Verena Olejniczak Lobsien

In Other Words:
George Herbert's Metaphorical Textures

Summary

The essay shows how seventeenth-century English poetry faces the ultimate challenge to conceptual metaphor. In a close reading of "Love (3)" and "Easter-wings" it explores metaphysical conceits that appear capable of presenting the unrepresentable by referring allegorically – that is to say, literally 'in other words' – to what must by definition remain beyond language: God's redemptive action in the resurrection.

Keywords: Conceptual metaphor; metaphysical 'conceit'; English Renaissance poetry; neoplatonism; negative theology; allegories of resurrection.

Der Aufsatz untersucht Struktur und Funktion der konzeptuellen Metapher (*conceit*) in der metaphysischen Dichtung des 17. Jahrhunderts. Am Beispiel zweier Gedichte von George Herbert, „Love (3)" und „Easter Wings", wird gezeigt, wie poetische Texte mit ihrer äußersten, paradoxen Herausforderung umgehen: „mit anderen Worten" das zu sagen, was sich als Verborgenes und Transzendentes der sprachlichen Verfügung, zugleich jeder räumlichen Repräsentation entzieht.

Keywords: Konzeptuelle Metapher; metaphysisches *concetto*; Dichtung der Englischen Renaissance; Neuplatonismus; negative Theologie; Auferstehungsallegorien.

1 Metaphor and metaphysics

Everybody knows that poets use metaphors and that they do so for a purpose. It is only to repeat yet another commonplace to recall that the so-called metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century used and introduced into English poetry a type of complex metaphor referred to as *concetto* or conceit. However, what to the historian of early modern English literature may seem trite acquires new – and different – relevance in the present context. The term *conceit* itself draws attention to what these metaphors were held to achieve. It emphasises their wit and imaginative dimension, but points beyond that: Conceits were not only ornamental devices, fulfilling the rhetorical 'office' of *delectare*, but they functioned equally as instruments to think with, as verbal ideas equivalent, indeed superior to, discursive arguments, pursuing didactic or moral intentions (*docere* and *movere*) and guiding the reader through a line of reasoning. It is their complexity and texture that enable them to do this. In a period that admired both concentration of 'matter' and rhetorical finesse, they served as vehicles for surprising, often difficult insight. Charged with intellectual as well as affective power, they tend to explore the edges of familiar systems of thought or move beyond the boundaries of well-trodden philosophical ground. In Helen Gardner's concise definition, a conceit "is a comparison whose ingenuity is more striking than its justness, or, at least, is more immediately striking. […] we are made to concede likeness while being strongly conscious of unlikeness."[1]

---

1 "Introduction" to Gardner 1957, 15–28, here: 19. She adds: "In a metaphysical poem the conceits are instruments of definition in an argument or instruments to persuade. The poem has something to say which the conceit explicates or something to urge which the conceit helps to forward. […] the metaphysical conceit aims at making us concede justness while admiring ingenuity" (21). Compare the definition offered by Preminger 1965: "An intricate or far-fetched metaphor, which functions through arousing feelings of surprise, shock, or amusement […] The poet compares elements which seem to have little or nothing in common, or juxtaposes images which establish a marked discord in mood. […] the emotion evoked by a good c. is […] a surprised recognition of the ultimate validity of the relationship presented in the c., which thus serves not as an ornament but as an instrument of vision" (147–149). The discussion surrounding metaphysical poetry in general and its imagery in particular caused something of a stir around the middle of the twentieth century; it does not seem to agitate literary scholars very much any longer. Its history is, however, still instructive, as it hinges on precisely the questions of what metaphor can and should do. It started with Dryden's and Samuel Johnson's castigation of the Metaphysicals; with Dryden's indictment in 1692 of Donne's love poetry as basically indecorous in his *Discourse concerning the Original and Progress of Satire* ("He affects the Metaphysics, not only in his Satires, but in his Amorous Verses, where Nature only should reign; and perplexes the Minds of the Fair Sex with nice Speculations of Philosophy […]", Dryden 1974, 7), culminating, a century later, in Johnson's criticism of the Metaphysicals' imagery as "analytick", far-fetched, and artifical in the worst sense, producing "[…] a kind of *discordia concors*; a combination of dissimilar images, or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike. […] The most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together; nature and art are ransacked for illustrations, comparisons, and allusions […]" (Johnson 1968, 20). The rehabilitation of the Metaphysicals, indeed their allocation of a place of honour in the prehistory of classical modern poetry began in 1921 with T. S. Eliot's review of Herbert Grier-

From the point of view of this volume's inquiry into the nature and history of metaphor it seems worth while to examine the structure and function of some of the conceits employed by the metaphysical poet George Herbert. These are remarkable in a number of respects. To begin with, they are comparatively understated. Eschewing the exhibition of paradoxical brilliance, they lack ostentation to such an extent that an eminent literary historian like Peter Conrad was led to the hyperbolic claim that, if we take John Donne to set the standard, Herbert does not seem to write conceits at all.[2] The apparent plainness of Herbert's style as well as his conceits is, however, deceptive.[3] In my reading of his poetry I shall look not only at the modes in which he builds, organises, combines and presents his metaphors, but also at the cognitive (and affective) functions they serve. For here, conceptual metaphor faces its greatest challenge, as Herbert's poems are metaphysical also in another, literal sense: They thematise questions of metaphysics, taking part in philosophically as well as theologically virulent debates about divine providence, the senses and the spirit, the immortality of the soul, the relation of material to immaterial causes, or the resurrection of the body. In other words: here, one of the conceptual domains involved in the formation of metaphor remains, by definition, not only abstract but unknowable. Furthermore, Herbert's conceits are relevant to the present inquiry in that many of them process, in best Renaissance manner, classical materials, topoi, and motifs.[4] Last not least, they tend to be spatial. This poet's

son's anthology *Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century* in his essay on "The Metaphysical Poets" (Eliot 1969 [1932], 281–291). Eliot argues, famously, that eighteenth- and nineteenth-century poets were victims of a catastrophic alteration of the English mind, a "dissociation of sensibility" that took place towards the end of the 17th century, beginning with Milton. While, in consequence, these latter poets "thought and felt by fits, unbalanced" ("The Metaphysical Poets", 288, cf. ibid., "Andrew Marvell", 297), the Metaphysicals were still masters of a "direct sensuous apprehension of thought, or a recreation of thought into feeling" (286). Donne, Eliot claims, experienced an abstract idea holistically, as immediately as the scent of a rose, and he was capable of rendering it in the shape of a conceit. In that, he resembles the modern poet, whose sensibility (by implication, like Eliot's own) is able to synthesise the disorderly elements again, forging new unities: "A thought to Donne was an experience; it modified his sensibility. When a poet's mind is perfectly equipped for its work, it is constantly amalgamating disparate experience; the ordinary man's experience is chaotic, irregular, fragmentary" (287). While the Metaphysicals are thus elevated

to the status of precursors to the modernists, conversely, the metaphorical practice of modernist poetry appears justified. In this view, modernism takes things up where the seventeenth century left them before enlightenment and romanticist extremism took over with their respective (rational or emotional) distortions.

2 Conrad 1985, 233.

3 C. A. Patrides has argued that Herbert's "self-conscious plainness" is in fact a kind of overcompensation, masking its opposite, in particular the pride of the artist: "The artlessness […] will be observed to comprehend an all-pervasive consciousness of self that negates even the nominal 'plainness.'" ("*A Crown of Praise*: The Poetry of Herbert", in: Patrides 1974, 6–25, here: 6). He asserts: "*The Temple* is the work of a humble man devoid of humility only because a great poet must set a 'just price' on his qualities" (8).

4 Herbert is, of course, an major classicist in yet another sense, as John Drury and Victoria Moul make clear, who for the first time translate and comment on, Herbert's considerable body of Latin and Greek poetry in their new edition; cf. Drury and Moul 2015.

spatial metaphors pervade and shape his œuvre in a way that sets it apart from the works of his contemporaries and fellow-Metaphysicals.

2 Herbert and the uses of metaphor

The very fact that George Herbert's poems were first published (after his death in 1633) under the title *The Temple* already indicates their preoccupation with constructing, building and dwelling, with inhabiting material and physical as well as immaterial and spiritual space. Their title, together with the motto taken from Ps 29.8 ("In his Temple doth every man | speake of his honour"), may be that of Herbert's friend and first editor, Nicholas Ferrar. What Herbert's own title would have been, we cannot know for certain. His headlines, written at the top of each manuscript page, were "The Church-Porch", "The Church", and "The Church Militant". Both temple and church allude to ecclesiastic architecture and to the theological as well as domestic ratio these poems obey.[5] They also delineate as well as enclose an imaginative domain, adapted to human needs but dedicated to the divine. They aim at creating a sacred space in which reader and writer move, sometimes in unison, sometimes in dialogic and conflicted interaction, often in a triangular relation, in which one participant is allocated the role of (almost) silent observer, always in a conversation that is oriented towards God, the real owner and master of the house.

George Herbert is Shakespeare's junior by 31 years, born in 1593. It is tempting to think that we can find an awareness of the great playwright's performative mastery in Herbert's own poetry, for instance in the way some of his texts construct their relationship to secular love poetry.[6] There is certainly a strong sense of drama here, but although there is experiential immediacy as well as an awareness of subjectivity as inherently problematic, there is no histrionic self-exhibition. In this respect, Herbert's theatricality is certainly less pronounced than John Donne's, whose speakers so obviously enjoy the display of their exceptional affective states and revel in their sensual involvement. Besides, Herbert's texts are not meant to be performed on stage but read – presumably – in silence, although their remarkable musicality seems to hint at yet another performative quality. Some of them even seem to be written as songs.[7] Herbert's poems are medi-

---

[5] On the variations both old and new testament texts ring on the trope of the temple see also Patrides 1974, 15–17. The number of poems differs between the MS Tanner, which forms the basis for most modern editions, and the Williams MS; it seems that Herbert thought of "Love (3)" as the final poem of "The Church"; see, however, the editorial remarks in Drury and Moul 2015, 485–486 and 490.

[6] See, for instance, John Drury's commentary on "Dullness" (Drury and Moul 2015, 438–439).

[7] This is a dimension also recognised in John Drury's recent biography of Herbert (Drury 2013).

tations, containing in themselves guidelines for further meditation.[8] They thematise – openly and exclusively – religious matters. Still, this poet does not deal in theological certainties. It is true that, in the latter stages of his career that began in the limelight of the public oratorship at the university of Cambridge and ended in relative obscurity, he was a parish priest and part of the community of Little Gidding in Huntingdonshire. But in his poems he seldom speaks in a pastoral or public voice. Rather than preach, he questions and problematises. While his tone, rather than being determined by the stage or the pulpit, is characterised by intimacy and inwardness, he frequently and fruitfully reflects on his own art, its potential as well as its pitfalls, hence on the consequences of articulating and speaking his mind in its conversation with God.

Domestic and household metaphors abound in these poems, as Herbert's readers have noticed from the first. He is a poet concerned with issues of place, space, and governance, conceived spatially – of the outside world as well as of his own interiority. The all-embracing question is who is to be in charge – man or God. Or, more precisely: how can we imagine God's perfect dominion, His taking up abode and dwelling in the human soul, not as hostile occupant or oppressor but as its true owner, as generous host, or welcome guest? Inevitably, the attempt to give a first idea of the subject matter of Herbert's poetry gravitates towards metaphoric language, in fact to metaphors preferred by the poet himself. But in view of the conceptual challenge he is facing, this appears in itself symptomatic. As Herbert is wrestling with complex problems and issues that reach, by definition, beyond sensual apprehension, such as the relationship between the self and God, or questions of identity and individuality, it is not surprising that he should resort to the devices of figurative language traditionally best suited to the purpose of dealing with matters that are hidden and invisible. It is metaphor and allegory which help to articulate what cannot (yet) be spoken as it resists discursive language or transcends everyday speech.[9]

It should be added immediately that Herbert uses fully-blown allegories not as often as might be expected. Rarely do they come complete with the personifications familiar from medieval literature or morality plays, and repristinated by his famous older contemporary, Edmund Spenser. When they do – for instance in "The Pilgrimage", a poem that charts a proto-Bunyanesque spiritual autobiography –, the ending is bitter, or – as in "Hope" – frustrating. In what is arguably his most famous, to some his best, poem, "Love (3)", only one of the parties concerned, the divine host, personifies the abstract term, and it is remarkable that the text does nothing to render the personification more

---

8 Cf. Martz 1962. Martz discerns the structures of meditation also in the work of Donne and others, governed, however, by formal conventions ruled by a different spirituality.

9 The justification for this is ultimately biblical. For history and functions of allegory and metaphorical language in general from a theological perspective see, above all, the work of Henri de Lubac, e.g. Lubac 2007.

concrete or imaginable apart from unfolding Love's incredibly tactful, irresistible and unreserved, literally self-giving hospitality. Its three brief stanzas permit full quotation; they also perfectly epitomise Herbert's style:[10]

> Love bade me welcome: yet my soul drew back,
> > Guilty of dust and sin.
> But quick-ey'd Love, observing me grow slack
> > From my first entrance in,
> Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning,
> > If I lack'd anything.
>
> A guest, I answer'd, worthy to be here:
> > Love said, You shall be he.
> I the unkind, ungrateful? A my dear,
> > I cannot look on thee.
> Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,
> > Who made the eyes but I?
>
> Truth Lord, but I have marr'd them: let my shame
> > Go where it doth deserve.
> And know you not, says Love, who bore the blame?
> > My dear, then I will serve.
> You must sit down, says Love, and taste my meat:
> > So I did sit and eat.

In illustrating 1 John 4.8, "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love", the poem conspicuously refrains from translating the divine agent into a humanoid being. Instead, all it does is offer another abstraction, a dialogue and an action rather than a thing; to boot, an action that overcharges the speaker-narrator's comprehension, commanding an utterly simple, wordless response, as silently affirmative and undisputable as the preceding interchange. All that characterises Love's behaviour is a knowing courtesy, overwhelming because uncalculating, unstinting, and wholly undeserved on the receiver's part. This is also an exquisite dramatic miniature, a playlet of invitation, refusal and acceptance, of reluctant gratitude, finally enabled by an anticipation that could not be anticipated.

It is also a poetic staging of the eucharist.[11] But instead of making the abstract some-

---

10 Drury and Moul 2015, 180–181.

11 John Drury: "This is a dialogue which ends all dialogue in the perfect reciprocity of holy communion" (Drury and Moul 2015, 486). As the final poem under the headline "The Church" it provides yet another symbolic closure, stressing the unique sacramental and ecclesiological meaning of the eucharist by presenting it as the element that perfects the poetical space in finishing the building. It should be added, however, that *The Temple* as we

how more palpable or the mystery more amenable to the senses and the rational under-standing, allegory here seems to remove it even further from our grasp.[12] Indeed, this seems to be exactly the point of Herbert's figurative strategy: It is Love's unexpected, in-explicable, 'prevenient'[13] grace that breaks the pattern of continued (and well-founded) self-denigration by absolute self-expenditure, to the speaker's and reader's amazement. In describing this truly excessive kindness in a language that could not be plainer, thus suggesting utmost accessibility and naturalness, the poem itself holds to an interactive style that paradoxically renders the invisible even less available than before: an effect of ultimate, negative-theological adequacy.

If the allegorical meaning of Love could hardly be further removed or more enig-matic, the literal meaning of this giving and receiving is wholly self-evident. The paradox it addresses and imitates in its miniature action, the conceptual difficulty it faces and solves without removing it, do not, as in Donne's poetry, lie on the dazzling surface, but are hidden in the textual implications. Facing the greatest challenge to metaphor, "Love (3)" demonstrates that it is possible to achieve a cognitive surplus, not by discursive elaboration, but by a partial metaphorisation: by allegorically explicating, in a micro-narrative, what it is that resists final explanation. The unimaginable and inexplicable is not rendered graspable, but moved closer. It is elucidated by a conceit that clarifies the grounds for its inexplicability 'in other words'. As a conceptual gain this may seem paradoxical, but at the limits of rational comprehension it succeeds in not only marking those limits but in pointing beyond them. It is also an effect we shall encounter again with the poem I am going to offer as a paradigmatic example of Herbert's combination of allegorical and metaphorical modes, "Easter-wings".

3   Imagining redemption

The topic of "Easter-wings" is yet another aspect of a theological 'scandal' not wholly graspable by (philosophical) rationality: the Easterly return to life in the resurrection. Like "Love (3)", the poem addresses also the concept of redemption. It does so in a metaphorical as well as a literal sense, thematising directly its central metaphysical idea – the rising of the believer with Christ in his victory over sin and death –, while at the same time approaching it by way of a layering of metaphorical levels, from the visual or iconic

have it ends yet again: The word "*FINIS*" (possibly added by the scribe) appears twice – first after "Love (3)" and next after "L'Envoy", which concludes a text less easily accommodated: the anticlimactic and polemic epyllion "The Church Militant". Herbert's

temple remains an open space in more than one sense.

12 A point made also, with reference to medieval texts, in Lewis 1973 [1936].

13 On Herbert's sense of Grace as "anticipatory of man's behaviour by virtue of Christ's presence in history", see Patrides 1974, 18–19.

through the narrative and allegoric to a 'punctual' focusing of the conceit in a striking turn of phrase. Similar to "Love (3)", it also engages the feelings – both the speaker's, who tries to marshall his own so that they match his redeemer's, and the reader's, who cannot but follow the affective up-and-down curve of elation and depression, flight and humiliation that results from the attempt. Thus resurrection is figured as a spatial event involving a specific logic of ascent and descent, and as a statement involving the body and its extension. In consequence, redemption will emerge as a product of Herbert's art and the way it depicts and regulates sympathy in a modulation from parallel, but distant, co-affection to true compassion based on imaginative knowledge. Herbert's use of metaphor, in turn, will be seen as a multi-levelled process, resulting in a 'texture' that involves visual, iconic, emblematic, as well as allegoric, comparative, and allusive strands.

In order to see how Herbert achieves all this; how he builds and develops his conceit with reference to this most demanding of metaphysical topics, we need to look more closely at the way he organises not only his sacred meditation, but also his reflection on poetry in "Easter-wings". It will emerge that both involve processes that are much more dramatic than might be expected.

Easter-wings.
Lord, who createdst man in wealth and store,
Though foolishly he lost the same,
Decaying more and more,
Till he became
Most poor:
With thee
O let me rise
As larks, harmoniously,
And sing this day thy victories:
Then shall the fall further the flight in me.

My tender age in sorrow did beginn:
And still with sicknesses and shame
Thou didst so punish sin,
That I became
Most thin.
With thee
Let me combine
And feel this day thy victory:
For, if I imp my wing on thine,
Affliction shall advance the flight in me.

We do not know the exact date of composition of this poem; like the other poems in *The Temple*, it was published posthumously in 1633. Its most striking feature is its iconicity: its shape and the figure it makes on the page.[14] Generically, this is pattern (or figure) poetry: the text's contours visually present its object or its topic.[15] But what precisely is it that is pictured here? There is some uncertainty as to how Herbert wanted the text printed. Differing from the version quoted above, the 1633 edition appears to have centred the lines so that a symmetrical shape is perceived, and this is also how some modern editions reprint it.[16] It is not, however, necessary to enter into a discussion of authorial intention or to decide between the versions. For those who opt for a symmetrical printing also draw attention to a semantic ambiguity in the text, i.e. to its potential. They transfer an implied possibility of reading to the visual outside of the text, thus exteriorising and stressing what would otherwise have remained implicit. In this version, the iconic image appears to be both that of a pair of wings, as suggested also by the title, and that of an hourglass (actually, two hourglasses).[17]

We are thus invited to perceive two different, seemingly incompatible, images: one that evokes life, ascent to the heavens, salvation, eternity, and another that reminds us of death, guiding us towards a contemplation of temporality, the finiteness of human life, and mortality; one that suggests redemption and another that suggests loss. If we are prepared to take into consideration this richer version of the textual shape, we gain an additional and alternative insight. In any case, we cannot from the first be sure where this poem is going to lead us. If its iconic outline strikes us as ambivalent, it does so by offering, metaphorically, two ideas that appear mutually exclusive.

It remains to be seen if and how the text will reconcile the clash of meanings and resolve the seeming contradiction. For, evidently, this ambivalence corresponds precisely

14 The printing is a matter of dispute. The reproduction given here follows that of John Drury (Drury and Moul 2015, 41), who prints a combination of two manuscript versions, which avoids the symmetrical triangles into which the printer of the 1633 edition shaped the text in favour of an asymmetrical, but more wing-like outline (cf. Drury's commentary, Drury and Moul 2015, 384).

15 "Easter-wings" thus places itself squarely in the tradition founded by Simmias of Rhodes, by whom a *technopaignion* on the wings of Eros survives in Book XV of the *Greek Anthology* (no. 24). Contemporary poetics, such as George Puttenham's *The Arte of English Poesie*, was aware of the possibilities offered by "Proportion in figure" (Puttenham 1970 [1936], 91–101), listing among the available suggestive shapes even the double triangles ("the tricquet dis-

played", 93), but tended to denigrate them as "wanton amorous deuises" (101) and idle embellishment.

16 E.g. Patrides 1974, 63, and Hutchinson 1978 [1941], 43.

17 If we look at the text through the eyes of Christian iconography, it could be seen to figure a number of other 'objects' as well, such as (in the symmetrical printings) the Greek letter χ (*chi*) in each stanza, signifying the crucifixion and Christ's passion, or, in both versions, the topical 'straight and narrow' path the believer ought to walk on his way to heaven. There is, also, an intriguing affirmation of the associations with mortality in the similarity to the small winged hourglass carried by the personification of Time in the Garden of Eden in Thomas Peyton's *The Glasse of Time, in the Second Age* (London 1620). The title of Herbert's poem, of course, guides the imagination towards the idea of wings, thereby to some extent curtailing the iconic potential.

to the criticism levelled at metaphysical conceits by Dr. Johnson: It springs from a combination of "heterogeneous ideas" of the most extreme kind – only that these are not "yoked by violence together",[18] but, as will appear, indeed form a *discordia concors*, or perhaps, as Nicholas of Cusa might have put it more aptly: a *coincidentia oppositorum*, at a theological juncture where this ultimately appears to be wholly adequate.

But even if we insist on the presumably more authorial and less ambiguous, solely wing-like contours of the version reproduced here, the iconic shape of the poem still remains provocative in other respects. It draws attention to itself, to the black-on-white materiality of any poetic text. Besides, it demands that we consider, indeed admire it as a work of art. It pushes itself into the foreground as a literary sign. This is an object skillfully crafted by the poet. It alerts us to the virtuoso performance that has produced a text capable of communicating its subject not only symbolically but also iconically.

There is, however, a serious problem here. The poem ought not to do this, if it truly wants to be a religious poem. If it really intends to speak of the highest truth, if it means to inculcate sacred insight, it ought not to draw too much attention to its own artificiality or to its author's virtuosity. According to this view, it had better step back modestly, hide its beautiful form, its distracting outside behind its all-important didactic purpose. Or is the poem's art perhaps an essential part of the poem's message? Does it, as in "Love (3)" clarify what cannot – philosophicall or theologically – be explained? I would like to claim that it does, by proposing a reading that looks even closer at the poem's 'conceited' metaphorical structure.

In order to test our hypothesis we have to ask how textual figure and structure, image and imagination interact. A first paraphrase might run as follows: The speaker begins by considering – liturgically quite suitable for an Easter poem – God's history with mankind, starting with the creation. He goes on to lament the Fall that led to the first humans' loss of grace and stature and their growing alienation from their Creator, a self-impoverishment that, at its very deepest point ("Most poor"), takes a turn for the better with Christ's incarnation and resurrection. It is these "victories" that the speaker, posing as bard or poet-singer, is going to praise, 'rising' as high as possible like the larks that jubilate in the fields at this time of the year. Thus, Adam's and Eve's "foolish[]" Fall will further the poet's "flight". It will have turned into a *felix culpa* that furnishes inspiration and beautiful material for his song.

The second stanza seems to perform a similar trajectory: Here, the speaker turns towards his own history with God. And here, too, we move from loss towards gain, from sin back to redemption. The speaker's own guilt and disgrace are imagined in physical terms, with correlates like illness and a lethal loss of weight that almost causes him to dwindle to nothingness ("Most thin"). Again, at the point of greatest despair, there is a

---

18 Johnson 1968, 20 (as in footnote 1).

reversal, marked by the very same words as in the first stanza ("With thee"). His prayer for grace seems to have been answered. The speaker's "Affliction" and repentance are turned into Easterly enthusiasm, as he is permitted to participate in Christ's resurrection.

In terms of theological doctrine, everything seems to be in perfect, orthodox order. We end where we had begun, in untroubled certainty of salvation. Both stanzas ostensibly and perfectly mirror each other. Fall and Redemption guarantee the salvation of mankind as well as inspire its poetic praise, just as individual sinfulness and the experience of renewed grace are discovered to be the foundation of Easter joy. At the end of both stanzas the poet is (re-)enabled to spread his wings, much like the lark he wants to imitate in his song. Truly, an admirable poem with didactic applicability.

A nagging irritation remains. Where at first we felt semantic tension in the poem's ambivalent iconicity, its opposition between life and death (or: flight and fall, ascent and descent), there now appears to be rather a lot of similarity. Indeed, both stanzas seem to be structured identically, thematising the same rhythm of spiritual wholeness possessed, lost, and regained, with a double conversion in the middle. Maybe we should rest content with this. But in fact, it is too good to be true.

For, of course, there is more to it than meets the eye. In order to understand this, we have to move yet a little closer to the text. A second reading will reveal that the theological parallelism between the poem's parts, their formal equivalence which causes the two stanzas to be read as elements of one extended, complex metaphor, hides important differences. In reality, this poem does not repeat itself. It does not move in a circle, and it does not cover the same ground twice with slight variations on the same theme. In fact it performs a fairly abrupt turn between its two stanzas. There is a volte-face, a conversion *between* them that differs from the more conventional ones within the stanzas and that demands explanation. It leads us through a turbulent process towards an insight that was not present at first.[19] The poem's symmetrical shape is, in other words, a façade or dissimulation, a kind of deception, decorative but misleading – however, as we shall see, in a productive manner.

First, it is important to observe that the first stanza, happy as it may sound, hides an aesthetic as well as moral problem. The poem begins with a grand gesture – much too grand. The authorial voice intends no less than an *imitatio Dei*. The poet presents

---

[19] In that respect, the poem's structure resembles that of the last two stanzas of "Misery". Here, the speaker charts a similar process of conversion: "Indeed at first Man was a treasure, | A box of jewels, shop of rarities, | A ring, whose posy was, *My pleasure*: | He was a garden in a Paradise: | Glory and grace | Did crown his heart and face. | But sin hath fool'd him. Now he is | A lump of flesh, without a foot or wing | To raise him to the glimpse of bliss: | A sick toss'd vessel, dashing on each thing; | Nay, his own shelf: | My God, I mean myself." (lines 67–78; Drury and Moul 2015, 97). In describing the movement from Paradise to shipwreck, from wealth and heavenly abundance to loss and a reduction to mere, earthly physicality; from divine grace to human, 'wingless' self, Herbert even uses some of the same metaphors he employs in "Easter-wings".

himself in best Renaissance manner as *alter Deus*, as re-creator for whom the Fall is mere subject matter. To him, mankind's guilt is nothing but a theme on which to play his own variations and show his own artfulness to best advantage. Sin appears as mere foolishness, easily distanced. It is a means to the end of advertising and displaying poetic expertise. It is by his art that the poet legitimises his stance: He places himself side by side with the resurrected Christ – "With thee | O let me rise | As larks, harmoniously". He imagines himself in perfect consonance with the Highest. In other words: he wants to be like God. Or he poses as Daedalus, another highly-renowned artist. This is, then, in itself a multiple conceit, with the poet imitating the Creator as well as casting both himself and Christ visually as larks spreading their wings, soaring to highest heaven, and singing.[20] Simultaneously, by way of the mythological comparison, he aligns himself with the epitome of the superior craftsman, capable of constructing an apparatus that will allow him to rise towards the light.

However, Daedalus' tandem flight with his son Icarus, as we know, ended in disaster. The second stanza unfolds some of the myth's ominous implications associated with Icarus' hubris.[21] Here, the poet's stance in love with his own art that pretended to a delightful combination of theological and classical learning stands revealed as vanity. It now appears as a strategy of self-immunisation. In retrospect, the speaker had only tried to evade a confrontation with himself, and we are asked to realise this at the nodal point

---

20 Wings, larks, and soaring flight figure in a similar context also in "Sion", interestingly contrasted with the stone building of Solomon's temple: "All Solomon's sea of brass and world of stone | Is not so dear to thee as one good groan. | And truly brass and stones are heavy things, | Tombs for the dead, not temples fit for thee: | But groans are quick, and full of wings, | And all their motion upward be; | And ever as they mount, like larks they sing; | The note is sad, yet music for a king." (lines 17–24, Drury and Moul 2015, 101). With emphasis not on the success, but on the failure of this soaring "like larks", "Easter-wings" associates the "groan" of contrition with a downward "motion". As this humiliation is the condition for a true "mount[ing]" in the rising that figures resurrection, the spatial semantic here provides the structure for a theologically more demanding arrangement.

21 The allusion to Icarus and the comparison of poetic (and amorous) daring with the ambition of one who flies too near the sun was not uncommon in Renaissance poetry, especially in Petrarchan and Platonic contexts. Thus, Pierre de Ronsard employs the topos in two of his sonnets, CLXXII and CLXXIII in the 1594 edition of *Le Premier Livres des Amours* (Amours de Cassandre), "Je veux brusler pour m'en-voler aux cieux" and "Mon fol penser pour s'en-voler plus haut" (Ronsard 1950, 75). In both he attempts to direct the speaker's love, enthusiasm, and soaring ("hautain") desire towards its proper, heavenly goal. The divine ("L'autre beauté") from which all earthly beauty takes its origin and to which it strives to return is presented in terms of light and fire, attraction and terror; it appears as ambivalent cause of a hoped-for immolation that will burn away all hindrance to ascent as well a source of heat that may effect a melting and loss of the foolish soul's wings ("Cesse, Penser, de hazarder ton aile, | Qu'on ne te voye en bruslant desplumer"). While Herbert seems to imitate Ronsard's linkage of poetic fury with bird-like flight and its hazards, he also transforms the conceit, in effect strengthening its ornithological literalness while critically turning its mythological associations against itself and casting the notion of a potentially dangerous transcendence in Christian, indeed Christological terms. – I am grateful to Steffen Schneider for drawing my attention to this 'Icarean' strain in Ronsard's poems.

of silence between the stanzas. Now the speaker opens his eyes that before had been blind to his own "sin". We are not told what this consists in, only that the consequences make themselves felt in "sorrow" and "sicknesses".[22]

From the first, something is fundamentally wrong; the speaker finds himself steeped in unhappiness. It is no longer Adam and Eve who are the theme of his song, but himself. He now speaks as the one concerned; it is his own life that is at stake. More: it is not only the life of the soul whose fate is affected, but his embodied life. He experiences himself – however, no longer as easily triumphant, but as guilty. The poem figures, quite literally, the radical self-diminishing of human stature that is effected by sin by transforming it, metaphorically, into a wasting away of the body. This loss of girth and spatial extension is made palpable in the first of the two shortest lines of the stanza.

At this point, the poem also figuratively imitates a return to earth: It makes evident humiliation and contrition, as it descends from the dizzy heights of theological and aesthetic generalisation so flattering to the poetic self of the first stanza. Here, the speaker recognises himself not as Second Creator, but as creature. He does not possess grace, but needs it desperately. He is no longer the poet-theologian[23] who knows everything there is to know about the Resurrection and the forgiveness of sin. Instead, he devoutly wishes for it, longing to experience and truly "feel" it by *feeling with* Christ, here and now, *His* "victorie". The perspective has changed completely, as has the deixis. Redemption now appears as conditional ("if"). It is made dependent on the believer's capacity for sympathy not in the sense of a superficial echoing of the triumph of the risen Christ, but in the sense of com-passion ready to share the saviour's pain and misery: not a facile evocation of the right doctrinal commonplaces, but genuine "affliction"[24] in a suffering that is no longer a fanciful pose seeking to imitate Christ, but a painful affect in consequence of the speaker's own entanglement in sin and his awareness of it. As 'passion' becomes personal experience, redemption is presented as the object of hope and faith – as well as of the poetic imagination.

---

22 Indicating, according to Richard Strier, a Lutheran streak in Herbert (see Strier 1983). Strict Calvinist as well as Lutheran observance would insist on the natural sinfulness of man, to be relieved only by grace, and, of course, faith.

23 Producing what Sir Philip Sidney in his *Defence of Poetry* would have termed 'divine' poetry – "chief, both in antiquity and excellency", because its makers "did imitate the unconceivable excellencies of God" (in: Duncan-Jones and van Dorsten 1973, 59–121, here: 80).

24 "Affliction" is, as John Drury has pointed out, a strongly resonant word in Herbert's poetry. Not only did he write five poems that bear this title,

but affliction amounts to nothing less than a signature of Herbert's later life after his career break, his struggle with what he felt to be his vocation, and the painful process of adjusting to the situation of a priesthood in the country after the political and academic glamour of being Public Orator to the university (cf. "General Introduction" to Drury and Moul 2015, xxi). Compare also the episode in the allegorical "Love unknown", where the narrator's heart, after already having been painfully wrung and cleansed, is thrown into "A boiling caldron, round about whose verge | Was in great letters set AFFLIC-TION" (lines 27–28, Drury and Moul 2015, 123).

In the end, the image of the spiritual flight to the heights, too, changes. The speaker no longer envisages himself twinned with Christ, paired like a couple of soaring larks, but presents himself metaphorically as a creature incapable of flight unless aided by his creator. No traces of prideful self-glorification seem to be left. A rather surprising, rare, both homely and technical term helps to foreground the transformation: The last-but-one line ("if I *imp* my wing on thine") employs a word taken from falconry, still a popular pastime with aristocratic connotations in seventeenth-century England. *Imp* refers to the practice of engrafting feathers in the wing of a falcon so as to restore or improve its powers of flight (for instance, when the bird is moulting or has damaged its wing). However, although the term itself is clear, its implications are not. They oscillate between notions of activity and passivity, between domesticity and outdoors activity, nobility and poverty, competence and disability, enforced stasis and dynamic motion. Are we to imagine that the speaker sees his powers of flight restored by having Christ's feathers added to his own wing, or are we to imagine him borne on the wings of Christ, powerless to fly by himself? Is it himself who does the repairing,perhaps even playing on the phonetic similarity between *imp* and *imitate*? All in all, the speaking subject does not appear to be as much master of himself as the metaphor is capable of suggesting. However, the possibility of discerning rather more autonomy here than is perhaps compatible with an orthodox Protestant theology of grace, even a sense of the believer's own cooperation and achievement, is not totally ruled out.[25] The opening of this possibility is, again, an effect of the poem's non-discursive, metaphorical texture.

4 Elements of a neoplatonic poetics?

Finally, the ornithological conceit remains theologically ambivalent. The unruly suggestive power of the image of heteronomous flight is due partly to its affective and imaginative charge, partly to its cognitive content. In fact, it conjures up even more associations than those we have charted, and they lead into literary as well as metaphysical realms of another sort. Potential meanings and resonances fairly explode if we remember that not only the story of Daedalus and Icarus may be relevant here. Besides, and as a further iconographical background to this poem, classical mythology also holds the narrative of the abduction of Ganymede by Jupiter's eagle. This episode (frequently and famously

---

25 Providing, incidentally, an argument against Richard Strier's contention that Herbert is to be seen as a protagonist of a strict Lutheran doctrine of salvation by grace alone.

pictured in Renaissance painting)²⁶ provides another, erotically charged image of a tandem flight in which the 'rapt' human is carried to heavenly regions by divine force.

Still, as if this were not enough, yet another, philosophical dimension is brought into play. These lines also evoke the ancient philosophy that is in many respects closest both to Renaissance art²⁷ and Christian theology: Platonism, not last in its early modern, neoplatonic version. Surprisingly, its relevance to Herbert's poetry has hitherto gone virtually unnoticed.²⁸ Particularly dear to the Platonic imagination is the idea of the soul as a winged and feathered being of dubious self-governance. In the *Phaedrus*, the soul appears in constant need of growing, grooming and repairing its wings in order to remain capable of ascending, maintaining and returning to its place of origin (cf. 246c–249e). The passage is part of the extended allegory of the charioteer, the so-called mythical hymn of the *Phaedrus* (243e–256a) providing a discursive language which a poet as learned as Herbert or his readers would have recognised easily. The argument on the four divine *furores* in the *Phaedrus* – the *mania* of the poet, the prophet, the priest, and the lover –, the discussion of poetic inspiration in the *Ion*, and last not least the exploration of earthly and heavenly love in the *Symposium* are central to this discourse as well as to Renaissance neoplatonism. Transformed and mediated through the translations and

26 E.g. erotically charged in sixteenth-century drawings of the Rape of Ganymede after a lost original by Michelangelo, with Ganymede's arms virtually merging with the eagle's wings, or in an early seventeenth-century painting by Rubens. The image of Ganymede carried by Jupiter's eagle occurs repeatedly in the emblem books of the time, for instance in the *Emblematum liber* of Andreas Alciatus, where, under the motto "IN DEO LAETANDVM" a determined-looking Ganymede is seen astride a comparatively meek eagle (see Henkel and Schöne 1978, 1726–1727). The motif may have an Akkadian prehistory, as noted by Walter Burkert (Burkert 1995, 122).

27 Cf., in particular, the studies of the Warburg School, e.g. Wind 1968 [1958], Panofsky 1972 [1939].

28 The more so, since it could be argued that it runs in the family. True, Cambridge Platonism only flourished a few decades after Herbert's university career, but it has its prehistory, and the Florentine neoplatonists, not last Marsilio Ficino's translations and commentaries of the Platonic dialogues were not unknown in England (cf., e.g., Patrides 1980). Not only could Herbert have come in touch with Renaissance neoplatonist thinking during his time in Cambridge, but his brother Edward, Lord of Cherbury, also has frequent recourse to neoplatonic figures of thought, both in his autobiography, his poetry, and in his philosophical writings (see Lobsien 2010, 16–29; cf. also Klaudies (in press)). This is not to dispute the importance of the biblical pretexts also present in this poem, such as possible allusions to Ps 63.7, 91.4, 103.5, Isaiah 40.31, Deuteronomy 32.9–13 or Malachi 4.2. The cherubims ornamenting the Temple of Solomon (1 Kings 6.23–27) are, of course, also winged. The *Physiologus*-tradition might also, at first glance, seem to offer itself; however, the birds that figure in Herbert's poem are neither eagle nor phoenix, let alone owl presented as allegories for Christ (or, in the case of the eagle, the believer), but, precisely and suitably, lark and falcon. Herbert's metaphysics are different, both richer and more varied than those suggested by his possible pretexts, and the inattention among scholars to neoplatonic elements in his poetry may be partly due to the tenacity of the traditional image of Herbert as the pious country parson.

commentaries by Marsilio Ficino it offers a mind-set,[29] a way of thinking and feeling that harmonises well with a number of Christian concerns.

Above all it appears congenial to poetry. From the first, and repeatedly, Plato resorts to metaphor to render plausible the soul's self-motion and underscore the necessity of right guidance. Thus, as he unfolds the metaphysical field of the mythical hymn at the heart of the *Phaedrus*, he relies on categories of spatiality and significant movement between value-related coordinates of up and down. And it is clearly upward mobility which is better than downward, flight better than fall; so much so that even the upward gaze is valued highly as the mark of the lover of beauty who in his *mania* has fixed the eyes of his mind on the highest truth in "the best of all forms of divine possession": "Such a one, as soon as he beholds the beauty of this world, is reminded of true beauty, and his wings begin to grow; then is he fain to lift his wings and fly upward; yet he has not the power, but inasmuch as he gazes upward like a bird, and cares nothing for the world beneath, men charge it upon him that he is demented" (249e).[30] Ficino's Latin rendering of this and related passages similarly stresses the soul's orientation towards divine beauty conceived of as situated 'on high': "When it [i.e. the soul, V. O. L.] is perfect and winged it soars up to the heights and rules over the whole world. [...] The natural power of wings is to lift something heavy up to the heights where the race of gods dwells. But of all that exists with regard to the body, what most participates in the divine is the rational soul. But the divine is beautiful, wise, and good and whatever can be said to be such. By these the plumage of the rational soul is nourished and strengthened most, but it droops and perishes because of the ugly and wicked and such contraries."[31]

The *Phaedrus* quotations also hint at a number of other features of the neoplatonic aesthetic implicit in Herbert's "Easter-wings":[32] for instance, an "emphasis on the poet

---

29 Cf. Allen 1999: "Renaissance Neoplatonism [...] contributed a *forma mentis* that transcended disciplinary and national boundaries without necessarily coming into direct conflict with other contemporary mind-sets, those we associate with Aristotelianism, Protestantism, Ramism, neo-scholasticism, Hermeticism, Copernicanism, Tridentism, and so forth" (435).

30 Hamilton and Cairns 1973, 496. Herbert incidentally favours the notion of the upward gaze in other poems as well, such as, again in comparison with the habit of birds, in "Mans medley", where man is placed, in good Renaissance fashion, ontologically between material and immaterial beings and challenged with joining the sensual, earthly world with the heavenly and angelic: "In soul he mounts and flies, | In flesh he dies. [...] Not, that he may not here | Taste of the cheer, | But as birds drink,

and straight lift up their head" (lines 13–14, 19–21, Drury and Moul 2015, 125).

31 Ficino 2008, 9–11 (sections 5–6). Cf. also the following passage, with reference to the "divine alienation" experienced by the lover: "[...] he who has seen something of beauty here, in recalling the true Beauty, receives his wings, and having received them, attempts to fly. But since he cannot do this, gazing upwards like a bird at the supernals and despising lower things, he receives the [crowd's] verdict that he has been seized as it were by a frenzy. [...] and the person who is seized by this frenzy, since he loves beautiful things, is called a lover" (19, section 14).

32 Allen 1999 presents some basic elements of a neoplatonic aesthetic along these lines; cf. also Lobsien 2007 and, for a more detailed discussion with reference to English Renaissance constellations, Lobsien 2010.

as god-possessed subject",[33] ecstatic, inspired, besides himself in his enthusiasm; a striving for oneness or union with the divine (*henosis*); a fascination with dynamic, upward movement presented as 'epistrophic', i.e. self-referential and guided by a sense of return to the origin; the preference for an art that is on the one hand non-mimetic in that it aims at the ideal forms themselves, their intelligible and immutable, metaphysical reality (rather than their 'demiurgic' representations), on the other conscious of the necessity of mediation in its approach to the highest. For Herbert's metaphoricity, a sense of the impossibility of attaining this immediacy together with an undiminished longing for it seems to be the most important item in the neoplatonic nexus. As the divine is neither available to the senses, nor to imagination or direct cognition, the only means of referring to it is by way of symbolic – linguistic or artistic – indirection, that is to say metaphorically and allegorically: 'in other words'.

5 The metaphorical art of "*Easter-wings*"

The speaker of "Easter-wings", it might be argued, undergoes a metamorphosis whose contours are delineated by the poem's central metaphors: After posing, first, as glorious poet-prophet, not affected by the moral failures of others and hardly touched with earthly materiality, he finds himself, in the second half of the poem, personally subjected to an experience of fall and – ultimately heteronomous – resurrection. Soaring lark-like in harmony with his saviour, we next see him reduced to a feather in the wing of a falcon, or at least faced with his own deficient powers of flight and dependent on the strength of another. From an initial, *Phaedrus*-like emphasis on beauty, the text seems to move to one of love, suggestive (if only in part) of the *Symposium*. But although the neoplatonic imagination may have provided some of the most potent metaphors for the process of *epistrophé* or conversion in Herbert's evocation and interrogation of Renaissance notions of the soul's autonomy, it is the point of intersection with Christian theological thinking about the resurrection of the body which renders his poem not only most poignant but also most interesting in terms of its metaphysical imagery. For it is here that the conceptual surplus emerges that causes poetic metaphors to vie with the arguments of philosophical (or theological) discourse for truth. Still, Herbert's metaphorical probing of philosophical ideas brings into play possibilities of thought without deciding between them. It thus leaves suspended the question – a major bone of contemporary confessional contention – as to the extent of human dependance on the divine and of

---

33 Allen 1999, 441.

the need to surrender autonomy to the agency of a divine other: the question of grace, together with the question of what the resurrection of the body entails.[34]

But this is what a poem does. It tends to remain irritating. Also, it does not preach. It wants to communicate essential truth, and it does. But it persuades in a manner that does not render its medium wholly transparent in favour of an extractable 'message'. On the contrary, it draws attention to the way it is made, and it convinces through it. It is in a very real sense 'about' its own intransparency. Literature therefore resists didacticism, and it needs to resist the reduction to *docere*. If it did not, it would render itself superfluous. Poetry, as we could see in reading Herbert's "Easter-wings", leads us not only to reflect, but above all to imagine and to feel. It thus taps into cognitive resources not available to mere rationality. As we experience, virtually, the speaker's experience, we are enabled to sympathise with it. The poem's metaphorical texture moves us – by creating productive uncertainty rather than dwelling on familiar certainties, by presenting its subject from different perspectives, by forcing us continually to revise the positions we thought we had gained. It can therefore never be wholly commensurate with theology, but will keep reminding us that there is always something else apart from dogmatic insight – the unavailable sensed in a surplus of aesthetic delight, given gratis.

In sum: Herbert's poetry, exemplified by "Easter-wings", faces the ultimate challenge – that of presenting the unrepresentable, of spelling out a divine truth incomprehensible to the unaided intellect. It does so by creating a metaphorical texture whose densely interwoven strands function on different levels, on that of visual (iconic, pictorial) form; on that of a short allegorical narrative, told twice and the second time with a difference; on that of metaphysical conceit, linking the Christian idea of resurrection with different notions of upwards flight (and human art) in a paradoxical complex that also brackets mortality with eternal life, sin with grace, agency with surrender.[35] Finally, on the micro-level of individual metaphor, it focuses all these in one select term ("imp").

The overall achievement is conceptual, albeit capable of embracing paradox. For although Max Black's distinction between the "focus" and "frame" of metaphor[36] seems to facilitate the description of effects created by "imp", it would on the other hand be inadequate to reduce the rest of the poem to context, or a mere framing device. The "system[s] of implication"[37] brought into play by the text as a metaphorical whole create an abundance of meaning that goes beyond the rich significance sparked by the embedded falconry metaphor in isolation. Rather, the two parallel stanzas with their title that already names the central conceit lead us through a process of poetical persuasion, past a silent point of conversion in the centre of the poem as the fulcrum on

---

34 For the history of this discussion from antiquity to early modern times see the milestone study by Bynum 1995.

35 In what Stanley E. Fish has described as an act of "letting go", cf. Fish 1972.

36 Suggested in Black 1962.

37 Black 1962, 41.

which it turns. Taken together, these two stanzas constitute a metaphorical complex in a persuasive mechanism working to convince us of a paradoxical truth. By thematising two types of attitude – towards the history of mankind and towards one's own life –, and implying, in the flight images, two perspectives on the divine in relation to the human – the soaring flight of the lark, accompanied by ceaseless song, and the artificially aided flight of the falcon, hampered by its deficient plumage –, the stanzas correspond in their rhythms of extension and contraction, their symmetrical sequence of elation, depression and resilience, inviting both comparison and distinction in their modes of figuring the return to life. In doing so, they refer to a Christian-neoplatonic system of ideas that seeks to adumbrate a reconciliation of the seemingly incompatible in the concepts of resurrection and redemption. What remains unavailable to the grasp of reason is nonetheless rendered credible – through the trope of wings in a metaphorical enactment of transcendence. In "Easter-wings" salvation by grace in unison with faith and humble effort becomes a possibility, at least a matter of well-founded hope. Thus, new life may after all spring from the experience of mortality.

What Herbert's intricately textured conceit makes clear is that resurrection does involve the spatial notion of a turning towards a 'higher' source of light, of an upward movement that is more than a rising from the horizontal, deathbed position and that is reminiscent of Christ's *anástasis* after the ransacking of the depth of hell – an ascent which chimes only too well with neoplatonic elements of thought. At the same time, Herbert's conversion of one kind of flight into another guides us towards an experience of the central truth of negative theology: that God is, in the last resort, not accessible by images. The poem places Him, once again, beyond metaphor. He is neither a lark nor a falcon, though the human soul may, in some respects, resemble both. Except that of flight as metaphor of dynamic motion, all possible attributes of the divine are transcended in "Easter-wings". The complications of its metaphorical texture also permit us to realise anew that, rhetorically speaking, metaphor is indeed a major trope. For trope, as we may remember, is after all just another term for conversion or *epistrophé*: in other words, a turning towards the One who has already turned towards us.

Bibliography

Allen 1999
Michael J. B. Allen. "Renaissance Neoplatonism". In *The Renaissance*. Ed. by G. P. Norton. The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism 3, ed. by H.B. Nisbet and C. Rawson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, 435–441.

Black 1962
Max Black. "Metaphor". In *Models and Metaphors. Studies in Language and Philosophy*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1962, 25–47.

Burkert 1995
Walter Burkert. *The Orientalizing Revolution. Near Eastern Influence on Greek Culture in the Early Archaic Age.* Translated by M. E. Pinder and W. Burkert. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995.

Bynum 1995
Caroline Walker Bynum. *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200–1336*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1995.

Conrad 1985
Peter Conrad. *The Everyman History of English Literature*. London and Melbourne: Dent, 1985.

Drury 2013
John Drury. *Music at Midnight. The Life and Poetry of George Herbert*. London and Melbourne: Allen Lane, 2013.

Drury and Moul 2015
John Drury and Victoria Moul, eds. *George Herbert: The Complete Poetry. With Translations from the Latin by Victoria Moul*. London and Melbourne: Penguin/Random House, 2015.

Dryden 1974
John Dryden. "Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire". In *The Works of John Dryden. Vol. IV: Poems 1693–1696*. Ed. by A. B. Chambers and W. Frost. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974, 3–90.

Duncan-Jones and van Dorsten 1973
Katherine Duncan-Jones and Jan van Dorsten, eds. *Miscellaneous Prose of Sir Philip Sidney*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973.

Eliot 1969 [1932]
Thomas Stearns Eliot. *Selected Essays*. London: Faber & Faber, 1969 [1932].

Ficino 2008
Marsilio Ficino. *Commentaries on Plato. Vol. 1: Phaedrus and Ion.* Ed. and transl. by M. J. B. Allen. I Tatti Renaissance Library 34. Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard University Press, 2008.

Fish 1972
Stanley E. Fish. "Letting Go: The Dialectic of the Self in Herbert's Poetry". In *Self-Consuming Artifacts. The Experience of Seventeenth-Century Literature*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972, 156–223.

Gardner 1957
Helen Gardner, ed. *The Metaphysical Poets*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1957.

Hamilton and Cairns 1973
Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, eds. *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973.

Henkel and Schöne 1978
Arthur Henkel and Albrecht Schöne, eds. *Emblemata. Handbuch zur Sinnbildkunst des XVI. und XVII. Jahrhunderts*. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1978.

Hutchinson 1978 [1941]
F. E. Hutchinson, ed. *The Works of George Herbert*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978 [1941].

Johnson 1968
Samuel Johnson. *Lives of the English Poets*. Ed. by G. Birkbeck Hill. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905, repr. Hildesheim: Olms, 1968.

Klaudies (in press)
 Alexander Klaudies. "Transformative Dynamik und Kontinuität: das Theorem der Allgemeinbegriffe bei Herbert von Cherbury". In *Allelopoiese*. Ed. by E. M. Hausteiner, J. Helmrath, and U. Jensen. Berlin: De Gruyter. In press.

Lewis 1973 [1936]
 Clive Staples Lewis. *The Allegory of Love. A Study in Medieval Tradition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973 [1936].

Lobsien 2007
 Verena Olejniczak Lobsien. "Neuplatonismus und Ästhetik: Eine Einleitung". In *Neuplatonismus und Ästhetik. Zur Transformationsgeschichte des Schönen*. Ed. by V. O. Lobsien and C. Olk. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2007, 1–17.

Lobsien 2010
 Verena Olejniczak Lobsien. *Transparency and Dissimulation. Configurations of Neoplatonism in Early Modern English Literature*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010.

Lubac 2007
 Henri de Lubac. *Typologie Allegorie Geistiger Sinn. Studien zur Geschichte der christlichen Schriftauslegung*. Translated by R. Voderholzer. Freiburg: Johannes Verlag Einsiedeln, 2007.

Martz 1962
 Louis Martz. *The Poetry of Meditation. A Study in English Religious Literature of the Seventeenth Century*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1962.

Panofsky 1972 [1939]
 Erwin Panofsky. *Studies in Iconology. Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance*. New York: Harper & Row, 1972 [1939].

Patrides 1974
 C. A. Patrides, ed. *The English Poems of George Herbert*. London: Dent, 1974.

Patrides 1980
 C. A. Patrides, ed. *The Cambridge Platonists*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.

Preminger 1965
 Alex Preminger, ed. *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965.

Puttenham 1970 [1936]
 George Puttenham. *The Arte of English Poesie*. Ed. by G. Willcock and A. Walker. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970 [1936].

Ronsard 1950
 Pierre de Ronsard. *Œuvres complètes.* Édition par Gustave Cohen. Paris: Gallimard, 1950.

Strier 1983
 Richard Strier. *Love Known. Theology and Experience in George Herbert's Poetry*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1983.

Wind 1968 [1958]
 Edgar Wind. *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*. London: Faber, 1968 [1958].

VERENA OLEJNICZAK LOBSIEN

Verena Olejniczak Lobsien, Dr. phil. (1984 Hanover), Habilitation (1992 Frankfurt/Main) is Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Her major research interests are Early Modern English literature and culture with a focus on transformations of antiquity. She is author of *Subjektivität als Dialog* (Munich 1994), *Skeptische Phantasie* (Munich 1999); *Transparency and Dissimulation* (Berlin 2010); *Jenseitsästhetik* (Berlin 2012), *Shakespeares Exzess* (Wiesbaden 2015) and, with Eckhard Lobsien, co-author of *Die unsichtbare Imagination* (Munich 2003).

Prof. Dr. Verena Lobsien
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik
Unter den Linden 6
10099 Berlin, Germany
E-Mail: verena.lobsien@rz.hu-berlin.de