"Thy words do finde me out":
Reading the Last Line of "Affliction (I)"[1][*]

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The words "Let me not love thee, if I love thee not" bring to a close the first of the five "Affliction" poems in George Herbert's cycle of religious poems titled *The Temple. Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations.* [2] I wish to focus on the questions raised by the last line of "Affliction (I)" in the context of this work as seen against the background of Herbert's characteristic Christian Humanism.

In *The Temple* the liturgical year does not begin with the first Sunday in Advent but with Good Friday. When the reader enters "The Church" (after having considered his moral responsibilities in "The Church-porch") he immediately stands in front of the altar. The sacrifice celebrated on the altar is Christ Crucified, who speaks to us from the Cross and makes us see his passion in his own light, using a phrase from a traditional liturgy for Good Friday: "O all ye who pass by, behold and see" ("The Sacrifice" 1 and 201).[3] Good Friday is followed by Easter. But in *The Temple* we are emphatically reminded that Christ's kingdom is not of this world and that, therefore, the speaker's Eastertide hope that "affliction shall advance the flight" in him ("Easter Wings" 20) is given the lie, for nature rebels[4] and sin circumvents all precautions.[5] Affliction has the speaker firmly in its grip and is complained of in a long and, indeed, very *private ejaculation*, the first of the five poems titled "Affliction."

In this poem the speaker surveys his former life and finds that God has been too hard a taskmaster for him, unkind and not even trustworthy since he not only "entic'd"[6] the speaker to enter his service but

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even went so far as to "betray [him] to a lingring book" (39). At the end of his long and bitter complaint, the speaker, after having wished to descend several steps in the scale of being and become a tree, goes to the last possible extreme of his discontent, giving notice altogether:

> Yet, though thou troublest me, I must be meek;
> In weaknesse must be stout.
> Well, I will change the service, and go seek
> Some other master out—(61-64)

This decision is, however, instantly revoked:

> Ah my deare God! though I am clean forgot,
> Let me not love thee, if I love thee not. (65-66)

The word "love" never occurred before in the long poem. "Service" was the word. In "The Church" the word *service* regularly denotes man's intimate relation with God. This could not be better expressed than by the fact that *serve* is an anagram of *verse*. Serving, "versing,"[7] and loving God are one and the same in Herbert's poetry.[8]

The word *love* that replaces the word *service* in the last line of "Affliction (I)" is, everywhere in *The Temple*, nothing less than the name of God.[9] To make that quite clear, Herbert went so far as to rewrite the 23rd Psalm, transforming "The Lord is my shepherd" into: "The God of love my shepherd is" (1). The next line that rhymes with this one consists of the classic formula of love poetry: "While he is mine, and I am his" (3). In Herbert's poetry the 23rd Psalm has become man's love song addressed to God. Herbert most sincerely respects the rule "*Love God and love your neighbour*" ("Divinitie" 17) but in *The Temple* the neighbour plays only a minor part, if any. The reader bids him adieu when he leaves the "Church-porch" and enters "The Church." Here one very individual man meets the God of love and communicates with him in a love poetry all his own. In his *Sacred Poems* he brings his offerings to him (not burnt offerings nor offerings of incense, but of prayer and praise),[10] and he does so not only as the spokesman of many other individual men[11] not gifted with his art but also of all created beings that, not endowed with a rational soul, can praise the

creator only unconsciously.[12] Most of all the speaker of *The Temple* praises the world-creating Word, Jesus Christ, because he died on the Cross for love of mankind. If only (the speaker often complains) his praise of the God of love could reach the fervour and perfection of love poetry that has been practised and refined through the ages.[13] And in "The Thanksgiving" he actually alludes to one of the great masters of love poetry, when he addresses God, saying:

> Nay, I will read thy book, and never move
>> Till I have found therein thy love,
> Thy art of love, which I'le turn back on thee: (45-47)

"[A]rt of love" is a literal translation of *Ars amatoria*, the title of Ovid's work in which we find, embedded in the most ardent love poetry, some lovely remarks on poetry as a *sacrum commercium*.[14] In God's book, the writer of *The Temple* wants to elicit God's *Ars Amatoria*, which he wants to "turn back" on him. In other words, he thinks of his poetic imitation in terms of his, George Herbert's, own *Ars Amatoria* imitating and answering the original one composed by the Divine Word.

In referring to Ovid rather than to Dante or Petrarch, Herbert prefers mutual love[15] to a one-sided adoration of a beloved. In the sixteenth century the Humanist revival and the Reformation had paved the way for such a preference. Petrarchism still prevailed in Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* (though not in the *Arcadia)*, but to Spenser and Shakespeare love came into its own in the "mutual flame" (Shakespeare, *The Phoenix and Turtle* 24)[16] of "married chastity" (61). Of course, in Elizabethan love poetry the beloved was as passionately and exquisitely praised as Beatrice and Laura ever were, but now the beloved lady has descended from her pedestal and become a passionately loving woman. Similarly in Herbert's art of love, the speaker offers his praise to an infinitely far removed beloved, God, who is, however, quite as infinitely near to him[17] as he is removed, and who is, again infinitely, more loving than beloved. *Amor Dei* denotes God's love for man and man's love of God at the same time, and in *The Temple* the love of God is mutual. The speaker often says so, some-

times with such loving poetic fervour as in "The Clasping of Hands," and sometimes with such a rigorous stylistic austerity as in the mysterious single line "Let me not love thee, if I love thee not."

The last stanza of "Affliction (I)" functions as a second "Superliminare," which tells us to be ready for "the churches mysticall repast" (4). The display of historically verifiable autobiographical facts[18] in "Affliction (I)" is exceptional in "The Church"; it will never be repeated, even in the most intimately personal of *Private Ejaculations*. In "The Church" we partake of the Sacraments, which are a "mysticall repast."

The mystery of *amor Dei* is the main theme of "The Church," and Herbert uses various means to make the mystery shine. Paronomasia is his favourite; he uses it repeatedly and to most striking effect, as in "Wine becomes a wing at last" ("The Banquet" 42). The pattern poems are indeed "common Hieroglyphicks"[19]: in poems like "Aaron" or "Paradise" sheer artistry points out the mystery, in "The Sacrifice" religious irony does, and sometimes the mysteriousness (the word does occur in "The Sacrifice") of *amor Dei* becomes manifest in such single lines as "I am with thee and *most take all*" ("The Quidditie" 12) – and "Let me not love thee, if I love thee not"("Affliction [I]" 67). Both lines are final and both read like encoded messages. In the first case the alphabet provides the key,[20] in the second we have yet to find it. In all these examples (as in Herbert's English poetry throughout) the shining of mystery is part of a stylistically and intellectually most subtle compositional texture which, however, answers to the maxim *Simplex sigillum veri.*[21] To make these "contraryes meete in one" (Donne, Holy Sonnet "Oh, to vex me" 1) is the hallmark of Herbert's charm.

By leading up to my "decoding" of the last line of "Affliction (I)" in this manner I have implicitly disagreed with those critics who see the line as an ellipsis and thus feel invited to fill in the blanks,[22] like this: "1. Do not allow me to go on loving you if I do not love you now … 2. Do not allow me to love you in intention if I do not love you in reality …," and so on.[23] But, as far as I can see, *amor Dei* in Herbert is not

relative to time or any other postulate of reality. There can only be loving or not loving. So let us take the last line as it stands, meaningfully interwoven with "Affliction (I)" and with all the other poems in *The Temple* and yet delivering a mysterious epigrammatic message of its own.

Since the stanza is flanked by two conjunctions, syntax and logic offer themselves as possible guides. The first conjunction is a composite one, "Yet though," the final one is "if." The adversative "Yet" marks the reversal from the speaker's lamentations to his coming to a conclusion. The "though" concerns the hardness of the speaker's "service"; he must always make concessions and never grumble: "Yet, though thou troublest me, I must be meek; / In weaknesse must be stout" ("Affliction [I]" 61) This is a chiasmus, stressed by the homonymic and synonymic link between "meek" and "weak" at the crossing point; and here a previous line (53) echoes in the reader's memory: "Thus doth thy power crosse-bias me." According to the *OED*, a "cross-bias" is a bias "running athwart or counter to another." Herbert uses the verb derived from this composite noun, and I shall borrow it to describe his syntactic and logical drift in the last stanza of "Affliction (I)." The next two lines are also *cross-biased*, though in a different manner, not by logically expressive conjunctions, but by a semantic opposition. In his statement about the concessions to be made ("Yet, though…") the speaker repeated the word "must." This modal verb is now *cross-biased* by the modal verb "will" that is stressed by being coupled with the near-homonymic and etymologically identical[24] "Well": "Well, I will change the service" (63). In the last two lines of the six-line stanza the wilful subjectivity of "Well, I will" is *cross-biased* by the submissive and pious apostrophe "Ah my deare God!" (65). After that we return to clearly defined syntactical logic. First there is another "Though" that partly repeats the initial "Yet, though," and this concessive conjunction leads up to the conditional conjunction "if" which, together with the climactic final "not," dominates the last line: "Let me not love thee, if I love thee not" (66).

The *if* has been described by Plutarch as the nucleus of the hypothetical syllogism that is an intellectual achievement strictly reserved for the human mind and, therefore, a characteristic of the human condition (see *Moralia* 386c-387a).[25] In syntactical usage the Latin *si* as well as the English *if* has assumed great semantic flexibility. To Donatus *si* was, without qualification, a causal conjunction (364), while in Lily's Grammar it is a conditional one (*A Shorte Introduction* Ciiiʳ). But in one of John Donne's sermons the exegesis of the text is based on a variety of denotations of *si* or *if*:

> there is thus much more force in this particle *Si, If*, which is […] *Si concessionis, non dubitationis*, an *If* that implyes a confession and acknowledgement, not a hesitation or a doubt, That is also a *Si progressionis, Si conclusionis*, an *If* that carryes you farther, and that concludes you at last, *If* you doe it, that is, *Since* you do it (*Sermons* 3: 277.124-29)[26]

All of Donne's denotations and connotations accord surprisingly well with the "if" in Herbert's line. Even if it is not quite a "*Si concessionis*," it is at least syntactically and logically dependent on the concessive clause "though I am clean forgot," which is preceded by the initial composite conjunction "Yet though." The question whether there may also be touches of a "*Si dubitationis*" and "*progressionis*" in Herbert's "if" is well worth considering. Certainly it leads up to a conclusion and can therefore be called a "*Si conclusionis*" and a synonym of "*Since*."

The logical conclusion, however, does not come until the last line of "Affliction (I)." "[I]f I love thee not" is the logical premise that syntactically ought to precede the imperative "Let me not love thee." It follows in the poem partly for the rhyme's sake, which lays stress on the "not" that is unique in *The Temple.* Never again does Herbert make negativity sound so final.[27] This strong and richly meaningful effect of "not" goes together with the interplay of chiasmus and parallelism implied in the inversion of "if I love thee not" and "Let me not love thee."

To repeat: inversion and chiasmus are structurally dominant in the last stanza. It is *cross-biased* to such an extent that we are inclined to

think of the double St Andrew's Cross of "Easter wings." In that poem the pattern can be seen with the eyes of the body and it indicates falling and rising. In the last stanza of "Affliction (I)" it can be seen only with the eyes of the mind and indicates mysteriousness, a crux, or shall we say *knot* instead of *crux*? According to the *OED*, a knot is "a design or figure formed of crossing lines" ("knot" *n*.[1] 6.); the figurative meaning of *knot* is "Something that forms or maintains a union […] *spec.* the tie or bond of wedlock" (11.a. and b.; or, as in Herbert's "The Pearl," a "true-love-knot" [16]). But it also means "Something difficult to trace out or explain," and "the central or main point […] in a problem" (10.a. and b.),[28] and, finally, "A bond or obligation; a binding condition" (†12.; see the examples).[29]

The last line of "Affliction (I)" does indeed present a *crux* or *knot*. The double "not" rings with all the overtones suggested by the semantic richness of the word *knot*. Nothing could be more like George Herbert than such a *serio ludere* or pious juggling with paronomasia. Such "Charms and Knots" are part of the charm of *The Temple*. In "Affliction (IV)" the speaker prays to God (in a verbal context very much akin to "Affliction [I]") that He may "dissolve the knot" (22) of man's entanglement with his own senses. In "Home" (61) man himself is the knot because of the duality of body and soul. It is a multi-voiced echo that draws attention to the two *nots* in the last line of "Affliction (I)." What do they say?

Let us, for interpretive purposes, take the second one first. True to its lexical calling of being the "ordinary adverb of negation" (*OED*, "not" *adv.*), the final "not" negates the speaker's love for God. It does so, as it still would in Herbert's time, following the verb (*OED*, "not" *adv.* 1.a.), "love […] not," and the syntactic relation of subject, predicate, and object in this conditional clause ("if I love thee not") is unambiguous.

In the imperative "Let me not love thee" which is, logically, the consequent (or *apodosis*) of the conditional clause, the syntactic function of the "not" is, by contrast, far from unambiguous. What does it negate? God's letting man love him? or man's loving God of his own accord?

The adverb "not" may, chiefly in poetical usage (from the 15th to the 19th century), not only follow the verb but also precede it,[30] as it does in Latin words like *nescio* or *nequeo* and, even more to the point, *negligo*.[31] The words easily come to mind because we have just been face to face with a Latinism in "Ah my deare God! though I am clean forgot" ("Affliction [I]" 65) "I am […] forgot" is the literal English equivalent of Latin *oblitus sum*[32] which, *obliviscor* being a deponent verb, is the semantic equivalent of English *I have forgotten*, but an ambiguous undercurrent of *I am forgotten* makes itself felt.[33] *Obliviscor* is semantically closely related to *negligo* (*forget* and *neglect*), and *negligo* is derived from *lego* as *diligo* is, and *diligo* denotes *to love* in the *Vulgate* throughout. Therefore I suggest that in "Let me not love thee" the "not" does not follow and negate "Let" but precedes and negates "love." The speaker says, *Let me not-love thee, if I love thee not*, as a man might say to a friend: "Take me as I am." Nothing speaks against this hypothesis linguistically, but something speaks for it in the immediate context, and the wider context confirms it.

   As the first ten stanzas have shown, the speaker only in the beginning "thought the service brave" (2); after that he gets more and more discontented, and in the last stanza he proclaims his decision to "change the service , and go seek / Some other master out" (63-64). But this is only the first of several changes of mind which are, very quickly, one after the other, to come. The words "some other master" are immediately followed by the apostrophe "Ah my deare God!" And once our attention is focused on this parallel—servant and master, the speaker and God—we become aware of a pattern in which the initially surprising word "love" in the last line finds its place as the indispensable copula of the two *personae*, servant and master—the speaker and God. It also becomes apparent that in this markedly autobiographical poem an archetypal pattern has become individualized to such a degree that (as Thomas Mann's Joseph tells Pharao) *the well known becomes unknown and we do not recognize it*.[34] But if we listen to the poet's words they do *find us out* and show us the way.

In Exodus 21 God, speaking out of his darkness to Moses, gives instructions for the relation of servant and master and service and freedom, telling him that

> 4 If his [the servant's] master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself.
>
> 5 And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free:
>
> 6 Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; […] and he shall serve him for ever.

The pattern is centred on the servant's statement "I love my master, […] I will not go out free," which explicates *amor Dei* seen from man's side, or, which is the same, *amor Dei* practised by man as the service that is perfect freedom (see BCP [1559], "The seconde Collecte for Peace" 111). The servant, loving his master as well as his family, rejects freedom and chooses his master's service, and the master lets him go on with it "forever." And this is the *well known* pattern that, in the last line of "Affliction (I)" becomes *unknown so that it is not recognized.* The phrase "Let me not love thee, if I love thee not" is a kind of sacred parody of God's words in Exodus, for Herbert at once disguises and discloses the Old Testament pattern; the phrase at the same time denies and confirms the idea of the service that is perfect freedom. The model servant in Exodus professes his love for his master and wants to remain in his service. The individual servant in the poem does not-love his master; he has put that on record in his long autobiographical complaint. But when he comes to the conclusion "Well, I will change the service and go seek / Some other master out," he realizes that he has hit rock bottom and cries out for help to the very master he was about to leave, begging him to keep him in his service *although*, or *since*, or "if" he does not-love him. His, a sinner's love for his God, will always be more of a *neglegere* than a *diligere*, and if God answers to his prayer and does let him remain in his service, He will always have to put up with His servant's not-loving him.

Just as the pattern for the service that is perfect freedom is to be found in Exodus, the pattern for George Herbert's idea of a sinner

being allowed to serve his God though unable to love him is to be found everywhere in *The Temple* but prototypically in the Private Ejaculation titled "Miserie." The speaker is concerned throughout with "Man" in general, but in the last line he confesses "My God, I mean my self." Man, that is, not every man in the abstract, but personally and really, must confess to his inability "to serve [God] in fear" and to "praise [God's] name." This applies to even "The best of men":

> They quarrel thee, and would give over
> The bargain made to serve thee: but thy love
> Holds them unto it, […] (25-27)

These three lines are a complement to the last stanza of "Affliction (I)." They partly paraphrase the errant servant's decision to "change the service and go seek / Some other master out," and partly contain an answer to his prayer "Let me not love thee, if I love thee not." God, loving and long suffering as he is, does let him remain in his service not-loving him.

Amor Dei in *The Temple* is as mutual as it is unequal. God's love for man is absolute and unchanging; it is essentially unconditional. By contrast, fallen man's love for God is relative, changeful. It is inextricably bound up with the human condition. Man is wanting in love for his God but God "doth supplie the want. / And when th'heart sayes (sighing to be approved) / *O could I love*! And stops: God writeth, *Loved*" ("A true Hymne" 18-20).[35] In the exuberance of "Praise (II)" the speaker goes far beyond that anxious hypothetical "*could I love*!" saying, or rather singing: "King of Glorie, King of Peace, / I will love thee" (1-2). But even in this joyful psalm the human condition intervenes: what the words say, is "I will love thee," not *I love thee*. Yearning for being able to love God, complaining of not being able to love God, and being, in happy moments, joyfully willing to love God are the modes in which the speaker of *The Temple* participates in the mutuality of *amor Dei*. God is Love, and the speaker addresses him sometimes as lovers do in songs and sonnets as "My love, my sweetnesse" ("Longing" 79; cf. "The Call" 9 and 11), but he avoids the direct, af-

firmative statement: "I love thee." It occurs only once in *The Temple*, in the refrain of the first three stanzas of "The Pearl. Matth. 13.45."

Critics of that poem have found it difficult to come to terms with the speaker's elaborate display of knowledge with respect to learning, honour, and pleasure and his rejection of them all, crying out "Yet I love thee" (10), until he, finally, grips the "silk twist" (38) let down to him from heaven: "To climbe to thee" (40). But in spite of all theological difficulties concerning the problem of *sola fide* in "The Pearl," one critic is struck with "the assured voice of the refrain, which is peaceful, dignified, and deeply happy."[36]

I beg to disagree. To me, in the context of *The Temple*, the threefold affirmation "Yet I love thee" is tinged with religious irony. The speaker is overdoing it, he is being, in John Donne's words, "*too familiar*" with God (*Sermons* 10: 245.566). Boasting of his knowledge of the world, he is completely bereft of the self-knowledge which, in clearer moments, tells him that "In soul he mounts and flies, / In flesh he dies" ("Mans medley" 13-14; see also "Justice [I]"). It seems to me that one of the reasons why the voice of Herbert's speaker could reach Emily Dickinson, Gerard Manley Hopkins, and T. S. Eliot so immediately is that always, even in his most joyful hymns, he speaks for fallen man in his entirety. Herbert's religious poetry is never merely soulful in a sentimental, esoteric sense, but the threefold refrain "Yet I love thee" together with the concluding "I climbe to thee" is just that. It does not fit. I suggest that the experience displayed in "The Pearl" is not basic but episodic; it calls for instant completion—and gets it, too. The next title is "Affliction (IV)," so that, reading right on from the last line of "The Pearl" to the next title, we hear the speaker say: *a silk twist from heaven has taught me to climb to thee, affliction*. Far from being in God's presence, he finds himself

> Broken in pieces all asunder,
> Lord, hunt me not,
> A thing forgot,
> […]. (1-3)

Seen in this light the climber's "silk twist" was not strong enough to carry him upwards, body and soul, so it breaks and he finds himself fallen down to the ground, disintegrated, and exposed to forgetfulness like the speaker of "Affliction (I)" who said "Ah, my deare God, though I am clean forgot" (65).

Could it be that in "The Pearl" Herbert demonstrates an understanding of the biblical text that is merely sentimental and falls short of religious sincerity, as if the merchant of the parable had been satisfied with having bought and being in possession of the pearl, oblivious of the fact that this is heaven only metaphorically and must be spiritually transformed and existentially realized to prove efficacious? If "The Pearl" was meant to expose such a fallacious manner of understanding, the reader of the poem should be intellectually situated within the parable, not regarding it from an Archimedean point in its hermetic seclusion. The metaphor hides the meaning which it shows. We need a special key to "dissolve the knot" as the speaker of "Affliction (IV)" will soon say in a fervent prayer (22), leading us back to the last line of "Affliction (I)" and the speaker's prayer to God, the master, that he may let him, the servant, remain in his service and thus go on not-loving him "if," or although, or since he *loves him not*.

The imperative "dissolve the knot" is charged with alchemical meaning. And the laconism of the concluding line "Let me not love thee, if I love thee not" is a kind of quintessence distilled out of a substance consisting of many ingredients. In literary interpretation, the process of distillation is reversed. The quintessential formula is regarded and evaluated as part of the smaller work, within the larger work, within its manifold cultural context, and the "solvents" used for the "analysis" are grammar, logic, rhetoric, and verbal usage through the ages, that is to say, the literary scholar's usual bag of tools. But if the quintessential message is especially firmly encoded, a special "solvent" must be looked for. This is, in the last line of "Affliction (I)," the passage from Exodus 21.5 where, in God's own words quoted from memory by Moses, the rule is laid down that a man's staying in his master's service depends on his love for his master. In the Old

Testament and in the poem, the components of the pattern are the same: master, servant, love. But in Herbert's variation on the theme "there is," as Portia laconically says, "something else" (*The Merchant of Venice* 4.1.301), not a *jot*, as in her case, but a "not." And this, syntactically rightly positioned, marks the difference between the ideal Mosaic prototype and the ardent and anxious Christian individual who speaks to us in the poetry of *The Temple*, which its maker wants us to regard as God's "art of love" *turned back on God*.

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NOTES

[1] The quotation is from "The H. Scriptures. II." (11). All quotations of George Herbert's English poetry and prose will be from F. E. Hutchinson's edition *The Works of George Herbert*; I have also consulted Helen Wilcox's edition *The English Poems of George Herbert*.

[2] For editorial details concerning title and subtitle, see Hutchinson L-LIII.

[3] See Tuve 33-34.

[4] See "Nature" 1-3.

[5] See "Sinne (I)."

[6] Apart from "The Church-porch" 295, *entice* has pejorative overtones in Herbert. See *OED* "entice" *v.*, and cf., e.g., Shakespeare, *Pericles* 1.0.27-28: "[…] entice […] / To evil." All Shakespeare quotations are from the most recent Arden editions.

[7] See "The Flower" 39.

[8] There is a further anagrammatic fact: the words *master* and *servant* consist of the same letters. This coincidence is displayed elaborately in "The Odour. 2. Cor. 2.15." For structural similarities in the Latin letters M, N, and V, see Tory k.ij. and verso.

[9] Three outstanding examples are "Love (III)," "Even-song," and "The World."

[10] The pattern of offering praise may be seen, e.g., in the first line of Donne's *La Corona*, "*Deigne at my hands this crown of prayer and praise*" (*The Divine Poems of John Donne* 1).

[11] See "Miserie," esp. 31, 43, and 78: "My God, I mean myself." Theodor W. Adorno unfolds this idea in "Rede über Lyrik und Gesellschaft."

[12]See, e.g., "Providence," especially 1-16, and "Man," especially 7-12.

[13]This theme is present in *The Temple* throughout. It is discussed directly in poems like "Jordan (I)" and indirectly in poems like "A Parodie."

[14]Ovid makes the lover (the poet) say to the girl: "Est deus in nobis et sunt commercia caeli" 3.549; "A god lives in us and we trade with heaven" (my translation). See Herz, esp. 13-22.

[15]See Anne C. Fowler, who writes: "The poem moves from an initial fiction of seduction and betrayal, with a speaker whose biography suggests the poet himself as the ingenuous victim, toward an intuition of active and reciprocal love" (144).

[16]The metaphor of the "mutual flame" is owed to Tibullus, see *Tibull und sein Kreis* V.V.6-7 and passim.

[17]See "The Search" 57-60.

[18]See, e.g., Hutchinson's notes on lines 32 and 38, and Wilcox's notes on lines 32, 37, 38, and 39-40.

[19]This is Sir Thomas Browne's version of the great commonplace; see *Religio Medici* 15.34.

[20]I suggest that "most take all" is an enigmatic variation of *mystical*.

[21]See Walther 5: no. 51c.

[22]See Empson's definition of his sixth type of ambiguity: "when a statement says nothing, by tautology, by contradiction, or by irrelevant statements; so that the reader is forced to invent statements of his own" (176). The last line of "Affliction (I)" is subsumed to this speculative supposition; see *Seven Types of Ambiguity* 176 and 182-84.

[23]Excerpt from Wilcox's note on "Affliction (I)" 66; see also Smithson, especially 130.

[24]See *OED* "well" *adv.*: "The stem is regarded as identical with that of the verb will."

[25]See Leimberg on "if."

[26]Donne's "much more force in [...] *If* " echoes Touchstone's "much virtue in 'if'" (*As You Like It* 5.4.101), as well as Plutarch's attribution of "the greatest force" (386-87) to this conjunction.

[27]*Not* is most emphatically used in *The Temple*, several times, at the end of lines but, with the single exception of "Affliction (I)," never at the end of a poem.

[28]OED "knot" *n.*[1] 10.a and b.

[29]OED "knot" *n.*[1]

[30]*OED*, "not," *adv.* 1.b., "chiefly poetical." One of the examples in *OED* is Shakespeare, *The Tempest* 2.1.122: "I not doubt / He came alive to land." The last reference in the *OED* is to Lord Byron.

[31]See *OED*, "not," *adv.*, the first example of verb-preceding "not"; see also Walde and Hofmann, *Lateinisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, "nē Adv."

[32]Herbert's "forgot" has an arresting precursor in Boethius's *Consolatio*, which is an indispensable component of Herbert's philosophical background, anyway, but with the "Affliction" poems comes near to being a source. See Boethius 70-72, especially 72: "Nam quoniam tui oblivione confunderis"; and "Quoniam vero, quibus gubernaculis mundus, regatur, oblitus es." Cf. Chaucer's *Boece* I. Prosa 6. 44-90, especially 71-72 "For-why, for thow art confounded with foryetynge of thiself," and 77-78: "for thow hast foryeten by whiche governementz the world is governed."

[33]See also Wilcox, who notes several meanings of "though I am clean forgot"; see note to "Affliction (I)" 65.

[34]My paraphrase of "daß unbekannt wird das Bekannte und du's nicht wieder-erkennst" (*Joseph und seine Brüder* 1055-56).

[35]Michael Steven Marx, "Biblical Allusions and Intertextual Assurances in George Herbert's 'Affliction (I),'" bases its theory summarized in the title of the essay on references in the Psalms, Job, and Jonah; he quotes "A true Hymne" 20 (263).

[36]See Wilcox's summary of "Modern Criticism" 322.

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