musitian) and so shall he with
 most daintie foode feede the soule through the meanes of
 these two senses, which have litel bodily substance in
 them, and be the ministers of reason, without entering farther
 toward the bodie with coveting unto any longing otherwise
 than is honest.

29 Page 26. Although this poem is untitled in the 1665 edition it
 is clearly separate from *A Vision* which precedes it.

30 Page 29.

31 Page 26.

32 See *Five Courtier Poets of the English Renaissance*, Robert Bender
 ed., (New York: Washington Square Press, Inc., 1967), p. 296. Sidney
 himself became a model for "courteous" behavior. Scholar, diplomat, soldier,
 poet and patron of poets, he was the first major English figure who seemed
 to embody Castiglione's ideal. There are many parallels between the lives
 of the two men which suggest that Herbert may have modelled a part of his
 life after Sidney, and consequently some of his poetry as well. Like
 Sidney, Herbert spent time in Germany, Hungary, Italy and the Netherlands.
 Sidney was also an English ambassador. Moreover, the Sidneys were related
 to the Herberts. See Moore Smith, p. 149 and Lee, p. 168-9. Herbert also
 wrote the following epitaph (p. 53) for Sidney:

Reader,
 Within this Church Sir *Philip Sidney* lies,
 Nor is it fit that I should more acquaint,
 Lest superstition rise,
 And Men adore,
 Souldiers, their Martyr; Lovers, their Saint.

Herbert imitates the format of the echo poems in three other instances: *Melander* (p. 46), *Echo to a Rock* (p. 46) and *Echo in a Church* (p. 47).

³³ Epitaph on Sir Francis Vere (?1618), (p. 34) is an example of this:

Reader,
 If thou appear
 Before this tomb, attention give,
 And do not fear,
 Unless it be to live,
 For dead is great Sir *Francis Vere*.

Of whom this might be said, should God ordain
 One to destroy all sinners, whom that one
 Redeem'd not there, that so he might atone
 His chosen flock, and take from earth that stain,
 That spots it still, he worthy were alone
 To finish it, and have, when they were gone,
 This World for him made Paradise again.

This poem is not immediately striking as an expression of sincere grief or sorrow. It is an elaborate compliment which sets up Vere as a sort of redeeming saint. Vere's virtues are established and he is set apart from the rest of humanity. This technique is common to many epitaphs. Because the poem is so conventional it loses some of its impact.

It is worth noting that earlier in his career, Herbert wrote a poem to Ben Jonson (who was still alive) which bears a remarkable similarity to the epitaph, especially in its artificial and complimentary style:

'Twas not enough, Ben Johnson, to be thought
 Of English Poets best, but to have brought
 In greater state, to their acquaintance, one
 So equal to himself and thee, that none
 Might be thy second, while thy Glory is,
 To be the Horace of our times and his.

Because he uses such similar techniques, it is difficult to distinguish between Herbert's style of poetry for epitaphs and his style of complimentary verse. The poem is written in praise of Jonson the classicist's poetical and translating abilities. Herbert elevates him to a level higher than Horace himself. Herbert also dedicated his *Satyra Secunda* to Jonson and the two poets appear to have been on friendly terms with each other. In spite of any friendship that existed between the two men, however, Herbert's praise of Jonson also had other favourable effects on his own

career. It was amply repaid, because "In return Jonson applauded Herbert's learning, wit, valour, and judgement in very complimentary verses" (DNB "Edward Herbert"). Jonson was pleased that Herbert recognized brilliance and talent when he saw it, and in turn, Jonson's praise of Herbert advanced the latter's reputation as a courtier of good taste.

³⁴ *Minor Poets of the Seventeenth Century*, R. G. Howarth ed., (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1931), p. viii.

³⁵ Page 22.

³⁶ Horace Rockwood argues (p. 41) that "Herbert's poem [as opposed to Donne's on the same topic] is an elaborate, 'pretty,' courtly compliment in conventional hyperbole . . . [and that] on the whole, it is a rather slight achievement, never transcending its occasional origin." Rockwood correctly observes the element of "hyperbole" but is misleading in saying that it "never transcends its occasional origin." Indeed, as we have seen from the satires, the style and content of Herbert's poetry was, to a certain extent, dictated by the circumstances (both personal and socio-political) surrounding its composition. It is also true, however, that if Herbert allowed this poem to be published, and if he did not wish to jeopardize his chances of promotion, both style and content would have to be conservative.

³⁷ Page 30.

³⁸ Page 32.

³⁹ Rockwood, (87) who appears to be quite confused about the poem, says it "has no specific subject; although it was probably written for a woman (or 'woman'), the subject could also be a man." The most likely subject of this, the most intense and emotional of all the poems in the canon, is Herbert's younger brother Charles, who died in 1617.

⁴⁰ Page 54.

⁴¹ In *Satyra Secunda*, written at a time when Herbert was a social misfit, the poor were spared his ridicule: they were "a subject not fit for my muse nor sport." This was the voice of Herbert the outsider. In 1621, however, when he was wealthy and enjoying his residency in the very place which he once criticized (St. Germain), he wrote this sonnet describing a place where the poor do not exist. Secure in his own financial status, and impressed by his own apparent wealth, Herbert, who was once himself one of the "poorest" now believed himself to be dressed in "riches which can never fade." The new poetics in *Sonnet* have their source in Herbert's changed social position in 1621 and in his reaction to that new position.

42 Merlou Castle, which was the place that inspired this poem, was remarkably Medieval in its lifestyle, and this appealed greatly to Herbert. He first visited the castle in 1608 and remained there for eight full months, enjoying the generous hospitality, the large hunting expeditions in the woods (conducted with all possible pomp and ceremony), the great feasts, and the pleasant company. See *Autobiography*, pp. 52-5. Herbert's description of the castle in the *Autobiography* contains the same sentiments found in Jonson's *To Penhurst*. Herbert visited Merlou Castle frequently throughout his career as ambassador and he attempted to incorporate its medieval ideals into his own lifestyle in Paris--even though he could not afford to do so. See Chapter II, n. 14, *supra*.

43 Pages 34-9.

44 The rhyme scheme in the poem imitates the thematic structure of each verse. The antithesis-thesis process of argument is imitated by the division of each stanza into an *aaabbb* rhyme scheme.

45 Critical interpretations of Herbert's use of the colour black vary greatly. Gasior believes its significance is religious. Rockwood argues that it is psychological and partially literary. Harrison (see n. 46 *infra*.) believes it is based on Heraldry. Most critics tend to ignore any literary significance that might be attached to the use of black in these poems and no critic attaches any specific or definite biographical significance to its use.

Gasior (p. 458) argues that the lady represents God and the Christian church. The colour black "represents both the non-being of God, His infinity and, perhaps, the human institutional structure of the Church, the physical or material element which is visible to the eyes." Gasior's interpretation is correct as far as it goes, and there is nothing in the text of the poems to deny the validity of his position. It is through the beauty of the lady that we come to realize black is "the veil of an eternal night" which God hides behind and through which he sends his "beams" (Grace). Black is infinity, it is associated with the influence of the stars and with the three sisters of fate; it is revelation and shows us the "causes why we are grown blind;" it is also simultaneously awe-inspiring, terrifying and attractive.

However, the significance of Herbert's use of black is more than just a religious one. Gasior fails to see that Herbert's use of black in these poems contradicts not only a literary convention, but Herbert's own earlier poetics. Indeed, we are still left with the question as to *why* Herbert should choose to invert these meanings and why he should do so at this particular stage in his life and not at any other stage.

Rockwood's interpretation (p. 107-8) takes us one step further. He argues that "Herbert's predilection for black stems from both public and private sources, which he then occasionally draws upon simultaneously. Black is traditionally associated with sin, evil, and ignorance, making it the symbolic opposite of white, but Herbert ignores the traditional completely and actually reverses the common valuations of black and white.

Herbert's love of black can be derived from three major sources, Heraldry, Platonism, and anti-Petrarchanism, but the most important source is undeniably private."

Rockwood attempts to derive this "private source" from a part of Moore Smith's interpretation of *Melander, Supposed to Love Susan but did love Ann*. Moore Smith argues that the Melander in the poem is none other than Herbert himself. Accepting this as a truthful and general principle upon which the black beauty poems are based, Rockwood derives this private source from two facts: one, that Herbert was of swarthy complexion with black hair, and two, that the name "Melander" comes from two Greek stems meaning "black" and "man." Rockwood concludes then, (p. 108) that "the colour black would have a special, personal significance for him, and he would be expected to assert its supremacy at every opportunity."

In spite of its ingenuity, Rockwood's theory may be partially correct, for, given Herbert's circumstances in 1621, he would certainly assert his supremacy over as many as he could. However, Rockwood has failed to see that this "assertion" of supremacy does not occur throughout the entire canon, or even through a significant part of it. Therefore, Herbert did not use "every opportunity."

⁴⁶ See John L. Harrison, "Lord Herbert's Two Sonnets on Black," *NQ*, (August, 1953), 323-5. Harrison argues that this contest between the colours of black and white is based upon Herbert's knowledge of "the similar contest in the science of Heraldry." Although Harrison does not seem to be aware of it, the Herbert coat of arms also contained large areas of black.

⁴⁷ In Book IV of *The Book of the Courtier*, (p. 319) light and darkness have a meaning opposite to what Herbert asserts here:

And therefore burning in this most happie flame,
she [the soul] ariseth to the noblest part of her
which is the understanding, and there no more
shadowed with the darke night of earthly matters,
'seeth heavenly beautie.

Black is not only earth-bound but detrimental to the well-being of the soul. Herbert's poetry of the first period agrees with this premise. By the time of the black beauty poems, however, Herbert was no longer using as many ideas from Castiglione as he had been earlier. The ideas and themes in his poems began to move away from earlier, more conservative precedents.

⁴⁸ Page 42.

⁴⁹ Moore Smith (p. 153) provides a virtual labyrinth of biographical information in an attempt to determine which of the two Lord Pembroke's Herbert refers to. It was either William, Earl of Pembroke, who was Lady Wroth's cousin, or his brother Philip, who did not become Earl of

Pembroke until 1630. Ultimately, Moore Smith's dating of the poem is based on two facts which seem to indicate the poem was written in 1621; first, the poem contains references to Lady Wroth's satirical abilities and secondly that "In 1621 . . . Lady Mary Wroth published . . . 'The Countesse of Mountgomerie's Urania,' in imitation of her uncle's work, 'The Countes of Pembroke's Arcadia' . . ." (p. 154), a work which was held to be satirically ruthless by many of her contemporaries.

Both Earls of Pembroke, however, had sons born to them in 1621.

50 Page 57.

51 Moore Smith (p. xviii) says "the elegy on Donne is dry and abstract, though with some real touches of feeling." Rockwood (p. 378) is the only critic who ventures an interpretation, and he makes a few correct observations but draws the wrong conclusion:

Herbert's poem fails to match Carew's 'An Elegy upon the Death of Doctor Donne, Dean of Paul's (sic) not only in poetic accomplishment but also in the sense of personal intensity, of personal grief, communicated. The lack of genuine intimacy in Herbert's elegy for Donne is almost shocking . . . [Rockwood then quotes the central section of the poem] . . . it may be that Herbert's emotion was so strong he actually was unable to express it, but the rest of the poem is so mechanical it is at least as likely that the passage is conventional hyperbole.

Critics have failed to produce a meaningful interpretation of the *Elegy* because they have not fully realized that the abundance of monetary and titular images (and the poem in general) is directly connected to Herbert's disgruntlement with his social position of 1631.

52 It is perhaps significant that on two other occasions Herbert uses the image of clothes. The first occurs in *Satyra Secunda* where he mocks the fashions of wealthy aristocrats who look as much out of place in France as an Indian's costume would in the streets of London. In this context, clothes conceal corruption. The second instance occurs in *Sonnet* ("You well compacted Groves") where he says nature dresses the inhabitants of the Grove in "riches which can never fade." In the first of these two occurrences clothes have a negative connotation, in the second, positive. Herbert's negative presentation of clothes coincides with the time when he was in an inferior social position, while his positive presentation of clothing imagery coincides with the time when he was living in luxury in France.

53 For a further discussion of "Thorougs" and Charles' interference in social, economic and religious affairs, see Lawrence Stone, *The Causes*

of the *English Revolution: 1529-1642*, (London: The Trinity Press, 1972), 126 ff. I am indebted to Professor J. Heller, Department of History, University of Manitoba, for suggesting the possibility of a connection between certain elements in *Elegy for Doctor Dunn* and the social conditions under which this poem was written.

54 Page 75.

55 Rockwood's most significant comment concerning *The Idea* (p. 101) is that it "is obviously and thoroughly Platonic All the Neo-Platonic elements in the poem appear elsewhere and I do not think it necessary to labor them."

Gasior is the only critic who offers to explicate the poem. He argues (p. 447) that the persona is to be criticized: "Herbert, if we read the poem closely enough, is telling us that this man is an utter fool, a defeatist who has retreated into the confines of a fantastic simplicity and a self-defeating, and perhaps contradictory, rationalism. This speaker went in search of truth and returned with all the wrong answers." Gasior argues further that the persona has so separated himself from his human needs and appetites that it is little wonder he falls into despair and is to be mocked.

Gasior is partly correct in his analysis of the persona, but he is wrong in his overall interpretation. He does not see the connection between the persona and Herbert himself in 1639. As I have argued, Herbert's garden of the world at this time, had gone to seed. He was a bitter, disappointed and confused man who did not wish to be bothered by a civil war on top of his own social and monetary problems. The despairing attitude of the persona is linked more closely to Herbert the poet and Herbert the man than Gasior would seem to indicate.

56 There are many instances in Castiglione where external appearances are equated to the condition of the soul. The following is but one example:

. . . as there can be no circle without a
center, no more can beautie be without
goodnesse,
Whereupon doth very seldom an ill soule
dwell in a beautiful bodie. And therefore
is the outward beautie a true signe of the
inward goodnesse . . .

(Book IV, p. 309)

Herbert's partial return to courtly elements in his poetry may, in fact, be symptomatic of a desire to assert his importance in the upper segment of society.

57 Rockwood, op. cit., p. 109-25.

58 Page 85.

CONCLUSION

Individually, each of Herbert's poems is unique, in spite of any similarities it may share with the work of other poets. To say that his poetry is simply "eclectic" or "good" or "bad" or "Metaphysical" or "imitative" is not enough. Individually, his poems are illustrations, statements, reflections of a complicated mind caught in various stages of personal, political, social and poetical change. Collectively, Herbert's poems trace out a pattern which develops and changes as he himself does.

The pattern is clear: as Herbert rises and falls in the social and political hierarchy, his poetic style, imagery and content, which were highly sensitive to these changes, take on new shapes. In the first period, the hostile content of the satires reflects the poet's dissatisfaction with the king and the ruling establishment. The dangerous and radical content was a contributing factor in Herbert's decision to use such a "knotted" style. The courtly images and the highly conservative themes of the lyrics in the first period reflect Herbert's preoccupations with courtly and chivalric ideals.

In the transition period we see the disintegration of former ideals. For instance, the content of the poems in this period ranges from the joy and celebration of the beautiful things in nature (*Sonnet: You well compacted Groves*) to the rejection of nature on the grounds that it is ugly, deformed and imperfect (*The Idea*). The imagery in this period begins with Herbert's inversion of black symbolism (*The Black Beauty* poems) and changes into the highly monetary and titular imagery of the *Elegy for DUNN*. Herbert's turning away from his earlier lifestyle and his

former values is closely paralleled by his rejection of his own poetical precedents.

In the final period, Herbert's poetry changes once again, and we see here, that his poetry became highly emotional and personal. In the final period, the poetry reflects the poet's weariness of worldly sorrows and his desire to overcome them.

Although there can be no doubt that Herbert's poetry was influenced by other schools of poetry, we have seen that a purely literary generic approach can only lead to an incomplete understanding of his poems. In this thesis I have attempted to provide a new way of viewing Herbert and his work; a way which acknowledges the canon as a totality, and also recognizes a coherency between the poetic art from *per se* and the conditions under which it was written. This new method allows us to see relationships between Herbert the Lord, the ambassador, the servant to the King, the Parliamentarian, the politician, the social climber, and Herbert the poet.

At times Herbert is capable of writing high quality poetry. The Black Beauty poems, the Platonic love poems and the satires, for instance, contain enough substance of thought and originality to place them among Herbert's more noteworthy accomplishments. Other poems such as the "Ditties" and some of the lyrics can hardly be considered significant poetic accomplishments in themselves. But nevertheless, both types of poems *do* exist in the canon and it is precisely this lack of uniformity which gives the canon one of its major characteristics. To work only with the poor poems or only with the better poems would not do justice to the canon as a whole.

The uneven quality of poems in the canon can be explained by viewing them in the light of Herbert's personal development. Herbert often chose to be more of the politician than the poet and, as we have seen, part of the trouble with Herbert the poet is that he all too frequently *used* poetry for diverse purposes over a long career, and all too often these purposes were self-seeking. It is significant that *Elegy Over a Tomb* and *October 14, 1664* (sic) are poems which appear to be devoid of any ulterior motives, and that of all the dated poems in the canon these two are most often praised and least often condemned. Had he been more often the poet and less the politician, he may have developed into a better poet. But such was not to be the case. The political, social and personal preoccupations which protrude through the poems are the essential elements in comprehending the canon as a totality. Thus, the poetry is one aspect of a much larger totality. These aspects do not make the poems any more or less noteworthy, for the understanding and appreciation of Herbert's poems is not simply an end in itself but also a means to understanding an individual, his society and his time in history.

APPENDIX A

THE EDITIONS OF LORD HERBERT'S POETRY

There are four major editions of Lord Herbert's poetical canon; Henry Herbert, ed., *Occasional Verses: 1665* (Scholar Press Facsim.), Menston, Yorkshire, England: The Scholar Press Ltd., 1969); John Churton Collins, ed., *The Poems of Lord Herbert of Cherbury* (1881; rpt. [n.p.] Folcraft Library Editions, 1971); G. C. Moore Smith, ed., *The Poems English and Latin of Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury* (1923; rpt. Ely House, London: Oxford University Press, 1968); and R. G. Howarth, ed., *Minor Poets of the Seventeenth Century* (Everyman's Library, no. 873, New York: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1931). In selecting a text for this thesis I have established the following criteria: 1) For the sake of uniformity and clarity only one text should be used. 2) The edition must be critically acceptable; it must not distort the poems by unnecessary complication or oversimplification. 3) It must preserve the formal characteristics of the 1665 edition (paragraph and line indentation, capitals, hyphenated words).

In some instances Churton Collins edits the poems so that they are more readily understandable, but far too often he takes too many unjustified liberties with the text. Hyphenated words occur in the 1665 edition but Collins usually separates them into two. He modernizes only some spelling and removes many capitals in a random fashion. But what is most disconcerting about Collins' edition is that he makes too many vocabulary changes for no apparent reason. For example, lines 55-57 of *Satyra Secunda* are printed as follows in the 1665 edition (p. 15):

. . . while he doth strive
 As if such births had never come from brain,
 To shew, he's not deliver'd without pain . . .

Collins completely distorts the meaning (p. 22) when he prints:

. . . while he doth strive,
 As if such births had never come from brain
 To shew his mots deliver'd without pain . . .

A second example is the poem *Epitaph for Himself*. In the 1665 edition (p. 54), the concluding couplet reads:

So his Immortal Soul should find above,
 With his Creator, Peace, Joy, Truth, and Love.

Collins' version (p. 81) reads:

So his Immortal Soul should find above
 With his Creator, Peace, Joy, Faith, and Love.

Collins does not justify the substitution of "Faith" for "Truth."

Possibly, he had in mind a passage (p. 19) from the Autobiography:

. . . so I believe, since my coming into this
 world my soul hath formed or produced certain
 faculties which are almost as useless for this
 life, as the above-named senses where [eyes,
 ears, and other senses] for the mother's womb;
 and these faculties are hope, faith, love, and
 joy

However, even if Collins did have this passage in mind (and I cannot be sure of this) it is still difficult to comprehend why he would make such a change. As Moore Smith correctly remarks, (p. xxviii-ix) Collins,

departs from his original in an arbitrary manner in the use of capitals and stops, and sometimes by changes of punctuation makes his text more obscure than he found it. In four cases (mislead in part by the 1665 edition) he prints as one poem which should be printed as two.

As will have been seen, he consulted no manuscript.

It is for these reasons that I find Collins' edition inadequate.

Moore Smith's edition is generally considered definitive. His efforts are commendable not only for the scholarship involved, but also because he offers all known alternative manuscript readings and indicates where he has departed from the 1665 text. Unlike Collins, Moore Smith had the advantage of being able to consult manuscripts. Unfortunately, however, Moore Smith's edition takes even more unwarranted liberties than Collins' edition did. As evidence, I offer the following example. The 1665 edition prints a twenty line poem entitled *Ditty* (p. 2). It reads:

Deep Sighs, Records of my unpitied Grief,
 Memorials of my true, though hopeless Love
 Keep time with my sad thoughts, till wish'd Relief
 My long despairs for vain and causeless prove.

Yet if such hap never to you befall,
 I give you leave, break time, break heart and all.

Lord, thus I sin, repent, and sin again,
 As if Repentance only were, in me,
 Leave for new Sin; thus do I entertain
 My short time, and thy Grace, abusing thee,
 And thy long-suffering; which though it be
 Ne'er overcome by Sin, yet were in vain,
 If tempted oft: thus we our Errours see
 Before our Punishment, and so remain
 Without Excuse; and, Lord, in them 'tis true,
 Thy Laws are just, but why dost thou distraign
 Ought else for life, save life? that is thy due:
 The rest thou mak'st us owe, and mayst to us
 As well forgive; But oh! my sins renew,
 Whil'st I do talk with my Creator thus.

Moore Smith splits this poem into two, calling the first six lines "Ditty" and the remaining fourteen, "A Sinner's Lament." In his textual notes and in the commentary he declares that he has departed from all original texts and manuscripts but offers no evidence to support this action. It seems probable that he could not see any connection between

the first six lines of the poem and the remaining fourteen, or if he did, he did not consider it a significant one. In his commentary (p. 40) he says that his six line "Ditty" might be called "A Lover's Lament." This seems to imply that he interprets the first six lines as a secular love poem and the remaining fourteen lines as a religious poem.

A closer examination of these two "separate" poems, however, suggests that Moore Smith is incorrect in his editing. The persona of the last fourteen lines is caught in an eternally cyclical progression of hope and despair. He is dismayed because repentance, which should be the means of returning to grace, is merely "Leave for new Sin." His faith teaches him that "Thy Laws are just," but the recognition of his own human frailty corrodes that faith. The poem describes the struggle of the will as it attempts to control these feelings of inadequacy and despair. The persona hopes for mercy rather than justice.

The first six lines describe an identical situation. The "Deep Sighs" testify that the persona is sincerely moved. Paradoxically, his love is "hopeless" yet he hopes that "Relief" will prove his despair and his feelings of spiritual inadequacy to be "vain and causeless." The first four lines portray the struggle to remain hopeful, but the fifth and sixth lines fall back into despair. The "you" of the fifth line is a personification of his "long despairs" and the persona recognizes that if his despairs are not proved "vain and causeless" all will be lost. It is obvious that the first six lines and the concluding fourteen lines are connected thematically. Both sections describe the same dilemma and the similar tone indicates that the persona may well be the same in both instances.

In view of the facts that Moore Smith offers no evidence for his decision to divide the poem in two, that thematically the poem is obviously one, that the 1665 edition prints all twenty lines as the same poem, and that the poem does not appear in a divided form elsewhere in either manuscript or any edition, it is clear that he has overstepped his bounds as an editor. His editing raises too many unanswered difficulties.

Howarth's 1931 edition, which contains the works of four poets, Sir John Suckling, Richard Lovelace, Thomas Carew and Lord Herbert, follows Moore Smith's editing of *Ditty* ("Deep Sighs"). This in itself is sufficient grounds on which to question the accuracy of the text. Howarth also removes all capitals in common nouns and modernizes punctuation. In Howarth's edition, *The Brown Beauty* does not contain numbered stanzas but the 1665 edition does. Howarth offers no justification for this minor modification. In fact, like Collins, Howarth offers no alternative readings and no justifications for any of his textual modifications. For these reasons, I also find Howarth's text unacceptable.

Although Moore Smith's is undoubtedly the best modern edition, it is, nonetheless, still unacceptable in terms of the criteria I have outlined earlier. In the light of these editorial problems, it is impossible for me to place my confidence in any of the modern editions of Herbert's poetry. The ideal solution to this problem would be to produce a new edition, but that is far beyond the scope of this thesis. Therefore, by process of elimination, and because of its chronological proximity to Herbert's own lifetime, I decided to use the 1665 edition as the working text for this thesis. I do, however, from time to time, depend on Moore Smith's scholarship in places where it is unquestionably reliable.

APPENDIX B

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF LORD HERBERT

The Autobiography's critics, like the critics of the poetry, have neglected to take into account the circumstances under which the work was written. Basil Willey, for instance, in his article "Lord Herbert of Cherbury: A Spiritual Quixote of the Seventeenth Century," *Essays and Studies*, 27 (1941), 22-9, sees the Autobiography as little more than the curious testament of a peculiar and "fascinating" seventeenth-century eclectic. A puzzled Margaret Bottrall, in *Every Man a Phoenix: Studies in Seventeenth Century Autobiography* (London: John Murray, 1958), 57, describes what to her is the central discrepancy between the autobiographical account of the life and the biographical one. She observes that,

What makes the Autobiography such a disconcerting book is that the picture presented with such obvious affection and pride by Lord Herbert conveys such an imperfect likeness of the man whom from his other writings and achievements, we know Lord Herbert to have been. The image of himself that delights him is that of an irresistibly good-looking, quixotically chivalrous, ostentatiously magnificent gentleman; an intrepid man of action, courtier, soldier, traveller, diplomatist. Whatever does not contribute to the enhancement of this image is omitted or played down. Yet Herbert's chief claim to fame rests upon his philosophical treatises, *De Veritate*, *Religio Laici* and *De Religione Gentilium*.

Bottrall overlooks the important element of change, not realizing that the Herbert who wrote the Autobiography was substantially different from the young Herbert who is the main subject of the Autobiography. Quite clearly, the Autobiography is preoccupied with politics and with socially acceptable codes of behavior, but the fact of the matter is that Herbert

neglects his "chief claim to fame" (his philosophical writings) because they were no longer a significant part of his concerns in the early 1640's. His most serious and most accomplished work, *De Veritate*, was written very early in his career (1624). By the 1630's Herbert philosophical writings, like his poetry, became almost wholly subservient to his social ambitions and he wrote several works which Sidney Lee correctly calls a "servile version of his own theological opinions" (p. 143). In short, Herbert practised a type of intellectual prostitution in order to flatter the King, with the ulterior motive of reaping financial rewards. By the 1640's his financial predicament had intensified substantially and his primary concern lay, not with the study of philosophy *per se*, but with his own precarious social status and his lack of funds. Indeed, as we have seen from his letter of 1639 (p. 41 supra) his concern for "my reputation" was of paramount importance to him. It is not surprising, therefore, that his writings in the 1640's should reflect this increased preoccupation with his public image.

Bottrall and Willey, however, are not the only critics who have failed to understand the Autobiography. Sidney Lee, the Autobiography's modern editor, misleadingly remarks that "No one defect is more patent in his memoirs than the total lack of a sense of proportion. Lord Herbert's self-satisfaction is built on sand. It is bred on the trivialities of fashionable life,--of the butterfly triumphs won in court society" (Auto. p. xii). While it is generally true that the Autobiography tends to exhibit aristocratic biases both in its selection and presentation of various episodes, Lee's evaluative type of criticism again overlooks the important connection between the work of art *per se* and the circumstances

surrounding and involved in its creation. If it is true that the Autobiography is disproportionate, then it is so because Herbert himself had lost all sense of proportion with regard to his position in the social hierarchy and with regard to his position in relation to the two opposing factions of the Civil War. As Chapter II illustrates, such was the case. The Autobiography was written during the years that Herbert was torn, undecided and reluctant to commit himself fully to either Royalist or Parliamentarian factions.

In one sense, the obvious fondness for courtly and aristocratic ideals so clearly expressed in the Autobiography, is a eulogy for himself as a younger man. But Herbert was not simply a foolish old man idealizing the golden days of his lost youth, nor is Lee correct when he condemns the Autobiography for its "total lack of a sense of proportion." When Herbert wrote his Autobiography in the early 1640's he was well acquainted with the political and civil crisis which had been developing. His Parliamentary and self-interested inclinations were counter-balanced against his Royalist and courtly ones, and this counter-balancing, this duality, manifests itself in the Autobiography by a subtle undercutting of the ideals which are apparently held up to be admired. In this appendix I shall suggest that the Autobiography is ambivalent about courtly and aristocratic ideals. I shall discuss briefly, Herbert's opinions on education, genealogy and duelling. In the expression of these opinions we simultaneously confront a young, ambitious courtier and an older, more cynical man who was caught in a personal dilemma. Thus, the Autobiography is important for two reasons; first, it provides us with information about his early years (1608-1624) and secondly it

reflects his state of mind in his later years (1639-1643) when he was writing this work.

For Herbert, education had two purposes, the first being the acquiring of knowledge for its own sake, and the second, for the social benefits it brought. For study he recommends Greek, Latin, philosophy (both Plato and Aristotle), astronomy, and mathematics. He also recommends the study and active participation in dancing, fencing and "riding the great horse" (p. 37). The study of medicine is to be encouraged in young gentlemen because "This art will get a young gentleman not only much knowledge, but much credit" (p. 28). For Herbert, the public recognition or "credit" is as important as the knowledge itself. "Credit" of course, also has monetary implications suggesting that education and reputation or public image go hand in hand with wealth. Indeed, this had also been his belief between 1619 and 1624 when he squandered extravagant sums of money in France.

Lawrence Stone (p. 27) provides a characteristic pattern of aristocratic behavior which fits Herbert almost perfectly:

Money was the means of acquiring and retaining status, but it was not the essence of it: the acid test was the mode of life, a concept that involved many factors. Living on a private income was one, but more important was spending liberally, dressing elegantly, and entertaining lavishly. Another was having sufficient education to display a reasonable knowledge of public affairs, and to be able to perform gracefully on the dance floor and on horseback, in the tennis-court and the fencing school.

This analysis by Stone confirms our insight into the character of the young Herbert as well as the psychological condition of the older Herbert. As a youth Herbert spent vast amounts of money in Paris in an attempt to

impress his peers. By the early 1640's he was still advocating the superficialities of glamorous living that many seventeenth-century aristocrats and courtiers endorsed. Herbert's opinions on education, then, tend to link him to aristocratic and courtly biases.

In his treatment of genealogy Herbert also tends to be aristocratic. In an attempt to assert the high esteem which he believed he deserved, Herbert carefully presents his ancestors as great heroes, magnanimous men who had represented justice, law and order in a chaotic and unruly world. He takes great pride in the fact that they were the King's representatives in the outer regions of the kingdom, and they are portrayed like the errant knights of old who restored things to their proper order wherever they travelled. Herbert describes his great great grandfather as "that incomparable hero, who . . . twice passed through a great army of northern men alone, with his pole-axe in his hand, and returned without any mortal hurt, which is more than is famed of Amandis of Gaul or the Knight of the Sun" (p. 6). Herbert elevates his ancestors' status above that of Amandis of Gaul, who was of course, the flower of chivalry and also, significantly enough, Don Quixote's hero. Herbert's selection of this particular hero is consistent with the pro-chivalric attitude so often a part of seventeenth-century aristocratic thinking (See Stone's analysis, n. 16, Chapter II, p. 54 supra).

Herbert proudly asserts that his great-grandfather was "higher by the head than anyone in the army" (p. 8) and that his grandfather was "a great suppressor of rebels, thieves and outlaws" (p. 6). Speaking of his father, he says "I remember [him] to have been black-haired and bearded . . . but withal very handsome and well compact in his limbs, and

of great courage" (p. 2).

The fascination with genealogy was quite common in the early seventeenth century. The family tree became yet another means of expressing one's gentility and good breeding. Lawrence Stone (p. 17) correctly identifies this widespread interest in family history as an indication of the upper class' need to impress their peers and inferiors with their own superiority and usefulness to society:

This passion for family history was not confined to the peerage, but spread right through the whole upper gentry class. One of the paradoxes of the age was that this exclusive adulation took place at precisely the time when political theorists were laying increasing emphasis on virtue, education and the capacity to serve the State as the supreme test of and justification for a leisured class living off the labours of others. But the contemporary obsession with genealogy and the direct association of gentility with a private income prove that birth and wealth still ranked higher than virtue, education, or ability as indicators of status.

There is a distinction to be made, however, between two types of genealogical accounts: an accurate one, often associated with those who were already well-established, and a distorted one usually associated with the newer arrivals into the upper classes. Stone (p. 16) says,

Though it soon became a fad, a craze, a quasi-intellectual hobby for the idle rich, its prime purpose was social integration, the welding of a homogeneous group of seemingly respectable lineage from a crazy patchwork of the most diverse, and sometimes dubious, origins. Genuine genealogy was cultivated by the older gentry to reassure themselves of their innate superiority over the upstarts; bogus genealogy was cultivated by the new gentry in an effort to clothe their social nakedness, and by the old gentry in the internal jockeying for position in the ancestral pecking order.

Herbert's account of his family tree is clearly a distorted one, thus linking his attitudes with those of the newer members of the upper classes.

The connection between Herbert's attitudes in describing his family tree and his social position is a consistent one. If we consider Herbert's uncertain social position in the early 1640's it is not surprising that he should attempt to re-assert his position in the social hierarchy by presenting his ancestors as idealized versions of noble knights-errant. The slanted presentation of his ancestors is thus more than the product of a foolish old man reminiscing about the family glory. Herbert's biased genealogical account is a part of his last desperate attempt to restore himself to the old world order which was now tumbling down about his ears.

The undercutting of these aristocratic ideals and practices, however, is also present in the Autobiography and it becomes evident in Herbert's treatment of his youthful adventures in duelling. There are two instances in particular which will serve to demonstrate this ironic element in the Autobiography. In 1608 Herbert was visiting Merlou Castle which was "about twenty-four miles from Paris" (p. 48). Several people were strolling through the woods when a French cavalier plucked a yellow ribbon from a young lady's hair. Outraged at this action Herbert felt compelled by his knightly code of honour to retrieve the ribbon and accordingly, challenged the Frenchman to a duel. The young lady graciously refused Herbert's services but he was more concerned with justifying his own actions to bystanders than with defending her "honour." Herbert was worried that the French cavalier might not publicly acknowledge that a challenge had been issued. The following day the cavalier received a second challenge saying that "either he must confess that I constrained him to restore the ribbon, or fight with me" (p. 49). By this time of

course, the issue of the young lady's ribbon and her honour had long been forgotten.

Shortly after this a similar incident occurred in England. Again, there was a crowd of bystanders nearby, and Herbert describes his own reaction (p. 51) like this:

I repaired, as formerly, to him in a courteous manner to demand it, but he refusing as the French cavalier did, I caught him by the neck, and had almost thrown him down, when company came in and parted us. I offered likewise to fight with this gentleman, and came to the place appointed by Hyde Park; but this also was interrupted by order of the Lords of the Council, and I never heard more of him.

The facts of these two incidents suggest many things about the hot-tempered, young Herbert, but also, the manner in which the episodes are presented, tells us other things about his condition in the early 1640's. From Herbert's actions during his early years it is apparent that he used duelling as a means of proving his worth for social promotion. Duelling in the seventeenth century became a ritualized style of combat which provided the contestants with the opportunity of publicly displaying their aggressive martial prowess, and like all rituals it was artificial. In the same way that extravagant spending on opulent feasts was an indication of the desire to return to late Medieval and early Tudor standards of generosity, the practice of duelling was an expression of fondness for ideals of gallantry and knighthood. These artificial rules were established, partially to prevent unfair play such as surprises and ambushes. The rules of the duel were part of gentlemanly conduct. But more than this, the phenomenon of the duel also concealed other motives for certain members of the aristocracy. The new code of duelling dictated that only the

concerned individuals could participate: there could be no more gang wars. Lawrence Stone (p. 119) correctly argues that,

Violence in word or deed was thus regulated, codified, restricted, sterilized. The traditional ambition of the propertied classes to demonstrate their personal courage and to avenge any disparagement of their virtue or their honour was given an outlet which at last affected no one but themselves. As Bodin and others argued for France, the first consequence of triumph of the code of honour of the duel was to diminish faction quarrels and to lessen the danger of aristocratic civil war.

Thus, it was through the return to the former manners of fighting that the aristocrats provided themselves with "legal" opportunities to murder their social competitors, and although the social prestige involved in challenging or winning a duel was undoubtedly part of the motivation for winning personal combat, the duel also became a means of releasing hostility.

The duel encouraged, in fact, praised and recommended impetuous behavior and quick tempers. Often men were killed over less than trivial matters. The young Herbert was clearly a part of this phenomenon as he struggled to rise in the system. During these early years, Herbert, who was a member of the lesser gentry, had an added incentive to demonstrate his "honour" and "virtue" because James had confiscated his castle.

But the aristocratic ideal of the quick-tempered gentleman was not fully endorsed by Herbert when he wrote his Autobiography much later, for in his advice to young gentlemen (p. 25) he says:

. . . it will be necessary that you keep the company of grave, learned men, who are of good reputation, and hear rather what they say, and follow what they do, than follow the examples of young, wild, and rash persons.

Thus, the Autobiography contains two opposing viewpoints: that of the quick-tempered, rash, youthful gallant who is delightfully portrayed as an almost comic hero, and that of the sombre adviser of young people who urges them to avoid such persons because they present a serious detriment to a gentleman's education and reputation. Herbert seems to be both condemning and recommending the chivalrous activities of his youth. The code of duelling which produced these rash, hot-tempered young men, is presented in two different lights. Herbert can only have been ambivalent about his wild duelling youth. He is both ironical and sincere.

While Willey's remark that Herbert took his oaths of knighthood "with a seriousness worthy of the ingenious man of La Mancha" may be true for the younger Herbert, it is most certainly not true for the older man. Early in the Autobiography (p. 45), Herbert describes the oaths he had taken as Knight of Bath:

There is another custom likewise, that the knights on the first day wear the gown of some religious order, and the night following be bathed; after which they take an oath never to sit in place where injustice should be done, but they shall right it to the utmost of their power; and particularly ladies and gentlewomen that shall be wronged in their honour, if they demand assistance, and many other points, not unlike the romances of knight errantry.

Yet we have seen that in the first duelling episode the lady's "honour" is quickly cast aside in the heat of the challenges and counter-challenges. If the young Herbert's chivalry is to be measured by the degree to which he fulfills his oaths, we cannot help but judge him as little more than a quick-tempered, egotistical, arrogant, aggressive fool who, in spite of the exciting moments he provides, is something less than a true chivalric hero. These subtle ironies and explicit Quixotic follies under-

cut the heroism of the young Herbert and seem to have been deliberately cultivated. Indeed, most of the episodes in the Autobiography which are concerned with an aspect of chivalry are presented in such a way that they are simultaneously ludicrous yet captivating. The figure of the young Herbert is both a hero and a mock-hero and this duality reflects Herbert's dual consciousness in the early 1640's. Torn between King and Parliament, between loyalty and self-interest, Herbert's indecision is also reflected in his ambivalent presentation of himself as the embodiment of chivalric ideals. The seriousness and foolishness of the Autobiography indicate that Herbert's mind was in a transitional phase of his life; he could not fully decide whether to mock the code of chivalry or to present it as a glorious and admirable way of life. He therefore does both.

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