Herrick's Debt to Jonson

by

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# CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. HISTORY OF THE PROBLEM</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. BEN JONSON'S CRITICAL IDEAS OF</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NON-DRAMATIC POETRY</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE INFLUENCE OF JONSON'S THEORIES ON</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE WORK OF ROBERT HERRICK</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. THE FAIRY POEMS</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. THE EULOGISTIC POEMS</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. THE LOVE SONGS</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. THE EPIGRAMS</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. THE NOBLE NUMBERS</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX. CONCLUSION</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I
HISTORY OF THE PROBLEM

For nearly eighty years critics have noted the fact that Robert Herrick was one of the poetic "sons of Ben," "sealed of the tribe of Ben," an enthusiastic admirer of "My Ben." It is the purpose of this study to examine the literary relation of Herrick and Ben Jonson. A first step will be to review the history of the problem to the present time.

Herrick himself is the first witness to the assertion that Ben Jonson was his literary master. He wrote five poems addressed to Ben Jonson, each expressing his love and admiration for the older poet. In "An Ode for Him" Herrick celebrates Jonson as a teacher.

My Ben
Or come agen:
Or send us,
Thy wits great over-plus;
But teach us yet
Wisely to husband it;
Lest we that Tallent spend:
And having once brought to an end
That precious stock; the store
Of such a wit the world sho'd have no more.1

A second poem, "Upon M. Ben Jonson, Epig.," celebrates Jonson as poet, playwright, and wit:

After the rare Arch-Poet JONSON dy'd,
The Sock grew loathsome, and the Buskins pride,
Together with the Stages glory stood
Each like a poore and pitied widowhood.

... Lastly too, all witt
In utter darkenes did, and still will sit
Sleeping the lucklesse Age out, till that she
Her Resurrection ha's again with Thee.²

Herrick's epitaph "Upon Ben. Johnson" honors him as a poet:

Here lyes Johnson with the rest
Of the Poets; but the Best.³

"His Prayer to Ben. Johnson" is a whimsical tribute to Jonson
as his patron saint of verse.

When I a Verse shall make,
Know I have praid thee,
For old Religions sake,
Saint Ben to aide me.

... Candles Ile give to thee,
And a new Altar;
And thou Saint Ben, shalt be
Writ in my Psalter.⁴

The last of the five poems written by Herrick in praise of
his friend and teacher is "A Bacchanalian Verse."

Fill me a mighty Bowle
Up to the brim:
That I may drink
Unto my Johnsons soule.

Crowne it agen agen;
And thrice repeat
That happy heat;
To drink to Thee my Ben.

Well I can quaffe, I see,
To th' number five,
Or nine; but thrive
In frenzie ne'r like thee.⁵

²Herrick, 150.
³Ibid., 282.
⁴Ibid., 209.
⁵Ibid., 224.
Later criticism presents a range of opinion in which Jonson is all things from a mere social companion to the source of all Herrick's principal literary forms and subjects.

Previous to 1856, when F. M. Hubbard published a paper on *Hesperides* in the *North American Review*, critics of Herrick had been largely concerned with the moral aspect of the poet, with the problem of his over-familiarity with Julia, and with the extreme poverty of his epigrams. Mr. Hubbard was apparently the first critic to find any interest in Herrick's connection with Jonson. He wrote:

His poems certainly show that he was on terms of friendship or intimate acquaintance, with him in those tavern frolics which "St. Ben," as he once calls him, loved to indulge in, and in which, still, the wit seems to have been more indulged in than the wine; or, as Herrick himself described it,

> Where we such clusters had  
> As made us nobly wild, not mad;  
> And yet such verse as thine  
> Out-did the meat, out-did the frolic wine.⁶

In 1875 Sir Edmund Gosse wrote a paper which was destined to become the classic article on the subject of Herrick's debt to Jonson, and which has directly or indirectly been the origin of the great bulk of later criticism.

If any fact about Herrick be certain, he writes, it is that he sat at the feet of Ben Jonson; the poems of rapturous admiration and reverence that abound in the *Hesperides* set this beyond question. In one piece, it will be remembered, he speaks with passion unusual to him, of the old days when Ben

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Jonson's plays were brought out at the London theaters, and gives us an important date by describing the unfavorable reception of The Alchemist....But The Alchemist was brought out in 1610, when our poet was nineteen years old, and it was received with great excitement as an innovation. We may well believe that the young apprentice, fired with enthusiasm for the great poet,....claimed the privilege of laying his homage afterwards at the author's feet....More important to us, however, as being more in unison with the tastes and genius of Herrick, are the masques which Jonson was engaged upon at this time. It is more than remarkable to notice that it was in this year that Jonson produced Oberon, the Fairy Prince, a beautiful masque containing the germs of many of Herrick's most beautiful fairy fancies. The Masque of Queens, brought out some months earlier, is full of Herrick-like passages about hags and witches; and we might pursue the parallel much further, did space permit, showing how largely Jonson, on the milder and more lyrical side of his genius, inspired the young enthusiast and pointed out to him the poetical path that he should take.  

Later in the same article, he continues:

We have seen that it was, probably, the performance of Jonson's pretty masque Oberon that set Herrick dreaming about that misty land where elves sit eating butterflies' horns around little mushroom tables, or quaff draughts

Of pure seed-pearl of morning dew,
Brought and besweetened in a blue
And pregnant violet.

Sir Edmund mentions also two other forms of poetry which Herrick wrote in common with his master.

There are too many "epigrams" as he called them, scraps of impersonal satire in the composition of which he followed Ben Jonson, who had followed Martial.

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8Ibid., 291.
6Ibid., 289.
The "Epithalamion" and "Prothalamion" of Spenser struck the keynote of fashion that Drayton, Ben Jonson, and others adorned, and of which Herrick was the last, and far from the least ardent votary.10

Two years after Sir Edmund Gosse wrote, F. T. Palgrave published the essay which was later prefaced to his edition of Herrick's poems. His statement of Herrick's debt to Jonson is even stronger than Gosse's. He not only names Jonson as Herrick's "patron saint of song,"11 and on his "highest list of friends"12 but also goes further and says:

Jonson's non-dramatic poetry--the Epigrams and the Forest of 1616, and the Underwoods of 1641 (he died in 1637)--supply models, generally admirable in point of art, though of very unequal merit in their execution and contents, of the principal forms under which we may range Herrick's Hesperides. The graceful love song, the celebration of feasts and wit, the encomia of friends, the epigram as then understood, are all here represented: even Herrick's vein of natural description is prefigured in the Odes to Fenthurst and Sir Robert Wroth of 1616. And it is in the religious pieces of the Noble Numbers, for which Jonson afforded the least copious precedents that, as a rule, Herrick is least successful. Even if we had not the verses of his own book in proof that Herrick was no careless singer but a true artist, working with conscious knowledge at his art, we might have inferred the fact from the choice of Jonson as his model. No writer could be better fitted for the guidance for one so fancy free as Herrick; to whom the curb, in the old phrase, was more needful than the spur, and whose invention more fertile and varied than Jonson's was ready at once to fill up the moulds of form provided.13

10Gosse, 281.
12Loc. cit.
13Ibid.
The appearance of Hazlitt’s edition of Herrick’s poems in 1883 occasioned a third review of Herrick’s life and works. T. Ashe, the author of the article, discusses at some length Herrick’s ancestry, and his school years as they are reflected by letters still in existence. Mr. Ashe sets the possible date for his meeting with Jonson as late as 1620-29, when Herrick was out of school but had not as yet accepted the appointment to the living at Dean Prior. Both Mr. Ashe and G. E. Saintsbury, who commented on Herrick in his book Elizabethan Literature published in 1887, were of the opinion that Herrick and Jonson must have been closely associated during the second decade of the century.

E. E. Hale, who published a selection of Herrick’s poems at the turn of the century, includes in his preface the assertion that “for a time at least there was the more or less frank imitation of Ben Jonson and the tribe of Ben” in Herrick’s work. In versification, he says, Numbers 128, 133, 159, 197, and 577 (Herrick numbered the poems of Hesperides and Noble Numbers) are the works of an admirer of Jonson. W. G. Courthope, in his History of English Poetry, points out this similarity and also a difference in saying

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17 Ibid., liii.
While this (his festive and dithyrambic verse) is plainly inspired by Ben Jonson, in whose revels at "the Sun, the Dog, the Triple Tun" Herrick had been a frequent partaker, there is nothing of the secular lyrics of the latter, of the solemn and sometimes Christian vein of reflection which is to be found in the "wit" of the President of the Apollo Club. Herrick's moralizing resembles the philosophy of Horace and Catullus.  

Barrett Wendell, in *The Temper of the 17th Century in English Literature*, names Herrick as "loyal to the tribe of Ben." However, Mr. Wendell was not of the opinion that "the tribe of Ben included no man who did not yield himself body and soul to that robust chief."  

Mr. Herbert J. C. Grierson also called Herrick a Son of Ben, and listed his saints as "St. Ben" and the classic poets whom he addresses in "To Live Merrily and Trust in Good Verses."  

F. W. Moorman, in *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, broadens the horizon somewhat by saying

In all that pertained to verse and diction, Herrick was the disciple of Jonson, and through him, all the lyricists of antiquity. The sanity of Jonson's poetic taste, his love of precision, his fastidious regard for lucidity and ordonnance are all found again in Herrick, combined with a delicate charm and spontaneity of utterance which the elder poet often lacked.

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J. J. Jusserand, to whom Herrick is the best of the secondary poets, "a man of religion by profession, and a man of the world by inclination," calls Herrick a friend of Jonson and a frequenter of literary taverns. To F. W. Moorman, Jonson was Herrick's "poetic father." Carl Halliday in Cavaller Poets echoes Gosse in placing the meeting time of the two men at The Alchemist in 1610, and in saying:

The joyous view of life taken by Jonson, the fays and elves of his dainty masques, the simple beauty of his lyrics, above all, the sympathetic brimming soul of the burly dramatist—all these appealed to Herrick's nature, and his heart never forgot.

Felix Schelling also includes Herrick in the "authentic sons of Ben," as does William Lyon Phelps in his Essays of Books and Literature:

Out of the whole range of the world's literature, we find that the two writers to whom in spirit and in form Herrick was most closely akin were Horace and Jonson. . . . The influence of Jonson both in thought and in meter is evident everywhere. One of the most celebrated of Herrick's poems is directly imitative of Ben Jonson who in turn borrowed from the Latin.

Gayley and Kurtz in Methods and Materials of Literary Criti-

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the realism that derives from the classical restraint of Jonson and the study of Anacreon, Horace and Catullus and shows itself best in the thought, imaginative quality and delicate art of such lyrists as Herrick, Carew, and Waller.  

Percy Simpson (in the Moorman edition of *Hesperides*) explains that the epigrams which he omits because they are "nauseous" are "derived through Ben Jonson from the ancients." John Erskine agrees on the latter point, and once again reminds us that it was through Jonson that Herrick inherited the ancient poetic tradition.

In 1925 the Reverend Clutton-Brock combined the two schools of critical thought—the moral and the Ben Jonson motif—with some vigor. It was a good thing Herrick was sent off to Dean Prior, says Reverend Clutton-Brock, for if he had been a man about town he might have turned into a mere idler listening to the talk of Ben Jonson. He must have been a man with some dangerous and exorbitant desires, which he could satisfy, or at least mitigate, by making verses about them. If he had not had that wonderful natural gift, he might have gone to the bad; but his gift enabled him to escape into a world of pure minds where these desires were all harmless.

Both the idea of the evil influence of Ben Jonson and the

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Freudian interpretation of Herrick's poems are new notes, which, whether valid or invalid, have not been followed up by succeeding commentators.

John W. Hebel of Cornell points out that Herrick is free from the Petrarchan conceits of the Elizabethans and the metaphysical conceits of the Jacobean and Caroline poets, and says in addition that he was influenced almost wholly by the classics. Both the Reverend Montague Summers and Mr. Hebel reaffirm his classical affiliation with Anacreon, Horace, Catullus, and Martial. Herrick's connection with Martial and the classical writers had already been suggested by Saintsbury and Percy Simpson, as well as by Sir Edmund Gosse, who wrote: "Ben Jonson it was, beyond doubt, who first introduced him to the classics, but his mode of accepting the ideas he found there was wholly his own." J. H. B. Masterman, devoting a few lines to Herrick in The Age of Milton, speaks of the Apollo club and the clear signs of Jonson's influence upon Herrick's lyrics. As Emile Legouis summarizes the matter, He began as Ben Jonson's disciple--his "son,"


33 Gosse, Living Age, CXXXVII, 289.

meeting "My Ben" in the London Taverns frequented by the wits. Like Jonson, Herrick had a taste for diminutive poems after the manner of the Greek Anthology; but his verses are endued with a sparkling lightness of which Jonson was scarcely capable.35

Such is the compendium of eighty years of the criticism which bears on the general subject of Herrick's debt to Jonson. It is to be noticed that much credit is given to Jonson for Herrick's success as a poet. The exact extent of the debt, however, has not been defined, and but little attempt has been made to define it. Also, certain questions are raised by statements which have been made; for example: Are there not closer sources for Herrick's fairy poems than Oberon, the Fairy Prince? Is the entirety of Herrick's classical affiliation traceable through Jonson? How many parallels are traceable to Jonson in comparison to those traced to other sources. Is Jonson's non-dramatic poetry indeed the source for Herrick's principal subjects and forms?

The purpose of this thesis is to study and define, as accurately as possible, the extent of Herrick's debt to Jonson, and to suggest answers to these doubtful questions.

A study of Jonson's critical ideas shows that his original contributions to criticism were few. Whether this is merely because he stated no precept without a classical source to back him, or because he was more or less servile to the classics (he denies this), or because he analyzed the problem and came to the conclusion that classic art was the only antidote for the poisons of Gongorism, Petrarchism, and Renaissance allegory, is not clearly evident. The important fact is that Jonson was a great teacher, if not a great original critic, and that he was the channel through which the different classical doctrines (notably the Horatian) were brought to seventeenth century criticism.

The classical movement led by Jonson was an immediate success, probably for two reasons. First, his colorful character and dynamic personality were the fabric of which leaders are made; he demanded followers. Second, the simple lyric was singularly adaptable to the light and often cynical spirit of the court poets, for it was musical, brilliant, and generally pleasing. The poets who formed his school--we remember Carew, Suckling, Lovelace, and Herrick--met in the literary taverns of the day and listened to his "wit." There
is record of this fact through Herrick who to the end of days regarded Ben Jonson in a spirit half whimsical, half serious, as St. Ben, his patron saint of verse.

If Jonson ever formulated in writing his ideas of non-dramatic poetry, the work has not come down to us, but a reasonably clear notion of what they were may be gleaned from his statements in Discoveries, The English Grammar, and Ben Jonson's Conversations with William Drummond of Hawthornden. Jonson's translation of the Ars Poetica may also be included, for although it is in no sense his own critical document, it is clear from numerous excerpts throughout the Discoveries that he subscribed whole-heartedly to the ideas it contains. Additional critical material is scattered throughout his plays, and in the prefaces to Volpone and the Poetaster, but it has seemed advisable to limit this study to the four works mentioned above, since they contain the epitome of his message.

The purpose of this chapter is to review Jonson's theories of non-dramatic poetry under the following heads: (1) On poetry in general; (2) On the objects of poetry; (3) On the qualities of a good poem; (4) On the faults in poetry; (5) On verse form; and (6) On how to become a poet.

1. On poetry in general. Throughout the Discoveries, which is considered to be Jonson's commonplace book, are found notes taken most often from the classic writers on subjects of character, morality, poetry, and drama. It is there that one comes upon many of Jonson's ideas and definitions of non-dramatic poetry, ranging from the general to the particular, and
In considering poetry as an abstract art, Jonson follows Plutarch; he says:

Poetry and picture are arts of like nature, and both are busy about imitation. It was excellently said of Plutarch, poetry was a speaking picture and picture a mute poesy. For they both invent, feign, and devise many things. 36

More particularly, poetry is "the work of the poet; the end and fruit of his labor and study." 37 In certain instances it may be that "one verse alone" rather than the complete work, makes a perfect poem. 38 More important than these things to Jonson, however, was that poetry is "a dulcet and sweet philosophy, which leads on and guides us by the hand to action, with ravishing delight, and incredible sweetness." 39 Poetry, in its ability to lead on to action, shows itself to be akin to oratory, but to exceed it in strength. 40 It is not strange, then, that Jonson defined a poet as one that can feign a commonwealth, ....can govern it with councils, strengthen it with laws, correct it with judgments, inform it with religion and morals..... We do not require in him mere elocution, or an exactness in verse, but an exact knowledge of all virtues, and their contraries,

37 Ibid., 213.
38 Ibid., 212.
39 Ibid., 214.
40 Ibid., 218.
with the ability to render the one loved, the other hated...\textsuperscript{41}

Considering the loftiness of Jonson's definitions of poetry and the poet, it is clear that inspiration along will not be a sufficient foundation for true poetic production. Guides are necessary, and the guides to which Jonson turned were the classics. He would not conclude a poet's liberty within the narrow limits prescribed by grammarians, but would rather turn to the ancients as an addition to the poet's own experience so that he may judge the new in the light of the old.\textsuperscript{42} The ancients opened the gates and made the way, but as guides, not commanders.\textsuperscript{43}

truth lies open to all; it is no man's several..... For I thank those that have taught me, and will ever: but yet dare not think the scope of their labour and inquiry was to envy their posterity, what they also could add, and find out.....Stand for Truth, and 'tis enough.\textsuperscript{44}

Also in harmony with Jonson's view of the sublimity of poetry is his intense hatred of popular judgment and criticism of poets. Such judgment is not the privilege of the multitude which "commend writers, as they do fencers and wrestlers"\textsuperscript{45} on grounds of robustness and violence. Rather, "to judge poets is only the faculty of poets; and not of all

\textsuperscript{41} Discoveries, 168.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 219.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 136.
\textsuperscript{44} Loc. cit.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 155.
poets, but the best,"46 and the office of the critic is to "lay words together, and ammend them; judge sincerely of the author, and his matter, which is the sign of solid and perfect learning in a man."47 He names Horace, and Aristotle who taught him, as the perfect types of critic.48

In Jonson's eyes poetry was no light calling, but rather an art which requires a multitude of virtues, of understanding, training, intelligence, and thought. It follows, therefore, that being thus lofty, it must be fostered by the criticism of great men, and not by the casual comments of poetasters. In such a noble conception poetry was not the province of the muses and a thing apart; it formed the very design of life.

2. On the objects of poetry. It has been seen from these definitions that Jonson's conception of poetry is of a lordly nature. This is further confirmed by his teachings on the objects of poetry. In Ars Poetica we are told that

Poets would either profit or delight;
Or mixing sweet and fit, teach life the right.49

This does not mean, however, that a poet should moralize at length. On the contrary, he should be brief, so that

The docile mind might soon thy precepts know,
And hold them faithfully....50

46Discoveries, 220.
47Loc. cit.
48Loc. cit.
50Ibid.
The poet

...can apply
Sweet mixed with sour to his reader, so
As doctrine and delight together go. 51

And as a reward
This book will get the Socii money; this
Will pass the seas, and long as nature is,
With honour make the far-known author live. 52

Horace is perhaps the chief, but not the only witness for the
nobility of the poetic calling. Others are named in Discover-
ies:

Now poesy is...the queen of arts, which had
her original from heaven, received thence from the
Hebrews, and had in prime estimation with Greeks,
transmitted to the Latins and all nations that
professed civility. The study of it (if we will
trust Aristotle) offers to mankind a certain rule
and pattern of living well and happily, disposing
us to all civil offices of society. If we will
believe Tully, it nourisheth and instructeth our
youth, delights our age, adorns our prosperity,
comforts our adversity, entertains us at home,
keeps us company abroad, travels with us, divides
the time of our earnest and sports, shares in our
country recesses and recreations; insomuch as the
wisest and best learned have thought her the
absolute mistress of manners, and nearest kin to
time.

Jonson's definitions of poetry, together with his
statements of the objects of poetry, form a logical and concise
unit: if poetry forms the design of life, then the object of
poetry is to provide a rich, beautiful, and highly moral
design.

51 Ars Poetica, 107.
52 Loc. cit.
53 Discoveries, 213.
3. **On the qualities of a good poem.** To Jonson the most obvious requirement for any single poem was **sense.** This fact is not only implicit in his definitions and objects but is also stated directly. During his conversations with Drummond, Jonson remarked that verse stood by sense without either colors or accent. Other times, says Drummond, he denied this.\(^{54}\) Of course he denied it, but his overstatement certainly indicates his position on the subject. To him the flabby prettiness of Elizabethan sonneteers must have appeared as a disease, and he was in search of bone and sinew for the English language.

Next to sense, unity and simplicity stood high. A unity must exist, says Jonson, in which "the congruent and harmonious fitting of parts in a sentence hath almost the fastening and force of knitting and connection; as in stones well squared, which will rise a great way without mortar."\(^{55}\) The composition is also "smooth, gentle, and sweet, like a table upon which you may run your finger without rubs, and your nail can not find a joint."\(^{56}\) In a clear and succinct style, he says, you can "take nothing away without loss, and that loss to be manifest."\(^{57}\)

There must exist not only unity of thought but unity

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\(^{55}\) Discoveries, 199.

\(^{56}\) Ibid., 203.

\(^{57}\) Ibid., 199.
of language as well. Use language, he says, which is neither
too high and great nor too humble and low, but of middle
stature where the language is plain and pleasing; "even with­
out stopping, round without swelling; all well torned,
composed, elegant and accurate." The language of proper
stature is that which has been chosen by the best custom--not
too new, so as to be novel and untested; nor so old as to be
unfamiliar. Words may be coined if clarity demands it, or
words used sparingly from antiquity for ornamentation, but
all in all, it is best to avoid extremes.

The composition should be more accurate in the begin­
ning and end than in the middle when we are carried along by
the movement, but throughout the words and style should be
suited to the subject matter, and the subject to the poet.
For example a purely lyric poet should not attempt the epic,
or a secular poet religious effusions.

Jonson's idea of a good poem, then, is one with the
central idea set forth in excellent but simple language,
unified in all its various parts, and possessing only those
ornaments which contribute to the whole.

4. On faults in poetry. Perhaps the thing which
Jonson could least forgive in poetry, or indeed in any form

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58 Discoveries, 202.
59 Ibid., 198-99.
60 Ibid., 199.
61 Ibid., 202.
of writing, was mediocrity. It has been intimated by some writers that he was set against any precept which he himself did not dictate, but that is hardly the truth. For example, consider his criticism of Shakespeare, whose work was diametrically opposed to Jonson's theory of drama. He does not suggest that Shakespeare rewrite his comedies according to the Jonsonian theory, but generally credits his opponent with "excellent phantasy, brave notions, and gentle expressions." His only unfavorable criticism is an expression of extreme pain at Shakespeare's silly mediocrities, and his lack of "art," which, with Jonson, meant that Shakespeare was satisfied with less than his best effort. Donne was likewise opposed to Jonson in poetic theory but we know that he was greatly admired by Jonson in spite of the fact that he led an opposing school of verse. Jonson's criticism is again fair, being two things: that he feared Donne's poetry would not live because of its obscurity, and that Donne "for the not keeping of accent, deserved hanging."

In addition to mediocrity, Jonson recognized other current failings. He despises jeering and lying poets, poetic dilettantes of various sorts, and the degeneracy of verse among his contemporaries. He expresses his contempt not only in his critical notes but in his plays, especially the Poetaster.

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62 Discoveries, 155.
63 Conversations, 383.
64 Ibid., 367.
Jonson distinguishes clearly the rhymer and the poet. Other types of writers which meet his disapproval are noted. There is the writer who strives to be rough and difficult in order to be different from his fellows; he sets a bad precedent. Then you have the "women's poets," who

...write a verse as smooth, as soft as cream; In which there is no torrent, nor scarce stream.

You may sound their wits, he says, and find the depth of them with your middle finger; they are but pudding-deep.

In the last analysis mediocrity is always the fault, and the other failings are only its various manifestations.

5. On verse form. It appears fairly evident that Jonson's ideas of non-dramatic poetry as a whole are reasonably broad. On the subject of verse form, however, he is more dogmatic. Elaborate verse patterns are to him a sort of Procrustean bed, on which sense is lopped or racked to the purpose of form. And, since his object of poetry was to delight and instruct, anything which interfered with that end was necessarily at fault. For that reason he did not like the Petrarchan sonnet, and also because it was a form he connected with dilettantism. Likewise, he did not like the

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65 Discoveries, 215.
66 Ibid., 157.
67 Loc. cit.
68 Conversations, 370.
69 Ibid., 105.
Spenserian stanza 70 nor Michael Drayton's long stanzas, 71 running as they did from a dozen to twenty or so lines. He considered that anything which ran more than eight lines must sacrifice something of the sense to continued rhyme. Also, it is possible that he did not like the extended fooling of Drayton's fairy poems. When we remember that Jonson professed to write all his poems first in prose and then to translate them, as it were, to poetry, it is easy to understand why he was an enemy to complicated forms. 72 His favorite verse form was the couplet.

In discussing with Drummond a projected piece of work, he stated his intention of writing it "all in couplets, for he detesteth all other rimes." 73 He further said that he had written a little tract "wher he proves couplets to be the bravest sort of verses, especially when they are broken, like hexameters; and that cross rimes and stanzas were all forced." 74 That was, if they ran beyond eight lines. This does not mean that Jonson in his own work did not attempt other forms. Opening Underwoods at random one finds not only couplets, but triplets and cross rhymes, and such verse forms as a-a-b-c-c-b or a-b-a-b-c-c-d-d or a-b-a-b-a-c-c-c. Here we

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70 Conversations, 366.
71 Loc. cit.
72 Ibid., 398.
73 Ibid., 365.
74 Against Campion and Daniel. Loc. cit.
find a second instance where poet-critic Jonson has overstated his views for the entertainment of host Drummond.

Jonson's chief criticism of the epigram, a form he used very much, was that "many times they (epigrams) were ill because they expressed in the end what should have been understood in the running."\(^{75}\)

At this time a major problem with which Jonson's contemporaries were concerning themselves was that of the quantity of syllables, and the virtues of quantitative verse in comparison to the system of rhyme and accent. He was able to consider that problem both lightly and seriously. He found time to pen *A Fit of Rhyme against Rhyme*\(^{76}\) which seems to be mostly the result of whimsy, but in the *English Grammar*\(^{77}\) he states his view fully and seriously enough. Rhyme, he said, is natural to English and other modern tongues; quantity is ruled by art. In the English language, he thought, were to be found the roots not only of the natural rhyme, but of the other artificial (worked out) system. He would not have the primitive rhyme and meter abolished (for he considered it both delightful and sweet) except for the end of making the English tongue equal to the ancient tongues of Greece and Italy. However, the working out of syllabic quantity was considered to be a very difficult task, and although he promised to

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\(^{75}\) *Conversations*, 398.


attempt it later in the grammar, he never did, or the chapters were lost. However, we can conclude, I think, that if he had thought it a task vital to the life of English literature, he would have carried out his promise.

6. On how to become a poet. In conclusion, we turn to a problem which has presented itself to the great and the near-great from Horace to Hemingway: How to become a poet. Jonson, while not original, is clear as a bell on the point. His directions are consistent with his various other teachings.

First in line, obviously enough, is genius, but genius without art will fail. Having the required "natural wit," the aspirant must read the best authors, observe the best speakers, and exercise his own style. With his natural ingenuity he must be able to convert the riches of other writers to his own use,

Not as a creature that swallows what it takes in crude, or raw, or undigested; but that feeds with an appetite, and hath a stomach to concoct, divide, and turn all into nourishment. Not to imitate servily, as Horace saith, and catch at vices for virtue; but to draw forth of the best and choicest flowers, with the bee, and turn all into honey, work it into one relish and savour; observe how the best writers have imitated, and follow them.

He must not think he can leap suddenly forth a poet, by dreaming he hath been on Parnassus, or having washed his lips, as

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78 Discoveries, 214.
80 Ibid., 215.
they say, in Helicon. There goes more to his making up than so: for to nature, exercise, and imitation, and study, art must be added, to make all these perfect. And though these challenge to themselves much, in the making up of our maker, it is only art that can lead him to perfection, and leave him there in possession, as planted by her hand.81

To Jonson, poetry was not only an inherent but a cultivated talent.

This is the sum of Ben Jonson's theories of non-dramatic poetry. It has been stated that his ideas of lyric poetry exhibited paucity, and even that he was "uncertain what its methods should be."82 Such a view seems unreasonable in view of the fact that he was the leader of an important poetic school, and numbers of young writers waited eagerly for his "wit's great overplus."83 Fortunately we have his notes and from them can be reconstructed at least a semblance of that "overplus" by which he strove to lead his young followers to Parnassus. A more firm and logical foundation can hardly be conceived than that laid down by Jonson. He spoke to his disciples again and again of the philosophy of poetry and its objects and ideals. He must have given them not only the abstract faults and qualities of poetry as they are found in Discoveries and the Conversations but criticisms of his contemporaries as well. He advised them soundly to use

81 Discoveries, 217.
83 Herrick, 282.
language which would emphasize the idea, rather than flowery
diction which would draw emphasis to itself. He insisted that
meter, rhyme, and simple verse forms were more adaptable to
showing the sense, which after all was the object of poetic
creation. In addition to all this, he gave them concise
directions on how to proceed to become a "maker." Genius
they must have, and also study, but the paramount thing was
art, or technique.

Jonson's poetic teachings are not for one whose
inspiration would weep and sigh, and look in a poetic lethargy
upon flowers. It is for the worker who would take hold of his
inspiration and would, sculpture, or beat it into subservience,
and in the end achieve a lasting perfection. Jonson's teach-
ings concerning non-dramatic poetry are as useful today as
they were three hundred years ago. Indeed, it does not seem
too much to say that while his theories on drama have become
antiquated, and invalidated by the works of such men as
Shakespeare and Ibsen, his theories of non-dramatic poetry
are sufficient today to stand without apology, or without
reinterpretation.
CHAPTER III
THE INFLUENCE OF JONSON'S THEORIES
ON THE WORK OF ROBERT HERRICK

It is now time to consider Jonson's theories of non-dramatic poetry in relation to the work of Robert Herrick. The purpose of the third chapter is to show how Herrick was influenced by the theories of Jonson and to point out any departures he made from them. This study will be made in five sections corresponding in general to the headings under which Jonson's critical ideas were classified: (1) Herrick and Jonson's objects of poetry; (2) The "Qualities of good poetry" as found in Herrick's works; (3) The "Faults of poetry" as found in Herrick's works; (4) Herrick's use of Jonson's theories of verse form; (5) Herrick's poetic training as a fulfillment of Jonson's requirements.

1. Herrick and Jonson's objects of poetry. We have already seen that with Jonson the object of poetry was a noble one: to seek virtue through beauty. "He poet shall "by mixing sweet and fit, teach life the right."84 His job is not to moralize, but rather to apply

Sweet mixed with sour to his reader, so
Doctrine and delight together go.85

85 Loc. cit.
Poetry to Jonson was the "queen of arts," and he quotes Tully in saying that it is "the absolute mistress of manners, and the nearest kin to virtue." The duty of a poet was to aid the commonwealth through his knowledge of good and evil, to provide a moral pattern for all men.

There is but little evidence that Herrick held this idea. He is proud of his calling to the extent that he writes on the conventional theme, Pride Allowable in Poets, but pride in his calling and his expectation of immortality from the hands of the muses does not compel him to take with it the weighty responsibility suggested by Aristotle, Tully, Horace, or Jonson. Undoubtedly he teaches, but his teaching seems to be a part of his clerical, rather than his poetic career. He writes his Pious Pieces so that the Lord may have a good opinion of him, not in order to aid the commonwealth. Herrick wrote no political poems. Unlike his poetic master, he never jeopardizes his position by rash political affiliations or strikes out at sovereign weaknesses. It is true that he wrote a half dozen couplets dealing with kings and laws. In one, he observes that kings ought "sheare not skin their sheepe," and in another that "Kings seek their subjects' good, tyrants

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86 Discoveries, 213.
87 Loc. cit.
88 Ibid., 168.
89 Herrick, 192.
90 Ibid., 256.
their own," but his poetry as a whole is confined to non-political subjects or else to good royalist eulogies. It hardly seems as if Herrick aspired to "aid the commonwealth" by such small contributions.

In one type of verse, however, Herrick's purpose was undoubtedly to teach. This type, "his meaner minstralsie," is the definitive couplet, or perhaps even a quatrain, directed to the Devonshire folk. There are dozens of them scattered throughout his fourteen hundred poems. A far cry from Gather Ye Rosebuds or Upon Julia's Unlacing, they are written not for the court, but rather for his parishioners at Dean Prior. It is not impossible to imagine him during his forty years of residence among them, penning mediocre little verses to meet their needs, their questions, and their dissatisfaction. He bids them to be satisfied with good health, He assures them that pain ends in pleasure, and that all things run well for the righteous, that temptation comes even to the saints, and that if transgressions do not appear to be punished on earth, it is only because God is saving the punishment for the reckoning day. This type of poetry,

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91 Herrick, 271.  
92 Herrick, passim.  
93 Ibid.  
94 Ibid.  
95 Ibid.  
96 Ibid.
however, can hardly be considered as flowering from the "nobility of poesy" taught by Jonson, or if it is, it is a rather humble flower. It is the voice of the preacher rather than the poet. Herrick hated "dull Devonshire," but still he credits it for fostering many "enobled numbers" for the press. If "enobled numbers" means Noble Numbers, then perhaps it may be reasoned that his moral verse arose from his life in Devonshire, or his life as a preacher.

Jonson, speaking through Horace in Ars Poetica, states that a poet "would either profit or delight." As to the presence of the second quality in Herrick's poetry, there is no need for proof or much discussion. Such poems as On Julia's Clothes, or An Epithalamie to Sir Thomas Southwell and his Ladie, are purely for delight, as are the fairy poems and the drinking songs.

It is possible, however, to find in Herrick's poems the perfect combination to fulfill the Jonsonian requirements. The poem, A Thanksgiving to God, for his House, seems to be an ideal example of how the poet may "by mixing sweet and fit, teach life the right." It is unnecessary to quote the poem in full, for a short quotation will show that it is Jonsonian in its simplicity, and that it combines pleasing music with a strong moral idea of pleasure and happiness in simple comfort:

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97 Herrick, 19.
98 Herrick, 256.
99 Herrick, 53.
Lord, Thou hast given me a cell
Wherein to dwell,
A little house, whose humble Roof
Is weather-proof;
Under the sparres of which I lie
Both soft, and drie;
Where Thou my chamber for to ward
Hast set a guard
Of harmlesse thoughts, to watch and keep
Me, while I sleep.

....
Which of Thy kindnesse Thou hast sent;
And my content
Makes those, and my beloved Beet,
To be more sweet.

....
All these, and better Thou dost send
Me, to this end,
That I should render, for my part,
A thankfull heart;
Which, fir'd with incense, I resign,
As wholly Thine;
But the acceptance, that must be
My Christ, by Thee.100

2. The "qualities of good poetry" as found in Herrick's works. The qualities of a good poem according to Jonson were sense, unity and simplicity, with language of middle ground, the words and style being suited to the subject matter and the subject matter to the poet. The first named quality, if we can trust Jonson's statement as reported by Drummond, is most important. The quality of sense is elusive in Herrick's work. Compared to such poets as Milton, Donne, Blake, and Wordsworth, he seems to lack it entirely. He is certainly miles away from them in thought and philosophy. An equal certainty is that Herrick had no desire to wrestle with religion and metaphysics as did Donne, Blake, or Milton, or

100Herrick, 399.
even to any extent to make great experiences of simple real-
ities in the manner of Wordsworth. In fact, it is only in his
"meander minstralsie" that he appears to take any pedagogic
interest whatsoever in the reader. Herrick, nevertheless, can
not be denied sense. Three themes run throughout his poetry:
the fleetness of time, immortality through verse, and content-
ment with one's lot. The theme of the fleetness of time is
typified by To the Virgins to Make Much of Time,\textsuperscript{101} by the
last verses of Corinna's Going A-Maying,\textsuperscript{102} and in a slightly
different tone by the verses To a Gentlewoman objecting to his
Gray Haires.\textsuperscript{103} Both this theme and the second, that of
immortality through verse, are shown in His Poetrie his Pillar:

\begin{quote}
Onely a little more
   I have to write
   Then Ile give o're,
   And bid the world Good-night.

'Tis but a flying minute,
   That I must stay,
   Or linger in it;
   And then I must away.

0 time that cut'st down all!
   And scarce leav'st here
Memoriall
   Of any men that were.

How many lye forgot
   In vaults beneath?
   And piece-meale rot
   Without a fame in death?

Behold this living stone,
   I reare for me,
   Ne'er to be thrown
   Down, envious Time, by thee.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{101}Herrick, 84.
\textsuperscript{102}Ibid., 68.
\textsuperscript{103}Ibid., 63.
A score of Herrick's "meamer minstralsies" are devoted to contentment, but the best of the poems on the subject are his Thanksgiving to God,\textsuperscript{105} and A Country Life: to his Brother, in which he tells him,

\begin{quote}
Content makes all Ambrosia.\textsuperscript{106}
\end{quote}

The theme of contentment is on the whole a conventional one, but the many variations which appear in Herrick's poetry lead one to the possible conclusion that he thought rather more on the topic than mere convention would demand.

In the main, he sings rather than teaches. Sense, however, is predominant in his epigrams, which are as a general rule definitive couplets on a wide range of moral subjects. In the Noble Numbers he is again highly moral, writing with such titles as God's Gifts not Soon Granted,\textsuperscript{107} and Persecutions Purified.\textsuperscript{108} With the exception of the songs contained therein, the Noble Numbers may be considered as a variation of one of his major themes: contentment with one's lot.

As to the question of unity and simplicity, little is to be said. Although Herrick's poems are often packed with a

\begin{footnotes}
\item[104]Herrick, 85.
\item[105]Ibid., 399.
\item[106]Ibid., 35.
\item[107]Ibid., 334.
\item[108]Loc. cit.
\end{footnotes}
wealth of detail, he never clutters or digresses. Such poems as The Hock Cart\textsuperscript{109} or Corinna's Going A-Maying\textsuperscript{110} are of the purest type which Jonson describes as being "smooth, gentle, and sweet, like a table upon which you may run your finger without rubs, and your nail can not find a joint."\textsuperscript{111} An example of Herrick's ability to simplify an idea is found in the following parallel which Barrett Wendell points out as a translation from Tasso by Spenser, and adapted by Herrick.

Spenser wrote

\begin{quote}
Gather therefore the rose, while yet is prime,
For soon comes age that will her pride deflower;
Gather the rose of love whilst yet is time,
While loving thou mayest loved be with equale prime.\textsuperscript{112}
\end{quote}

Herrick has simplified and polished, and as a result produced the gay song which is one of the most famous of English literature:

\begin{quote}
Gather ye Rose-buds while ye may,
Old time is still a flying:
And this same flower that smiles to day,
To morrow will be dying.

...\textsuperscript{...}

Then be not coy, but use your time;
And while ye may, goe marry:
For having lost but once your prime,
You may forever tarry.\textsuperscript{113}
\end{quote}

The song To the Virgins shows clearly Jonson's teachings, for it is simple in language and verse form, it is closely

\textsuperscript{109}Herrick, 100.
\textsuperscript{110}\textit{Ibid.}, 68.
\textsuperscript{111}\textit{Discoveries}, 203.
\textsuperscript{112}Barrett Wendell, \textit{Temper of the Seventeenth Century in English Literature} (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904), pp. 150-51.
\textsuperscript{113}Herrick, 84.
unified, and it has a high technical excellence which has perhaps never been surpassed.

In addition there are two other songs which satisfy Jonson's desire that words and style should be suited to the subject matter: they are To her Feet, written for Susanna Southwell, and the song to Julia:

When as in silks my Julia goes,
Then, then (methinks) how sweetly flowes
The liquefaction of her clothes.

Next, when I cast mine eyes and see
That brave Vibration each way fre;
O how that glittering taketh me!

While Herrick was capable of writing songs in the purely classical manner, he was capable of falling into the rankest of conceits, which even the Elizabethan sonneteers could not have surpassed. He views his "Mistresse" and says to her,

You are a Tulip seen to day,
But (Dearest) of so short a stay
That where you grew, scarce man can say.

You are a lovely July-flower,
Yet one rude wind or ruffling shower
Will force you hence (and in an hour.)

And so on in five successive meditations his mistress is a sparkling rose in the bud, a fair set vine, a balm enclosed in amber, a dainty violet, and the queen of all flowers. He also skirts upon the pathetic fallacy in such a way that he

114Herrick, 192.
115Herrick, 256.
116Herrick, 88.
seems nearer to the swooning Elizabethan lover than the Jonsonian classicist, in poems such as this:

Droop, droop no more, or hang the head,  
Ye Roses almost withered;  
Now strength and newer Purple get,  
Each here declining Violet.  
Oh Primroses! let this day be  
A Resurrection unto ye;  
And to all flowers ally'd in blood,  
Or sworn to that sweet Sister-hood:  
For Health on Julia's cheek hath shed  
Claret, and Creame commingled.  
And those her lips doe now appear  
As beames of Coral, but more clear.117

Such poems are not so far away from Lodge's

Phillis hath morn-waking birds  
Her risings still to honour.  
My Phillis hath prime-feather'd flowers,  
That smile when she treads on them.118

Nor are they completely departed from Sidney's

With how sad steps, 0 Moon, thou climbst the skies!  
How silently, and with how wan a face.119

There seems to be an extremely close relationship between flowers which droop when the loved one is ill, and those which smile when she walks upon them; and also between such sensitive flowers and the equally sensitive moon. All are distinctly Elizabethan.

An additional connection which is evident between Herrick and the earlier Elizabethans is shown in the

117Herrick, 7.
119Sir Phillip Sidney, Astrophal and Stella, Sonnet 31.
sprinkling of artificial pastorals which exist in his work side by side with the far more successful Hook Cart and Corinna. He was not successful in carrying them out, but they may be presented to testify that while Herrick was a member of the tribe of Ben, he was unable to deny completely the appeal of certain conventional themes of the preceding period—namely, the pastoral and the idea of emotional sympathy among inanimate objects in nature. It is likely that when Herrick first became aware of poetry he read widely in Sidney, Spenser, Marlowe and the other famous poets of the time. Then when he went to college he must have become acquainted with the Latin writers; then spurred by the enthusiasm of Ben Jonson, he grew to know them better. Finally his intimacy with them became so great that he lost sight almost entirely of London and lived apart in a queer world, half Devonshire, half Greece and Rome. It is even possible that we may infer that political and social life in England became so unsettled that it finally forced him to escape into a strange, classical Utopia. To be more specific, Trotsky in Literature and Revolution shows that in time of revolt, the majority of the intelligentsia, unable to cope with the rapid change of times and equally unable to aid or retard the revolution by decisive action (Milton is an exception), withdraw in various ways. Some are reactionary, some drift with the revolutionary party, some are silent, others are cynical or express a defeatist philosophy, but many others withdraw to a world which revolution can not change—religion, or the
While one may disagree with Trotsky in many respects, it seems that his view in this case is valid, and if one may trust his statements, Herrick's lack of sense and his complete assimilation into the ancient world may be explained.

Pauline Aiken in a recent study, The Influence of the Latin Elegists on English Lyric Poetry, 1600-1660, points out one hundred thirty four elegaic parallels in Herrick's non-erotic verse alone, and perhaps fifty more in the love poems. In addition to these, she states that in many instances Herrick merely writes in a Roman atmosphere, although direct parallels can not be found. He was indeed, according to Miss Aiken, a "Roman citizen." He followed elegaic themes, which are classified by her as follows: eternity of fame through verse; the passing of youth and love and a poignant awareness of death; rural festivals; Roman religious observances; and erotic verse.

Herrick's years were spent in a time of social change. In 1603 when Herrick was perhaps fourteen years old the first American colony was founded by the Pilgrim Fathers, and from

122 Ibid., chap. iv, passim.
123 Ibid., p. 49 and passim.
124 Ibid.
that time until his expulsion and return to Devonshire the Puritans were in constant agitation. The king was beheaded, Cromwell took possession of England, bills of rights were forced upon the rulers—but Herrick had withdrawn. Time rots the body, and puritans behead kings, but perhaps verse will bring immortality; youth and love are fleeting, so we will be cynical. Death will come, but cloaked in flowers and with virgins' tears and effusions it can be thought of without much pain. Rural festivals are picturesque and delightful, and bring with them no dangerous connotations of stern reality. (The king was beheaded, but in Devonshire one can forget.) Religion is also a bad subject currently, for the Puritans and Anglicans and Catholics are at it hand and tooth, but in Rome all is peaceful, and in a Christian moment one may worship the infant Christ and perhaps even

\[
\text{win a kisse} \\
\text{From those mellifluous lips of his.}^{125}
\]

For recreation one may play at stool-ball with the maidens.

So we see Herrick completely withdrawn, thinking no thoughts vital to the nation, meeting no problems with the deep, stern thoughts of a Milton, but writing charming but superficial thoughts which have but little to do with reality. Only when he writes as a parson does he write of problems tangible to the average human being, and then he stoops to mediocrity. This is Herrick the poet—a priest of "The Queen of Arts, the Absolute mistress of manners,

\[125\text{Herrick, 344.}\]
the nearest kin to virtue."

3. The "Faults of poetry" as found in Herrick's works. Mediocrity, jeering and lying, shallow or "women's poetry," and wanton plagiarism were to Jonson the evils of poetry. At his worst, Herrick must needs be defended from the first. Most critics agree that his moralistic verse is the voice of mediocrity itself. From jeering and lying he is free. As to his shallowness, a difference of opinion exists. Some consider that his overwhelming delight in small subjects denotes shallowness; others place it as a legitimate pleasure in the delicate and miniature. It appears that latter opinion is more to the point, or perhaps it would be better said that although in the light of Jonsonian principles, Herrick is shallow, that fact need not stand in the way of recognizing and appreciating his genius for handling the small and delicate. An example of the type of poem which someone has described as being a "carving on a cherry seed" is Herrick's poem to Mistress Susanna Southwell Upon her Feet:

Her pretty feet
Like snails did creep
A little out, and then,
As if they started at Bo-peep,
Did soon draw in agen.

Another of the same delicacy is To Electra:

I dare not ask a kisse;
I dare not beg a smile;
Lest having that, or this,
I might grow proud the while.

126 Discoveries, 213.
No, no, the utmost share  
Of my desire, shall be  
Onely to kisse the aire,  
That lately kissed thee.

It may be taken for granted, I think, that Herrick was not one of those "wanton plagiarists" hated by Jonson. Herrick borrowed extensively, but he seems to have kept within the limits Jonson prescribed when he advised young writers to gather nectar like the bee and work it all into honey of one savour.

4. Herrick's use of Jonson's theories of verse form. It is evident that in verse form and technique Herrick closely followed his master. He wrote no sonnets, no Spenserian stanzas, he strained for no intricate verse forms. Couplets predominate in his work. Rhyme is an integral part of his poetry, but it is so naturally placed that it never calls for misplacing of accent or disfiguration of idea. Jonson knew that accent and rhyme are natural to the English tongue, and Herrick so successfully used them that Swinburne, himself a great lyrist, said that Herrick was the greatest writer of songs in the English language.

5. Herrick's poetical training as a fulfillment of Jonson's requirements. It will be recalled that with Jonson three things were required of a man to make a poet--not to dream that he had been in Helicon, nor that he had conversed with the muses; but rather that he should be endowed with natural talent (wit), that he should be able to observe the best writers and turn their riches to his own use, and last that he should ceaselessly exercise his own style. That
Herrick was endowed with natural talent is unquestionable. He would have been a singer if he had never heard of Ben Jonson or read a line of Greek. It is also widely recognized that Herrick observed the best writers and turned their riches to his own use. It has been shown, through reference to Miss Aiken's work, how well Herrick knew the classics, and there is reason to believe that he knew the writers of his own country as well. We know that he had the customary education of his day, first at Westminster, and later (1614) in St. John's College, Cambridge. T. Ashe wrote:

> There is no proof at all that he led an idle university life, but presumption to the contrary. He certainly spent much money in books, as we gather from his letters. He presently migrated to Trinity Hall,...and in due course, in 1620, he took his master's degree.....

To the period of Herrick's academical life belong the fourteen letters to his uncle which have been preserved,...chiefly requests for money.....And what guardian would have had the heart to refuse a nephew, who writes: "My studie craves but your assistance to furnish her with bookees, wherein she is most desirous to laboure"? 127

If we may believe, then, that Herrick was indeed a serious student, he must have been well grounded in the classics before he ever met Ben Jonson, and Gosse's statement that it was Ben Jonson "without doubt, who first introduced him to the classics" is open to question. On the contrary we must believe that Ben Jonson sowed his seed on well cultivated ground, and that that was why it grew so well.

From internal evidence in Hesperides one gathers that

127 T. Ashe, 496.
Herrick also followed his master's teachings and ceaselessly exercised his own style. He wrote much, and such highly technical poems as To the Virgins and Corinna's Going A-Maying show that he also polished and perfected. In fact, he leaves careful instructions to Julia to destroy his book if he should die before his poems reach perfection:

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Julia, if I chance to die
Ere I print my Poetry;
I most humbly thee desire
To commit it to the fire:
Better 'twere my Book were dead,
Than to live not perfected.128
```

Such an action, however, would have destroyed in an instant his hopes for immortality, and it is doubtful whether he truly would have had it done. He speaks continually of his poetry as Work. Near the end of Hesperides he writes a couplet which speaks by overtones of the time, energy, and love he had put into them:

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My wearied Barke, O Let it now be Crown'd!
The Haven reacht to which I first was bound.129
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This is not the voice of a man to whom poetry has been an avocation, but rather of one to whom it has been inspiration, master, and guiding star. In the end he trusts that the "Mirtle Coronet" will be set upon his "curles" by the young men and maidens, and sets for himself a pillar of fame:

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Fames pillar here, at last, we set,
Out-during Marble, Brasse, or Jet,
Charm'd and enchanted so,
As to withstand the blow
Of overthrow:
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128 Herrick, 21.
129 Ibid., 325.
Nor shall the seas
Or oustrages
Of storms o'erbear
What we up-rear,
Tho Kingdoms fall,
This pillar never shall
Decline or waste at all;
But stand for ever by his owne
Firme and well fixt foundation.

To his Book's end this last line he'd have plac't,
Jocond his Muse was; but his life was chast.130

The conclusions drawn from a study of the influence of Jonson's critical ideas on the poetry of Robert Herrick are these: in technique and verse form Herrick is distinctly Jonsonian for his poetry is simple in form and language, and shows high technical excellence. Herrick was, however, unable to fulfill the high aims of poetry set forth by his master. Herrick's poetic viewpoint, far from being the vital and realistic ideal conceived by Jonson, is that of the escapist. His lyrics are as a whole purely personal effusions and while they are delightful, they have not the moral quality demanded by Ben Jonson. His attempts to "mix sweet and fit" and thus to "teach life the right," that is, his moralistic verses, are in general miserable failures having not even the vitality of our present day Edgar Guest. An effort has been made in this study to judge Herrick's work solely in the light of Jonson's own theories of non-dramatic poetry, and by such standards Herrick is seen as a distinctly second rank poet. In the rural poems, in his gay love songs, and in many of his whimsical poems such as the Litany and his verses to Maid Prue

130Herrick, 326.
he reaches an excellence which is rarely surpassed, but still they do not concur with the poetic ideals found in Jonson's critical notes. Herrick's obligation to his master for his technical perfection can hardly be overstated, but in his subject matter he was of another school.

In the succeeding pages will be made a study of the problem of Herrick's debt to Jonson for subject matter. I shall attempt to show that while Herrick was greatly obligated to his master for the classical form he used, that his debt for subject matter is far less than has been previously stated by Herrick-Jonson commentators.
CHAPTER IV

THE FAIRY POEMS

As has already been stated in this study, Jonson's masque Oberon, the Fairy Prince has long been considered the inspiration for Herrick's fairy poems. Sir Edmund Gosse wrote,

It is more than remarkable to note that it was in this year (1610) that Jonson produced Oberon, the Fairy Prince, a beautiful masque containing the germs of many of Herrick's most fantastic fairy fancies. The Masque of Queens, brought out some months earlier, is full of Herrick-like passages full of hags and witches. We have seen that it was, probably, the performances of Jonson's pretty masque Oberon that set Herrick dreaming about that misty land where elves sit eating butterflies' wings around little mushroom tables, or quaff draughts

Of pure seed-pearl of morning dew,  
Brought and besweetened in a blue  
And pregnant violet.131

That Herrick's poem The Hag is a direct development from the witch scene in The Masque of Queens both in subject matter and form is not open to question. But, on the other hand, that Oberon, the Fairy Prince should be considered as the inspiration for Herrick's fairy poems is one of the minor stupidities of modern literary history.

In the first place Jonson's masque Oberon was written in praise of Prince Henry and the leading role was played by

131 See note 7, supra.
him. At that time the prince was a full-sized and manly young fellow of seventeen. Silenus praises him thus:

He is the matter of virtue and placed high.
His meditations to his height are even;
And all their issue is akin to heaven.132

The Satyrs are curious about Oberon, and ask Silenus,

Is he such a princely one
As you spake him long agon?133

Silenus answers them,

Satyrs, he doth fill with grace
Every season, every place;
Beauty dwells but in his face.134

He is even more than this. He is

The proper heir
Design'd so long to Arthur's crowns and chair.135

Minor White Latham in his The Elizabethan Fairies points out an important difference between the fairies of ordinary literature and folk lore, and those presented in pageants and entertainments at court. In ordinary belief the fairies were seen as spirits of the devil, capable of stealing children, bewitching men with blindness and disease, blasting crops and cattle. They had their residence in hell. It was necessary, therefore, to overcome these difficulties before including fairy-folk in masques which were to be acted by royalty. This was done by purging the fairies of their conventional evils,
and portraying Oberon as a "Christian and pious fairy."^36
It was such an adaptation that Jonson made in his masque
Oberon, the Fairy Prince. He allows himself somewhat more
scope with the Satyrs, whom he represents as wanton hairy
rascals, opposed in their naughtiness to the character of
Oberon, than which nothing can be higher "save JAMES."^37
Herrick suffered from no such limitations. He is
writing solely for his own amusement and that of his friends,
and it would seem that that material deleted by Jonson was
included eagerly by his pupil. Herrick's Oberon is no Chris­
tian and pious fairy. In fact, a visit to Herrick's fairy
palace leads us to quite the opposite conclusion, for first

we'll present our Oberon led
Halfe tipsie to the Fairie Bed,
Where Mab he finds; who there doth lie
Not without mickle magesty.

... Full as a Bee with Thyme, and Red,
As Cherry harvest, how high fed
For lust and action; on he'll go,
To lye with Mab, though all say no.
Lust he's no eares; He's sharpe as thorn;
And fretfull, carries Hay in's horne,
And lightning in his eyes; and flings
Among the Elves, (if mov'd) the stings
Of peltish wasps; we'll know his Guard
Kings though th'are hated, will be fear'd.
Wine leads him on.\textsuperscript{138}

This seems proof enough that Herrick's Oberon has not the same
character as that attributed to Oberon by Jonson, but is, on

\textsuperscript{136}Minor White Latham, The Elizabethan Fairies

\textsuperscript{137}Jonson, op. cit., 176.

\textsuperscript{138}Herrick, 164.
the contrary, quite a sophisticated little man. But let us go on. Among the interior decorations for the royal apartments are

those threds
Broke at the Losse of Maiden-heads:
And all behung with those pure pearls,
Dropt from the eyes of ravisht Girles
Or writhing Brides; when (panting) they
Give unto Love the straiter way.
For Musick now; he has the cries
Of fained-lost-Virginities;
The which the Elves make to excite
A more unconquer'd appetite.

And now the bed, and Mab possest
Of this great-little-Kingly-Guest.
We'll nobly think, what's to be done,
He'll do no doubt....

Now while Herrick's verses of this petite sensualist might charm the court, it seems hardly credible that anyone should consider them as a direct development from Prince Henry's Oberon.

Not only are the two Oberons completely unlike in character, but in size. We are not given the exact size of Jonson's Oberon, but there is nothing in the play to indicate that his size is not that of a normal human being. He is presented in the masque riding in a chariot drawn by two white bears. It seems that if Jonson had wished to portray minuteness, he would have contrived butterflies, or some such small creatures, to take their place. The masque is peopled with knights attendant on Oberon, sylvans and satyrs. These are characters from Greek mythology as Jonson indicated in his

139 Herrick, 166.
footnotes when he prepared the masque for publication.\textsuperscript{140} As characters from Greek myth, they can not be seen as diminutive creatures, for the Greek gods were of heroic proportion, and the satyrs varied in size, one would suppose, being neither larger nor smaller than their goatish parts would normally allow. At any rate, they were not puppet-like. In addition to these characters, we have the "lesser faies," portrayed by the "little ladies" of royalty, who gave an intricate dance which Sir John Finnet says amazed all beholders, considering the tenderness of their years.\textsuperscript{141} The appearance of such small children only adds to the conception of a full-sized Oberon.

Both in Herrick's Oberon's Feast and Oberon's Chappell minuteness is insisted upon. The table is a mushroom, the music is made by the "chirring grasshopper, the merry cricket, the puling flie and a piping gnat for minstralcy."\textsuperscript{142} The elves quench their thirst with dew, sweetened in the heart of a flower.\textsuperscript{143} The king will not touch the little fuz-ball-pudding, for it is too "coorse" but he will have a bit of pith of sugared rush, "the sagge of the Bees sweet bagge," some emit's eggs, a little moth "late fattened in a piece of cloth," and some of the "broke-heart of a Nightingale orecome in

\textsuperscript{140}Jonson, op. cit., 164-81 passim.
\textsuperscript{141}Ibid., note 2, p. 178.
\textsuperscript{142}Herrick, 119.
musick.  

And last, a wine

Ne're ravish't from the fluttering Vine,
But gently prest from the soft side
Of a most sweet and dainty Bride,
Brought in a dainty dazie, which
He fully quaffs up to bewitch
His blood to height....

In the temple, one finds the holy water in the shell of half a nut, surplices of cobweb, and

A little-Puppet-Priest doth wait,
Who squeaks to all the commers there,
Favour your tongues who enter here.
Pure hands bring hither without stain.
A second pules, Hence, hence, profane.
Only in the name, and in the fact that both treat of fairyland can any similitude between the two works be found. One might be tempted to accept Gosse's theory were it not for the fact that Herrick's Oberon is flanked with poetic relatives, all with one great ancestor: Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream.*

Latham states that he has been unable to find record of the diminutive and harmless fairy before Shakespeare. Previous to that time, and among his contemporaries as well, fairies were presented with much the physical characteristics of men. The fairy who was the familiar spirit of Joan Willimott, a seventeenth century witch, appeared in the "shape of a Woman," while another writer described them as "being

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144 Herrick, 120.
145 Loc. cit.
146 Herrick, 91.
147 Latham, 69.
148 Loc. cit.
like Men, and Women, Souldiers, Kings, and Ladyes Children, and Horsemen." Heywood is also quoted by Latham as stating that fairies may "be easily tooke for some friend or acquaint-
ance." Shakespeare's fairies, however, are small and flowerlike. Ariel could lie in the bell of a cowslip, and the fairies of Titania's train in _Midsummer Night's Dream_, could hide in acorn shells at times of danger. Shortly after _Midsummer Night's Dream_ was presented the vogue of the small and harmless fairy began to spread. Three writers in particular are remembered for their poems of this minikin fairy land. They are William Browne of Tavistock in _Britannia's Pastorals_, Michael Drayton in the _Nymphidia_, and Herrick in the Oberon poems.

Ben Jonson did not follow the new influence, but rather clung to the fairies of tradition. Only in his old age, in _The Sad Shepherd_, did he even so much as recognize "span-long" fairies. Herrick, like Jonson, was well acquainted with the traditional English fairy, but it was the new race created by Shakespeare that he chose to consider at length. It seems plausible, therefore, to seek Herrick's fairy inspiration in Shakespeare, Browne, and Drayton.

Although _Midsummer Night's Dream_ was published about 1594-95 the vogue for the small and harmless fairy did not actually appear in other literature for some thirty years.

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149 Latham, 70.
150 _loc. cit._
151 Latham, 212.
afterward. Drayton's *Nymphidia* was published with the Battle of Agincourt in 1627. Browne's third book of *Britannia's Pastorals* appeared shortly after, and Herrick's fairy poems were brought out in 1635. The similarity of the characters in the three works is very close. All are infinitesimal, all are flower-like, and all feast largely on small worms, insect eggs, dew, and honey. Since this paper is a study of the Jonsonian influences and not the various influences which shaped Herrick's work, it is impossible to go more deeply into the sources of the fairy poems. A few comparisons will be made, however, to support further the idea that Herrick's fairy poems show close study of Browne and Drayton.

First, let us consider the matter of size. In *The Temple*, Herrick speaks of a "little-puppet-priest." Browne had already used almost the same figure to describe

A little spruce elf there (just of the set
Of the French dancer or such marionette).\(^{152}\)

Six dandelions serve as the nuptial bed for Oberon and Mab in *Oberon's Palace*.\(^{153}\) Drayton's Oberon is able to ride upon an ant, or an earwig,\(^{154}\) and both Mab and all her train are able to hide in a hazel nut where it is so roomy that

For room ye need not wrestle,
Nor need ye be together heaped.\(^{155}\)

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\(^{153}\)Herrick, 166.


\(^{155}\)Ibid., 123.
Herrick is closely agreed with Browne on the subject of fairy food and feastings. A mushroom serves as a table for both elfish groups. Herrick's fairies quench their thirst with

A pure seed-Pearle of Infant dew,
Brought and besweetened in a blew
And pregnant violet....156

Browne's fairies drink of the same beverage:

And every bottle was a cherry stone.
To each a seed pearl served for screw,
And most of them were filled with early dew.157

It also may be worth noticing that the word "seed pearl" is used in each description. While Herrick's Oberon drinks dew from a "blew and pregnant violet," and wine from a daisy, the fairies of Britannia's Pastorals drink from glasses

all from ice not made to overlast
One supper, and between two cowslips cast.158

In Oberon's Feast the little king views the table and spies

The horns of papery butterflies,
Of which he eats, and tastes a little
Of what we call the Cuckoes spittle.

...:
Gladding his pallat with some store
Of Emits eggs; what wo'd he more?
But Beards of Mice, a Newt's stewed thigh,
A bloated earewig, and a Flie.159

Browne's fairy king eats

In white broth boil'd a crammed grasshopper,
A pismire roasted whole; five crayfish eggs;
The udder of a mouse; two hornet's legs;

...:

156 Herrick, 119.
157 Browne, II, 52.
158 Loc. cit.
159 Herrick, 119.
Three flees in souse, a cricket from the brine;  
And of a dormouse, last, a lusty chine.  
Two roasted flies...  
A butterflie which had been killed that day.  

Not only are the two descriptions alike in spirit, but some  
of the same articles are on both fairy menus. On both tables  
are displayed butterflies, eggs, parts of mice, and flies.  
Whereas Herrick's Oberon has eaten a bit of cuckoo's spittle,  
Browne has supplied in a verse not quoted above "a dried lark's  
tongue."  
A further delicacy which Herrick imagines is "the  
broke heart of the nightingale ore-come in musick."  

No royal feast would be complete without music, and an  
additional relationship exists between the two poets in the  
manner of music devised. As Browne said, "No famous sensualist  
....hath his name register'd....had ever harmony so fit as this  
king."  
Browne's orchestra was made up thus:  
The treble was a three-mouth'd grasshopper,  
Well tutor'd by a skilful quirister:  
Then a field-cricket, with a note full clean,  
And to all these a deep, well breasted gnat,  
That had good sides, knew well his sharp and flat,  
Sung a good compass, making no wry face,--  
Was there as fittest for a chamber bass.  

Herrick must have read Browne's description before he  
wrote  

160 Browne, II, 53.  
161 Ibid., 58.  
162 Herrick, 120.  
163 Browne, II, 59.  
164 Ibid., 60.
But all this while his eye is serv'd,
We must not think his eare was ster v'd:
But that there was in place to stir
His merry spleen, the chirring Grasshopper;
The merry cricket, puling Flie,
The piping Cnat for minstralcy. 165

Perhaps the first end most obvious relationship which
strikes the mind between Herrick's Oberon and Drayton's court
of Nymphidia is the moral atmosphere. We have already seen that
in spite of his size, Herrick's Oberon is a rather gross sensu­
alist. Throughout the king's revels, however, Mab has appar­
tently been safely tucked in bed. Drayton's Mab, while to the
knowledge of the king she is slumbering in the royal apart­
ments, is in reality arranging a midnight meeting with
Pigwigen, who "amorously observed" her. The complications
arise when the king's suspicions are aroused, and he sets out
in fury to revenge the "baseness."

A second and perhaps more tangible parallel exists
between the names of Mab's ladies in waiting in Nymphidia and
the names of the saints in Herrick's Fairy Temple. While the
same names appear but rarely, both are brief and nonsensical
and peculiarly applicable to a race of such small beings.
Drayton wrote,

Hop, and Mop, and Drap so clear,
Pip, and Trip, and Skip that were
To Mab their sovereign ever dear,
Her special maids of honour;
Fib, and Tib, and Pinck, and Pin,
Tick, and Quick, and Jill, and Jin,
Tit, and Nit, and Wap, and Win,
The train that wait upon her. 166

165Herrick, 119.
166Drayton, op. cit., 121.
In Oberon's Temple Herrick names the saints:

If unto me all Tongues were granted,
I co’ld not speak the Saints here painted,
Saint Tit, Saint Nit, Saint Is, Saint Itis,
Who ‘gainst Mabs-state plac’t here right is.
Saint Will o’th’ Wispe (of no great bignes)
But alias call’d here Fatuus ignis.
Saint Trip, Saint Trip, Saint Fill, S. Fille,
Neither those other-Saint-ships will I
Here goe about for to recite
There number is (almost) infinite.167

Herrick has taken over the names "Tit" and "Nit" and also has copied Drayton's method of rhyming the various names of saints.

It is possible that yet another influence was brought to bear upon Herrick's fairy poems--that of Bishop Corbet, a friend of Jonson's. The whole of Bishop Corbet's fairy poems have not been available for use in this paper, but in one of them is found a thought which may have been the seed for parts of Oberon's Temple. Corbet wrote:

But since of late, Elizabeth,
And later, James came in,
They never daunc'd on any heath
As when the time hath bin.
By which we note the Fairies
Were of the old profession;
They're songs were Ave Maryes;
Their daunces were processions:
But now, alas! they are all dead,
Or else beyond the seas;
Or farther for religion fled,
Or else they take they're ease. 168

The theory that the belief in fairies waned because of the influx of protestantism has become a commonplace in these later years, but it is not impossible to believe that these lines

167Herrick, 91.

gave Herrick the idea of writing at length upon the fairies' religion. Herrick wrote:

Now this the Fairies wo'd have known,  
Their is a mixt Religion.  
And some have heard the Elves it call  
Part Pagan, part Papisticall.169

He describes in detail their service, books of canons, vestments, holy relics and says,

And if their Legend doe not lye  
They much affect the Papacie;  
And since the last is dead, there's hope,  
Elve Boniface shall next be Pope.170

To summarize, Jonson's fairyland is largely classical in origin; his leading characters are possessed of great virtue; and so far as can be inferred from any internal evidence his mythical characters are full sized. Herrick's Oberon, on the other hand, is born of the lineage of Shakespeare's Midsummer Night's Dream; he is small, he is self-indulgent and sensual. In moral character and nomenclature of characters Herrick's fairies show a close relationship to those of Drayton's Nymphidia. Herrick's fairy court is nearest to Browne's in details of feasting and music. In addition to these three, a possible obligation to Bishop Corbet has been suggested for the religious details of Oberon's Temple. There is strong evidence, therefore, to support the thesis that Herrick's fairy poems have their inspiration in Shakespeare, Drayton, Browne, and Corbet, not in Jonson.

Notice has been taken earlier in the paper of the

169 Herrick, 91.
170 Ibid., 93.
fact that Herrick's poem The Hag is a direct development from the anti-masque of The Masque of Queens. Herrick wrote,

The hag is astride,
This night for a ride;
The Devill and shee together:
Through thick, and through thin,
Now out, and then in,
Though ne'r so foule be the weather.

A Thorne or a Burr
She takes for a Spurre;
With a lash of Bramble she rides now,
Through Brakes and through Bryars,
O're Ditches, and Wires,
She follows the Spirit that guides now.

No Beast, for his food,
Deres now range the wood;
But husht in his laire he lies lurking:
While Mischiefs, by these,
On Land and on Seas,
At noone of Night are a working.

The storne will arise,
And trouble the skies,
This night, and more for the wonder,
The ghost from the Tomb
Affrighted shall come,
Cel'd out by the clap of Thunder.

Both the music and the thought of this poem is taken directly from the third charm to bring in the hag, sung by the witches of the anti-masque of Jonson's Masque of Queens:

The owl is abroad, the bat, and the toad,
And so is the cat-a-mountain,
The ant and the mole sit both in a hole,
And the frog peeps out o' the fountain;
The dogs they do bay, and the timbrels play,
The spindle is now a turning,
The moon it is red, and the stars are fled,
But all the sky is a burning.

Spur, spur upon little Martin,
Merrily, merrily make him sail,
A worm in his mouth, and a thorn in his tail,
Fire above, and fire below,
With a whip in your hand, to make him go. 172

In fact, it may be said that Herrick's poem The Hag is not much more than a paraphrased version of Jonson's charm. 173 It may also be pointed out that Jonson's poetry is a court version of a charm to bring in the hag. Down in Devonshire Herrick wrote another charm, a country charm which never failed:

To house the hag, you must do this:
Commix with meal a little piss
Of him bewitch't: then forthwith make
A little wafer or a cake,
And this rawly bak'd will bring
The old hag in. No surer thing. 174

The purpose of this chapter has been to point out that while Herrick was acquainted with the conventional folk-fairy of his time, and also with Jonson's Masque of Queens, he did not make use of that material in his Oberon poems, but, on the other hand, used the fairy which had been created by the literary fancy of Shakespeare and passed on to Herrick through the intermediate agencies of Browne and Drayton.

172 Jonson, ed. cit., VII, lxi.
173 See also Nymphidia, ed. cit., 123.

By the croaking of the frog;
By the howling of the dog;
By the crying of the hog
Against the storm arising;

By the whirlwind's hollow sound,
By the thunder's dreadful stound,
Yells of spirits underground,
I charge thee not to fear us.

CHAPTER V

THE EULOGISTIC POEMS

Because the eulogy or laudatory poem has long been an accepted poetic convention, it is not strange that it should be found common to the works of both Herrick and Jonson. Nor is it unusual that the eulogies of the two poets should have much in common, for the sentiment had become conventionalized through long usage. Such works were generally directed to kings, patrons, or other influential people, often with the express purpose of obtaining favors, grants, or gifts which would aid substantially the writer's livelihood. Other times, of course, pure admiration was the motive. The term eulogistic poems has been extended for this study, however, to include not only the formal laudatory form, but the epithalamion.

It is of no purpose to point out the conventional sentiments which occur in the eulogies of both Herrick and Jonson. They are only commonplace, with one important exception. This exception which has been recognized by many critics exists in the parallel between Jonson's Penthurst and Herrick's Panegyric to Sir Lewis Pemberton. Unless there be a common source for the two poems, there is no question that Herrick's poem is an outgrowth of Penthurst. Jonson wrote in part:

There comes no guest, but is allow'd to eat,
Without his fear, and of thy lord's own meat:
Where the same beer and bread, the self-same wine,
That is his lordship's, shall be also mine.  

Herrick paraphrases and says,

No, no, thy bread, thy wine, thy jocond beer
Is not reserved for Trebius here,
But all, who at thy table seated are,
Find equall freedome, equall fare.  

The thought throughout the Panegyric is from Jonson's Pent-
hurst, but the form is from Jonson's To Sir Robert Wroth,
which may be seen in the following quotation:

How Blest art thou, canst love the country, Wroth,
Whether by choice, or fate, or both!
And though so near the city, and the court,
Art ta'en with neither's vice nor sport.  

The epithalamion also presents a wealth of poetic commonplace with which to deal. To check for such detail, I have proceeded on the supposition that any detail which commonly occurred in the wedding songs of Herrick, Jonson, and Spenser could be considered "conventional." Such details, then, are references to flowers in the bridal chamber; the need of the bride for reassurance; naming the lovers "Turtles," "Turtle-doves," or "doves"; the presence of the several gods of matrimony, including Venus, Hymen, Juno, and Cupid; references to the moon as "Mid-wife moon"; and a varying recognition of folk-charms and ceremonies. The use of Spenser's Epithalamion as a "check" poem has not only provided a method for weeding out the commonplace, but has been the means for adding further information concerning Herrick's sources, for it would seem

175 Jonson, ed. cit., VIII, 247.
176 Herrick, 146.
177 Jonson, ed. cit., VIII, 243.
that although a certain number of unmistakable parallels exist between the wedding songs of Herrick and Jonson, Herrick by no means limited his imitations to the poems of his master. He shows a thorough acquaintance with Spenser, who in the matter of the epithalamia seems to have been his inspiration, if parallels can be trusted.

Jonson, describing ceremonies, writes:

The longing bridegroom on the porch,
Shows you again the bated torch. 178

And later, after the ceremonies are over and it is bed time, he says, "Shut fast the door." 179 Herrick is very close to his master when he writes:

Mount up thy flames, and let thy torch
Display the bridegroom on the porch. 180

After the festivities he gives the same command as Jonson in "Now barre the doors." 181 In The Silent Woman the question is asked, "What! No garters?....No epithalamion?....No masque?" 182 Such customs are not lacking in Herrick's epithalamia. He says to the young couple,

And let the Young-men and the Bride-maids share
Your garters; and their joynts
Encircle with the Bride-groom's points. 183

The three parallels given above are about all which can be

179 Ibid., 69.
180 Herrick, 112.
181 Ibid., 56.
183 Herrick, 114.
shown of Jonson's influence on Herrick's wedding songs. It may be that Herrick followed Jonson in the mere fact that he wrote them, but that can only be conjectured. Herrick's verse form is Jonsonian in that it is made up of couplet variations, but he does not take the form in its entirety from Jonson. It is his own.

A closer relation in the epithalamia seems to exist between Spenser and Herrick, than between Jonson and Herrick. As a tentative distinction it might be possible to say that whereas Jonson's wedding songs are for the court, both Herrick's and Spenser's seem more closely connected with the country. Even in wording, Herrick is close to Spenser. Spenser writes:

Hymen, Io, Hymen, they do shout
And evermore they 'Hymen, Hymen' sing.\(^{184}\)

Herrick follows with

Himen, O Himen! Tread the sacred ground.\(^{185}\)

Spenser has

The night is come, now soon her disarray
And in her bed her lay.\(^{186}\)

Herrick celebrates the same custom in the phrase, "Now strip her."\(^{187}\) Again there is a similarity between Spenser's "Let

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\(^{185}\) Herrick, 112.

\(^{186}\) Spenser, 739.

\(^{187}\) Herrick, 114.
no lamenting cries,"\textsuperscript{188} and Herrick's "Virgins, weep not."\textsuperscript{189} Both Spenser and Herrick are well acquainted with the folklore and superstition of the country people. Spenser writes,

Let not the screech owle, nor the stark be heard.\textsuperscript{190}

And Herrick follows with

\begin{quote}
No Fatal Owle the Bedsted keeps
With direful notes to fright your sleep.\textsuperscript{191}
\end{quote}

In the same vein is Spenser's

\begin{quote}
Ne let Pouke, nor other evil sprights,
Ne let mischivous witches with their charmes,
Nor let Hob goblins....\textsuperscript{192}
\end{quote}

Herrick uses the same idea in

\begin{quote}
For 'tis a charm to strong against future harm:
And evil deeds, the which
There was hidden by the witch.\textsuperscript{193}
\end{quote}

Both again are in accord with Spenser's "And Timely sleep, when it is time to sleep,"\textsuperscript{194} and Herrick's

\begin{quote}
But see ye shun
Asleep, untill the act be done.\textsuperscript{195}
\end{quote}

Although Herrick's Nuptiall Song to Sir Clipsby Crew has not quite the beauty of song and delicacy of the Epithalamion,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{188} Spenser, 739.
\item \textsuperscript{189} Herrick, 56.
\item \textsuperscript{190} Spenser, 739.
\item \textsuperscript{191} Herrick, 56.
\item \textsuperscript{192} Spenser, 739.
\item \textsuperscript{193} Herrick, 55.
\item \textsuperscript{194} Spenser, 739.
\item \textsuperscript{195} Herrick, 57.
\end{itemize}
it is close to it in its spirit of freshness and feeling. The relation may be seen in comparing stanzas from the two works. First, Spenser:

Bring with you all the nymphaes that you can heare,  
Both of the rivers and the forrests green,  
And of the sea that neighbors here so neare,  
All with gay girlinds goodly wel besene.  
....  
And let the ground whereas her foot shall tread,  
For feare the stones her tender foot should wrong,  
Be strewed with fragrant flowers all along,  
And diapred lyke the discolored mead.  

Compare Herrick:

'Tis she! 'tis she! or else some more Divine  
Enlightened substance; mark how from the Shrine  
Of holy Saints she paces on,  
Treading upon Vermilion  
And Amber; Spicing the Chaste Aire with fumes of Paradise.  
Then come on, come on, and yeeld  
A savour like unto a blessed field,  
When the bedabled Morne  
Washes the golden eares of corne.  

Equally close in spirit and subject matter are the two following quotations, the first from Spenser's Epithalamion and the second from Herrick's Corinna's Going A-Maying.

Spenser wrote:

Wake now, my love, awake! for it is time:  
The rosy morne long since left Tithones bed,  
All ready to her silver coche to elleme,  
And Phoebus gins to shew his glorious hed.  

Herrick awakens Corinna with

Get up, get up for shame, the Blooming Morne  
Upon her wings presents the god unshorne.

196Spenser, 736.  
197Herrick, 112.  
198Spenser, 739.
See how Aurora throwes her faire
Fresh quilted colours through the aire.

Herrick's choice in drawing the material for his wedding
songs from Spenser rather than Jonson shows again his
attraction to the Elizabethan romantic poets, which in spite
of his discipleship to Jonson he could never overcome.
CHAPTER VI

THE LOVE SONGS

Among the various forms with which Jonson is said to have supplied Herrick is that of the graceful love song. In the love songs as in the eulogistic poems certain parallels are to be found. To say that Herrick followed Jonson, however, is unfair to both men. Herrick's works are full of conventional poems to his loves, in the manner of the Latin elegists. With the exception of Julia, who may possibly have been a part of Herrick's London life, there is but little proof that they are more than fantasies. Miss Aiken says,

His mistresses, like Ovid's Corinna, are either composite sketches of several women or entirely imaginary. Not one of them has a consistent personality--or, in fact, any distinct personality at all. He seldom even describes their physical beauty (except Julia). For the most part they are merely pretty Latinate names around which he weaves fanciful praises or descriptions of amorous experiences. His erotic complaints are often charming but never convincing.¹⁹⁹

In making this statement, Miss Aiken does not depart from the opinion of most commentators. Jonson also wrote the conventional love poem of which Drink to me Only With Thine Eyes²⁰⁰ is one. His Poems in Celebration of Charis²⁰¹ are in part

¹⁹⁹ Aiken, 84.
²⁰⁰ Jonson, ed. cit., VIII, 258.
²⁰¹ Ibid., 293-304.
convention, but in spots sincerity breaks through. The central idea of an old man's loving a young woman could easily be convention; yet one feels an actual Charis had, as Percy Simpson has it, "touched his sluggish vein, as a 'Celia' had touched it a few years before", and to quote further from Simpson, that such a poem as Why I Write Not of Love "is something other, and something more, than the ingenious anacreontic which its theme suggests." And certainly Charis who tells what manner of man she would love suggests a humor close to reality. Jonson is certainly never hot and cold with jealousy in the manner of the conventional love lyricists. When he sees fit to celebrate the entrance of jealousy to his life, he says,

Wretched and foolish jealousy,
How cam st thou thus to enter me?
I ne'er was of thy kind.

Herrick, on the other hand, celebrates a dozen loves, and still writes:

I am Sive-like, and can hold
Nothing hot, or nothing cold.
Put in Love, and put in too
Jealousie, and both will through:
Put in Fear, and hope, and doubt;
What comes in, runnes quickly out.

This is not the expression of a man whom passion has touched deeply, but a rather foolish cynicism. The large difference, then, between the love poems of Herrick and Jonson lies in

203 Jonson, ed. cit., VIII, 312.
204 Herrick, 116.
the sincerity of the two poets.

Critics have been largely interested from time to time, both in the eighteenth century and in our own, in the problem of Herrick's chastity. Such a problem can not be solved, and would be of no particular significance if it could be solved, but a study of his poems indicates that he probably was chaste. Certainly his poetry shows an almost exaggerated interest in sensual love which seems to be mostly fabrication of the mind. Following the psychological proposition that we think most of that which we have not, we reach the simple and early conclusion that, indeed, "his muse was jocond, but his life was chaste."\textsuperscript{205} It is certain that his over-stimulated passions have little in common with the virile and normal outlook of Jonson. He understands and writes well of clothing, he appreciates the visible parts of the body, he writes superficial lyrics of intimate love; but the games he plays with his mistresses—push-pin, and draw-gloves, and stool-ball, and cherry-pit—and much of his begging for kisses and favors sounds more as though the vicar is "joshing" than making love.

Only two of his love lyrics have the note of sincerity, and one of them is directly from Jonson. The first is his

\textbf{To Anthea, who may command him anything:}

\begin{verbatim}
Bid me to live, and I will live
Thy Protestant to be:
Or bid me love, and I will give
A loving heart to thee.
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{205} Herrick, 116.
A heart as soft, a heart as kind,
A heart as sound and free,
As in the whole world thou canst find,
That heart I le give to thee.

Thou art my life, my love, my heart,
The very eyes of me:
And hast command of every part,
To live and die for thee.

The second poem is Nightpiece to Julia:

Her Eyes the Glow-worms lend thee,
The Shooting Starres attend thee,
And the Elves also,
Whose little eyes glow,
Like the sparks of fire; befriend thee.

No Will-o’th’-Wisp mis-light thee;
Nor Snake, or Slow-worme bite thee:
But on, on the way
Not making a stay,
Since Ghost ther’s none to affright thee.

Let not the darke thee cumber;
What though the Moon do’s slumber?
The Starres of the night
Will lend thee their light
Like Tapers cleare without number.

Then Julia let me wooe thee,
Thus, thus to come unto me:
And when I shall meet
Thy silv'ry feet
My soule I le poure into thee.

This gentle love lyric, unquestionably one of Herrick’s best,
is modeled directly from Patrico’s song in the Masque of the

Gypsies Metamorphosed:

The faery beam upon you,
The stars to glister on you;
A moon of light,
In the noon of night,
Till the fire-drake hath o’ergone you:
The wheel of fortune guide you,
The boy with the bow beside you;

206 Herrick, 108.
207 Ibid., 214.
Run aye in the way,
Till the bird of day,
And the luckier lot betide you! 208

Perhaps it is worth mentioning that Herrick used the phrase "noon of night" in his poem The Hag.

Since both writers read and made use of Catullus a common source may exist in some circumstances rather than true parallels. Examples of this kind have been pointed out by many critics, and the writer has not the classical background to go deeply into the problem. One example from Pauline Aiken, however, will be given. Jonson writes to Celia:

First give a hundred,
Then a thousand, then another
Hundred, then unto the other
Add a thousand, and so more. 209

Herrick writes to Anthea:

Give me a kisse, and to that kisse a score;
Then to that twenty, adde a hundred more;
A thousand to that hundred: so kisse on,
To make that thousand up a million. 210

Both of these poems, according to Miss Aiken, are near to translations of Catullus' poem:

da mi basia mille; deinde centum,
dein.mille altera, dein secunda centum
dinde usque altera mille, deinde centum. 211

This quotation from Catullus is only one example of how classical poems were assimilated into English literature.

209 Ibid., VIII, 255.
210 Herrick, 194.
211 Aiken, 95.
Herrick's *To the Fever not to trouble Julia* is reminiscent of Jonson's *Song to Sickness* and his Epigram to *Smallpox* in that both poets rail at disease for attacking beautiful and virtuous women. Also Herrick's *Upon Roses*

And all, because they were possest
But of the heat of Julia's breast;
Which as a worme, and moistened Spring,
Gave them their ever flourishing.

bears a poor similarity to *Drink to me Only with Thine Eyes*.

If we can accept Herrick's statement that "his life was chaste" an explanation can be set forth for the type of love poetry which he wrote—being chaste, or comparatively so, he had no great experience to draw from and was thus forced to three sources for his erotic material: first, his own imagination; second, the use of the imaginary mistress such as "Delia" or Drayton's "Idea"; and third, the Latin elegists. The use of the imaginary needs no explanation, but something must be said of Herrick's relation to the elegists. Pauline Aiken, whose work on Herrick and the Elegists has already been mentioned, has found that Herrick's love poetry is almost entirely Ovidian. She says,

Herrick's amatory verse, however, is distinctly Ovidian. Nothing in his lines suggests the reverence for womanhood, the exaltation of the loved one, that commonly characterized the sings of the Platonic love convention. Herrick

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212 Herrick, 82.
215 Herrick, 26.
expresses no desire for intellectual or spiritual communion with mistresses. He delights in glowing, robust, physical charms. He is amorous as Ovid was amorous. Like Ovid, he celebrates the advantages of variety, and boasts that he can not possibly remain true to any one woman. His mistresses, like Ovid's Corinna, are either composite sketches of several women, or entirely imaginary.\(^{216}\)

Not only does Herrick boast of his plurality of women, but he describes their clothes in a manner Jonson clearly disliked, for he wrote:

Such songsters there are store of; witness he
That chanced the lace laid on a smock to see,
And straightway spent a sonnet; with that other
That in pure madrigal, unto his mother
Commended the French hood, and Scarlet gown.\(^{217}\)

The result of such poetry was, as Esther Cloudman Dunn has put it, "ingenious and pretty, but not first rate, not worth the careful consideration of a man who compounded poetry of earth and heaven and gave it the boundless realm of man's spirit to range through."\(^{218}\)

The chief points which have been suggested in this chapter are these: that the love poetry of Jonson and Herrick differs widely in its degree of sincerity, that Herrick's life was such that it forced him to convention and imagination for his amatory themes, and that such a search led him, in the last analysis, closer in thought to Ovid than to his master, Jonson.

\(^{216}\)Aiken, 84.


\(^{218}\)Ibid.
CHAPTER VII

THE EPIGRAMS

With the epigram we come upon a type of poetry which seems in reality to owe its life to Jonson. It is true that in the hands of Herrick it underwent changes; the social satire prevalent in Jonson's epigrams became in the hands of Herrick mainly religious-moral observations. This change, however, was due not so much to the fact that Herrick developed a new view of the epigram as that in the main he followed only a single type. An example of the epigram which Herrick studied most is found in Jonson's _Of Death_:

He that fears death, or mourns it, in the just, Shews of the Resurrection little trust. 219

Herrick also wrote laudatory epigrams, particularly to his friends upon whom he wished to confer immortality through his verses. He once expresses the hope that someone will do the same service for him. Also found in Hesperides are epigrams to his book and his critics, and in this Herrick follows not only convention but Jonson to whom the critic was ever present.

Both men express a distrust for contemporary doctors, and tend to credit Aesculapius, the Roman god of medicine, for their recoveries, rather than the doctor's abilities. In his

219 Jonson, _ed. cit._, VIII, 162.
epigram to Doctor Empiric, Jonson writes:

When men of dangerous disease did 'scape,
   Of old, they gave a cock to Aesculape:
   Let me give two, that doubly am got free;
      From my disease's danger, and from thee.220

Herrick echoes this feeling in his Letanie to the Holy Spirit:

When the artlesse Doctor sees
   No one hope, but of his Fees;
   And his skill runs on the lees;221
      Sweet Spirit comfort me.

And again in Upon Prudence Baldwin her sickness:

   Fruè, my dearest Maid, is sick,
   Almost to be Lunatick:
       Aesculapius! Come and bring
       Means for her recovering;
   And a galland Cock shall be222
       Offer'd up by her, to Thee.

Some relation may also exist between Jonson's Giles and Joan:

   Who says that Giles and Joan at discord be?
   The observing neighbors no such mood can see.
   Indeed, poor Giles repents he married ever;
      But that his Joan doth too. And Giles 
         would never
   By his free-will be in Joan's company:
   No more would Joan he shoud.

   In all affections she concurrèth still.
   If now, with man and wife, to will and nill
   The self-same things, a note of concord be:
      I know no couple better can agree.223

and Herrick's

Since Jack and Jill both wicked be;
   It seems a wonder unto me;224
   That they no better do agree.

220 Jonson, ed. cit., VIII, 151.
221 Herrick, 337.
222 Ibid., 122.
223 Jonson, ed. cit., VIII, 165.
224 Herrick, 162.
An unmistakable parallel exists between Jonson's On My First Daughter and two of Herrick's epigrams Upon a Child that Died and Upon a Child. Jonson wrote:

Here lies, to each her parent's ruth,
Mary, the daughter of their youth;
Yet all heaven's gifts being heaven's due,
It makes the father less to rue.

Where while that severed, doth remain,
This grave partakes the fleshy birth;
Which cover lightly, gentle earth!

Herrick's version is:

Here she lies, a pretty bud,
Lately made of flesh and blood:
Who, as soone, fell fast asleep,
As her little eyes did peep.
Give her strewings; but not stir
The earth, that lightly covers her.

And similarly, he writes:

Here a pretty Baby lies
Sung asleep by Lullabies;
Pray be silent, do not stirre
Th' easie earth that covers her.

Herrick's epigrams have been called "scurrilous" and "nauseous" but in the main they are only tiresome. Some of the Dean Prior epigrams, however, are invested with a nicety of humor which is worthy of Jonson or any other master. Certainly there is nothing nauseous about Gubbs:

Gubbs calls his children kittlings, and would bound (Some say) for joy, to see those kittlings drown'd.
And one can well sympathize with a vicar who would write:

Comely acts well; and when he speaks his part,
He doth it with the sweetest tones of art:
But when he sings a psalm, there's none can be
More curst for singing out of tune than he.229

And Clunn is no stranger even in the present day:

A roll of parchment Clunn about him bears,
Charg'd with the arms of all his ancestors:
He seems half ravish'd, when he looks upon
That bar, this bend; that fess, this cheveron;

What joy can Clunn have in that coat, or this,
Whenas his own still out at elbows is?230

It would seem that the main criticism of the epigrams is that
of Sir Edmund Gosse--that there are too many of them.

229 Ashe, 487.
230 Herrick, 288.
CHAPTER VIII
THE NOBLE NUMBERS

The Noble Numbers are generally considered to be without Jonsonian influence. Palgrave conceded this when he wrote, "It is in the Noble Numbers, for which Jonson afforded the least copious precedents, that, as a rule, Herrick is least successful." Jonson has but three Poems of Devotion. One of these, A Hymn to God the Father, seems to have influenced Herrick in two different poems. Jonson wrote:

Hear me, O God!
A broken heart
Is my best part:
Use still thy rod,
That I may prove
Therein, thy love.

For, sin's so sweet,
As minds ill bent
Rarely repent,
Until they meet
Their punishment. 251

One can but feel that this is a sincere expression of deep piety. From the same thought Herrick wrote the two following poems:

Make, make me Thine, my gracious God,
With thy staffe, or with thy rod,
And be the blow too what it will,
Lord, I will kisse it, though it kill. 252

251 Jonson, ed. cit., VIII, 289.
252 Herrick, 341.
And:

Deer God,
If thy smart Rod
Here did not make me sorrie,
I sho'd not be
With Thine, or Thee,
In Thy eternall Glorie.

....

Feare me,
Or scourging teare me,
That thus from vices driven,
I may from Hell
Flie up to dwell,
With Thee, and Thine in 233
Heaven.

Herrick's poems, if one may make such a distinction, are
"pretty" rather than deep. They do not seem to proceed from
deep emotion. As a whole, Herrick is apparently unable to
differentiate clearly between God and the Gods. He quotes
impartially from the Bible, the Romans, or the Talmud. He
is as likely to offer thanksgiving to Aesculapius as to God.
He could satirize the Catholic faith as in Oberon's Chapell,
or view it with religious emotion.

There is evidence that both in Dean Prior and at
Whitehall Herrick's hymns and religious poems were thought
successful, but judged as poetry they do not live.

233Herrick, 353.
CHAPTER IX
CONCLUSION

Evidence points to the fact that although Herrick's technique, that is, the simplicity of his language and verse form and the high polish of his lyrics, is closely influenced by Jonson, his field of subject matter is less Jonsonian than has previously been believed. Reasonable proof has been set forth that Herrick's Oberon poems are descendants of Shakespeare's Midsummer Night's Dream, through Browne's Britannia's Pastorals and Drayton's Nymphidia, rather than of Jonson's Masque, Oberon, the Fairy Prince. Comparison reveals that while Herrick's Oberon differs from Jonson's both in size and moral character, he resembles Shakespeare's fairies in size, Browne's fairies in details of feast-making, and Drayton's fairies in moral characteristics and nomenclature. Parallels have been shown to support such a thesis. Parallels have also been brought together to show Herrick's relation to Spenser in the writing of wedding songs. Differences in the love poetry of Herrick and Jonson have been suggested and the former's relation to the Latin Elegists as demonstrated by Pauline Aiken has been pointed out. No modifications have been suggested in the relationship previously established between the epigrams of Jonson and Herrick. With the
exception of one parallel Herrick shows no indebtedness to Jonson in the Noble Numbers.

Throughout this paper it has appeared that Herrick's main debt to Jonson has been in verse form and technique rather than in philosophy and subject matter. Herrick's withdrawal from reality and his preoccupation with small subjects has been shown to be in opposition to Jonson's more comprehensive theory that poetry is the mistress of manners and the nearest kin to virtue. Pauline Aiken has shown that Herrick's poetic subjects are closely akin to those of the Latin Elegists.

Although these wide divergences in the thought and practices of the two poets have been shown, one may not infer that Herrick's debt to his master is a small thing for that is not the case. Unquestionably there was a time when Herrick practiced what E. E. Hale has called "frank imitation of Ben Jonson and the Tribe of Ben." In his mature years, however, it seems almost certain that Herrick lost sight of the master of his youth and found models more to his liking among the elegists, particularly in Tibullus, Ovid, Propertius and the other poetic deities to whom he drank in To Live Merrily and Trust in Good Verses.
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