



Undergraduate Research Symposium May 18, 2012 Mary Gates Hall

Online Proceedings

SESSION 2G

RADICAL MOVEMENTS FROM CICERO TO BANASSI, WAGNER TO THE GHANAIAI CONCERT PARTY

Session Moderator: Julie Villegas, English

Mary Gates Hall 251

3:30 PM to 5:00 PM

* Note: Titles in order of presentation.

Circles within Circles:??George Herbert???'s Poems around Poems, ad infinitum ??

Sarah Poppe, Senior, English

Mentor: Jeffrey Knight, English

Renaissance poet George Herbert is known as an innovator in poetic style and construction, but conservative or traditional in his content and subjects. This research explores an alternative interpretation that argues instead that his poems are actually radical innovations in structure that express and reveal the substance – function reflecting form. Herbert’s poems “Paradise” and “Easter Wings”, demonstrate this subversive and subtle, even subliminal, messaging. This methodology reveals his revolutionary attitude toward both poetic structures and content. By embedding alternative readings and perspectives into his poems, Herbert simultaneously explored the malleability of interpretations of both form and content, while subtly subverting and redefining traditional interpretations of his topics. Style and textual shapes are his tools for melding the cyclical elements of his topical inspiration with the outward appearance of the pieces. When read “in the round,” these poems reveal Herbert viewing cycles in life and text through slightly different perspectives and elements, creating duality and continuity. Both forwards and backwards, the content and form echo the other, as the circular readability contributes to and reflects the cyclical nature of the topic and content of the two poems. In this way, Herbert radically experimented in redefining the boundaries between form and focus.