



George Herbert's *The Temple*: A Religious Rhyme or Political Poetry?

Reza Babagolzadeh, (Corresponding author)

Islamic Azad University, Central Tehran Branch, Iran

E-mail: reza.golzadeh88@gmail.com

Mahdi Shafeyan

Imam Sadiq University, Tehran, Iran

E-mail: aliteraturist@yahoo.com

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Abstract

George Herbert's retreat from a political path and a turn towards a religious route has created a perception that the poet and priest had separated himself from politics. His magnum opus, *The Temple*, corroborates such a point of view with its verses coated with poetic praises and surrounded by biblical allusions, morals and confessions. Within Foucauldian perspective, this study peruses a different path of repainting the picture of the pious priest into a political poet, highlighting how his religious intentions were not separated from political influence. This paper highlights the inseparable bond between politics and religion in the Jacobean Era by analysing how the regimes of truth play its part in shaping the poet's discourse.

Keywords: George Herbert, Michel Foucault, *The Temple*, Regimes of Truth, Discourse

1. Introduction

The poetry of George Herbert is one that comes with sincerity, modesty, and virtue; his philosophical thoughts and religious belief take refuge in his centerpiece, *The Temple*. He welcomes readers from all sorts of background to his devotional lyrics of praise and promotion of his religion. By diverging away from a political path to peruse priesthood (Woodring 162), his loyalty to his faith is emboldened furthermore. However, had Herbert truly broken away from politics or any influencing factor of such kind? The religious nature of this Anglican priest and poet's work of art has been praised for its exceptional devotional lyrics and magnificent metaphysical poetry leaving the political aspect underrated. However, this research will aim to shorten the gap between *The Temple* and its political motives, and hopefully add to the already but minute research connecting Herbert's mystical poetry to political influence and power.

Nevertheless, placing Herbert's poetry within a Foucauldian outlook would serve much justice to the argument of this paper. From the language and tone to the numerous styles of rhetoric in *The Temple*, the poet's pen appears to serve a political purpose more than a religious one, since in Herbert's time religion itself was power, playing a vital role in domination and control. Under King James I's reign, Christianity influenced and shaped politics, and censorship was not anything alien to the Jacobean Era (Kinney 103). Therefore its influence should be detectable in Jacobean literature, including Herbert's *The Temple*. This collection of poems that projects Christianity's core concepts also harbours Foucault's notion of power. The theorist explains that regardless of its obvious or subtle presence, power is ubiquitous; and since Foucault places language in "the center of social power" (Bertens 157), an examination of the discourse and its function in Herbert's text will serve as a good starting point in the quest for the dominant power. The study will explore how Herbert's religious poetry is also a political discourse shaped and influenced by the dominant power of his time through the regimes of truth.

2. Methodology

Herbert's *The Temple* has been praised for its precision of language, and it is well-known for its theocentric and Christocentric construct. It is flooded with ideological standards along with cultural and religious influence. It is this very characteristic of *The Temple* that welcomes a Foucauldian reading to challenge Herbert's magnum opus and its intentions and motives. In this study, the researcher will, firstly, highlight the type of discourse employed in *The Temple* by examining selected poems from his work, before tracing its temporal atmosphere by drawing upon historical references pertaining to the religious tensions of the Jacobean society and also Europe (being the Thirty Years' Wars), to understand how the poetry plays its part in politics of its time. Nevertheless, it then explores Herbert's involvement in the production of truth and discourse that is in favour of the dominant power. It looks at how the poet and society, through a mechanism of exclusions, influence the circulation of certain statements while disregarding those not in line with the dominant discourse. In the process, it compares certain assertions regarded as truths from various religions and

different denominations of Christianity (such as Anglicanism, Catholicism, Unitarianism and Trinitarianism) to better highlight how the dominant power works through discourse and regimes of truth.

3. Literature Review

There is quite a considerable amount of study dedicated to Herbert's works with only a few proving quite useful to this research. Some of the literature reviewed does not relate Herbert's *The Temple* to Michel Foucault's theories. However, the minute amount that do share common traits and issues will be utilized to serve a positive purpose for this exploration. Among the many subjects investigated in Herbert's work, the topic of dialogue and discourse has found itself in the spotlight quite often.

One of the studies concerning dialogue and discourse is the research conducted by Polya Tocheva entitled *The Language of Man and the Language of God in George Herbert's Religious Poetry*. The sixty-four page dissertation demonstrates how the language and discourse of Herbert's poetry bring individuals closer to God. The approach investigates the shift in Herbert's dialogue with his creator from the conventional conversation of discipline and theological dogma to a radical friend-to-friend discussion of questions and responses. Tocheva states that the language of God needs to be translated into a "meaningful experience" to be fully understood and appreciated, and Herbert's poetry is that translation. Tocheva's work has paid close attention to the language of the author; however, it does not focus on discourse in a Foucauldian sense; therefore it will not be used in this study.

The intimacy between Herbert and his creator is also one of the main themes of discussion in *The Invisible Listeners: Lyric Intimacy in Herbert, Whitman, and Ashbery* by Helen Vendler. The author of this book aims to map out the relationships of Herbert, Walt Whitman and John Ashbery with their intended listeners; and here, the listener for Herbert is God. Vendler also points out Herbert's more intimate language and approach when conversing with his creator which will in return result in a satisfactory human interchange. Despite her engaging outlook and novel ideas in her work, her research does not share any common point of interest with this study.

Unstrung Conversations: Herbert's Negotiations with God by Susannah Mintz also portrays the effectiveness of an intimate dialogue with God. Mintz's examines how the speaker in Herbert's poems negotiates his engagement with the divine through a psychoanalytic approach. Mintz's argues that through a mutual object-relationship this dialogue takes form.

Another psychological outlook towards Herbert's poetry has also been brought into discussion; a work by Eelco van Es entitled *Tuning the Self: George Herbert's poetry as Cognitive Behaviour*. Van Es' cognitive analysis of Herbert's poetry aims to teach self-knowledge and bring about temperance, a kind of self-fashioning. Though the method and approach is different to this research, the argument shares a striking resemblance to Foucault's notion of discipline and self-surveillance, which is one of the areas of interest to the argument of this study. Despite such common traits, the article will not be included in the discussions, since the sources and argument of van Es' exploration will not serve much justice to this study.

The issue of self-fashioning has also been the focus of Ronlad W. Cooley who included such a concept in his book, *"Full of all knowledge": George Herbert's The Country Parson and Early Modern Social Discourses*. In his book, he explores how *The Country Parson* takes part in topics such as theology and devotion, but also about agriculture practices, the statuses of different professions and even power relations within the family. Cooley's work tries to explain that Herbert has set out a guide to every new priest. When discussing power relations, the book explains how *The Country Parson* clarifies hierarchal structures. Even though hierarchy and power relations are important topics to this research, Cooley's study will not be utilized in this research since it channels its focus on *The Country Parson*.

However, there have also been studies that bring Foucault and Herbert together such as *Wrestling Power: George Herbert's Struggle for Spiritual Union* by Mary Katherine McMullen. In her research, she combines power, gender and sexuality drawing upon theories and ideas from Foucault, Judith Butler and Jacques Derrida in an effort to illuminate the role-changing gender and sexuality within the relationship between the Creator and the author, and also the author and the audience. Nevertheless, quite similar to this study, McMullen's research also acknowledges the fact that Herbert's religious views have shaped and moulded his poetry; an important point that will also receive much attention in this study. Despite the similarity in point of view, McMullen's exploration does not approach the concept of power in a political sense. Power in McMullen's work is concerned with sexuality and gender between Herbert and God, while this study draws attention towards a more political power that involves issues regarding disciplinary power, religion and the state, which are issues not related to McMullen work.

"Discourse and Direction: 'A Priest to The Temple, Or, The Country Parson'" and the elaboration of sovereign rule", an article by Douglas J. Swartz, is also another research that brings Herbert and the notions of Foucault together. In the study, Swartz uses a mixed approach in analyzing *The Country Parson* in order to highlight how Herbert has not really retreated from a political path but rather resumed it "from the pulpit" (194). However, different to this study, Swartz's findings place the spotlight on Herbert and how he makes use of his authority and position at the church "as a propaganda channel" to direct his fellow Christians (198). Among other approaches and theories, he includes Foucault notion of pastoral power and the concept of surveillance in order to explain how Herbert achieves such a goal of guiding his fellow Christians in *The Country Parson*. However, despite the insightful point of view, Swartz research will not be used in this study since it does not bring these ideas into *The Temple*.

However, in order to explain and trace the dominant power and its agenda, it would deem necessary to inspect the political atmosphere of the Stuart period. Having a better understanding of the "Age of Absolutism", its religion and

beliefs, and its standards, this research will turn towards *Conversion, Politics and Religion in England, 1580-1625* by Michael C. Questier. It would play its part as a reliable source when aiming to understand the true nature and norms of the dominant power, politics and ideology of that age. The author depicts The Reformation as a period of urge for conversion from Catholic to Protestant and takes the religious matter into a political perspective. Questier investigates the power of the State to compel uniformity and the direction towards it. The politics and religion of the Stuart period and its mechanisms to compel dissident will provide great assistance to this study.

Nevertheless, there remains a more specific historical period that must be perused is the era of Herbert himself. The research will also trace the beliefs, norms and political atmosphere of the poet's period. By narrowing down the Stuart period to an era under James I and VI's reigns, the Jacobean Era, the research can better understand the motives and factors that may have influenced Herbert's work, politically and religiously. A good understanding of Charles W. A. Prior's *Defining the Jacobean Church: The Politics of Religious Controversy, 1603-1625* will prove to be beneficial and polemical to the study. The main discussion of this book is ecclesiology, and with the use of sermons to books of several hundred pages the author lays out the nature of the church, its rites and governance, and its connection to the Stuart political world.

4. The Discussion

To any reader, one of the most prominent features of Herbert's poetic work is the religious theme and language, and its presence is felt throughout. In all the poems in *The Temple*, the speaker shares his spiritual journey of experience and his confessions to his creator, and as he does so in the process, he also advocates his religion to his readers. It becomes evident that the language in Herbert's work is religious when in almost every poem one is faced with words such as Lord, God, the Ark, Moses, Christ, Church and so forth, or at times reminded of the bible with all the allusions his poems offer. It is hard to miss the message Herbert is sending and what he finds most dear to himself: his faith. In every corner come his revelations, from the title of his book to the title of the poems. In his tone and language of use, Herbert sets the scene, signalling every reader of the religious praise and contemplation that are to follow.

For Foucault, discourse is composed of a group of statements or claims to facts and knowledge; and statements and propositions that make up this knowledge carry with them other ideas and thoughts that have been derived from other sources of knowledge. As Foucault explains in his *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, "the frontiers of a book are never clear-cut . . . it is caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences" (26). The allusions and biblical references in Herbert's poetry function the same way. These words and ideas are linked to other ideas and complex webs of existing knowledge and statements. As Herbert encapsulates his readers with deep metaphorical rhymes, he also incorporates an already existing and ancient discourse of Christianity into his work through biblical allusions and references. Moreover, his poetry is shaped by this Christian discourse, and the theocentric and Christocentric focus behind his poem is the main ingredient responsible for the production of this religious discourse. Examples of these allusions can be seen in his poem "The Holdfast" for instance. According to *Norton Anthology of English Literature*, the title refers to Psalm 73.27 in the Book of Common Prayer: "It is good for me to hold me fast by God" (217). The commentary explains that the entire poem dramatizes "the entire reliance on grace [which is] a cornerstone of Calvinist theology" (*The Norton* 1619). Therefore, a Christian who is familiar with such a concept and statement, when coming across such a title, may be reminded of the biblical reference Herbert's poetry pertains too, in this case, Psalm 73.27. "Jordan" also displays another example of a biblical allusion embedded in Herbert's works. In the Old Testament the river Jordan was the hurdle the Israelites had to cross to reach land of Canaan, referred to as the Promised Land: "And now the Lord your God hath given rest unto your brethren, as he promised them: therefore now return ye . . . and unto the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave you on the other side Jordan" (Josh. 22:4). The river also has another significance role in the New Testament. It was the river in which Jesus was baptized: "Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan" (Mark 1:9). The river can be perceived as a symbol of rebirth or renewal, and Herbert's poem also shows that the speaker wants to repaint Christian poetry with the truth: "Who says that fictions only and false hair/ Become a verse? Is there in truth no beauty?" (50; 1-2). The speaker wishes to break away from the common poetic style of his time that sacrificed truth for beauty, being filled with "enchanted groves" and "coarse-spun lines" (6, 7). He desires to portray the reality to his herd as a responsible shepherd should: "Shepherds are honest people; let them sing;"(11). He brings with him something different and a more simple language that "plainly" praises "[his God, [his] King" (15). These allusions are scattered throughout his work, and it is also present in the "Love": "You must sit down, says Love, and taste my meat:/ So I did sit and eat" (Herbert 200; 17-18). The poet here refers to the banquet in heaven in Luke 12.37 of the bible, when the Lord "will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them". "Church Monuments" is another poem that contains an allusion, referring to Genesis 3.19: "For dust you are, And to dust you shall return". Herbert speaks of the experience of death in which he lies in his tomb and his body becomes acquainted with this "heap of dust". The speaker wants his body to learn and understand its own elements, origin, and rightful place after death: "Therefore I gladly trust/ My body to this school, that it may learn /To spell his elements, and find his birth" (59; 6-8). Nevertheless, for Herbert, man is of dust and shall return to dust, and when death comes man must prepare for the next phase which is judgment; a phase in which will be compared and examined: "dissolution sure doth best discern,/ Comparing dust with dust, and earth with earth" (10-11). It is clearly evident in the choice of words and imagery what the poet wants to glorify and praise, and what issue he aims to bring to the fore, which is his religion.

Through the selection of words is how Herbert's poetry reinforces Christian doctrines into his work, promoting his faith, his message, and circulating what priests preach in sermons. It functions as a reminder of their chief morals for the

believers of the Christian faith and an introduction to the faith for any potential believer. His poetry includes a story within a story or a fable within a psalm. And the manifestation of this religious discourse emboldens itself in shapes as well. Foucault argues that discourse is created by “a group of sequences of signs” that function as statements (*The Archeology* 122). Therefore, it is not restricted to words, but also projects its message or meaning through signs also; and Herbert’s embolic poems have been fashioned into certain shapes and icons, which remind the reader of the religious imageries and ideas attached to it. “Easter Wings” is one example:

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 begin:
 And still with sicknesses and shame.
 Thou didst so punish sin,
 That I became
 Most thin.
 With thee
 Let me combine,
 And feel thy victory,
 For, if I imp my wing on thine,
 Affliction shall advance the flight in me. (Herbert 35)

In this poem, Herbert has formed his poetry into wings, most likely that of an angle; and the lines that increase and decrease imitate flight and also the “spiritual experience of falling and rising”. Herbert alludes to the *felix culpa* or fortunate fall on line 10: “Then shall the fall further the flight in me”. He glorifies the experience of the rise and fall of man both through the verse and shape of the poem, maintaining that man has “foolishly” lost all this wealth that the Lord has given him, “decaying more and more”. But only when he combines with the lord, will he rise again: “Let me combine,/ And feel thy victory”. “Easter Wings”, in earlier editions, had been printed vertically which made the wing-shapes more noticeable (*The Norton* 1609). Nevertheless, it is clear that, apart from the use of allusions, Herbert’s religious faith also manifests itself in shapes; even aiming to resemble a sacred symbol in a poem functions as another form of endorsing and reinforcing one’s belief. Another example of this type of discourse can be seen in “The Altar”:

A broken ALTAR, Lord, thy servant rears,
 Made of a heart, and cemented with tears:
 Whose parts are as thy hand did frame;
 No workman's tool hath touch'd the same.
 A HEART alone
 Is such a stone,
 As nothing but
 Thy power doth cut.
 Wherefore each part
 Of my hard heart
 Meets in this frame.
 To praise thy name:
 That if I chance to hold my peace,
 These stones to praise thee may not cease.
 Oh, let thy blessed SACRIFICE be mine,
 And sanctify this ALTAR to be thine. (17)

In this poem, Herbert converses with his creator explaining that he is building an altar made out of his heart and held together with tears. With the help of God himself, the poet is able to “sanctify this altar” to his creator so as “to praise [his] name”. “A heart alone” would produce “nothing”. However, Herbert also shapes his poem into an altar, a sacred symbol that reminds the readers of the religious notions it carries. What Herbert has done is built upon an already existing discourse that contains countless discussed ideas on a Christian God, Jesus Christ and gospels from the Bible.

However, this very religious discourse should also be considered as a political discourse as well due to its temporal location. At a time when England and Scotland were united under one ruler, King James I and VI, the kingdom continued to inherit the long existing conflict between Catholics and Protestants. Despite James smooth accession, the king faced two conspiracies in the first year of his reign, the Bye Plot and Main Plot (Croft 51). Also known as the priests plot, the Bye Plot was a conspiracy by catholic priests and laymen to kidnap the king. The plan was to hold the target hostage in exchange for “religious toleration”. The main plot, on the other hand, was more an “obscure affair” intended to replace the crown with Arbella Stuart, his cousin (Martin 316). However the most notable attempt of subversions was the Gunpowder Plot, an assassination attempt against the king that took place on 5 November 1605. A group of Catholics tried to blow up the House of Lords but failed, facing execution for the act of treason (Malam 7). The Bye Plot and Gunpowder Plot were both linked to Catholic dissidents while the Main Plot stemmed from unhappy English courtiers. What James received from the previous monarchy was a church with an “uneasy equilibrium”. With the Elizabethan Religious Settlementⁱⁱⁱ in motion, the church endeavoured to unite Protestants and Catholics under the dominant denomination of the time, Anglicanism; however, this act instead frustrated some such as Puritans who demanded a cleansing of the Church from Catholicism (Seel 14). This frustration was left for James to handle, which turned into turbulence and conflict from 1603 to 1606. However, after this period of instability, James succeeded in “defusing” tensions, but this did not mean that threats against the monarch or the Church of England were eradicated. James’ reign was also prone to critical and political consequences posed by the outbreak of the Thirty Years’ War^{iv}. Nevertheless, the Jacobean Era was right at the heart of the Christian conflict, and a promotion of any denomination, directly or indirectly, should be treated as taking sides.

Herbert’s work also belongs to that era, and *The Temple* shows to champion Anglican doctrines, making it not purely Protestant or Catholic but rather a mixture of both. Anglican theology relies heavily on the Thirty-Nine Articles, a collection of defining statements of Anglican doctrines used by its followers to interpret and understand their principles. It is important to note that the Thirty-Nine Articles states its belief in Catholicism’s faith in the Trinity (the belief in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as one substance) and Calvinism’s core principle the Five Solaes^v (Five Only’s). Both principles display a strong presence in Herbert’s poems like “Easter I”, “Ungratefulness”, “Holdfast”, “Faith” and “Scripture I” (see section 3.2 for closer analysis of examples). Consequently, Herbert’s discourse is not only projecting Christian beliefs, but he is also promoting an Anglican discourse. As an Anglican priest, Herbert chooses to espouse his denomination into his work. In other words, his discourse adopts the dominant discourse of Anglicanism and with such a discourse and poetic promotion positioned within the Jacobean era, a period entangled in sensitive religious tension, *The Temple* is just as political as it is religious, favouring Anglicanism over the other denominations of Christianity.

With the use of biblical allusions and references, it becomes palpable that *The Temple* has been shaped in favour of a Christian discourse. Herbert channels his religious faith and belief through his poetry, producing and adding more to an already existing discourse of Christianity. Therefore, the discourse of his work is religious in nature; however, due to religions delicate role in the Jacobean era, his work could also be considered as a piece of literature that could be either favoured by the court and the church or just the opposite. Due to such a situation, Herbert’s poetry should be considered as both a religious and political discourse, given the fact that religion held power and authority, and was very much a part of the court at that time. Among the denominations of Christianity, the Anglican faith reigned supreme in that era, and there appears to be an influence of Herbert’s Anglican faith moulding and shaping his poetry. Moreover, the following section will explore how the dominant denomination plays its part in Herbert poetry as it aims to answer the following questions: How is *The Temple* in line with the religious policies, beliefs and ideas connected to the dominant power of its era? Is the dominant power responsible for any sort of censorship in *The Temple*? Does it only highlight certain Christian doctrines and discard other discourses not favoured by the state or the church? If so, what has the poet reproduced and circulated from his religion and discourse into society, and what discourses, references, and knowledge has he discarded?

For Foucault, discourse is also responsible for the production of truth and the reality that we perceive, since “discourse transmits and produces power” and power itself “produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth” (*The History* 100). In other words, as Clayton Whisnant describes in his “Foucault & Discourse”, it “creates a world” (6). The reality or truth of each individual may be similar or different depending on many influencing factors such as historical or geographical locations. One’s religion can play a major role in shaping or even altering an individual’s truth. The discourse which Herbert has adopted from and employed is merely a reflection of his system of thought and how he perceives and accepts reality and truth. What the poet acknowledges as fact, provided by his religion, becomes his instrument to separate truth from falsehood. Through a close reading of *The Temple*, this separation can be exhibited along with the poet’s adoption and production of “truth”. This section will focus on how the poet partakes in this creation of facts, particularly in the inclusion and exclusion of certain discourses among different religions, and denominations within his own faith.

What Herbert’s poetry has done is continue to build upon an already existing centre, and that centre is Christianity, Anglicanism in particular. Apart from confessing with the creator through his poetry, he preaches his dogma. The

system of thought and truth of Herbert's faith finds a firm place in his poem. What his religion states as true and considers as facts are also what Herbert agrees upon. As an example, the theory behind creation in Christianity declares that only one Christian God is the divine creator of all beings: "Gods breath in man returning to his birth". It also states that: "God created man in his own image" (Gen. 1:27); and such a principle is also present in Herbert's work. In "Easter Wings", Herbert states that it is the "Lord who createdst man in wealth and store" (35; 1), and in "The Pulley" he maintains: "When God at first made man" (166). Furthermore, knowing that Herbert has adopted a discourse of Christianity in *The Temple*, it also shows that Herbert has accepted the Christian God as his creator and no other. This would leave other discourses pertaining to pagan beliefs such as druidism out of circulation. The ancient belief was once the main religion of Britain before being replaced and dominated by Christianity.^{vi} After its replacement, however, Christianity was unable to completely eradicate druidism's influence in society (Cooper 19). An example of that would be the pagan festivals of Christmas, Easter and Halloween that have been Christianized (22). In the 17th century, there existed some sense of revival of the past that had been forgotten, and that led to the identity and practices of druidism being partially recovered (13). However, due to the fact that it was labelled as a pagan belief and carried with it elements of magic,^{vii} it was associated with witchcraft and demonic rituals. With the Witchcraft Act 1604 still in effect at that time,^{viii} it would be understandable as to why it had very little public followers in that era since nothing but danger and execution came its way. Their discourses at that time would have also been unaccepted in public domains or published works. To speak differently against the bible or denouncing God as the divine creator of all was also unacceptable and considered as blasphemy and a taboo. Druidism's discourse of creationism rests on the belief of metempsychosis, with the Circle of Annwn (pronounce anoon) being responsible for the rebirth of all potential forms and manifestations (Harvey 28). Such a discourse surely existed even before Herbert's time, however, the poet, being the only person with the pen in his hands when writing *The Temple*, has chosen to exclude it from circulation. Here, one could exhibit the contradiction and clash of truths among the different beliefs in regards to creationism. Foucault believes that this "choice of truth" is "ceaselessly" renewed, "repeated and displaced" ("The Order" 70). As Mills clarifies, discourses are not placed in "a vacuum" but are rather connected to each other causing a "constant conflict with other discourses" and social practices (*Discourse* 19). This conflict gives way to procedures of exclusion.^{ix} In these procedures, some counter-discourses and different version of truth are ruled out and others are selected and allowed to continue in circulation. One of these external exclusions is the "taboo" ("The Order" 52). Herbert's religions consider Idolatry a taboo, which explains why his discourse asserts that there is only a single omniscient and almighty God as the creator of all, leaving the discourse of druidism, which question the Christian idea of creationism, to be discarded since it is considered a taboo. This inclusion and exclusion of the dominant discourse and counter-discourse become more evident with a closer and detailed analysis. As one continues to analyse *The Temple*, from its core beliefs to the slightest detailed disagreements concerning Christianity, one can understand first of all how the discourse of Christianity and Anglicanism influences the poet's work, and second of all what the poet considers as facts and false and how these facts contradict with other propositions from other discourses. Another form of external exclusion at work is the selection of statements that are considered true or false or "will to truth" (55), and that selection is done through an individual with "positions of authority" (Mills, *Michel* 58). Those who are not in such a position will not have much say in influencing truth. Herbert, as an Anglican priest and in a time where Anglican was the dominant faith, fits the profile as an individual sanctioned to speak the truth. Since Herbert is also in-line with Anglican doctrines, his statements will count as being true. Furthermore, his statement is also subject to judgement by institutions such as the church or the court. They too function as instruments of selection since as Foucault explains, an individual's statement would only be "in the true" if they "obeyed the rules of some discursive 'police'" (*Archaeology* 224). However, to what extent has Herbert "obeyed the rules" of the Anglican dominating society and remain loyal to their idea of truth as priest with a position of authority? By examining the Foucault's internal exclusion of the author-function one can better understand how the poet's function complements the State and Church's interests.

As a devoted Anglican, Herbert makes room for his Anglican beliefs to dictate and take centre stage in *The Temple*. A closer inspection exhibits how the poet employs the Thirty-Nine Articles in an effort to promote the Anglican truth. One of the main beliefs of Anglicanism is the faith in the Trinity. The first statement of Thirty-Nine Articles entitled "Of the Faith in the Holy Trinity" states that "there is but one living and true God . . . and in unity of this Godhead there be three Persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost" (Welchman 1). Herbert's poetry also acknowledges this unity in his "Ungratefulness": "Thou hast but two rare cabinets full of treasure./ The Trinity, and Incarnation . . . The statelier cabinet is the Trinity" (79; 7-8, 13). The poet not only acknowledges but also places such a doctrine on the pinnacle, labelling it as treasure. However, such a doctrine, which is very much central to Anglicanism and Catholicism, is not considered to be true by another Christian group, Unitarians, who oppose Trinitarians. Unitarians maintain that God is only a single entity and Jesus is only the "son" of God, disconnecting them as one substance (Miano 15). The poet has selected Trinitarian beliefs of the Trinity leaving the Unitarian discourse out of circulation.

From the above example Herbert's work shares the same views as the Catholic Church and the Church of England, in respect to the belief in the Trinity; however, when it comes to other issues such as salvation and sacraments, *The Temple* and Anglicanism turn toward a Protestant truth and break away from Catholicism. The Biblical principles held dear and firm to Protestant Reformation are the Five Solae and such set of beliefs are also present in both Thirty-Nine Articles and in Herbert's poetry. For Protestants and Anglicans salvation is only granted by the creator; the grace of God is considered a must. According to the tenth statement of the Thirty-Nine Articles, "Of Free will", an individual

has “no power” to commit good deeds “pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God”. This resembles the *Sola Gratia* (by grace alone), and such condition is also visible in “The Hold-fast”:

I threatenen'd to observe the strict decree
Of my dear God with all my power and might:
But I was told by one, it could not be;
Yet I might trust in God to be my light. (148; 1-4)

The speaker strives to observe God ‘strict decree’ for salvation; however, he is told by a friend that “nothing is our own” (7). The speaker is told that his actions do not have much say in determining his fate and even trusting in God “to be [his] light” is also in the hands of God himself: “Nay, ev’n to trust in him, was also his” (6). The speaker is being told that only through the grace of God can he reach salvation. And the poet reflects such a stance also in “The Holy Communion”: Only thy grace, which with these elements comes./ Knoweth the ready way” (44; 19-20). Once again the speaker relies on God’s grace as the “key” to salvation and that he already “knoweth the ready way”. This differs to the Roman Catholic Church’s belief that merit can open the way for salvation (Baker 78-79). What the *Sola Gratia* argues is that good deeds are pointless if one is not elected by the creator to pass the pearly gates. Another point of contradiction between Anglicanism and Catholicism, which is very much related to the *Sola Gratia*, is the issue of predestination, which is also central to Calvinism and Lutheranism (Lange 448). The seventeenth statement, “Of Predestination and Election”, explains that predestination is “the everlasting purpose” of the creator and Herbert accepts that he could either be chosen for heaven or hell. In “The Thanksgiving”, he explains that he acknowledges the time he has on earth, and before his time comes, he will try to do good regardless of the pre-election:

For thy predestination I’ll contrive,
That three years hence, if I survive,
I’ll build a spital, or mend common ways,
But mend mine own without delays. (27; 31-34)

Despite predestination dictating the speaker’s destiny, the speaker will “contrive” to mend his ways or build a place for the sick or injured. The speaker understands that regardless of his efforts toward a righteous path and good merit, his faith lies in the hands of God, once again reaffirming that only through God’s grace does he reach salvation.

Apart from attaining salvation through God’s grace, Anglicans and Protestants also believe that through faith, *Sola Fide* (by faith alone), one can seek salvation from hellfire, since one is “justified by Faith only” (Thirty-Nine Articles XI). According to the eleventh statement entitled “Of Works before Justification”, without faith, one’s deeds will not please the creator, and justification is only gained through faith without the need for good works. This opposes the Catholic view that “faith without works is dead” (Jas. 2.26). Such a stance also rules out Catholicism’s concept of indulgence, by which an individual can reduce the amount of punishment in afterlife. Herbert also adopts the same views shared by Anglicans in “Faith”, since the speaker also maintains that justification is only attained through faith:

Faith makes me anything, or all
That I believe is in the sacred story:
And where sin placeth me in Adams fall,
Faith sets me higher in his glory. (42; 17-20).

The poet expresses that through faith will his fate be known, making him “anything” and maintaining that faith is a vital component in defining the speaker’s fate. If original sin holds him back from salvation, faith can set him “higher” from “Adams fall”. The poet further explains that “Faith puts me there with him (Christ), who sweetly took/ Our flesh and frailty, death and danger” (43; 23-24). Here, the poet points out that faith is all he needs to place him in heaven to join Christ. He again asserts faith’s role as a major requirement to pass the pearly gates, in “Trinity-Sunday”: “With faith, with hope, with charity/ That I may run, rise, rest with thee” (63; 8-9). Once again the selection of what is true and should continue to be circulated is exhibited by Herbert. The poet plays an active part in continuing to reproduce the same truth or statements favoured by the dominant denomination.

Another Anglican doctrine that makes its way into Herbert’s poetics is the *Sola Scriptura* (by Scripture alone). Article VI of the Thirty-Nine Articles states that only the Old and New Testament is needed for salvation, and any other text that disagrees or differs with its teachings are not considered as a divine revelation: “Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation” (VI). Therefore, all traditions and teachings of the church must be in line with the teachings of scripture for it to be accepted as the word of God. This Anglican outlook is also reflected in Herbert’s work. In “The Holy Scriptures”, the poet expresses the importance and remedy for “any grief”:

Oh Book! Infinite sweetness! let my heart
Suck every letter, and a honey gain,
Precious for any grief in any part;
To clear the breast, to mollify all pain. (51; 1-4)

In the “Discipline”, Herbert states the importance of the book and by God’s “book alone” one can seek the true source to salvation (189; 12). Such a take goes against Catholicism that accepts both “Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture”

with the same “sense of loyalty and reverence” (qtd. in Dogmatic 8). Tradition that is handed down and considered a part of the Church for Catholics is rather put into question by Anglicans since only scriptures (and some other mentioned canonized scriptures in the Thirty-Nine Articles) are considered as divine revelation. The truths and facts within the Christian faith face different degrees of authenticity among different denominations. The treatment of truth become subject to different versions. The truth about salvation and authenticity of what is holy and what is not holy takes different shapes and forms in different denominations of Christianity. Herbert’s work is the advertisement of a truth and reality base on an Anglican perspective.

The Temple shows to favour one truth and discourse over another as it undertakes the procedure of inclusions and exclusion in favour of the dominant Christian denomination. It is caused by policing factors such as the poet and institutions. Herbert displays an active participation in the reproduction of an Anglican truth by evoking the same principles extracted from the Thirty-Nine Articles. What the poet has done, as an Anglican priest, is let his truth be known. Power has shaped his work; but it has also allowed his work to continue to circulate through certain inclusions and exclusion, through a system that Foucault terms, regimes of truth. According to the theorist, discourse that has been accepted and “made true” by society and the “mechanism and instances” allowing one to differentiate true and false statements is what he refers to as the regimes of truth. However, it is also responsible for the techniques and procedures that give way to this access and distribution of truth by institutions or individuals with authority. Foucault argues each society makes use of this mechanism (*The History* 112). Herbert society shows to be no exception at all. From the already circulating Anglican doctrines and discourse reproduced in Herbert’s poems to *The Temple* undergoing eight editions and receiving plenty of attention and commentary at its time, it shows how their society made use of the regimes of truth. It is through this regime that Herbert was allowed to obtain and adopt from this discourse that shaped his work, and at the same time reproduce and build on this discourse. In this way, the poet has allowed power to work through this discourse and keep the dominant discourse in circulation.

5. Conclusion

With an investigation into the language, rhetoric and references utilized by the poet, one can come to a clear conclusion that *The Temple* inhabits a discourse of Christianity. It is religious in nature given the constant usage of biblical words, imageries, symbols and allusion. However, a more detailed examination reveals Herbert’s lean toward his own faith, favouring a discourse of Anglicanism over other denomination of Christianity. Anglicanism plays a vital role in shaping the poet’s truth and perception, molding his work into poetry accepted by The Church and State. This could be seen through the author’s function as he partakes in the regimes of truth by including certain Anglican discourses and excluding those belonging to other religions or denominations, such as Protestantism, Catholicism and Unitarianism. Herbert allows his faith to flow through his poetics, making him an instrument of the dominant power. It is this advertisement of his faith along with the religious and political sensitivity surrounding the British Isles and Europe at that time that transforms *The Temple*’s religious discourse into a political promotion of The Church and authority. In Herbert’s era religion and politics were inseparable and through religion, the masses were controlled. Herbert was situated in a time of tension with internal and external threats from various denominations of Christianity fighting to become representatives of God’s voice. These instances of conflicts could be observed in religious conspiracies and treasons against the Protestant king and his dominion by their rival denomination: Catholicism. There was also a continental struggle between European countries, divided by Protestants and Catholics, waging wars against each other for thirty years; and at the heart of all this internal and external friction, Herbert produces a politically religious poetry that promotes his Anglican principles.

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Notes

- i. The Book of Common Prayer is a prayer book used by the Anglican Communion and was first used in 1549. See Careless' *Discovering the Book of Common Prayer: A Hands-on Approach* for more information.
- ii. According to Oxford Dictionaries, Felix culpa is referred to as the sin of Adam (that is looked upon as a "fortunate" event since it made way for "the blessedness of the Redemption").

- iii. The Elizabethan Religious Settlement was a response to the religious divisions in England that prevailed before the reign of Elizabeth I. It is comprised of two acts that was passed by the Parliament of England: the Act of Supremacy of 1558 (re-established the Church of England's independence from Rome and conferring on Elizabeth the title Supreme Governor of the Church of England) and the Act of Uniformity 1558 (which imposed everyone individual to attend Sunday service and includes the Book of Common Prayer in prayers) (Dickens 401). Under The Elizabethan Religious Settlement, Anglicanism saw itself as both Catholic and Reformed. This church identified itself with Catholicism since it is a continuation and part of the church of Jesus Christ and apostolic church, and reformed since it adopts some doctrines of the Protestant Reformation movement (*The Canons7*).
- iv. Thirty Years' War was a string of conflicts in Central Europe between 1618 and 1648, initially triggered by Protestant and Catholic states. The result led to the Holy Roman Empire and the Habsburgs losing power in the region (Wilson 787). See Wilson for more information.
- v. The Biblical principles held dear and firm to Protestant Reformation are the Five Solas (Five Only's): Sola Fide, by faith alone, Sola Scriptura, by Scripture alone, Solus Christus, through Christ alone, Sola Gratia, by grace alone and Soli Deo Gloria, glory to God alone (Voerding 75).
- vi. The origins of druidism in Britain is debatable, however, the earliest reference of their presence dates back to Julius Caesar's account (Cunliffe 344). For more see Cunliffe 344, "The Origins of Druidism in Britain".
- vii. For more on druidism and magic see Harvey, chapter six "Magic".
8. Under the 1604 Act, any practice of "conjunction" of, or association with "an evil spirit" carried the death penalty (Newton 117).
9. In "The Order of Discourse", Foucault explains that there are procedures that lead to the exclusion and production of discourse. External exclusions include: taboo, the mad and the sane distinction, and the true and false distinction. Furthermore, there are also internal procedures of exclusion which include: commentary of the discourse, the author-function, the role of disciplines, and the rarefaction of the speaking subject (52-61). Also see Mills' *Michel Foucault*, Chapter 3: Discourse, for more information.