ROBERT HERRICK AND THE POETICAL BOOK

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ABSTRACT

Robert Herrick's complete works appeared in one large volume of poetry entitled *Hesperides: or the Works both Humane and Divine* (1648). The number and range of Herrick's poems are astonishing. Herrick's more than one thousand "humane" poems range in subject matter and verse form from the *carpe diem* lyric and polite compliment to meditations on death and immortality, from the satirical and moralistic epigram to the formal ode and epithalamium. A critical problem arises here: is there any unity among all this diversity, or is *Hesperides* just a haphazard collection of lyrical gems? Herrick's status as a poet and place in English poetry depends very much on the answer to this question.

This study sets out to demonstrate that *Hesperides* is a well wrought poetical book. Herrick had behind him an ancient and well-defined tradition when he undertook the composition of *Hesperides*. Horace and the Latin elegists provided him with classical models of the poetical book, while Herrick's own master Ben Jonson established a precedent for the poetical book in English with *The Forest* and *Epigrams*. Indeed, the fact that the "Metaphysicals" Herbert, Crashaw and Vaughan composed poetical books demonstrates that the tradition of the poetical book transcends the familiar dichotomy between "Metaphysical" and "Cavalier."

Herrick makes poetry and his book one of his major subjects. He calls his book, among other things, an "expansive Firmament" and an "immensive Sphere" - metaphors which suggest that *Hesperides* was conceived as a microcosm which reflects the diversity-in-unity
of the Renaissance world-view. Herrick also regards his book, as the poems on fame demonstrate, as a bulwark against mutability and his personal guarantee of immortality. He is thus not the singer of transience, as his popular image would have it, but a poet who celebrates permanence and cosmic order.

*Hesperides* is structured according to a Neo-Platonic scale of love, which ascends step-by-step from profane to sacred love. Herrick's amatory ideal harmonizes profane and sacred love in the paradox of "cleanly-wantonnesse." Herrick sees himself as a poet-priest celebrating a "Poetick Liturgie" and performing the rites of "Loves Religion." Many of his poems display a subtle use of biblical allusion and liturgical symbolism. Therefore, Herrick's poems are not, as the title-page of *Hesperides* suggests, entirely "humane," but rather represent a synthesis of the "humane" and the "divine" in a unified world-view.

Herrick's aesthetic ideal of "wilde civility," like his amatory ideal, balances freedom and discipline. Herrick sees himself as both an inspired *vates*, or "Lyrick Prophet," and a responsible craftsman. His idea of decorum allows for slight deviations in syntax, rhythm and phrasing. Therefore, his verses display greater freedom and subtlety in their design than Jonson's. Herrick is no slave of his master Jonson, but has his own unique voice and sensibility.

In conclusion, Herrick should be ranked with Jonson, Donne and Herbert and not with the "Cavaliers." In fact, Herrick is not as far removed from Herbert as is usually thought. This
thesis, then, attempts a reevaluation of Herrick by treating *Hesperides* as a complex but unified whole, a poetical book, and by calling attention to the "metaphysical" dimension of his verse.
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CHAPTER I

Introduction: *Hesperides* and the Tradition of the Poetical Book

Robert Herrick's place in English poetry has long been a matter of considerable critical debate.\(^1\) Forgotten for more than a century after his death, Herrick was finally rediscovered at the turn of the nineteenth century. The critical evaluation of Herrick during that century is not notable for its consistency. We find him either damned for his coarse epigrams and occasional "lewdness," or lavished with uncritical and fulsome praise. Robert Southey, who in 1831 was scandalized by the recent republication of the complete works, attacked Herrick as "a coarse-minded and beastly writer, whose dunghill, when the few flowers that grew therein had been transplanted, ought never been disturbed."\(^2\) Swinburne, on the other hand, hailed Herrick in his rapturous preface to Pollard's edition of *The Hesperides & Noble Numbers* as "the greatest song-writer - as surely as Shakespeare is the greatest dramatist - ever born of English race."\(^3\) Nineteenth-century criticism, vacillating between the poles of opinion represented by Southey and Swinburne, was never quite able to decide whether Herrick was gross or refined, his verses contrived or spontaneous. But all commentators were unanimous about at least one thing - Herrick was essentially an elegant trifler who exalted form above content and wrote rather superficial, even trivial poems. He was "the idle singer of an empty day." The anthologists culled his few lyrical flowers from the mass of his inferior work, finding it necessary, on occasion, to bowdlerize
them to avoid offending delicate Victorian taste. Even the most appreciative Victorian critics, while admiring Herrick's fine craftsmanship and exquisite lyricism, found his verses lacking the "high seriousness" requisite for poetry of the highest order. Herrick thus received the somewhat dubious distinction of being rated as the best of the "Cavaliers."

Herrick's reputation as "trivial" and "cavalier" went virtually unchallenged until about the middle of this century. Critics who noticed his preoccupation with death and decay began to question the received view of Herrick as the carefree singer of country joys, flowers and dainty mistresses, his status as "the last Elizabethan." A man who wrote a poem called "His Winding-sheet", in which he celebrates his burial shroud as the inspiration of all that he has written, could hardly be judged "Cavalier" or unconcerned with the darker aspects of human experience. But a fuller appreciation of Herrick's seriousness had to await the New Critics, whose close attention to texts enabled them to detect verbal wit and subtle ambiguities beneath the polished surfaces of his deceptively simple verses. Cleanth Brooks' essay on "Corinna's going a Maying," to take a prime example, focused on Herrick's subtle handling of imagery, his complex interweaving of Christian and pagan themes, and the conflicts, ambiguities and ironies of a poem often taken as a straightforward statement of the carpe diem theme. And Sydney Musgrove, in a monograph with the challenging title The Universe of Robert Herrick, demonstrated that Herrick, no less than Milton, Donne and Marvell, belongs
to the mainstream Christian Humanist tradition of his age. Musgrove's close readings of several apparently simple lyrics showed how they resonate with metaphysical overtones, and reflect the great Renaissance system of analogy and correspondence known to students of Milton and Donne. Musgrove argued that Herrick's work, far from being "trivial" or "pagan," represents in fact a unique expression of the Renaissance world-view and its vision of cosmic order. Evidently, earlier critics had read Herrick far too simply, ignoring his complex sensibility and artistry as well as the historical and cultural context of his work.

Recent criticism has continued to view Herrick as a "serious" poet, stressing in particular the importance of ceremony and art in Hesperides. Yet it still cannot be said that Herrick has been fully rehabilitated, or that his place in English poetry has been at all adequately defined. When The New Pelican Guide to English Literature judges him as overrated and as "a poet of charmingly fanciful but simple sensibility," one must wonder whether Herrick's unfortunate reputation as the best of the "Cavaliers" has been finally exorcized and put to rest. The old Victorian view is no doubt perpetuated in anthologies and classrooms. But even those critics who treat Herrick as a serious and important poet are in sharp disagreement, if not uncertainty, about his status as a literary figure - is he to be ranked with Donne, Herbert and his master Jonson, or is he ultimately a superior Lovelace or super-refined Rochester? What exactly were his intentions in composing Hesperides, and by what standards is
his achievement to be judged? No consensus has been reached on these questions, and very few attempts have been made in recent years to tackle them. Herrick studies have clearly reached the stage where a fresh look at his work is demanded and a reevaluation of his total achievement warranted.

Perhaps the key critical problem concerns Herrick's intentions in composing *Hesperides*. Did he intend his work to be no more than a collection of short poems in various genres, a poetical miscellany, or did he set out to compose a coherent and well-organized book? The New Criticism, with its characteristic disregard for the larger context of short poems, rarely addressed this question. Nevertheless, several attempts have been made to solve the problem, none with much success. But before we review the main theories advanced for or against the unity of *Hesperides*, it must be emphasized that Herrick's status as a poet depends very much on whether or not we view *Hesperides* as a unified work. If Herrick composed his book without regard to the arrangement of his poems, then he can be admired as an exquisite miniaturist who can be best appreciated by his finest lyrical gems. In this case, even Herrick's greatest admirers would hardly claim the status "major" for him. If, on the other hand, Herrick intended *Hesperides* as a unified work, with individual poems arranged according to a formal or conceptual scheme, then a case for his status as a "major" poet can be made.

Of course, the terms "major" and "minor" are notoriously difficult to define, which does not prevent them, however, from
being useful and widely-used labels. T.S. Eliot, in an influential essay entitled "What is Minor Poetry?" attempted to establish a critical touchstone by which a poet's work might be judged "major" or "minor". Eliot was willing to consider any poet "major" who either wrote a first-rate long poem, such as Samuel Johnson's *Vanity of Human Wishes*, or "a number of short poems" which taken together "has a unity of underlying pattern." George Herbert, according to Eliot's criterion, is without question a "major" poet, since "The Temple is something more than a number of religious poems by one author: it was, as the title is meant to imply, a book constructed according to a plan ... [a book] which is more than the sum of its parts." Interestingly enough, Herrick appears in Eliot's essay as the exemplar of the "minor" poet and as a foil to the "major" Herbert. Eliot found that *Hesperides* displays "no such continuous conscious purpose" as does The Temple. Eliot's standards of evaluation here are sound, but his presentation of *Hesperides* as a haphazard collection of poems is certainly open to debate. It can be argued that like Herbert, Herrick had a "continuous conscious purpose" behind his book; that both poets sought, in different modes, to construct books in which the whole is "more than the sum of its parts."

Several theories have been advanced to account for the organization of *Hesperides*. The first such theory, posited by Edward Hale in 1892, and reaffirmed by Floris Delattre in 1911 and L.C. Martin in his 1956 edition of the complete works, views *Hesperides* as reflecting a kind of chronological ordering: Herrick
wrote the earlier poems in his youth, the latter ones in his maturity. This approach naturally encouraged speculation about Herrick's poetic development as it can be followed in the arrangement of his poems. L.C. Martin, for example, argued that the poems in the first half of the volume reflect the heavy influence of Horace and Ovid, but that as Herrick matured he moved to the terser style of Martial andTacitus. The fact is, however, that terse epigrams appear throughout Hesperides and the influence of Horace is all-pervasive. Moreover, there is no sign in Hesperides of the evolution from a less to more mature poetic style; one is struck, rather, by the consistent excellence of the poems. Herrick's style, despite the great diversity of his verse forms and themes, remained remarkably uniform throughout his career of thirty odd years.

The most serious flaw in this approach is the attempt to construct Herrick's biography from the supposed chronological ordering of the volume. According to this view, Hesperides is a kind of poetic diary, reflecting Herrick's life first as a young Son of Ben in the taverns of London, then as an aging Anglican priest in the countryside, and finally as an embittered and dispossessed loyalist during the Commonwealth period. But Hesperides is not autobiography: the earlier critics ignored the important distinction between the poet as a persona and the poet as a man, something much clearer in seventeenth-century poetry than in modern verse. The theory of the chronological ordering of Hesperides, which only leads to misreadings, can
safely be discarded. It is based on scant textual evidence, and argues for an external and artificial organization of the volume which the critic himself imposes on what appears to him as a haphazard collection of poems.

It is perhaps not surprising that the earlier criticism viewed Hesperides as a kind of poetical hodgepodge. The volume at first sight appears much more remarkable for its variety than for any formal unity it might have. We find in Hesperides virtually every minor classical verse form, ranging from satirical epigrams and anacreontic drinking songs to formal odes and epithalamia; we find striking metrical diversity, as evidenced by iambic monometer poems and lyrics written in the most complex poetical texture, combining epicurean, stoic, Christian and folkloric themes and ideas. What, then, does one make of the arrangement (or apparent disarray) of the poems, where one finds a coarse epigram often followed by a delicate love lyric, or a fairy poem on Mab by a classical carpe diem lyric? Add to this the sheer dimension of Hesperides (1130 poems in all), and one may well understand the difficulties encountered in trying to discover the unity of the volume.

Many readers, nevertheless, feel that there is a method to this apparent madness, and that Herrick took some care over the arrangement of his poems. They point out that Herrick strategically places his coarse epigrams so as to avoid cloying mellifluence, that he artfully alternates the cynical and the serious, the erotic and the chaste in order to reflect his ideal of balanced
moderation and "cleanly-wantonnesse." After all, Renaissance aesthetics allows for a *discordia concors*, an ordered disorder, something which must have appealed to Herrick with his taste for "sweet disorder" and "wilde civility," phrases which suggest the art which conceals art. Obviously, Herrick would not have been able to create an ordered disorder in his book, or make subtle links among poems, if he had arranged his poems in a thematic sequence or according to some other formula. The argument for the pleasing disorder of *Hesperides*, directed against those who characterize it as a formless work, is valid as far as it goes; it does not, however, touch upon more general principles of ordering, nor can it by itself account for the unity of the volume.

That unity is to be found, it has been argued, in Herrick's conception of himself as a poet, in his literary persona. Roger B. Rollin, in his book-length study of Herrick, finds the unity of *Hesperides* "crystallized in Herrick's conception of himself as a pastoral poet and in his creation of a pastoral world, a 'Sacred Grove.'" Herrick then uses this ideal "pastoral world" as an overt or covert criticism of "the real world." But pastoral poems, although important in *Hesperides*, make up only a part of the volume. Herrick could, for example, just as easily be called a "social poet" for his numerous epigrams of praise. Moreover, Rollin has in mind something more like a unity of "vision" than the unity of a literary text; therefore, his theory does little to elucidate the organization of the book. But Rollin's instinct that *Hesperides* is something more than the sum of its parts, and
should be read as a whole, certainly deserves attention; his approach is more likely to yield valuable critical results than the older approach which views Hesperides as a disorderly collection of miniatures.

John L. Kimney, too, argues that the unity of Hesperides is based on Herrick's poet-persona, whose aging, growth in wisdom and sobriety and death provide the underlying pattern of the volume. The poet-persona celebrates wine, women and song in the earlier poems; but as he ages and reflects on the ravages of time, he adopts the pose of a philosopher and prepares for his death and the immortality of his poetry. Corresponding to this shift to more serious subject matter is a change in preferred verse forms: around the middle of the volume we find a "movement from the lyrical to the homiletic, from the song to the epigram." This theory is superior to Rollin's, since it posits a structural plan for Hesperides and attempts to account for the general layout of the poems. It also makes the clear distinction between Herrick and his poet-persona, which the earlier critics did not, and therefore does not fall into the error of viewing Hesperides as concealed autobiography. But Kimney focuses too narrowly on the poet-persona as the major organizing principle of the book, and ignores the subtle interconnections among poems. No one, for example, would say that the unity of The Temple is based on Herbert's poet-persona; his book displays much deeper and more general principles of ordering than that. Similarly, we do Herrick less than justice if we try to discover the unity of his
book in some simple formula based on a selective reading of his poems. The few theories advanced for the unity of *Hesperides* suffer from these shortcomings. What is needed is a general conception which will explain the unity-in-diversity of *Hesperides*, one that takes account of all his poems.

Did Herrick have a plan when he set out to compose his book, and if so, where did he get it? What kind of models and precedents might he have had of coherent and well-organized books of short poems? What was Herrick's relation to the classical tradition? The well-organized poetry book, in fact, was an established way of writing in classical antiquity, as recent studies have demonstrated. We can expect that Herrick, immersed as he was in the classics, would have regarded the ancient poetry book as a model for his own work.

Herrick criticism is silent about this tradition of the classical poetry book, and unfortunately has a rather limited view of Herrick's relationship to the classical tradition in general, focussing too narrowly on his borrowings from the Latin poets. But this approach, with all its shortcomings, has demonstrated that Herrick was intimately acquainted with the classics, being especially influenced by Horace and the Roman elegists, without, however, slavishly imitating them, but rather weaving their themes, situations and lines into his own unique poetic statements. In addition, Herrick often interweaves Biblical allusion and English folklore with classical material, which gives his "smooth" surfaces a very complex texture. But such studies do
little to illuminate Herrick's place in the Western poetic tradition. Clearly, Herrick's "classicism" cannot be defined only by his use of classical quotation and allusion, or by his treatment of the *carpe diem* lyric or Roman burial poem. Its essence is rather to be found in the major artistic principles which inform his work, in his poetics. The proper place to begin the study of the question of the unity of *Hesperides*, its form and organization, is first to examine the nature of the classical poetry book, then to determine whether seventeenth-century English literature furnishes examples of this genre other than *Hesperides*.

Fortunately, classicists have recently rediscovered the tradition of the ancient poetical book, and have described its main features and conventions. The well-organized poetical book was a well-established form in Latin poetry: Virgil's *Eclogues*, Horace's *Odes*, Catullus' *Carmina*, and the works of the elegiac poets are all examples of well wrought poetical books. The ancient Greek poets appear to have been the creators of the poetical book; at any rate, classical scholarship has demonstrated that the Romans received the tradition from the Alexandrian poets. John Van Sickle, in his pioneering study of the conventions of the ancient poetical book, has shown how these conventions were derived in large part from the physical nature of the ancient book-roll. The physical format of the book-roll, requiring the reader gradually to unfold the text with his right hand while closing what he has already read with his left, made it virtually impossible to skip back and forth throughout the book. The
reader would rather make a sequential reading, from beginning to end, while noticing the links, contrasts and framing of poems within the book. Moreover, the size of the book as well as the length of individual poems were partly determined by convenience of reading and the format of the book-roll. The Hellenistic editors of the Homeric books, for example, divided them into twenty-four books each, with the average length of a book at 500/650 lines. This editorial work, as well as the older Alexandrian line preference of 1000/2000 lines, had a momentous influence on later poets.

Collections of short poems always made up a poetic ensemble and were distinguished by sophisticated internal ordering. In other words, such collections, however random their arrangement might at first appear, were carefully planned works. E.J. Kenney, for instance, argues that "Catullus' Lesbia poems, even though distributed through the corpus in an apparently random order, make such a marked impression, as a group, on most readers ... that they alone suffice to explain the genesis of the idea of a planned cycle of poems centering on a single woman." Kenney's conclusion is that "for the Latin poet, the planned collection of short poems with a total 'message' was already an accepted and well understood form." Indeed, the conventions and principles of ordering of the poetical book were fully understood by good readers in the Augustan Age; poet and reader thus shared a common ground. As Van Sickle puts it: "Good readers, in part prepared by Alexandrian example and the experiments of older friends, in
part no doubt intrigued by the novelty of new work, would respond to sequential variation, enjoy the play of contrast in return of theme, admire a felicitous change, sense the import of positioning — proximities and deferrals, beginnings, articulations, ends. Such conventions of the book-roll would be an unstated premise for both readers and writer."25

All of this can be highly relevant for seventeenth-century poetry, if it can be shown that the Renaissance recovery of classical tradition included also a rediscovery of the classical poetical book. Sixteenth-century literature shows nothing comparable to the classical poetical book: poetical miscellanies and sonnet sequences abound, but the well-organized collection of short poems seems not to have been an established tradition during the earlier Renaissance. Ben Jonson, with his crusade to set English literature on a solid classical basis, appears to have been the first to recover the tradition of the classical poetical book for English poetry. The recent critical revival of Jonson is beginning to give equal time to the non-dramatic poetry, finding that its influence on subsequent seventeenth-century poetry was much greater than formerly thought.26 Richard C. Newton has argued that Jonson took great care in arranging his works into a definitive canon: he was the first author in English to establish the notion of a "classic text", a text which is standardized and closed, unlike the incomplete, or open, texts of the sixteenth century which often exist in several versions.27 Ben Jonson's example,
in this as in so many other ways, was to have a profound impact on English literature and its subsequent development.

Jonson's non-dramatic books of poetry, *The Forest*, *Underwoods* and *Epigrams* are now receiving attention as well-organized and coherent books. *The Forest*, to which Jonson himself gave a foremost place in his canon, is certainly Jonson's best work of non-dramatic poetry, especially when it is considered as a "book" rather than a miscellany. Alastair Fowler has convincingly argued that *The Forest*, far from being what the earlier critics called a miscellany, is in fact a well wrought book of poetry which must be read as a unified whole.²8 Fowler argues that a scale of love frames the internal structure of volume—the sequence begins with a palinode renouncing the earthly love of Cupid, and ends with a poem addressed "To Heaven." This ascent to heaven, however, is fraught with manifold temptations and obstacles. The songs, for example, are expressions of the various degrees of lust, from the coarse to the refined, which are only overcome by the chaste love celebrated in *Forest* 11. Furthermore, Fowler notes that "many of the poems are in fact connected by themes of retirement and religious aspiration."²⁹ The country-estate poems, for example, celebrate the virtues of country life as opposed to the vices of the court and city, thereby preparing the way for a more direct condemnation of the world in *Forest* 4, "To the World: A Farewell for a Gentleman, Virtuous and Noble." The climax of the volume is, of course, "To Heaven," which has as its subject the love of God. This internal structure of an ascent, according to Fowler, is matched by an
external structure: for "fifteen (the number of poems) conventionally signified ascent to heaven."30 The Forest, then, despite its variety of matter and apparently miscellaneous arrangement, is a very carefully planned and well-executed poetic ensemble, the first work of its kind in English poetry.

But Fowler's essay is marred by a serious flaw. Instead of viewing The Forest as belonging to the tradition of the poetical book, he places it within the silva tradition. Surely this minimizes Jonson's achievement, since the silva was a rather minor genre both in classical antiquity and the Renaissance. According to Renaissance genre theory, the silva is "a collection form, characterized by variety,"31 written in a plain style and usually consisting of occasional poems. Statius' Silvae, according to Fowler, was the major classical model for the Renaissance. But The Forest should be placed alongside the great poetical books of the Augustan Age, rather than compared with Statius' Silvae. Even though The Forest displays mixed genres, unlike such one-genre collections as Horace's Odes or Martial's Epigrams, it still shares all the characteristic features of the ancient poetry book: its poems are well-organized, bound by numerous links, balances and antitheses, and arranged in accordance with a general formal scheme. The ancient poetry book was by no means always a one-genre collection: most of the Hellenistic poetry books, for example, were mixed collections. Moreover, the crowded lists and diverse material in the poems of The Forest which Fowler finds characteristic of the silva form are not included simply for the
sake of variety or diversity. The lists in the country estate poems, for example, are ordered according to a scale of Creation. Fowler's approach is fresh and pathbreaking. But he would have made a far better case if he had argued that *The Forest* is a poetical book, comparable to the great examples of antiquity, rather than part of a minor and somewhat vague *silva* tradition.

Ben Jonson, then, established the tradition of the poetical book for seventeenth-century English poetry. The example of his non-dramatic books of poetry, it is worth noting, extended beyond his own school, influencing "metaphysical" poets who are usually opposed to the "Sons of Ben." Vaughan, Crashaw and Herbert, "metaphysical" and religious poets, all wrote poetical books.

*The Temple*, of course, is the most outstanding example among the "Metaphysicals," and has long been regarded as a highly structured and unified work. Indeed, the internal structure of *The Temple* bears comparison with *The Forest*, for both works have as their underlying pattern an ascent to heaven. This structure is even more obvious in *The Temple* than in *The Forest*, not least of all because Jonson is usually characterized as a non-religious poet. Herbert begins his work with a long didactic poem, "The Church-Porch," which contains numerous adages of practical wisdom, many of them classical commonplaces; it ends, however, with the divine wisdom of "Love (III)" and "The Church Militant." Corresponding to Jonson's palinodes on Cupid are Herbert's renunciations of earthly love found, for example, in the sonnets "Love (I)" and "Love (II)." Both works also move from a public and didactic
domain to a more intimate and personal mode. Many of Herbert's poems are linked by a typological frame of reference: later poems often fulfill their earlier types. In a similar manner, the earlier poems of *The Forest*, such as *Forest 1*, prefigure the chaste and divine love which is to be celebrated later. Along with linear scales, both works also display circular, or chiastic, schemes of organization. For example, the country estates poems (*Forest 2 & 3*) clearly balance the long epistles addressed to noblemen (*Forest 12 & 13*): both groups are written in the same verse form (iambic pentameter couplets) and celebrate the virtues of model aristocrats. Similar framings and calculated discontinuities are to be found in *The Temple*: the two massive didactic poems framing *The Church* are obvious instances, as is the strategic spacing of the poems on earthly and divine love, "Love (I)," "Love (II)" and "Love (III)."

All of this suggests that the poetical book, a classical idea, was shared by the competing schools in seventeenth-century English poetry which were later to be labelled "Cavalier" and "Metaphysical". Indeed, Herbert's *Temple* is in many ways more like *Hesperides* than *The Forest*. The tradition of the well-arranged collection of short poems - the poetical book - thus cuts across the familiar distinction between "Metaphysical" and "Cavalier." Herrick, therefore, had numerous precedents both in antiquity and in his own age when he set out to compose a volume of short poems. And given the fact that Herrick is universally acknowledged as the prime Son of Ben, it is well-nigh impossible that he would
have neglected his master's example by composing a poetical miscellany. In absence of evidence to the contrary, it is reasonable to argue that *Hesperides* should be considered within the tradition of the poetical book.

To sum up: *Hesperides* is not a poetical miscellany, as earlier critics merely assumed, but a coherent and unified work. The classical scholarship which has recovered the tradition of the poetical book gives us a convenient framework in which to examine the question of the unity of the volume and the arrangement of its poems. Herrick criticism has had nothing to say about this tradition; moreover, its theories of the unity of *Hesperides* are all flawed in one way or another. The frequent denigration of Herrick as a "minor" and "trivial" poet, a superb singer who had nothing serious to say, can easily be refuted by placing *Hesperides* in the tradition of the poetical book, a tradition which includes, among other masterpieces, Horace's *Odes* and Ben Jonson's *The Forest*. A case can thus be made for ranking Herrick as a "major" poet. Furthermore, Herrick was doing nothing novel or eccentric when he set out to compose a poetical book; the fact that the "Metaphysical" poets wrote in this form demonstrates that the poetical book was a well-established tradition in the seventeenth century. One of the reasons why *Hesperides* has been characterized as a random collection of poems is due to the loss of this tradition. Herrick, in fact, appears to be the last master who consciously wrote within the tradition of the poetical book.
This study considers just how successful *Hesperides* is as a poetical book. The following chapter outlines the general hierarchical structure of the volume, and examines Herrick's own metaphors for his book and his concept of fame; the third chapter focuses on Herrick's amatory verse and the scale of love which (as in *The Temple* and *The Forest*) underlies *Hesperides*; the final chapter is concerned with Herrick's poetics and identifies some of the internal sequences which form the texture of the volume. In a study of this kind, it is impossible to identify all the significant sequences or do more than sample the wealth of Herrick's more than one thousand poems. The poems chosen for analysis, therefore, are representative of basic themes, trends and techniques in *Hesperides*, and are offered as supporting evidence for general observations about the whole book. Herrick's lyrics, with their superb artistry and nuances of meaning, deserve close attention. Herrick criticism has often gone astray on just this point. And the best critical studies of Herrick to date, such as Brooks' essay in *The Well Wrought Urn* and Musgrove's *The Universe of Robert Herrick*, are precisely those which probe the subtleties of Herrick's verse, thereby showing him to be a much more sophisticated poet than usually thought. Rather than examine many poems superficially, the course adopted here is to try to read some of Herrick's key poems rather closely. Only in this way can one make an adequate assessment of Herrick's stature.
CHAPTER II

**Hesperides as Microcosm: Herrick's Quest for Permanence**

_Hesperides_, like Horace's _Odes_, Jonson's _Forest_ and Herbert's _Temple_, is a splendid example of the well wrought poetical book. This thesis, admittedly, is somewhat novel, since _Hesperides_ is most often regarded as a single-author miscellany, or at best a loose collection of _silva_ poems. But to read Herrick's volume as a haphazard collection of short poems rather than as a large-scale poetical ensemble is to invite serious misunderstanding about his basic intentions, and to promote his long-established yet totally undeserved reputation as an elegant trifler. Herrick tells us, in poem after poem, that his work is a "Book" which, as he warns the "soure Reader", must be read "unto the end" (H-6,3). The first nine poems of the volume (a kind of preface in verse) announce the poet's intention to write a "Book," outline its "Argument" and specify "When he would have his verse read" (H-8). Herrick evidently takes great pains to ensure that his reader knows how to read his "Book," instructing him, first and foremost, that _Hesperides_ is an ordered and unified work. In the opening dedication to the Prince of Wales, Herrick extols the young Charles as his "Works Creator" and describes the poems as "Morne, and _Evening Stars_" which shine in the universe of the "Book." Elsewhere, Herrick calls his "Book" an "expansive Firmament" (H-516,2) and an "immensive Sphere" (H-685,2). These cosmic metaphors demonstrate that Herrick intended his "Book" to be a microcosm which reflects the macrocosm of God and embodies the
diversity-in-unity of the Renaissance world-view. No Renaissance poet could be expected to make such a claim for the relatively minor genre of the *silva*, and most certainly not for a poetical miscellany.

Critics have long noted the tremendous diversity of matter and genre which make up *Hesperides* but have been less sensitive to its unity. If Herrick is no longer regarded as an exquisite lyricist who has nothing important to say, he is now sometimes faulted for having too much to say. Diversity, beyond a certain limit, becomes incoherence. And, at first sight, *Hesperides* is indeed more remarkable for its variety than for unity. One set of lyrics marks Herrick as a hedonist and pagan, whose philosophy does not rise above the *carpe diem* sentiment; another demonstrates that his main theme is the immortality of fame rather than transitory pleasure; a third sampling puts Herrick back into the Anglican Church, showing his ultimate concerns to be neither epicurean pleasure nor pagan fame. Herrick has many strings to his lyre, and the reader can never be fully sure who is playing - Herrick the "pagan," Herrick the "cavalier" or Herrick the "priest." One might well ask what kind of unity such a medley of voices, ideas and genres can possibly have. No wonder that the perennial critical debate over whether Herrick is finally "serious" or "trivial," "Christian" or "pagan" has never been resolved, or that the multiplicity of Herrick's voices has led some to conclude that *Hesperides* lacks unity of purpose. We shall argue, however, that Herrick's many voices are essential to the design of his
work, and that his world-view allows him to accommodate, and even harmonize, profane and sacred spheres of experience. Moreover, the playful treatment of serious philosophical themes is a hallmark of Herrick's wit, his gentlemanly sprezzatura, his sense of decorum and even his religious faith. There is method and unity behind Herrick's apparent "Delight in Disorder." To regard Hesperides as a miscellany is, inevitably, to miss the full range of Herrick's voices, and to mistake his paradoxes and antinomies for inconsistencies and contradictions.

Let us begin, then, by considering what Herrick himself has to say about his "Book." In this respect, Herrick is his own best explicator, since he defines the nature of his "Book" and gives precise instructions on how it is to be read. A supremely self-conscious artist, Herrick makes poetry and his "Book" one of his major subjects: his "Book," in fact, becomes a complex symbol, an "immensive Sphere" which contains and is identified with the key images, metaphors and ideas of his poetical universe. There is absolutely no need to impose a pattern of one's own devising on the seeming disarray of Hesperides, since Herrick himself offers abundant clues about his schemes of organization.

We have suggested that Herrick primarily conceives of his "Book" as a microcosm or universe which is the artistic image of the Creation. This key-metaphor, suitably enough, is developed in the opening poem of the volume, the dedication to the Prince of Wales:
Well may my Book come forth like Publique Day,
When such a Light as You are leads the way:
Who are my Works Creator, and alone
The Flame of it, and the Expansion.
And look how all those heavenly Lamps acquire
Light from the Sun, that inexhausted Fire:
So all my Morne, and Evening Stars from You
Have their Existence, and their Influence too.
Full is my Book of Glories; but all These
By You become Immortall Substances.

The correspondences in this epigram of praise are, for a royalist, perfectly conventional: Charles, occupying as heir-elect to the throne the apex of the political hierarchy, is the image of God on earth, and blazes like the "Sun" with the "Flame" and "Light" of god-like majesty. The allusions to the creation account in Genesis are unmistakable. Charles, the "Creator" of the world of Hesperides, calls Herrick's "Morne, and Evening Stars," or poems, into "Existence," and places these "heavenly Lamps" to shine in the firmament, or "Expansion" of the Book. (Note the expansion of "Expansion" into four syllables, an example of prosodic wit which Herrick shares with Donne). Herrick's poetical universe, then, has by analogy a kind of divine beginning, and reflects the order, variety and plenitude of the Creation.

The form and imagery of the dedication impart power to this harmonious vision. The "Sun", "Star" and "Glories" are all images of the sphere (a key one in Hesperides), which traditionally represents completeness, perfection and eternity. The reference to "Morne, and Evening Stars" suggests a diurnal cycle, with the "Stars" perhaps setting to become "Immortall Substances." Thus, the immortality of poetry, one of Herrick's main subjects, is
here underlined by his choice of spherical imagery. Moreover, the chiastic design of the poem, in which the last couplet mirrors the first, the penultimate the second, with the couplet describing the "Sun" standing in the centre, is a splendid formal expression of Herrick's belief in cosmic order. Indeed, every aspect of the poem, the cosmic and spherical imagery, the Latinate diction, the perfect blending of form and content, and its exalted tone, contributes to the majestic statement of cosmic, political and artistic order. Herrick obviously conceived his "Book" as the artistic embodiment of this multi-leveled order.

Besides being an exuberant statement of the Divine Right of Kings, the dedicatory verses illustrate Herrick's analogical mode of thought, his habit of relating the secular and earthly to a metaphysical or celestial pattern. In one way, the dedication is a secular or (as Herrick would put it) "humane" poem, an extravagant, though conventional, compliment to a member of the royal family. But in a less obvious though more serious way, Herrick acknowledges the "divine" inspiration of his poetry, and implies that he has a higher Muse than those of the classical sisterhood. Herrick, of course, does not state this: his method, as always, is to show rather than tell, to hint by metaphor, image and allusion. Hesperides, therefore, is not an entirely "humane" work as its title-page would suggest. The poems are "humane" to the extent that they deal with classical themes, genres and conventions, erotic love, social concerns and other earthly matters. But Herrick, usually in very subtle ways,
twists these conventions to relate earthly matters to a metaphysical or sacred context. His verse, in its imagery, diction and purport is often ambiguous and can be understood in both a profane and sacred sense. Far from betraying a conflict between Herrick the "pagan" and Herrick the "priest" such ambiguities and paradoxes are natural expressions of Herrick's wit and Renaissance Neo-Platonism.

The "Argument to his Book" (H-1) extends the metaphor of Hesperides as a microcosm by defining the poet's role as the singer of the whole of Creation, of all things "humane" and "divine." Herrick's scope is truly universal, justifying the epic "I sing" with which he opens the poem. In fact, this sonnet-like epigram is designed as a scale of Creation, which ascends in orderly degrees from the natural realm of "Brooks" and "Blossomes" to the divine realm of "Heaven" and "Hell":

I Sing of Brooks, of Blossomes, Birds, and Bowers:  
Of April, May, of June, and July - Flowers.  
I sing of May-poles, Hock-carts, Wassails, Wakes,  
Of Bride-grooms, Brides, and of their Bridal-cakes.  
I write of Youth, of Love, and have Access  
By these, to sing of cleanly - Wantonnesse.  
I sing of Dewes, of Raines and piece by piece  
Of Balm, of Oyle, of Spice, and Amber - Greece.  
I sing of Times trans-shifting; and I write  
How Roses first came Red, and Lillies White.  
I write of Groves, of Twilights, and I sing  
The Court of Mab, and of the Fairie-King.  
I write of Hell; I sing (and ever shall)  
Of Heaven, and hope to have it after all.

The "Argument" is a remarkably accurate and well-designed catalogue of Herrick's main themes and poetic forms: pastoral verse, "youth" and "love," the brevity of life, epithalamia, country ceremonies,
fairy lore and sacred song. Within the overarching scheme of the "Great Chain of Being" are several significant minor sequences. For instance, the first line comprises a miniature scale of nature, ascending from inanimate matter ("brooks") to plant and animal life ("blossomes" and "birds") and ending in the human realm, or nature humanized ("bowers"). A similar progression can be observed in the fourth couplet, which moves "piece by piece" from the "dewes" and "rains" of nature to "spice" and "Amber-Greece," products of art designed for human use. Moreover, the sequence suggests a transmutation of the natural into the sacramental (so typical of Herrick), since balm, oil, spices and perfume, in addition to their everyday uses and amatory function, have sacred associations. The natural and the human, the secular and the sacred are viewed as different levels of the same continuous vertical scale.

The "Argument" also defines man's place within the scale of Creation, his middle station as being at once part of and above nature. Herrick thus shares the Renaissance view of man as a microcosm, an epitome of the whole creation, "humane" and "divine." However, this idea is not verbalized, just as the notion of the universe as a scale of Creation is not. Rather, the non-verbal, formal elements of the poem, the implied correspondences in the sequences of nouns, develop a picture of man as encompassing the whole of Creation. First of all, Herrick emphasizes man's oneness with nature by relating his life to the natural cycle of growth and decay, and human activities to the seasonal cycle:
Of April, May, of June, and July – Flowers.
I sing of May-poles, Hock-carts, Wassails, Wakes ....

One of the most frequent tropes in Hesperides is the identification of flowers and man (in fact, usually woman). Human life is almost as brief and fragile as "July-Flowers" - both people and flowers are subject to the same natural law of growth, decay and death. Similarly, the rural festivities of "May-poles" and "Wassails" suggest the harmony of human life with the seasonal cycle. Transience and mortality are, of course, key themes in Hesperides. Even though usually softened by an amatory or pastoral setting (as in the "Argument"), their sovereignty over human life is never questioned or underestimated.

But man is able, in important ways, to transcend temporal limits and stand outside nature. Above all, it is ceremony, ritual and art which elevate us to a realm of stasis and permanence; they have the sacramental function of mediation between the "humane" and the "divine", time and eternity. So after placing man within a pastoral setting, where the natural and the human are in harmony, Herrick ends the first quatrain by shifting to the sacred dimension of human experience. He will also sing:

Of Bride-grooms, Brides, and of their Bridall-cakes ....

Here the natural cycles of growth and decay and the change of seasons give way to the timeless realm of the sacred. (Note that the Bride and groom are united here by the Bridall-cake, a circular image. Also, the balancing of the three nouns suggests harmony
and unity, rather than the sequences and cycles suggested by the rows of four nouns or adjectives in the previous lines). For Herrick, ceremony and ritual, besides forming the basis of civilization, help define and express man's permanent and indestructible nature, his link with the transcendent.

Herrick, in the tradition of Renaissance Christian Humanism, recognizes a dual nature in man, the mortal and immortal, and seeks to harmonize rather than oppose them. In the "Argument," he begins by locating man in the natural environment and ends with a personal hope for salvation: once again, the vision of a graduated scale of being dissolves potential conflicts between man's "humane" and "divine" natures. For Herrick, as for Sir Thomas Browne, man is "that great and true Amphibium, whose nature is disposed to live ... in divided and distinguished worlds." In fact, Herrick's humanistic outlook values the variety and richness of man's nature, provided that this many-sided nature is fashioned into a harmony. Thus, Herrick's heroic ideal, developed in his epigrams of praise, is the secular or "civil" "Saint," whose public and private virtues and accomplishments, social and religious natures, are perfectly reconciled. Similarly, Herrick's ideal of love, the paradox of "cleanly-wantonnesse", suggests a concord between man's higher and lower natures. This paradox is not a purely fantastic caprice, an erotic daydream, possible only in the imaginary world of Herrick's Hesperidean garden. Instead, "cleanly-wantonnesse" represents the reconciliation of "profane" and "sacred" love, the governing
of human impulses and desires by the higher imperative of chastity. As we shall see, Herrick's erotic lyrics usually extend into a sacred dimension, often exemplifying the ideal of "cleanly-wanton-ness" in a very witty manner.

Herrick's vision of the cosmos and man, of time and eternity, outlined by the "Argument" is largely inspired by Renaissance Neo-Platonism. In fact, the relation of time to eternity can, without exaggeration, be said to be Herrick's major philosophical problem in _Hesperides_. Perhaps the greater number of his poems are meditations, in one way or another, on how to meet the challenge of the destructiveness of time. In one sense, _Hesperides_ is the record of Herrick's various attempts to affirm life in the face of mutability. Sometimes he cheerfully accepts the Heraclitean flux, making it a pretext for the _carpe diem_ argument; less frequently, his mood is one of Stoic resignation. However, these solutions to the threat of mutability are tried and ultimately discarded.

Herrick's dominant quest is for the grounds of permanence and immortality. He announces this quest in the "Argument" when he promises to "sing of Times trans-shifting." This striking phrase has usually been glossed as "transience." However, the prefix "trans," as well as the context of the line, indicate a shift from one ontological mode to another, from the temporal to the eternal dimension of the "Great Chain of Being." Significantly, the phrase forms the _volte_ of the sonnet-epigram, which signals the traditional Petrarchan shift from a profane to a sacred
context. Indeed, the sestet of the "Argument", with its symbolic "roses" and "lillies" in contrast to the natural flowers of the octave, its sacred "groves" and mythological figures, and its mention of "Hell" and "Heaven" corresponds to the traditional Petrarchan pattern. Such a shift from the temporal to the eternal, however, is unobtrusive, and perhaps can only be inferred from the form of the poem. In any case, Herrick certainly is not the singer of transience, of decaying flowers and aging mistresses, as his popular image would have us believe. His purpose, instead, is to transcend time, through ceremony, sacrament and art - to "trans-shift" from the temporal realm of change and decay to the metaphysical realm of permanence.

We have dealt at length with the "Argument" because it articulates the major ideas which underlie Herrick's verse, and hence provides a welcome framework for interpretation. Of these, the notion of a hierarchical scale of values is perhaps the most crucial. In his amatory verse, Herrick is able to reconcile profane and sacred love since both belong to the same continuous vertical scale; so long as the vision of this cosmic scale is not distorted, "wantonnesse" and human love have their accepted place. The principle of hierarchy is also central to the conception and organization of Herrick's book. Herrick promises to sing of all levels of Creation and write of all spheres of human experience. Hesperides, like the "Argument," is structured to reflect a development from the temporal to the permanent. For example, the final poem of Hesperides, "The Pillar of Fame," is a triumphant
assertion of cosmic order and Herrick's everlasting fame, a monument of his final victory over the forces of mutability. Along with this ascent from a temporal to an eternal perspective, we find a movement toward greater formal stability, simplicity and order. Like much Renaissance art, Hesperides, therefore, displays a dynamic structure, a movement toward increased clarity and order.

Herrick, of course, employs metaphors other than the cosmic to define the nature of his book. His book is (among other things) a garden, a temple, and a commonwealth of verse. The garden metaphor is reflected in the title of the work and is greatly elaborated by Herrick's complex floral and plant imagery. Herrick envisions his book as a "rich Plantation" (H-392,4) in which the "chaste Spirits" of his worthies will grow to "Life eternal", and a "Sacred Grove" (H-265,3), which, like the fabled garden of the Hesperides, is at once earthly and celestial. In architectural terms, Hesperides is a "White Temple" (H-496,1) of "Heroes" and a "Colledge" (H-983,1) of worthies. Herrick never seems to tire of the Horatian notion of poetry as an eternal monument. He also styles himself the "Princely Poet" (H-166,12), and imagines that he rules over a commonwealth of patrons, artists, soldiers, scholars, magistrates, and other Renaissance heroes. And this "vast Dominion" (H-592,4), he tells us, will outlast all earthly monarchies.

But perhaps the most striking images of all are the liturgical and religious metaphors. Herrick, as poet-priest, celebrates a
"Poetick Liturgie" (H-510-4) in which he commemorates his "rare Saint-ships" (H-496,3), expounds the doctrines and rites of "Loves Religion" (H-38,5), and performs the miracle whereby decaying nature is transfigured into immutable art. Like the Book of Common Prayer, Hesperides contains its hymns, ceremonies, sacraments and high-points, all performed in due and comely order. The sacred dimension of Hesperides is well-evidenced by Herrick's abundant use of biblical allusion and Christian rite, which are very subtly woven into the fabric of his "humane" verse. In fact, the order of Hesperides parallels in significant ways the order of the Book of Common Prayer, as evidenced by the numerous eucharistic overtones in the final section of the volume. Herrick's description of Hesperides as a "Poetick Liturgie," therefore, is particularly apt, since this epithet sums up his blending of classical and Christian images, ideas and traditions, and his goal of reconciling the "humane" and the "divine" in a unified world-view.

Whatever terms and metaphors he uses, whether he calls Hesperides a "Testament" (H-977,4) and "Psalter". (H-604,12), an "eternall Coronet" (H-789,2) or a "Colledge" of "Heroes", Herrick always conceives of his book as unified, permanent and, in some sense, sacred. Herrick's epithets for his book are the key-metaphors which give shape to the volume and bind together its various strains of imagery, patterns of thought and even sequences of poems. The notion of Hesperides as a "Sacred Grove" or "rich Plantation", for example, wonderfully illuminates Herrick's
complex plant and floral imagery. And the idea of the book as a microcosm, a "Spacious Sphere" (H-804,7) which mirrors the divine order of the Creation, helps clarify the progression from the temporal to the permanent which underlies the structure of *Hesperides*. The interrelationships among Herrick's patterns of imagery are also governed by Herrick's overarching conception of his book. We find, for example, a movement from vegetative to architectural imagery as we read through *Hesperides*, a movement which corresponds with a shift from the realm of Nature to that of Art, and from a pastoral to a social setting. (This is foreshadowed, as we saw, in the "Argument"). In fact, Herrick's main idea is, in many ways, the book itself: the idea which controls and orders the multiform details of a 1,130 - poem collection of verse. Herrick's book contains all things because it is the artistic reflection of the cosmos; it is unified because it embodies a vision of world harmony; it is sacred because it celebrates the divine order of the Creation.

Herrick, as we have noted, does not make a strict separation between sacred and secular dimensions of experience, but typically attempts their reconciliation. So although Herrick writes within the tradition of classical erotic poetry, the tradition of Anacreon, Horace and the Latin elegists, it is not difficult to find a "sacred" undercurrent in his "humane" verse. In one of his many addresses "To his Muse" (H-84) Herrick offers to give "Baptime" to his Muse: he appropriates the classical lyric tradition and fits it into the framework of Christian ritual and belief. Even
if one grants that Herrick does not entirely succeed in baptizing the classical tradition of lyric poetry, it is impossible to deny that he subjects it to an abundant sprinkling of holy water. Herrick's own distinction between his "humane" and "divine" verse is, therefore, somewhat artificial, and must be treated as such by the critic of Hesperides. For Herrick, poetry, music, civilized manners, funeral rites and "Loves Religion" are all forms of ritual and, therefore, essentially sacred in content.

It is not surprising, then, that Herrick regards his own work and art as sacred. Characteristically, Herrick sees his role as a classical *vates* inspired by wine or the muses, a poet-priest who celebrates a "Poetick Liturgie," and a "Lyrick Prophet" (H-365,3) who writes a "Psalter", a book of praise. The notion that Hesperides is a kind of sacred text or work appears in numerous contexts; it is the subject of one of Herrick's emblem poems, "To Laurels" (H-89):

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A Funerall stone,
   Or Verse I covet none;
   But onely crave
   Of you, that I may have
   A sacred Laurel springing from my grave:
    Which being seen,
    Blest with perpetuall greene,
    May grow to be
    Not so much call'd a tree,
   As the eternall monument of me.
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This poem is an expression of Herrick's main desire in Hesperides: poetic fame and eternal life. The standard classical trope of the immortality of poetry and its power to eternize the subject of its praise undergoes every possible modulation in Hesperides. In sheer volume of reference and variations on this trope, Hesperides
no doubt surpasses all other collections of verse. A fact that is less well-recognized and needs to be stressed is the pervasiveness in *Hesperides* of Herrick's meditations on death, an obvious concern of "To Laurels." Herrick's sense of the decay of nature and the constant threat of death, however muted and controlled by the delicacy of his verse, is surely as strong as Donne's. True, we find no medieval images of rotting corpses or the dance of death. Instead, Herrick foretells his own end in the withering of a daffodil or the furrow in his mistress' brow - and his sense of mortality is no less acute for that. If Herrick finally wins the victory over mutability and death in "The Pillar of Fame", it is only after having taken full account of the destructive power of time over man and nature.

In "To Laurels," Herrick's hope for immortality is closely linked to his conception of his book and his understanding of fame. The laurel, of course, is the classical emblem of poetic fame. Unlike other men who are commemorated by the "Funerall stone" or by "Verse," Herrick, like all artists, wishes to be remembered for his work. The "Funerall stone" is inadequate to his desire for immortality - only the "sacred Laurel" of poetic fame can ensure him everlasting life. This "sacred Laurel" springing from Herrick's grave is nothing other than his book. The one-couplet epigram entitled simply "To his Book" sets this down in unambiguous terms:

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Thou art a plant sprung up to wither never,
But like a Laurell, to grow green for ever. (H-240)
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So far, Herrick's notion of immortality here does not differ markedly from the classical notion as represented, say, by Horace - the poet's work keeps his name alive to all posterity. This is the only kind of immortality which Horace could hope for; it is obviously impersonal and different in kind and quality from the Platonic and especially the Christian understanding of eternal life.

Herrick does something very characteristic in "To Laurels": he begins with a classical concept, in this instance the classical understanding of poetic fame, and converts it into a Christian idea. In other words, Herrick's understanding of the immortality of fame is more Christian than classical - it both contains and transcends the classical idea. The fusing of classical and Christian perspectives on a subject is, indeed, a hallmark of Herrick's style, and can be discerned in his handling of imagery and formal and prosodic effects. "To Laurels" contains an interesting mixture of classical and Christian diction and imagery.

This appears most clearly in the key-line of the poem, in which Herrick "craves" a "sacred Laurel" that will be "blest" with everlasting life.

A sacred Laurel springing from my grave ....

Ostensibly, the desire here is for lasting fame, the praise of future generations for Herrick's work. But a veiled allusion to the Christian belief in the Resurrection is not difficult to discern in the image of the "sacred Laurel" "springing" from Herrick's "grave." We find here a "trans-shifting" from a humanistic
to a Christian understanding of fame as a type of personal immortality, a shift from a historical to a metaphysical definition of fame. Moreover, the chiastic design of the line beautifully underlines Herrick's understanding of fame as something immutable and eternal. The modifiers and nouns encircling the participle, "springing", identify the verse as a golden line - an apt formal expression of order and permanence. Herrick even reinforces this chiastic pattern by the assonance of the words "sacred" and "grave." These are the kinds of effects Herrick delighted in, subtle effects of grammar, diction, image and allusion. Such devices often represent deviations from classical conventions, as when Herrick modifies the carpe diem theme, or when, as in "To Laurels", he modifies a classical concept to fit into his Christian Humanist world-view. And these are the devices which the reader of Herrick must familiarize himself with if he is to see the complexity often underlying the apparently simple surfaces of his lyrics.

The development of imagery in "To Laurels" is rather curious, bringing together as it does two dominant strains of imagery, the vegetative and architectural, which are usually kept apart in Hesperides. Herrick begins by rejecting the "funeral stone", craving instead a "sacred Laurel" which will grow into an "eternall monument" rather than into a "tree". This shift from organic to inorganic imagery, from terms of Nature to those of Art, is rather common in Hesperides.

We must, then, say a few words here about the values associated with Herrick's main strains of imagery, and his understanding of
the key Renaissance concepts of Nature and Art. Stated briefly, Nature in *Hesperides* represents the realm of time and mutability; Art, the realm of eternity and permanence. In the natural perspective, time underlies the never-ending cycle of growth, aging and death; it both "hastens on/things to perfection" (H-767,15-16) and brings everything "into the grave" (H-467,18). Nothing can alter the flux of time or avoid the certain fate of death. The possibility of survival beyond the grave is quite dim according to the naturalistic viewpoint. Philosophical naturalism underlies most of Herrick's *carpe diem* lyrics, and gives rise to an epicurean ethic. Indeed, Herrick has been taken by many to be a seventeenth-century pagan, so powerfully does he make the case for philosophical naturalism and epicureanism in many of his best-known and best-loved lyrics. The natural images of flowers and plants, which pervade the volume, almost always represent the natural cycle of growth and decay, and often serve as *memento mori*. Like Sir Thomas Browne, Herrick is an adept reader of the Book of Nature, and can see his own end in the withering of a daffodil (see H-107) or in the fall of a blossom. In the final stanza of "To Blossoms," (H-467), the blossoms become leaves in the Book of Nature, which teaches that all things, "though ne'r so brave," must die:

3. But you are lovely Leaves, where we
May read how soon things have
Their end, though ne'r so brave:
And after they have shown their pride,
   Like you a while: They glide
   Into the Grave.
There is no suggestion here of permanence beyond the grave. "To Blossoms", like much of Herrick's floral verse, is a bare statement of the facts of mutability and death.

Architectural images, in contrast to those drawn from the natural world, always suggest a realm of permanence above the flux of time and the decay of nature. Stones, pillars, buildings and monuments are all images of immutability in Hesperides. At the end of his volume, when Herrick wishes to assert the immortality of his book, he can do no better than write an emblem poem in the shape of a pillar. In Platonic nomenclature, Herrick's architectural images represent immutable and eternal abstract forms. For Herrick, the universe is divided into the lower realm of time and Nature, and the higher realm of eternity and Art, often associated with, respectively, vegetative and architectural imagery. The division is not absolute, however, since Art is also understood in its widest sense to include all forms of ritual which unite the realms of time and eternity. These two meanings of Art are not contradictory, since Art, whether considered as sacred or as an abstract form, is always above the flux of time. This vision of the world gives Herrick a dual perspective, and helps us elucidate his imagery. For example, Herrick's many mistresses and virgins are commonly identified with flowers, and, therefore, are seen from the natural perspective of growth and decay. On the other hand, Herrick views his worthies from a metaphysical perspective and offers them eternal life in Hesperides. In these epigrams of praise, architectural imagery predominates. One may note, too,
that Herrick evokes his mistresses in short lyrics with varied line-lengths and short metres, while his worthies are always honoured in iambic pentameter couplets - the heroic metre. Herrick's book, too, reflects a general development from the realm of Nature to the realm of Art.

The form of "To Laurels" reflects in miniature the broad development of the volume from Nature to Art. The two senses of Art which we have noted are present here: the ritualistic sense, in the epithet "sacred Laurel", and the Platonic sense, in the epithet "eternall monument." Herrick is saying that his poetical book is a "sacred Laurell" which grows into an "eternall monument." Translated into plain prose, his book has its origin in time but finds its end in eternity. The bilateral symmetry of the poem reflects this dualism. The first half concentrates on the poet's personal hope for immortality and the second half with its fulfillment. The active voice and nominative "I" with its desires give way in the second part to the passive voice and the objective pronoun "me". The "eternall monument," that is, Herrick's poetical book, takes the place of the ego after it passes out of time.

"To Laurels" is an emblem poem, a genre which Herrick usually reserves for his architectural verse, such as "His Poetrie, his Pillar" and "The Pillar of Fame." Though less definitive in its typographical shape than these, "To Laurels" obviously belongs to the same class of verse. The handling of line-lengths is quite virtuosic. In the first part, the "Funeral stone" and "Verse" are incommensurate with the poet's desire for immortality and
appear in short dimeter and trimeter lines. The poet's hope for everlasting life can only be answered by the "sacred Laurel", which appears in the heroic line. The first two couplets are really iambic pentameter lines, broken by rhyme. Their formal instability is resolved in the fifth line which, formally and grammatically, is the most regular and stable verse in the first part. The second part follows a similar pattern. This time, however, Herrick reverses the pattern of imagery, beginning with an organic image and ending with an architectural image. The short lines are now given to the "laurel" and the "tree", an inadequate emblem of Herrick's fame, which can only be immortalized by the "eternall monument" of the last heroic line. Thus, the long lines, equalling fame, are reserved for the Laurel, Herrick and his book. Herrick's handling of sound patterns is no less virtuosic - one may note, for example, how the repetition of the terminal sound in "Funerall", "Laurell", "perpetuall" and "eternall" helps impart formal unity to the poem, or how the low-pitched o's and a's which dominate the first half give way to the long e's which make for a most confident and resonant conclusion. All in all, Herrick displays in "To Laurels", as in innumerable other poems, his powers of compression and economy, his ability to express the sublime and the heroic within the confines of a short poem, and complete mastery over all aspects of his art. The development of thought and the form of the poem fit like hand in glove.
The hope for immortality expressed in "To Laurels" is ultimately fulfilled in the final poem of the volume, "The Pillar of Fame." This poem is the grand finale of the volume, and is Herrick's strongest assertion of cosmic order. The poem may well be modelled on George Herbert's "Altar", at least in its emblematic form. At any rate, it is interesting to note the two poets' poetical books display an almost opposite development. Herbert begins his book with a poem shaped as an altar; this physical altar is ultimately spiritualized in the heavenly banquet table of "Love (III)." When Herrick wishes to assert a metaphysical order, he employs architectural images and a definitive emblematic form. Like Herbert's "altar", Herrick's "pillar of Fame" is both a classical pillar and a biblical altar, and thus an apt visual symbol of his Christian Humanist world-view. The classical notion of the pillar and the Horatian trope of "exegi monumentum" are, of course, primary here. But as in "To Laurels", it is possible to detect a sacred undercurrent beneath the external classical form. For example, the pillar is presumably the altar on which Herrick is sacrificed in "The Muses Martyrdome" (H-1128,4) mentioned in the preceding poem. The pillar, erected only after Herrick's symbolic death, is a kind of metaphysical pillar which, like Herrick's fame, is incorruptible. Herrick's assertion that his pillar is not subject to the slightest decay, that it will outlast kingdoms, the rage of the "seas" and "storms" and other apocalyptic events, demonstrates conclusively that his concept of fame transcends the Horation notion. This poem also represents
the culmination of the architectural strain of imagery in _Hesperides_, which is developed principally in Herrick's epigrams of praise. Much of the diction in these poems is biblical, which accords well with Herrick's goal of building a "white Temple of Heroes," a kind of Church of "rare Saint-ships." Or as Herrick puts it in an earlier poem, addressed to "the most learned, wise, and Arch-Antiquary, Master John Selden" (H-365):

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A City here of Heroes I have made,
Upon the rock, whose firm foundation laid,
    Shall never shrink, where making thine abode,
Live thou a Selden, that's a Demi-god. (11.9-12)
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Such words as "pillar", "rock", "foundation" and "city" are key biblical images, usually associated with the building of the Church in the Pauline epistles and the gospels. St. Paul, for example, calls the Church the "pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15) and talks of the Church being built on "the foundation of the apostles and prophets" (Ephesians 2:20). These biblical overtones are present in most of Herrick's epigrams of praise as well as in the diction of "The Pillar of Fame", and help emphasize Herrick's idea of _Hesperides_ as a kind of "Temple" or "Testament." This fusion of classical and biblical diction and ideas gives Herrick's verse a complex texture, which is lost on the casual reader who insists on seeing Herrick as a "pagan" or "Cavalier" poet.

First, we should note that "The Pillar of Fame" is part of an eight-poem epilogue (H-1123-H-1130) which parallels an eight-poem prologue (H-1-H-8). The main subject of both prologue and epilogue, interestingly enough, is Herrick's "Book." The prologue concentrates
on preparing the reader for what is to follow, giving him instructions on how to approach the book, and advising him to read Herrick's lyrics in a cheerful and festive mood:

IN sober mornings, doe not thou rehearse
The holy incantation of a verse .... (H-8,1-2)

By contrast, the epilogue is more concerned with Herrick's personal relationship with his Book. The book is now identified with his posthumous life, since it is the guarantee of his eternal fame. The book is "the pillar of Fame" which, being grounded on a "Firme and well fixt foundation," will never "Decline or waste at all." The prologue and the epilogue mainly differ, then, in the one being concerned with practical advice on how the book should be read, and the other with an assertion of the victory over time and death. Herrick's book is well-"bound" in two senses: first, by being framed by a clear beginning, middle and end, and second by being a "City of Heroes" walled off from the threat of mutability:

The bound (almost) now of my book I see,
But yet no end of those therein or me .... (H-1019,1-2)

Herrick finally reveals himself, not as the singer of transience, of decaying flowers and aging virgins, but as a poet who celebrates the permanent things.

One may note here several cross-references between the prologue and epilogue. Herrick's dismissal of his "Book" (H-3) clearly parallels "To his Book" (H-1125) in the epilogue. And his statement "I'll'e write no more of Love" (H-1124,1) is a direct
recantation of his promise in the "Argument" to "write of Youth, of Love" (H-1,5). Approaching his own end, Herrick takes occasion to recant his folly (as he puts it in "His last request to Julia") of chafing "o're much the Virgins cheek or eare" (H-1095,2). Like Chaucer's Troilus in the final stanzas of Troilus and Criseyde, Herrick is enlightened about the foolishness and ultimate unimportance of all earthly love. Herrick's confession here of the ultimate precedence of otherworldly over worldly values may also be compared with Christ's renunciation of human wisdom in Paradise Regained. As a Christian Humanist, Herrick's scheme of values in this respect hardly differs from Milton's. The otherworldly, medieval viewpoint is still for them, when all is said and done, the pinnacle of wisdom. Herrick's final renunciation of the world and his repentance for the extravagance of his "jocond" muse, are the natural preparation for "pious pieces" in Noble Numbers:

IL'e write no more of Love; but now repent
Of all the times that I in it have spent .... (H-1124)

The serious tone of these last poems is quite unlike the "sacred Orgies," feasting and merrymaking counseled in "When he would have his verses read." (H-8).

It is interesting to compare Herrick's choice of imagery in the prologue and epilogue. Natural and pastoral images dominate the prologue. In the "Argument", Herrick promises to sing of "Brooks, of Blossomes, Birds, and Bowers" (H-1,1) and of the ceremonial activities of the human and semi-human ("Mab" and the
"Fairie-King") inhabitants of the countryside. In the address "To his Muse" (H-2) Herrick advises his "Mad maiden" to shun "Courts" and "Cities" and remain content with the pastoral pleasures of the country, where "No Critick haunts the Poore man's Cell." (1.22) The poetic forms mentioned here are the traditional pastoral genres which, from the time of Virgil, were considered the province of the young and aspiring poet:

And with thy Eclogues intermixe
Some smooth, and harmlesse Beucolicks .... (11.9-10)

Finally, the last poem of the prologue, "When he would have his verses read" (H-8) presents us with a traditional English manorial hall embellished with classical associations such as the "Laurell" and the "Thyrse." This classicized English landscape is the background for most of Herrick's lyrics. In the first half of the volume, the threat of mutability - the major enemy of this semi-idealized landscape - is always present, and becomes more insistent as Herrick approaches his symbolic death at the end of Hesperides. But Nature is generally positive and life-enhancing in the earlier poems. The argument of time is used principally to persuade men, and especially women, to take advantage of the innocent pleasures offered by the Hesperidean garden of "youth" and "love". Not to partake of the springtime festivities and pleasures is, as Herrick tells Corinna, a "profanation" and a "sin" (H-178).

In contrast to the prologue, the epilogue is dominated mainly by artificial and architectural imagery. Herrick changes "The Laurell Crowne" for one "Not subject to corruption" (H-1123).
His "Pillar of Fame" is set on an eternal and "well fixt foundation" which will never succumb to the ravages of "seas" and "storms." Nature, seen here as a destroyer, is the realm not only of change but also of decay, corruption and death. Art, represented by Herrick's "pillar" of words (that is, his book), is now a symbol of immutability and immortality. Throughout Hesperides, Nature and Art are usually seen as complementary: the lily is enhanced by its chrysal covering, just as Julia's beauty is magnified by her silks and jewels. Art refines, adorns and redeems the imperfections of Nature. But in the epilogue, Nature and Art are set apart as absolute irreconcilables in a manner that reminds one of Yeats' Byzantium poems. The reason for this kind of dualism, alien to most of Herrick's thought and verse, is that after his symbolic death in the "Muses Martyrdom" (H-1128) Nature has been transcended and is now seen as of little importance. The context of "The pillar of Fame" is thus transcendental and otherworldly—another indication that Herrick's concept of fame is quite different from the pagan notion of fame as the unending praise of posterity.

"The pillar of Fame" brings to its climax a strain of architectural imagery which is increasingly prominent in the second half of Hesperides. We have already mentioned the Pauline echoes in the epigrams of praise, appearing in such words as "rock", "stone", "pillar" and "foundation". Indeed, several of the earlier poems on the immortality of poetry foreshadow Herrick's final assertion of everlasting fame. The "eternall monument" of "To Laurels" (H-89), as already noted, is none other than Herrick's book. In
"Safety to look to ones selfe" (H-209) Herrick asserts that his business is not to worry about his neighbour but to ensure that "Firm be my foundation" (1.4). The "foundation" is, as we learn in a poem on the following page, Herrick's poetic book. "His Poetrie his Pillar" (H-211) is clearly a companion poem to "The pillar of Fame". The relationship between the two is that between hope and fulfillment, the desire for immortal fame and its final bestowal. The "pillar" of poetry that Herrick is rearing is the only defense against the tyranny of time. The last three stanzas are a free adaptation of Horace's *exegi monumentum*:

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'r to be thrown
Downe, envious Time by thee.

Pillars let some set up,
    (If so they please)
Here is my hope,
And my *Pyramides*.

The "living stone" (that is, Herrick's book) can never, like the rotting corpses in "Vaults beneath", be touched by "envious Time". The "living stone" is equivalent to the "sacred Laurel" which grows into the "eternall monument" of Herrick (H-89). It is yet another biblical allusion (I Pe.2.4). Architectural images here take on the qualities of life, while natural and organic images are associated with decay and death. This reflects Herrick's identification of Art with eternity, and Nature with time.
Herrick's pillar of "poetry" will be his second, immortal life. It will also be his "Pyramides" - his own funeral pyre (as the false etymology suggests) on which he must be sacrificed before he wins eternal life.

Herrick's concept of fame in "His Poetrie his Pillar" does not differ appreciably from the pagan notion celebrated by the Latin poets. The humanistic understanding of fame, of course, was also prevalent during the Renaissance, and receives a pure formulation in poems such as Shakespeare's famous sonnet "Not marble, nor the gilded monuments." Clearly, this definition of fame is important in Hesperides. Herrick's heroes are celebrated for their humanistic achievements as statesmen, soldiers, scholars and artists, and for the virtues that win them a "name" in the "white Temple" of Hesperides. But in addition to their cultural accomplishments and classical and civic virtues, Herrick's "righteous race" (H-859,1.2) also display the higher religious virtues. They are called "rare Saint-ships" (H-496,1.3) and are commemorated in Herrick's "eternall Calender" of "Saints" (H-545). In other words, they are examples of the good Christian humanist which was Herrick's heroic ideal. Therefore, Herrick's concept of fame is not solely humanistic. It can mean at one and the same time fame on earth and fame in heaven. As Milton writes in Lycidas, "Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil" (l. 78). Herrick's hierarchical vision of the cosmos does not permit him to make any sharp distinction between the "secular" and the "sacred." Indeed, the
modern idea of secularism, which makes a firm distinction between culture and religion, is completely alien to Herrick's world-view.

There is, then, no real conflict between these two senses of fame, the humanistic and the Christian. But the idea of fame as eternal life is stressed in the "otherworldly" context of the epilogue. Herrick here suffers in "The Muses Martyrdom" (H-1128) - another of those many phrases which conflate classical and Christian associations. Of course, martyrdom is the very negation of egoism and pride. By identifying the writing of verse with self-sacrifice, Herrick clearly indicates that his quest for fame is not motivated by a desire for personal glory. As a sacrificial altar, "The Pillar of Fame" has the same function and place as does "This Crosse-Tree here" (N-268) in Noble Numbers - an example of one of the many cross-references between Herrick's two poetical books:

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:
         Nor shall the seas,
           Or O U T R A G E S
      Of storms orebear
         What we up-rear,
              Tho Kingdoms fal,
         This pillar never shall
           Decline or waste at all;
   But stand for ever by his owne
      Firme and well fixt foundation.

There are a number of prosodic and poetic effects here that deserve comment. First, notice the perfect bilateral symmetry of the poem, in which the second part is a perfect mirror image of
the first part. The long tetrameter and trimeter lines are associated with stability and permanence. The first and the last lines are closely linked by their content and sound patterns. Both are strong statements of the eternity of fame, have a similar aural shape, and contain rhythmic substitutions in the first foot. On the other hand, the short dimeter lines are associated with the "outrages" which threaten the stability of the pillar: the "seas" and "storms", or the destructive power of time. Earthly kingdoms, such as the Stuart monarchy destroyed by the "storms" of the Civil War, will all dissolve and wither away. The apocalyptic events of the middle lines will wipe away all traces of both Nature and civilization. Yet the pillar will stand. On the formal level, we can see how the longer lines provide a framework which contains the chaos and "outrages" set in the middle of the poem. This is similar to the larger framework of order and stability which the prologue and epilogue provide for the book as a whole. Here, too, the threats to the Hesperidean garden - time, aging, death - are countered and defeated by the transcendental and immutable realm represented by Art. "The pillar of Fame" is thus a splendid and fitting conclusion to the volume. It represents the fulfillment of Herrick's quest for immortality which is his major journey in Hesperides. It is the goal of the "wearied pilgrim" (H-1088,1) who walks "Life's pilgrimage" (H-519) in Hesperides (See also H-306 & H-617). Finally, as Herrick puts it in "To Crowne it", the end of his book is "The Haven reacht to which I first was bound" (H-1127). Indeed, the epilogue contains
irrefutable evidence that Herrick considered his work as a unified and complete poetical book.

Finally, "The Pillar of Fame," it should be noted, is a masterpiece of versification and poetic form. The lines are cast in Herrick's best epigrammatic and "monumental" style. Notice the long o's which contribute to the expansive, sonorous and assertive tone of this triumphal poem (See the triple-rhyme "so / blow / overthrow," and "Tho" and "owne"). Or consider the heavy alliteration and assonance which make the last line the most resonant in the whole poem. The metrical expansion of "foundation" makes it the key-word of poem, and appropriately so, since this is the "foundation" of truth on which Herrick's fame and the whole edifice of his "white Temple" (H-496,1) rests. The biblical overtones of this word are unmistakable (See Isaiah 28:16; 1 Cor. 3:10 & Eph 2:20).

But the sound pattern which gives most resonance is the recurrence of the "or" and "ar" sound. Interestingly, this is a sound which dominates the epilogue, occurring more often than the t's and d's which end a good number of the rhymes. We list here its major occurrences: "labour", "Laurell", and "corruption" (H-1123); "more" (H-1124); "forth", "fortunate" and "harbour" (H-1125); "work" and "Anchor" (H-1126); "wearied" and "Barke" (H-1127); "worke", "curles", "Coronet" and "comfort" (H-1128). In "The Pillar of Fame" this sound is heard in almost every line.

Obviously, the epilogue is tightly unified by its imagery and sound patterns. The image of the crown and coronet, for
example, recurs throughout the epilogue. Herrick exchanges the "Laurell Crowne" of earthly fame for the "Mirtle Coronet" of "the Muses Martyrdome." In this way, he hopes to be rewarded with a crown "Not subject to corruption" (H-1123,6). Then there is the image of the ship which, having reached the safe "Haven" for which it was "bound", is able to cast its "Anchor" before it resumes its journey in Noble Numbers. (H-1126). The ship is identified with Herrick and his book - he hopes that a "kinsman" or "friend" will "harbour" his "book" while his "fates neglected lye" (H-1125). The juxtaposition of the nautical and crown imagery in "To Crowne it" (H-1127) makes Herrick's identification with his book unequivocal:

MY wearied Barke, O Let it now be Crown'd! The Haven reacht to which I first was bound.

One could go on to discover many more such interconnections, in image, word, and sound, which bind the eight poems of the epilogue into a complex unity. I think, though, that it is clear by now that none of Herrick's poems can be read in vacuo, but must always be read in the context of the entire volume. Any close readings which ignore or minimize this overall context are bound to be partial and inadequate.
CHAPTER III

Herrick's Amatory Verse:
"Cleanly-Wantonnesse" and the Scale of Love

In this chapter we shall consider Herrick's amatory verse, and challenge the received view of Herrick as a second-rate love poet. We shall review some of the negative evaluations of the amatory verse, and then go on to demonstrate that Hesperides, like Jonson's Forest and Herbert's Temple, is structured according to a scale of love. Just as Herrick unites humanistic and Christian perspectives in his understanding of fame, so he harmonizes profane and sacred aspects of love in the paradox of "cleanly-wantonnesse." Profane love, the image of the divine love which is its ultimate source, can serve as a stepping-stone to the realm of the sacred. The sequence of Herrick's love poems reflects this scale of love: we find a general movement from a "profane" to a "sacred" context, from an understanding of love as a human passion to one that views love as a kind of sacrament. The extensive religious and liturgical imagery in the latter part of Hesperides signals this "trans-shifting," as Herrick puts it in "The Argument", from the red rose of earthly love to the white lily of spiritual love (see H-1, 10). Herrick's book, like "The Argument", thus displays a hierarchical structure, a progression from the earthly to the otherworldly.

Herrick, however, is not usually thought of as an inspiring love poet, at least when measured against most readers' notions about what makes good love poetry. We find in Hesperides none
of the passion and fervour of Donne, little of the high-flown idealism of Spenser, Sidney and the Elizabethan sonneteers, or even the genuine erotic passion of Ovid, Catullus and the Latin elegists. There is something rather cool and distant in Herrick's approach to erotic love, which reminds one of Anacreon and Horace, the classical poets on whom Herrick models his persona as the aging and "wisely-wanton" lover (H-289). Herrick's mistresses, too, bear scant resemblance to real women. They are not meant to. His Julias, Antheas, Corinnas, Sapphos, Electras and the rest are pure creatures of the imagination, and possess a grace, comeliness and ethereality found nowhere in this nether sphere. Herrick is the connoisseur of this gorgeous train of ladies, not their lover; he most often remains content to admire them at a safe distance as objets d'art, while he praises their parts, proportions, dress, manners and accomplishments.

This is not to deny that a strong erotic element exists in Herrick's verse. The mistresses and nymphs who inhabit his "Sacred Grove" are incredibly alluring in their sensuous silks, rich perfumes and jewel-bedecked attire. Yet, curiously enough, they seem to present to Herrick little interest beyond the aesthetic dimension. Erotic passion has been sublimated, or (to use Herrick's superb phrase) "trans-shifted" to the realm of art. Indeed, Herrick appears to make no real distinction between erotic passion and artistic creativity. "No lust theres like to Poetry" (H-336,112) says Herrick to "his peculiar friend, Master John Wickes" in a long Horatian ode on old age and the good life. Apparently,
Herrick is more interested in wooing the Muses than his mistresses, who themselves are little more than embodiments of aesthetic values and aspects of the poetic craft.\(^38\)

The literary nature of Herrick's loves is, of course, far from unique in seventeenth-century poetry. What perhaps distinguishes Herrick is that he revels in such artifice and always lets his reader in on the joke that his lyrics are the amorous daydreams of an aging bachelor exiled to "the dull confines of the drooping West" (H.713,1). Even his most blatantly erotic poems turn out to be confessions of his inadequacy as a lover. In "The Vision" (H-142) - and, significantly, Herrick's most erotic poems almost always take the form of a vision or dream - Herrick makes a foolish and hopeless attempt to kiss the "tempting nakedness" of a Diana-like wood nymph, only to be warded off by her myrtle wand and the reproach: "Herrick, thou art too coarse to love" (H-142, 22). Evidently, Herrick denies himself erotic fulfillment even in his visions and dreams. Nor does his self-confessed lack of experience in the ars amatoria do much to enhance his reputation as a love poet:

To his Book's end this last line he'd have plac't, Jocond his Muse was; but his Life was chast. (H-1130)

To the reader weaned on Romantic love poetry who expects a lyric to voice the poet's inner being and passions, this contrived separation between life and art must appear disappointing. Such verse is often dismissed as "rhetorical", by which is usually meant "cerebral" and "insincere". But even those readers who
find Herrick's persistent self-mockery, his many diatribes against love and marriage, and his persona as the "wisely-wanton" lover quite witty and entertaining might conclude that Herrick (perhaps because of his wit and playfulness) need not be taken seriously as a love poet. Worse still, the well-worn epithets of "trivial" and "cavalier" are only too ready at hand to explain the apparent shortcomings of Herrick's amatory verse.

Herrick has never been ranked high as a love poet; he has, however, received more than an adequate share of critical abuse for the apparent lack of passion and insincerity of his love lyrics. Some critics find Herrick's lyrics voyeuristic, the product of an old lecher who titillates himself with half-undressing his imaginary harem of mistresses, suffers from a fetish for petticoats, silks, bracelets and other feminine adornments, and who (in George Meredith's phrase) fiddles "harmonics on the strings of sensualism." J.B. Broadbent, for instance, regards Herrick as a decadent Spenserian whose love poems lack sexuality; he finds his "pretty lewdness" boring and his personality "nasty." In the same vein, John Press characterizes Herrick as a "pure sensualist" whose erotic poems, however, are "faintly unpleasant because his sensuality is lukewarm and adulterated with self-conscious roguishness." Press also judges Herrick's coarse epigrams not only "pointless and dull" but "dirty" as well. Most criticism, of course, does not go to such extremes in finding fault with Herrick's love poetry. Nevertheless, Herrick has often been taken to task for his lack of ardour and
lukewarm eroticism. Even Douglas Bush, whose comments on Herrick are always sensible and well-considered, considers Herrick a "cool-hearted" lover whose poems seldom rise to true passion or "enshrine the ideal attitude of the cavalier."\textsuperscript{42} Since \textit{Hesperides} is by and large a collection of love poems, such adverse criticism has no doubt harmed Herrick's reputation and promoted the common view that his poised and graceful lyrics are deficient in both passion and intellectual content. Any defense, then, of \textit{Hesperides} as an important and serious poetical book must come to grips with the problem of the love lyrics, and answer the charges that have frequently been levelled against them.

First of all, it is necessary to dispel the notion that good love poetry must somehow reflect the poet's own personal feelings, that it must be an authentic record of his own rapture or despair as a lover. To the seventeenth-century reader the idea that a love lyric must be "natural" or "sincere" would appear strange indeed; he may well have regarded an outpouring of personal passion as a mark of immaturity and bad taste. The poet's purpose was to display his talent and virtuosity in the artful and witty handling of traditional themes, conventions and situations - something at which Herrick, by any reckoning, excels. The modern reader (especially when reading Jonson and his Sons) would do well not to impose his own attitudes about love and poetry on Renaissance amatory verse.

It should be remembered, too, that the word "artificial" did not have the connotations of "insincerity" and "phoniness"
that surround it today. An "artificial" poem was one that was "well wrought;" an "artificial" poet was one who was skillful in his craft. According to Renaissance aesthetics, the "artificial" and the "natural" were complementary: Art, far from opposing Nature, actually heightens and refines it.\textsuperscript{43} Herrick, with his gift for brevity, states succinctly the Renaissance theory that Art helps Nature by smoothing out its rough spots and correcting its imperfections:

\begin{center}
\textbf{ART quickens Nature; Care will make a face; Neglected beauty perisheth apace.} (H-234)
\end{center}

An assumed passion or mask in love poetry can "quicken" Nature, and refine and idealize thought and feeling - something that the anti-traditional love poet who relies on his own limited inner resources and tries to write "natural" verse perhaps cannot do. Tradition, convention and artifice, instead of being inhibiting, can open to the artist means of expression and technique beyond the grasp of the anti-traditional or "natural" artist. What musical form is more artificial than opera, which nevertheless is the ideal musical vehicle for the dramatization and celebration of romantic love? To dismiss Herrick because his amatory verse is artificial, conventional or impersonal simply will not do.

There is a more convincing explanation for why Herrick's love poetry is impersonal: Herrick is the "cool-hearted" and impersonal lover because his amatory verse is traditional, philosophical and, therefore, universal. Herrick is far more interested in elaborating a philosophy of love in \textit{Hesperides} than in recording
his shortcomings as a lover or his erotic fantasies. Now, to call Herrick a philosophical poet may come as something of a surprise; it certainly challenges the received critical view that Herrick's verse is deficient in intellectual content. Nevertheless, his amatory verse and his understanding of love are demonstrably indebted to the Renaissance philosophy of love, which itself is an amalgam of Christian, Neo-Platonic and Aristotelian elements.

We shall, therefore, briefly outline the Renaissance theory of love here to provide a background for a discussion of Herrick's amatory verse.44

The Florentine Neo-Platonists, especially in their interpretations of Plato's Phaedrus and Symposium, developed the theory that the soul can be ennobled and led upward by the contemplation of a woman's beauty to the contemplation of abstract and intellectual beauty. The ultimate goal of this spiritual ascent is, of course, the knowledge and the love of God. Earthly beauty is a reflection of heavenly beauty; human love a stepping-stone to divine love. It is important to note that profane and sacred love are not opposed here, but are understood as lower and higher levels of the same scale or ladder of love. This theory of love was an important part of the intellectual background of the age, and had a profound and lasting impact on Western poetry. It is fully set forth in Cardinal Bembo's influential discourse on love in Castiglione's The Book of the Courtier, and receives its finest poetic expression in English in Spenser's Fowre Hymmes. For a brief statement of the theory, we can do no better than
quote Milton's Raphael who instructs Adam, in the manner of a Florentine Neo-Platonist, that a true and rational love of Eve can lift him to the pinnacle of "heav'nly love":

... Love refines
The thoughts, and heart enlarges, hath his seat
In Reason, and is judicious, is the scale
By which to heav'nly love thou may'st ascend ...

(PL, Bk. VIII, 589-92)

The theory rested on the belief that man has a dual nature, sensuous and intellectual, and that the apprehension of sensuous beauty is a necessary preparation for enjoyment of the unchanging and eternal beauty which can only be apprehended by the mind. It was, therefore, one which obviously held great appeal for poets and artists, who found in the theory a ready-made justification for their works.

Herrick, admittedly, nowhere states the theory didactically as do Spenser or Milton, nor does he adopt the fashionable and absurd poses of the "Platonick Lover" who earned the scorn and ridicule of such mid-century poets as Cleveland and Herbert of Cherbury. We find in Hesperides no struggling souls imprisoned in fleshly houses of clay, awakened by the beauty of their mistress to ascend a ladder of love ending at the gates of heaven, there to be enraptured by a vision of heavenly beauty. For this reason, Herrick cannot, strictly speaking, be called a Platonic poet, as can Spenser or the Cambridge Platonist Henry More. What must be stressed, however, is that Herrick appropriates the metaphysics of the Renaissance theory of love, reinterpreting it within the conventions, images and ideas of classical amatory verse. In
this sense, Herrick is the exact opposite of a poet like Shelley, who adopts in his love poetry the imagery and poses of Neo-Platonism and the "Platonick Lover", while rejecting Neo-Platonic metaphysics.

Herrick's central paradox of "cleanly-wantonnesse," which colours nearly all of his amatory verse, means much more than just the innocent pleasure that is possible in the timeless Arcadia of his Hesperidean garden. The concept at first appears to be based on the Epicurean ethic that pleasure is the highest good. And, on one level, "cleanly-wantonnesse" does indeed mean erotic desire freed from strict moral restraint. One can detect a kind of polemic here against the Puritans, most apparent when Herrick warns the "soure Reader" and "rigid Cato" at the outset that his verse is not for them. The Puritan and the libertine, both extremists, would put a blight on natural instincts, one by repressing them and the other by perverting them. "Cleanly-wantonnesse," then, represents innocent natural desire which suffers from neither the oppressive legalism of the Puritan nor the prurience of the libertine.

Sometimes Herrick treats "cleanly-wantonnesse" as a kind of mean between strait-laced virtue and inhuman purity, on the one hand, and moral laxity and undisciplined "wantonnesse" on the other. Herrick would have his mistress "Pure enough, though not Precise" (H-665, 4). She is neither the unapproachable and ethereal mistress worshipped by the "Platonick Lover", nor the slightly demure but willing mistress wooed by the cynical
cavaliers. She is neither a saint nor a "wanton." Herrick here displays a refinement of ethical perception, a rejection of the either/or mentality not shared by many of his contemporaries. Herrick, then, is neither strictly idealistic nor strictly realistic in his amatory verse: his love lyrics display that dialectic of "Art" and "Nature", order and freedom, which gives them their "wilde civility."

But "cleanly-wantonnesse," like so many of Herrick's key-concepts, has a double-sense and must be interpreted as both a naturalistic and metaphysical idea. "Cleanly-wantonnesse," as well as signifying innocent pleasure or the mean between over-rigid sexual morality and licentiousness, represents a union of sacred and profane modes of love. A typical image of this union of chastity and erotic passion is the marriage of the lily and the rose (H-124). The paradox, in fact, presupposes a Neo-Platonic scale of love. Just as man occupies the central station on the scale of nature, uniting in his person the corporeal nature of the beasts and the intellectual nature of the angels, so "cleanly-wantonnesse" occupies an analogous position on the scale of love. It is the type of love best-suited to man with his dual nature, the type of love which best balances the claims of this world and the next. Therefore, Herrick's Neo-Epicureanism, his constant injunctions to seize the day and enjoy life to the full are in no essential conflict with the higher imperatives of sacred love or the Christian love celebrated in Noble Numbers -
provided, however, that each kind of love observes its due place on a universal scale of love.

That Herrick does not regard profane and sacred love as at odds is demonstrated by the extent of liturgical symbolism and scriptural allusion in his amatory verse. This mixing of the sacred and the profane, which might well have seemed blasphemous to many seventeenth-century readers, Herrick aptly calls "Loves Religion" (H-38, 5). Most likely, this notion of a religion of love is in part derived from the medieval tradition of courtly love, and in part from the fashionable Platonizing which invaded English letters after Henrietta Maria introduced a Platonic cult of love to the English court. Whatever its source, "Loves Religion" admirably sums up Herrick's attitude to love as a power which can purify, elevate and bring one to the threshold of the sacred. Erotic passion and earthly love, according to this view, can shadow forth and serve as stepping-stones to the divine love which is their ultimate source.

As we shall see, a general movement from profane to sacred love can be observed in Hesperides. The latter poems exhibit an abundance of sacred and liturgical imagery. Julia, no longer the "wanton" she had once been, is now a priestesse and saint in "Loves Religion." Herrick's attitude to love has changed as well. Love is no longer a game, or a form of refined lust, but a power which can promote spiritual regeneration. Herrick (as a persona) has matured throughout Hesperides, now seeing love as a universal and divine power. He has left behind the limited
viewpoint of the "cavalier" lover who was wrapped up in his erotic fantasies or love-sickness. In fact, Herrick begins to celebrate sacrificial love in these latter poems, he himself now being purified by the "fire and martyrdom of love" (H-449, 4). Ultimately, Herrick retracts earthly love, in the manner of a good medieval Christian, as he prepares for his symbolic death in the "Muses martyrdom":

I Have been wanton, and too bold I feare,
To chafe o're much the Virgins cheek or eare ....
   (H-1095, 1-2)

and, echoing the thematic catalogue of the "Argument":

IL'e write no more of Love; but now repent
Of all those times that I in it have spent ....
   (H-1124, 1-2)

Having repented of the lines "pen'd" by his "wanton Wit" (N-1, 3) Herrick is ready to sing of divine love in Noble Numbers.

These latter poems demonstrate that Herrick had a plan for his volume all along - to cover the whole extent of "humane" love, up to the point where it is ultimately superseded by "divine" love. The end of Hesperides is, in the sense, the beginning of Noble Numbers; as Herrick puts it in one of the couplets of the epilogue, "Part of the worke remains" (H-1126, 1). Herrick's own journey through his book, which he likens to a pilgrimage, ends at the highest grade of reality where earthly love and, indeed, nature are left far behind. The perspective here is universal and "metaphysical." This organization of the book according to a
scale of being and a scale of love allows one to call Herrick (in some sense) a "philosophical" or "metaphysical" poet. But whatever label we use to describe Herrick, we should be aware that these tropes and ideas are inseparable from the structure of the book. Herrick's ideas are worked into the very texture and structure of verse. In all successful verse, form and content, of course, are inseparable. But one feels this is true of Herrick with especial force.

A lyric which exemplifies Herrick's amatory ideal at its highest level is "A Ring Presented to Julia" (H-172). The poem is a marriage proposal to Julia, and therefore represents a departure from Herrick's typical anti-marriage stance, a breach of his vow to "never take a wife / To crucifie my life" (H-31, 3-4). Like many of Herrick's poems, this lyric is based on a submerged paradox. The paradox here is what Herrick elsewhere calls "Freedome in Captivity," (H-169, 10) and is worked out in the extended comparison between the ring and ideal love:

Julia, I bring
To thee this Ring,
Made for thy finger fit;
To shew by this,
That our love is
(Or sho'd be) like to it.

Close though it be,
The joynt is free:
So when Love's yoke is on,
It must not gall,
Or fret at all
With hard oppression.

But it must play
Still either way;
And be, too, such a yoke,
As not too wide,
To over-side;
Or be so strait to choak.

So we, who beare,
This beame, must reare
Our selves to such a height:
As that the stay
Of either may
Create the burden light.

And as this round
Is no were found
To flaw, or else to sever:
So let our love
As endless prove;
And pure as Gold for ever.

Two different but equally one-sided attitudes to love are brought together here and resolved in the tension of a paradox. The first views love as a form of slavery, a yoke of "hard oppression." Throughout Hesperides we find images of bondage and slavery, often in a humorous context, applied to love and marriage. At times, Herrick is bound to his mistress by no more than a bracelet or ringlet of hair (H-876, 7). We also find the classical view of love as a type of disease or madness (e.g., H-157), a "fire" which fries the "house of flesh" (H-61), a "fiend" who "marres" the rest of lovers and makes them "wring" their "hands and weep" (H-289). Love, according to this view, is an irrational force which destroys the contented mind, subverts the "merry heart" (H-289), and represents the intrusion of chaos into the individual soul and the social order. It is incompatible with rational self-control or any of the higher philosophic virtues: "No man at one time, can be wise, and love" (H-10, 8). And Cupid's arrow is most likely to strike those who are not about some useful employ-
ment: "The lazie man the most doth love" (H-147, 14). This attitude to love is almost entirely negative, regarding it as something perhaps unavoidable but nevertheless undesirable.

Opposed to the notion of love as an uncontrollable passion is what we can call the cavalier attitude to love. Here love is seen as a game, or even art, requiring great skill in the rhetorical strategies of seduction. The "wounded" heart and self-lacerations of the enslaved lover are out of order here. Wit and intellect, instead, are essential. The burning heart of the enslaved lover is replaced by the ice-cold heart of the cynic or cavalier. Several of Herrick's carpe diem lyrics and invitations to love express the cavalier attitude. Herrick's more typical pose, however, is that of the slightly jaded and cynical lover who is "wisely wanton", an admirer of "dainty" mistresses who is as "Cold as ice" (H-289,10). The "wisely wanton" lover actually understands love as a form of refined lust, and as the disinterested pursuit of pleasure. Freedom is his catchword - freedom from the agonies of the "wounded heart" and freedom to indulge his taste for variety. The cavalier lover is also violently anti-marriage in accordance with his own iron-clad logic:

For why? that man is poore,
Who hath but one of many;
But crown'd he is with store,
That single may have any. (H-422, 13-16)

But both types of love, love as oppressive slavery and love as lawless liberty, are one-sided and inadequate. Herrick's amatory ideal, in common with his aesthetic, moral and political
ideals, balances freedom and restraint, and discovers liberty under the law. The dialectic between freedom and captivity that runs throughout Hesperides can only be resolved by the kind of paradox we find in "A Ring Presented to Julia."

Let us now take a closer look at the imagery and language of the poem to see how Herrick develops the paradox of "Freedom in Captivity." To begin with, the key image of the ring has a multiple range of reference. First, there is the conventional symbolism, by which the ring represents the union of souls in holy wedlock and their vows of love and fidelity. Such ceremonial and sacramental overtones are rarely absent from Herrick's love lyrics. In fact, the poem itself is a kind of ritual - a sacrament in verse - in which the lovers prepare to assume "love's Yoke." Second, the ring represents an ideal of perfect love which the lovers should strive to approximate. Like the golden ring, their love should be, or try to be, "pure" and "endless" and without "flaw." The circle is, of course, a conventional symbol of eternity and perfection in the seventeenth century, and appears in various guises throughout Herrick's verse. The couplet-epigram "Love what it is" (H-29) is only a more abstract statement of what is said in the final stanza of "A Ring Presented to Julia:"

LOve is a circle that doth restlesse move
In the same sweet eternity of love.

(Note how the chiastic design of the couplet and the submerged image of the "unmoved Mover" of the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic universe underscore the eternity and universality of love). The ring,
then, represents an abstract, metaphysical archetype, a model of perfect love, which the lovers should strive to imitate. Only by doing so can they transcend the dualism of love-as-bondage or love-as-anarchy, and achieve the paradox of "Freedom and Captivity" in love.

The main comparison in the poem is that between the ring, a symbol of ideal love, and "Love's yoke," a symbol of slavery. At first sight, this would appear to be an incongruous juxtaposition of images. For how can one who is enslaved enjoy the freedom which is naturally an attribute of ideal and perfect love? The answer appears in the fourth stanza, where the paradox of "Freedom in Captivity" in love is identified with Christian love. This is the sacrificial love in which he who loses his life shall gain it. The specific biblical allusion is to Matthew 11:30, where Christ tells his disciples that "my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." By bearing one anothers' burdens, the lovers can discover a freedom that is well beyond the grasp of the libertine cavalier or the puritanical scowler of love. "A Ring Presented to Julia," like so many of Herrick's poems, presents us with a composite of classical and Christian images, ideas and allusions, and demonstrates that Herrick's attitude to love is by no means superficial or simple.

We need to say here a few words about Herrick's superb artistry in "A Ring Presented to Julia." Every aspect of the poem - its versification, grammar, form and visual shape - is perfectly fitted to its subject. Note first the emblematic
shape of the lyric, in which the long trimeter lines obviously represent a ring enclosing a finger. To modern readers, Renaissance emblematic poetry might appear to be the product of a quaint and eccentric age. And a glance at the numerous oddities in Witt's Recreation (1650), a miscellany containing, among other poems by Herrick, "A Ring Presented to Julia," can only support this attitude. But as in Herbert's emblematic poems, Herrick's shaping of line lengths is not just a quaint device or pretty decoration but always functional. For example, the long lines of the lyric generally suggest the discipline and restraint that are necessary to Herrick's amatory ideal. Words suggesting discipline and bondage tend to predominate in the longer lines: words such as "yoke", "oppression", "choak" and "burden". The versification of these lines also suggests the constriction of the yoke, as in the wonderful line:

Or be so strait to choak

The short monosyllables and dental and glottal stops reflect the content of this line. A similar effect is produced in the line:

With hard oppression

Here the metrical expansion, suitably enough, gives a double stress to the word "oppression." Also, the placement of the longer lines at the third and last line of each stanza, producing an alternation of couplets and enclosed rhymes, is a formal expression of "Freedom and Captivity."

Contrariwise, the shorter lines are generally associated with freedom and relaxation. Take, for example, the couplet:
Close though it be
The joint is free

The rhythmic substitution in the first foot is another subtle prosodic effect which accords with the sense of the line: that is, the violation of the metre suggests, in this case, the oppression of "Love's Yoke". But the return to metrical regularity in the second line suggests the return to a norm of order and freedom. Also, the open rhymes of the short lines ("be/free"; "play/way"; "stay/may") are in obvious contrast to the closed rhymes of the long lines. The result is that the short lines, in their content and aural shape, suggest the freedom of the finger while the long lines suggest the bounds of the ring. Or, to put it another way, the short lines represent "Freedom" in love and the longer lines "Captivity" in love. One could go on and on describing such subtle effects by examining the general chiastic shape of the poem or such grammatical devices as the use of the infinitive, which is particularly apt in the final stanza. However, the point, I think, is clear: manner and matter are here absolutely inseparable. These verbal minutiae, though often difficult to analyze and describe, are never adventitious, but rather integral to the "meaning" of the poem. And Herrick's mastery of nuance and sound, his refinement of statement and complexity of thought, should never allow one to attack his verses for their apparent "simplicity" or "superficiality."

We have argued that Hesperides is structured according to a scale of love, a step-by-step progression from erotic love
to sacrificial love. This is, of course, somewhat of an oversimplification. "A Ring Presented to Julia" is an early poem (H-172) which defines an ideal of perfect and sacrificial love which the lovers are called upon to strive for and imitate.

And in a late poem, "Upon Julia's washing her self in the river" (H-939), Herrick watches in rapture as a half-naked Julia washes herself in the brook. This seems to be an example of Herrick's voyeuristic and erotic verse. It is only seemingly so, because these streams are the waters of purification, as the images of the "purest pebbles", the "Lillies" and "Lawne" (always symbols of chastity in Herrick) make quite clear. And the case is further complicated by the fact that most of Herrick's love lyrics express that reconciliation of profane and sacred love which he calls "cleanly-wantonnesse."

Nevertheless, the sacred ceremonies and rites of "Love's Religion" become more serious and prominent in the latter half of the volume. No longer is love seen merely as a cavalier pastime or pagan god. Even though the classical pagan context is not absolutely renounced until "His Prayer for Absolution" (N-2) in Noble Numbers, a sacrificial, or Christian, understanding of love clearly predominates in the second half of Hesperides. Herrick's mistress' are now "saints" and "priestesses" in "this Poetick Liturgie." Whereas Herrick wishes to "lie in one devoted bed" (H-12, 2) with Silvia at the beginning of the volume, he desires the protection of her "pure hand" in the second half:
I Am holy, while I stand
Circum-crost by thy pure hand;
But when that is gone; Again,
I, as others, am Prophane. (H-651)

The "wanton" love of many of the earlier lyrics, never a bad thing in its own context, has been refined and purified through what Herrick calls the "martyrdom of love" (H-449, 4) and the sacred fire of "Loves Religion." Now Herrick is ready, after his confession and absolution, to sing of divine love in Noble Numbers.

To give an idea of how Herrick's attitude to love changes throughout Hesperides let us compare two short love lyrics which appear at virtually opposite ends of the volume. The two poems are "Love perfumes all parts" (H-155) and "The Transfiguration" (H-819). The titles alone suggest the tremendous change that has occurred in Herrick's thinking about love in the course of the volume. "Perfumes" are staple items in classical erotic verse; "parts" refer here, of course, to Anthea's bodily "parts", her "lip", "hands", "thighs" and "legs." The title identifies this as an erotic poem. But "The Transfiguration," from its title alone, would appear to belong in Noble Numbers. Anthea in the first poem is a kind of goddess of love; she is, in fact, compared to the pagan goddesses Isis and Juno. Julia in the second poem is like Dante's Beatrice, and reflects on earth the heavenly glory and "incorrupted light" which shall surround her when she is finally crowned on her "refulgent Thronelet."
But the two loves, profane and sacred, are really one and the same - they are one love appearing in different dimensions. The lower is a type of the higher, and is, in fact, a necessary stage to the divine love which is its source. For Herrick, the Creation is good. The Manichean tendency, evident in some seventeenth-century religious verse, has no place in Hesperides. Spirit and flesh are not seen as irreconcilable enemies, nor is erotic passion considered an evil. This is why there is no essential conflict between Herrick's secular and religious verse. Herrick's extensive use of liturgical and religious imagery in his amatory verse is, therefore, readily understandable. Ceremony and ritual refine and purify erotic passion into "cleanly-wantonness" - Herrick's idea of chastity - and eventually into sacrificial love. Critics who do not bear Herrick's religious outlook in mind are apt to find his verse pagan and his Christianity insincere.

Thus, the Victorian critics, notorious for their Manichean outlook, were naturally squeamish about Herrick's poetry. Robert Southey found Herrick "a beastly writer", and Palgrave deemed it necessary in The Golden Treasury to change the title of the perennial favourite "To Virgins to Make Much of Time," perhaps an invitation to mischief, to "Counsel to Girls." Victorian anthologists regularly bowdlerized Hesperides, leaving the "offensive" lyrics and epigrams to the convenience of an appendix. They exonerated Herrick's lapses of "taste", just as they excused Shakespeare, as the inevitable by-products of the barbarous age in which they lived. Herrick, of course, answers these criticisms
in scores of epigrams which excori ate the Puritan mentality, or try to persuade Cato, Brutus, "the soure Reader" and other censorious critics to read this book with due attention.

It is not hard to see that Herrick's target is often Puritan anti-sacramentalism, and Puritan suspicion of classical and folk culture. (Whether this assessment is historically accurate or not is debatable). Herrick appears deliberately to revel in the very things the Puritans abhorred: may-day festivities, fairies and folk superstitions, church ritual and the King, and all the innocent pastimes and pleasures of the merry England of his youth. And he says that these are not only innocent and good, but essential. Corinna will "sin" by staying indoors on may-day and not participating in "the harmless follie of the time." For Herrick, not to use the good things of life wisely is impious and a sin against the Creation and God.

All of this is perhaps obvious, and need not be over-stressed. Yet the received critical view is still that Herrick is a pagan and hedonist, who perhaps sprinkled his verses with "holy water" to appease his conscience or to avoid offending his more "pious" readers. Before condemning the Victorian critics, whose inhibitions were admittedly different from ours, we must remember that Herrick's religious outlook is just as or even more alien to many modern readers. The Manichean dualism of spirit versus flesh, though now taking mainly a secular rather than religious form, is arguably more prevalent today than almost any other time in history. This is perhaps why what appears as a conflict between Herrick's
paganism and Christianity for many critics was no great problem for Herrick or his like-minded seventeenth-century readers. And perhaps, too, the fact that Herrick does not solemnly preach from a pulpit, but rather concerns himself with the follies of love, has more than anything else supported his reputation as a lightweight and the best of the "Cavaliers." "Cleanly-wantonnesse" is evidently a very difficult concept for the modern mind to understand.

The first of the poems in our comparison presents a kind of epitome of "cleanly-wantonnesse." Its approach to love and its imagery are typical of many of the love lyrics in the first half of Hesperides. Profane and sacred love overlap here. On one level, the poem can be read as a profane, or erotic, love lyric. But the imagery of the " Phenix nest", the "Altar" and "Incense" certainly qualifies and expands this reading, and forces us to understand profane love as a lower form of sacred love. The double-meanings and ambiguities in this lyric are typical of Herrick's technique and wit:

IF I kisse Anthea's brest,
There I smell the Phenix nest:
If her lip, the most sincere
Altar of Incense, I smell there.
Hands, and thighs, and legs, are all
Richly Aromaticall.
Goddesse Isis can't transfer
Musks and Ambers more from her:
Nor can Juno sweeter be,
When she lyes with Jove, then she.

Notice the ambiguities of this sly poem, which are reinforced by the ambiguous anacreontic metre. Is "nest" a verb or noun? Does "sincere" modify "altar" or "lip"? Is Anthea merely "sweeter"
than Juno when she disrobes for Jove, or is the implication also that Anthea is a paramour of the poet, who has assumed the guise of Jove? The grammar of the last couplet does not allow a clear answer. Nor does the poet say that he has kissed or will attempt to kiss "Anthea's brest." The conditional "if" can refer to a hypothetical situation: the poet may merely be speculating about what his response would be "if" he kissed Anthea's "brest" or "lips", and later, by implication, her "hands", "thighs" and "legs." Or he might be saying that he knows what his response will be from his past experience. It is hard to know, then, whether the poet is describing an erotic daydream or a real situation.

Herrick also plays with the reader's expectations in a subtle fashion, as can be observed in the first couplet:

IF I kisse Anthea's brest,
There I smell the Phenix nest ....

The first line, by itself, might appear to be the introduction to a long erotic fantasy in the manner of Carew or Rochester. But the second line introduces sacred overtones which seem out of keeping with this interpretation. (The Phoenix, it will be recalled, is the bird of immortality and, in Christian symbolism, a symbol of the Resurrection). In the second couplet, Herrick transforms the "profane" kiss into a "sacred" kiss by comparing Anthea's "lip" to an "Altar." The third couplet, with its climax in the tri-colon crescendo of "hands, and thighs, and legs" returns the reader to an erotic context. The hyperbole of the
final two couplets, where Anthea's fragrance and sweetness are said to surpass that of Isis and Juno, makes one wonder about the sincerity of the poet's compliment. The tone here is mock-heroic.

The point is, however, that Anthea may have bad breath, wear the cheapest and most malodorous perfume and still be the most "richly Aromaticall" being in the universe because "Love perfumes all parts." Love supplies the perfume, and also the incense and the altar. Perfume in *Hesperides* often has a double-reference: it is at once what the biologists call a pheronome and a spiritual essence. In this lyric, the poet is unable clearly to distinguish perfume from incense. The love which idealizes, that is "perfumes" the beloved, has a sacred source, even though the poet in his present state can only apprehend and express it as overpowering erotic passion. "Cleanly-wantonnesse" here is a perhaps not entirely innocent, and is only fully understood when Herrick (that is, his persona in *Hesperides*) learns about the nature of sacrificial love.

The content and images of "The Transfiguration" (H-819) are overtly religious. Julia is now no longer the tempting mistress of such earlier poems as "Upon Julia's Clothes," but rather a saint who reflects the uncreated and "incorrupted light" of the Transfiguration. This vision is almost identical with Dante's vision of Beatrice, and has nothing of the eroticism or even "cleanly-wantonnesse" of Herrick's numerous earlier visions. "The Transfiguration" would have been out of place if it were, say, placed right after "Love Perfumes all Parts." The poet-priest
of the "Poetick Liturgie" of Hesperides would have been unprepared for such an exalted vision at that stage of his development. Now, in the order of the book, he is preparing for his own death and entry into his "eternall Mansion":

IMmortal clothing I put on,
So soone as Julia I am gon:
To mine eternall Mansion.

Thou, thou are here, to humane sight
Cloth'd all with incorrupted light;
But yet how more admir'dly bright

Wilt thou appear, when thou art set
In thy refulgent Thronellet,
That shin'st thus in thy counterfeit?

As in "Lover Perfumes all Parts," this poem says more about the speaker, the "I" of the lyric, than it does about his beloved. His complaint is that he has to wait until he reaches heaven until he can "put on" his "Immortal clothing," while Julia already "shin'est" with "incorrupted light" on earth. How much greater, then, will she appear than her counterfeit here when she is crowned in heaven. But when he says that Julia is glorious to "humane sight," he refers to his own purified sight. Before, Julia's clothes and silks were enticements, and the subject of his erotic fantasies. At that stage in his spiritual development, the persona had only a limited and imperfect concept of beauty. Now the sight of Julia's clothes leads him to thoughts of heaven and perfect beauty. Julia on earth is a copy or "counterfeit" of ideal beauty. The Platonic term is almost exact. Love of earthly beauty has led to the love of heavenly beauty, which is exactly
the substance of the Renaissance theory of love which we outlined earlier in the chapter.

By looking at "Lover Perfumes all Parts" and "The Transfiguration" side by side, I think we can see the development of Herrick's understanding of love in Hesperides. Briefly put, the general pattern begins with erotic passion, is then refined into "cleanly-wantonnesse" and ends with sacred love. In the latter poems, for example, Julia has become a priestess in "Loves Religion": she prepares with Herrick a beast for "sacrifice" as they wear their "pure Suplices" (H-870); she sprinkles the "Altar" of love with "holy waters" and "baptizes" Herrick before they go to perform the sacrificial rites "in innocence" (H-974); and she intercedes for Herrick's sin in chafing "o're much the Virgins cheek or eare" (H-1095). And a poem such as "Comfort to a youth that had lost his love" (H-1024) signals the ultimate separation between the "humane" and "divine" which is made at the end of Hesperides and the beginning of Noble Numbers. Here the departed mistress is among "the race/Of Saints" (lines 3-4) and beyond all earthly joy and sorrow. The context here is otherworldly.

The same general pattern is illustrated by the metamorphoses that the central image of fire undergoes in the course of the volume. Early in Hesperides, "fire" refers most often to irrational passion, whether erotic passion or the frenzy of poetic inspiration. So Herrick writes in "The Scar-fire" (H-61):

Water, water I desire
Here's a house of flesh on fire ....
This is the "fire" of love, but the image of the "house of flesh" makes it clear that love and lust are virtually indistinguishable here. But in the middle poems we find the suggestion that the poet is undergoing a kind of spiritual purification by fire. In "Upon Love" (H-635), Cupid brings Herrick a "Christall Violl" supposedly containing a remedy against love. Herrick greedily drinks the juice, only to discover that the "deadly draught" of love is like "the fire of hell." The torments of love here are obviously different in nature from the torments of lust Herrick suffered in "The Scar-fire." In "To Groves" (H-449), for instance, Herrick speaks of "the fire, and martyrdome of love" (1.4). And in the latter poems, "fire" appears as a sacred flame. In "To Electra" (H-836), love is called a "consuming fire" - a direct allusion to St. Paul's description of God as a "consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29). And in "The Sacrifice" (H-870), Herrick advises Julia to prepare the "Altar cleane, no fire prophane" (1.6). Obviously, this sacred fire does not incite the passions but rather purifies them. As always, Herrick's poems and key images must be read in context. Just as the coronet of pagan love and poetry is transformed into an incorruptible "crown" at the end of Hesperides (H-1123, 6), so the image of "fire" is "trans-shifted" from a profane to a sacred context.

In summary, Herrick's conception of love is by no means simple. "Cleanly-wantonnesse" itself is a concept with rich connotations, sometimes suggesting innocent pleasure, sometimes desire freed from moral strictures and, later in the volume,
an image or type of sacred love. Herrick's task was to rehabilitate the classical tradition of erotic verse, or, as he puts it, to "baptime" his Muse. (H-84,1). The Renaissance theory of the scale of love, progressing step-by-step from profane to sacred love, provided Herrick with a conceptual and structural framework for his amatory verse. Profane and sacred love are not opposed, but related to one another in the liturgical and religious symbolism of "Loves Religion." Herrick's book thus reflects a hierarchy of values, as it develops gradually (like "The Argument") from a mundane to a transcendental context. Herrick's retraction of profane love in "His last request to Julia" (H-1095) and "His Prayer for Absolution" (N-2) for his "unbaptized Rhimes" (1.1) clear the ground for his "pious pieces" and lyrics of divine love in Noble Numbers. In his amatory verse, Herrick thus occupies a curious position in seventeenth-century verse. He is neither strictly a "Cavalier" poet like Suckling, nor strictly a religious poet like Herbert, but something of both. This paradox is central in Hesperides, and is well-stated in its final line:

Jocond his Muse was; but his Life was chast.
CHAPTER IV

Herrick's Poetics: the Beauty of "Wilde Civility"

In this chapter our major concern is to examine Herrick's aesthetics, poetics and his view of his role as a poet. Herrick is one of the most self-conscious of artists, and makes poetry and art one of the main subjects of his volume. The craft of verse has always been a major interest to all classically-oriented poets. And this interest has always been far more practical than theoretical. Horace's *Ars Poetica*, Jonson's *Timber*, Boileau's *L'Art poétique* and Pope's *Essay on Criticism* are as much practical guidebooks as manifestoes of classical values. And although Herrick wrote no poetic *credo*, his book is packed with observations on the art of poetry, the function of the poet and nature of beauty and decorum. Of course, his aesthetic principles cannot be separated from his practise as a poet. His praise of John Harmar's verse as "most soft, terce, sweet, and perpolite" (H-966, 2) is set in lines which embody exactly those qualities. And the stylistic hallmark of his verse is the "wilde civility" which in his mistress' attire moves him to rapture. Herrick's criticism and poetics, then, are absolutely integral to his activity as a poet. It need not be stressed how much this concept of criticism differs from modern criticism.

Herrick, of course, inherits his aesthetic values from the classical tradition. His own poetic practise is modelled on Jonson and the Latin poets, especially Horace. His major verse forms are all classical: ode, lyric, epigram (both *mel*
and fel), epithalamium, erotic elegy (the Sack poems), country life poems, and so forth. What he inherits from the native tradition is always brought under classical control. The exuberance of the Elizabethan lyricism, though present in Herrick, has been subordinated to the classical impulse toward restraint and economy of expression. "To Daffadills," although formally a kind of ornate ballad, is closer in spirit and execution to Horace than the native English ballad or Elizabethan song. Posterity has always admired Herrick most for his lyric gems and songs. Yet, strangely enough, Herrick's favourite verse form - and one in which he excelled - appears to have been the classical epigram. His affinity for Martial is great, and Hesperides certainly owes something in plan and general structure to the Epigrams. Herrick reserves the epigram for his most important didactic statements, the praise of his cultural heroes, and his assertion of permanent and eternal values. His lyrics, on the other hand, are usually carpe diem poems taken up with transitory values. The greater prominence of the epigram in the final section of Hesperides suggests the importance Herrick attached to the genre.

Herrick's deep respect for tradition is perhaps the most abiding feature of his personality. He displays unqualified devotion to the classical poetic tradition, the Anglican tradition (as defined by Hooker and the Anglican apologists) and the royalist political tradition. His classical theory of liberty under this law underlies his poetics no less than his politics:
Men must have Bounds how farre to walke; for we
Are made farre worse, by lawless liberty. (H-990)

And what he says of the political non-conformist might have been applied to the literary innovator:

Who violates the Customes, hurts the Health
Not of one man, but all the Common-wealth. (H-1041)

Of all the major mid-seventeenth century poets, Herrick is the only one who writes as if Donne never existed. As far as Herrick is concerned, the classical poetic tradition extending from the ancients to Ben Jonson is the sole tradition of Western literature. And it is within this tradition that he is content to preflect his "sweet" and "noble" numbers.

Therefore, none of Herrick's ideas about poetry or art is new or unconventional. He would have considered it an insult to be called "original" in the modern sense of the word. But Herrick does not suffer in the least from the "anxiety of influence" or the "burden of the past" which we are told plagued later English poets. His addresses to his "Father Jonson" are all marked by reverence, gratitude and humility. He prays to "Saint Ben" to aid him, and offers him his "Lyrick" on his knees (H-604). And Jonson receives adulation as the model poet whom his Sons can imitate but never match:

Thou had'gst the wreath before, now take the Tree;
That henceforth none be Laurel crown'd but Thee. (H-383)
Tradition, for Herrick, is always positive and liberating, and never regarded as a hindrance to creativity.

To say that Herrick's poetry is traditional is by no means to deny that he has his own poetic voice. Herrick's style can never be mistaken for any other's. His treatment of traditional themes and conventions is unique and inimitable. That a poet can be both "personal" and "traditional" is no paradox, but a verified fact of literary history. One is naturally reminded here of T.S. Eliot's theory about "Tradition and the Individual Talent." As a poet, Eliot deliberately cultivated impersonality; nevertheless, he is a very personal poet. The same is true of Herrick - in a different way. And an analogy which Northrop Frye has made between music and literature in The Great Code beautifully captures this paradox. Frye writes:

If we are listening to music on the level of say, Schumann and Tchaikovsky, we are listening to highly skillful craftsmanship by a distinguished and original composer. If then we listen to, say, the "Kyries" of the Bach B Minor Mass or the Mozart Requiem, a certain impersonal element enters. What we hear is still "subjective" in the sense that it is obviously Bach or Mozart, and could not possibly be anyone else. At the same time there is a sense of listening to the voice of music itself.

Herrick's lyrics are "subjective," but they also have the same kind of "impersonal element" which Frye notices in the music of Bach and Mozart. We feel that we are listening to the voice of poetry when we read Herrick. We sense an "impersonal element" that is not apparent in most modern verse.
Herrick made the classical tradition so thoroughly his own that his verse appears unlaboured and spontaneous. Of course, they only appear so - this is always the art that conceals art. Herrick's relation to tradition is never parasitic, but free and unhindered. "Upon his Verses" (H-681) sums up his attitude toward the poetic tradition:

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What off-spring other men have got,
The how, where, when, I question not.
These are the Children I have left;
Adopted some; none got by theft.
But all are toucht (like lawfull plate)
And no Verse illegitimate.
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Whatever he may have borrowed from his predecessors, Herrick is the legitimate father of all his verses.

Herrick's aesthetic ideas are, in their basic outline, firmly based on the practice of his poetic forbears. The virtues of clarity, simplicity, balance, moderation, decorum, order are all his. For instance, the classical theory of the golden mean is stated and restated in the epigrams, such as "Moderation" (H-1038):

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Let moderation on thy passions waite
Who loves too much, too much the lov'd will hate.
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The virtue of the golden mean is the main theme of the country life poems. In "A Country Life" (H-106), Herrick counsels his brother to "confine desires" and live wisely in accordance with "golden measure" so that he may be rewarded with "the contented mind." This is classical ethical theory at its purest, with the
combined authority of Aristotle, the Stoics and the Epicureans behind it.

But this philosophy of restraint and moderation is in little evidence elsewhere in _Hesperides_, in either Herrick's ethics or his aesthetics. Herrick, in fact, revises the classical notion of beauty as a golden mean or as a harmony of parts with the whole. "The Definition of Beauty" (H-102) is the clearest and most concise statement of his aesthetics, and a clue to his actual poetic practice:

BEauty, no other thing is, than a Beame
Flasht out between the Middle and Extreme.

The beauty of the golden mean is correct, but perhaps a little boring. The extremes of too much order or too little discipline are also to be avoided. But the "beame" which flashes out "between the Middle and Extreme" is the beauty which startles and pleases the reader within the bounds of decorum. Slight deviations and irregularities in phrasing, diction and rhythm enhance decorum, just as the rhythmic substitutions and irregular caesura do in the above couplet. As Herrick puts it in "A request to the Graces" (H-914):

    Numbers ne'r tickle, or but lightly please
    Unlesse they have some wanton carriages.  (11.8-9)

Herrick's aesthetic of "wilde civility" is virtually unique in seventeenth-century poetry. One has to turn to the history of music to find an analogous attitude to form and decorum. Couperin
and the French clavencinists with their miniaturism and love of
the note inegalé, fanciful titles, slightly off-centre harmonies,
and elaborate but strict ornamentation share Herrick's basic
aesthetic. For both Herrick and Couperin all slight irregularities
are held in check and enhanced by a powerful sense of order and
decorum.

It must be stressed that Herrick's aesthetics and ethics
overlap. "Cleanly-wantonnesse" is in the ethical sphere what
"wilde civility" is in the aesthetic sphere. To write strictly
according to the rules may be "correct" and admirable but rather
dull and lifeless. To live strictly according to sound moral
precepts and the moderate path may make one virtuous but also the
most miserable of creatures. But to write and live with gentlemanly
ease and sprezzatura, and yet remain within the bounds of virtue
and decorum is the result of refined taste and high civilization.
Herrick's verses (more so than the Charles Cotton he praises) are
marked by "wit without offence" (H-947,1). The wit - invention,
adroitness - is there in abundance, but never gets out of control
or offends the standards of good writing and taste.

"What kind of Mistresse he would have" (H-665) is a poem
which, like "Delight in Disorder" (H-83), embodies Herrick's
aesthetic and ethical ideal. The "order in a sweet neglect"
(1.8) which Herrick desires in his mistress' dress is identical
to the "wilde civility" he praises in the earlier poem. Order,
for Herrick, is tempered and sweetened by a slight infusion of
disorder:
BE the Mistresse of my choice,
Cleane in manners, cleere in voice:
Be she witty, more then wise;
Pure enough, though not Precise:
Be she shewing in her dresse,
Like a civill Wilderness;
That the curious may detect
Order in a sweet neglect;
Be she rowling in her eye,
Tempting all the passers by:
An each Ringlet of her haire,
An Enchantment, or a Snare,
For to catch the Lookers on;
But her self held fast by none.
Let her Lucrece all day be,
Thais in the night, to me.
Be she such, as neither will
Famish me, nor over-fill.

This poem exhibits that sly mixture of cleanliness and roguishness which is one of Herrick's hallmarks. His ideal mistress is civil but not stiff; clever but no philosopher; moral but no precisian; a coquette but no trollope. She enthralls all men, yet remains free herself. She is the perfect balance between Lucretia, the model of faithfulness, and Thais, Greek courtesan and mistress of Alexander the Great. In other words, she is a perfect specimen of Herrick's notion of beauty as a "beame" flashing out "between the Middle and Extreme." This beauty is glamourous and enchanting, without being tasteless or gauche. Its excesses are all refinements or "snares" to engage and delight the "curious" reader. Herrick's verse, like the calculated disorder of his mistress' dress, is always held in check by his unerring sense of decorum.

First, notice how the anacreontic metre perfectly suits the content of the poem. As always, Herrick's choice of metre is not arbitrary, but inseparable from the content of "meaning"
of the poem. The oppositions here are not set apart as unresolved contraries but are each united in a discordia concors. Herrick's ideal mistress can be both Lucretia and Thais - clearly a difficult paradox. Her dress is a "civil Wilderness", the perfect harmony of Art and Nature, order and disorder. (The phrase is another example of Herrick's fondness for oxymoron). And the tone of the lyric is ambivalent throughout: it is hard to tell if the mistress is more Thais than Lucretia, more wild than civil. The anacreontic metre, with its ambivalent status as neither strictly iambic nor trochaic, is the perfect formal vehicle for the sly, ambivalent tone of this small "enchantment."

On the surface, the poem with its carefully balanced phrases and couplets may appear to be the epitome of regularity and "order." But the "curious" reader can easily "detect" a "sweet neglect" behind the outward facade of order and precision. For example, the first two couplets, which form the first four-line unit of the lyric, are perhaps formally and syntactically the most regular in the poem. The second line is perfectly balanced, with a caesura between the fourth and fifth syllables. The grammatical parallelism is reinforced by the alliteration and assonance of "cleane" and "cleare." And rightly so, since the mistress' "manners" and singing should observe perfect proportion and harmony. Line three is also balanced by a mid-point caesura, but the parallelism here is not perfect. In the fourth line, Herrick introduces a slight irregularity by moving the caesura back to lie between the third and fourth syllables and having the imperfect rhyme of "precise"
and "wise." This last couplet in its design is, exactly like Herrick's mistress, "Pure enough, though not Precise." This is the kind of nuance of phrasing of which Herrick is a past master.

The second unit of two couplets is less regular, a little "wilder," than the first two couplets. The polysyllable "wilderness" in line six gives this line a brisk skip, an irregularity perfectly in keeping with its content. The next couplet, the key-lines in which Herrick defines his aesthetics, looks something like a golden line thrown out of kilter:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{That the curious may detect} \\
\text{Order in a sweet neglect} 
\end{align*}
\]

The key-word "order" receives a double-emphasis by being preceded by the rhyme-word and verb "detect" and followed by a weak pyrrhic. The couplet, in its design and rhythm, embodies that mixture of "order" and "sweet neglect" which is Herrick's aesthetic ideal.

The second half of the lyric is almost, but not quite, parallel to the first half. The third unit of the poem (ll. 9-14) is extended by an extra couplet, thus breaking the pattern established in the first eight lines. Here the verse, by Herrick's usual standards, becomes rather luxuriant as he describes the alluring temptations of his mistress' person. In his enthusiasm over these "enchantments", Herrick extends the section by a couplet. But order is restored in the last line. The clipped monosyllables and plain assertive tone stand in marked contrast to the preceding lines:
But her self held fast by none....

Just as Herrick's mistress tempts but does not fall herself, so his verse reestablishes regularity and decorum before it reaches an extreme of luxuriance or negates the basic formal design. Also notice that the final couplet of the poem reestablishes the strict regularity of the first couplet. The irregularities of the inner couplets, therefore, are contained by a strict framework of order. Manner and matter are here inseparable: the poem embodies in its design and expression the dialectic of discipline and freedom which is its subject.

In "What Kind of Mistresse he would have" the edge is given to freedom over discipline. One suspects here that Herrick's imagined mistress, while remaining within the bounds of virtue and decorum, is nevertheless a little too eagerly and dangerously seeking out the limits and extremes of "wilde civility." In a later poem, "Leprosie in houses" (H-1004), Herrick acknowledges this danger when he finds in the house:

The Daughters wild and loose in dresse;
Their cheekes unstain'd with shamefac'tnesse .... (11.7-8)

Just as he renounces profane love in the last section of the volume, so Herrick begins to sound here like a puritan on the subject of dress. In "Leprosie in Cloathes" (H-1010), a companion poem to "Delight in Disorder," Herrick retracts his earlier philosophy of clothes and aesthetics of "wilde civility":
So plaine and simple cloathes doe show
Where vertue walkes, not those that flow. (11.9-10)

These lines, italicized to emphasize their didactic content, typify the plain, epigrammatic and even austere style of many of the later poems. When the chips are on the table, Herrick is on the side of "vertue," plainness and "civility." "Cleanly-wantonnesse" and "wilde civility" have their legitimate place only in the earlier, profane section of Hesperides. We find, therefore, a greater discipline, economy and order in the poems in the final section of the volume. In other words, there is a general movement away from "Nature" toward greater "Art" in Hesperides.

This can be seen by comparing "Delight in Disorder" (H-83) with its companion piece "Art above Nature, to Julia." (H-560). Both are based on Ben Jonson's "Still to be neat, still to be drest." Herrick's poems, however, are neither strict imitations nor parodies, but free inventions based on the Art versus Nature theme of Jonson's lyric. Moreover, Herrick's aesthetics differs appreciably from Jonson's - his concept of decorum and his poetics permit a good deal more freedom and irregularity than his master would. Jonson's lyric, as lovely and well wrought as it is, sounds somewhat stiff and even austere when compared to Herrick's "Delight in Disorder" and "Art above Nature." Douglas Bush captures this difference when he says that in Herrick "the bricklayer has, so to speak, given place to the goldsmith's apprentice, the master of filigree."53
We quote here Jonson's song from *The Silent Woman* to give an idea of how Herrick's style differs from his master's. The balanced phrases, lucidity and noble "simplicitie" of Jonson's lyric are typical of the "bricklayer's" art. Even though the poem prefers Nature over Art, its design is palpably artful and well wrought. Indeed, its monumental style and neat parallelisms can justly be compared to the orderly arrangement of bricks in a wall:

Still to be neat, still to be drest,
As you were going to a feast;
Still to be pou'dred, still perfum'd:
Lady, it is to be presum'd,
Though arts hid causes are not found,
All is not sweet, all is not sound.

Give me a looke, give me a face
That makes simplicitie a grace;
Robes loosely flowing, haire as free:
Such sweet neglect more taketh me,
Then all th'adulteries of art.
They strike mine eyes, but not my heart.54

These couplets are more regular than any Herrick wrote, but still not as disciplined as Pope's heroic couplet.

Now here is Herrick's version of the Nature above Art theme. This *blazon* poem (H-83) contains an element of "sweet disorder" and "wilde civility" not apparent in Jonson's song. Its couplets, more highly-wrought than Jonson's, still display greater freedom and suppleness. The mistress also exhibits far greater "wanton-nesse". The elaborate filigree of this lyric is the work of the goldsmith:
A Sweet disorder in the dresse
Kindles in cloathes a wantonnesse:
A Lawne about the shoulders thrown
Into a fine distraction:
An erring Lace, which here and there
Enthralls the Crimson Stomacher:
A Cuffe neglectfull, and thereby
Ribbands to flow confusedly:
A winning wave (deserving Note)
In the tempestuous petticote:
A carelesse shooe-string, in whose tye
I see a wilde civility:
Doe more bewitch me, then when Art
Is too precise in every part.

Where Jonson's lady's "robes" are "loosely flowing", Herrick's mistress' "ribbands" "flow confusedly." Where Jonson looks for a natural "simplicitie" in his lady's dress, Herrick has as his ideal a "wilde civility." Irregularities of syntax, rhythm, rhyme, and logic (e.g., the list of oxymorons) violate the "classical" norm of order and moderation represented by Jonson's song. The imperfect golden lines, the partial rhymes, the expansion of syllables and piquant diction (for example, "kindles," "erring" and "bewitch") are effects conspicuously absent in "Still to be neat." Only the last couplet exemplifies the "too precise" order which Herrick finds uninteresting. Herrick's attitude to decorum is obviously different from Jonson's, which is more typical of the classical tradition. The tone and execution of "Delight in Disorder," so different from Jonson's song, are ample proof that Herrick was a disciple but no slave of his master.

In "Art above Nature, to Julia" (H-560) Herrick presents us with the flip side of the coin: the regularity and order of Art are now preferred to the "disorder" of Nature. This poem
foreshadows the greater emphasis laid on Art and order in the second half of Hesperides. But even here Herrick's verses are more elaborate and more "curiously" wrought than Jonson's lines in "Still to be neat." The poem divides into two equal parts, each containing two quatrains. The main grammatical clause is delayed until a final additional couplet, which states the moral and serves as a kind of coda. Thus, the basic structural outline is far more regular than that of "What kind of Mistresse he would have." The anaphora signaled by the repetition of the phrase "When I" reinforces this structural regularity:

When I behold a Forrest spread
With silken trees upon thy head;
And when I see that other Dresse
Of flowers set in comlinesse:
When I behold another grace
In the ascent of curious Lace,
Which like a Pinnacle doth shew
The top, and the top-gallant too.
Then, when I see thy Tresses bound
Into an Ovall, square, or round;
And knit in knots far more than I
Can tell by tongue; or true-love tie:
Next, when those Lawnie Filmes I see
Play with a wild civility:
And all those airie silks to flow,
Alluring me, and tempting so:
I must confess, mine eye and heart
Dotes less on Nature, then on Art.

Like "Delight in Disorder," this poem is a blazon which surveys the lady's person and dress. But Herrick focuses here only on Julia's hair-style and lawns and silks, alternating his glance from one to the other. There is no mention of the lady's undergarments as in the earlier poem, and the "airie silks," although said to be "alluring" and "tempting," do not betray any great
"wantonnesse." Julia's charms appeal chiefly to the "eye" and not to the "heart" and desire as in "Delight in Disorder." Herrick's appreciation of his mistress here is akin to pure, disinterested aesthetic contemplation. The tone and imagery of "Art above Nature" are ethereal.

Notice the clear development of imagery from images of Nature to images and terms of Art. First, Julia's braided hair and dress are described in natural images. Her head is a "Forrest" made up of "silken trees", and her dress is composed "of flowers set in comlinesse." Her "lace" ascends like a crawling vine or plant. But this is nature methodized: the "silken trees" and "flowers" are clearly artificial. Then her lace is compared to the structure of a ship, with its masts and "pinnacle," and her "tresses" to geometrical patterns. These patterns are set in a tri-colon crescendo, ascending from the less to the more perfect forms:

Into an Ovall, square, or round....

Finally, Julia's "airie silks," free of any trace of matter or natural dross, are described in entirely abstract terms as playing with a "wild civility." But unlike "Delight in Disorder," the emphasis here is more on "civility" rather than wildness. This movement from concrete to abstract imagery makes the conclusion hardly surprising and, indeed, inevitable: Julia's dress and hairstyle cause Herrick to dote "less on Nature, then on Art."
The design of the couplets and their versification underline the emphasis on balance, order and art. The high proportion of balanced phrases and parallelisms contributes to the overall regularity. Phrases are neatly balanced in doublets, as in "top" and "top-gallant," "eye and heart", "alluring" and tempting," and the final antithesis of "Nature" and "Art." The parallelism of the following line is reinforced by symmetrical alliteration and sound patterns.

Can tell by tongue; or true-love tie....

And, instead of the imperfectly realized golden lines of "Delight in Disorder," we find a perfect golden couplet in "Art above Nature":

\[ \text{m N V} \]

Next, when those Lawnie Filmes I see

\[ \text{V m N} \]

Play with a wild civility:

Compare this with the first couplet of "Delight in Disorder":

\[ \text{m N N} \]

A Sweet disorder in the dresse

\[ \text{V N N} \]

Kindles in cloaths a wantonnesse ....

The reader expects a modifier before the final noun "wantonnesse," but is instead offered a kind of deceptive cadence. The flawed golden line perfectly describes the "sweet disorder" which is the aesthetic ideal defined by the poem. There is a greater tolerance of a pleasing disorder here than in "Art above Nature."
In "Art above Nature", the high proportion of light, frontal consonants and sibilants \((f's, l's, t's\) and \(s's\)) and long vowels \((long o's, e's, i's\) and \(a's\)) makes its lines exceptionally smooth and light, even by Herrick's usual standards. The following line best illustrates this mellifluous quality:

And all those airie silks to flow....

The long vowels, light consonants and sibilants perfectly imitate the flowing of the "airie silks." Most of the rhymes, too, are perfect, and all end with the same vowel quality — a notable contrast to the imperfect rhymes of "Delight in Disorder".

"Art above Nature", then, is not merely an inferior version of "Delight in Disorder," but is clearly intended to be read as a companion poem exemplifying the opposite side of the art-versus-nature controversy. The series of poems on this theme clearly form an inner sequence within the volume. Such discontinuous sequences were not uncommon in ancient poetry books. But limits of space prevent us from examining the many such sequences in *Hesperides*. The two Sack poems, "His Poetrie his Pillar" and "The Pillar of Fame," the epigrams of praise which compose an "eternall Calender" (H-545, 10), the anacreontic lyrics, the sequences of poems entitled "To his Book" and "On himself" are notable examples which spring to mind. Sometimes companion poems can be widely separated, as are "To Perenna" (H-16) and "To the handsome Mistresse Grace Potter" (H-992), the first defining beauty in an earthly and the second in an ideal context; or
similarly, the two epigrams on love (H-29 and H-839) which describe
the larger circle of love in which the volume is contained. The
point is that the apparent disorder of Hesperides is a calculated
disorder, a "delight in disorder" which avoids the monotony which
a simpler pattern would undoubtedly impose. To the "curious"
reader who is not content with the received view of Hesperides as
a formless mass of poems on overworked and hackneyed themes,
Herrick's powers of construction on the large scale must appear
truly formidable. This alone places him at a level far beyond
the reach of the "Cavaliers."

How did Herrick conceive his role as a poet? Did he regard
himself as primarily a craftsman, or as an inspired bard or
prophet? What were the relative values Herrick assigned to
"craft" and "art" and inspiration? These questions about self-
conception are basic to poets of all ages and cultures. Nor can
they be answered in a straightforward, unequivocal way. Even
the most self-conscious artists declare that the rules of good
craftsmanship are insufficient to produce good poetry. Pope, for
example, sums up the classical view in An Essay on Criticism
that there is "a grace beyond the reach of art." Similarly, even the
most "inspired" bard cannot dispense with the rules or hard work
if he hopes at all to communicate with his readers. Early manuscript
versions of "inspired" Romantic lyrics expose the myth of the
untutored genius who sings involuntary hymns under the influence
of the divine afflatus. The safest generalization that one can
perhaps make is that the classical poets attach more importance
to craft, and the Romantics more to inspiration. However, this is not a hard-and-fast distinction, but only a description of the general tendencies of those difficult and troublesome terms, "Classic" and "Romantic."

In the Renaissance, the poet was viewed both as a craftsman and teacher, and as a prophet and vates. From Plato, the Renaissance inherited the idea of the poet as a madman who suffered from a furor poeticus. This, however, was a divine madness given by the gods, or as Herrick puts it in "His fare-well to Sack," a "sacred madnesse." The belief was still strong that the poet was inspired by an outside force, usually identified with the classical Muses, or, in the case of Milton, with the "Heav'nyly Muse" who resides far above "th' Aonian Mount." But, following Aristotle, the poet was regarded also as an imitator of nature. For the Renaissance, this meant nature as discovered and understood by the ancients. Therefore, the imitation of nature implied the imitation of classical genres, themes and poets. According to this view, the poet's function was to educate his readers in virtue by presenting them with models of heroism and excellence. His task was that of the educator and orator - "to teach and delight." Here, he is not an inspired vates, but primarily a craftsman whose duty is to civilize his readers.

Both theories about poetry and the function of the poet are to be found in Hesperides. Herrick reminds his reader in several epigrams that his function is to "teach" as well as "delight." For example, in "To his Booke" (H-603) he asserts
that there is a didactic content in *Hesperides*. Even the censorious reader who does not enjoy his verses might still learn something, provided he reads with understanding:

BE bold my Booke, nor be abasht, or feare
The cutting Thumb-naile, or the Brow severe.
But by the Muses sweare, all here is good,
If but well read; or ill read, understood.

And every line of *Hesperides* testifies to the importance with which Herrick regarded his role as a craftsman. In "A Vow to Minerva" (H-530,1), Herrick says "Goddesse, I began an Art," a line which few poets could utter with as much justification. Poetry is an art which requires "noble Discipline" (H-657, 3); it requires all the love and patience of the most fastidious craftsman. One really has to go back to Horace to find another poet who displays such great care in giving every word and syllable its proper "Euphonie, and weight" (H-947, 6).

But Herrick's more typical self-conception is that of the vates or "Lyrick Prophet." Herrick stresses again and again that poetry and song are of divine origin and that the poet is inspired by a "sacred madnesse." He writes a series of invocations to the Muses, Apollo, Bacchus, the Graces and "Saint Ben." Poetry is divine and, therefore, able to immortalize the poet and his cultural heroes. The divine vigour of the celestial ichor sack "Work'st more then Wisdom, Art, or Nature can" (H-128, 24). Without the sacred inspiration of Bacchus and his vine, Herrick's verse "shall smell of the Lamp." (H-128, 54). "His
Fare-well to Sack" (H-128), indeed, is a classic statement of the theory of *furor poeticus*.

Of course, Herrick is no enthusiast, and he hymns Apollo (e.g. H-388; H-871) just as often as he chants the praise of Bacchus. He requests the graces to "ponder" his verses and ensure that they observe decorum:

\[\text{POneder my words, if so that any be} \\
\text{Known guilty here of incivility:} \\
\text{Let what is graceless, discompos'd and rude,} \\
\text{With sweetness, smoothness, softness, be endu'd ....} \\
\](H-914, 1-4)

The Graces represent the conscious and rational qualities, as opposed to the divine and suprarational origin of poetry identified with the Muses and Bacchus. In fact, the Graces are associated with something as seemingly mundane as revision:

\[\text{For I know you have the skill} \\
\text{Vines to prune, though not to kill....} \\
\](H-569, 13-14)

Herrick implies that both Apollo and Bacchus, the Graces and the Muses, Horace and Anacreon are complementary. Inspiration and hard work, invention and restraint, form a necessary partnership. Just as Herrick reconciles profane and sacred love in the paradox of "cleanly-wantonnesse", so he unites Bacchus and Apollo in his aesthetic ideal of "wilde civility."

The divine origin of song is a theme fully developed in the series of poems on music. Herrick conceives of himself as a bard who sings his praises to the gods "to the tension of the string" (H-332, 1). He calls upon the gods to inspire him with song and
allow him to hear the music that comes from above. His invocation "To Apollo", (H-871) the god of harmony and music, is representative of his view of music:

\[
\text{THou mighty Lord and master of the Lyre} \\
\text{Unshorn Apollo, come, and re-inspire} \\
\text{My fingers so, the Lyrick-strings to move} \\
\text{That I may play, and sing a Hymne to Love.}
\]

Music is an image of the divine order of the cosmos, and can with its magical and celestial properties impose order on chaos:

\[
\text{MUisick, thou Queen of Heaven, Care-charming-spel,} \\
\text{That strik'st a stilnesse into hell: (H-254, 1-2)}
\]

Finally, music is a medicine and "charm" which can cure the disorders of the body and soul. (H-227; H-244). Music is thus a gift from above, the fount of all poetic inspiration, the sustainer of the order of the cosmos and the soul, and the ladder which stretches from heaven to earth.

The divine origin of music is the subject of one of Herrick's most beautiful and intricate lyrics, "To Musique, to becalme his Fever." (H-227). As in Herbert's "Church-musick," music raises the ill poet up to the gates of heaven. Herrick invokes music to "charm" him into "easie slumbers": sleep and death, as in much Renaissance verse, are closely linked throughout the poem. The "whispers of mortality," the sacred aura and religious imagery, and the broken ballad stanza make this poem a close cousin of another great lyric, "To Daffadills" (H-316). The patterning of
lines in "To Musique", however, is even more intricate than that of the latter poem:

1. Charm me asleep, and melt me so
   With thy Delicious Numbers;
   That being ravisht, hence I goe
   Away in easie slumbers.
   Ease my sick head,
   And make my bed,
   Thou Power that canst sever
   From me this ill:
   And quickly still:
   Though thou not kill
   My Fever.

2. Thou sweetly canst covert the same
   From a consuming fire,
   Into a gentle-licking flame,
   And make it thus expire.
   Then make me weep
   My paines asleep;
   And give me such reposes,
   That I, poore I,
   May think, thereby,
   I live and die
   'Mongst Roses.

3. Fall on me like a silent dew,
   Or like those Maiden showrs,
   Which, by the peepe of day, doe strew
   A Baptime o're the flowers.
   Melt, melt my paines,
   With thy soft straines;
   That having ease me given,
   With full delight,
   I leave this light;
   And take my flight
   For Heaven.

The basic pattern is the lyric or ballad stanza with alternating tetrameter and trimeter lines and alternate rhymes. But the trimeter lines all end with feminine rhymes. These cadences beautifully capture the sense of repose and "slumber" which the poem seeks to convey. In the second part of each stanza, the basic pattern
is broken and varied, much as the variations or "strains" in Elizabethan music. The shortened lines and building up of rhymes slacken the overall pace. And the delayed rhyme between the seventh and last lines of each stanza makes the final rhyme doubly emphatic. This reflects the sense of tension and repose which underlies the poem. With its abundant alliteration, assonance, broken lines, repetitions, balanced phrases and verbs, the poem is an exceptionally musical statement. These verses "charm" the ear as "Delicious Numbers" and "soft straines."

The basic metaphor here is that sleep equals death, a common trope in seventeenth-century religious poetry. But the equation, nowhere stated definitely, is only hinted at. The music from above which can convert the burning fever into a "gentle-licking flame" and make it "expire" can also "expire" the "flame" of life. Hints of mortality appear throughout the poem: the "bed might be a deathbed, and the "Power" of music might be able to "sever" the soul from the "ill" body; Herrick does not know whether he is to "live or die" among roses; and finally he leaves "this light" (that is, the world) to travel on the wings of music to "Heaven." As in classical mythology, music guides the departed soul to its everlasting abode. Because of its divine origin music can serve as an intimation of immortality and give a foretaste of the "full delight" of "Heaven." Earthly music is an echo of celestial music.

In keeping with this theme, there is a high proportion of religious diction and imagery here. Music is apostrophized as
a "Power," a member of the ninefold hierarchy of angels. This is a perfectly conventional identification in Renaissance poetry. Then music is said to "convert" the "consuming fire" of the fever "into a gentle-licking flame." The fever here, though, represents both the ills of the body and the soul, and so this fire is one of purification. Later in the volume, Herrick calls love a "consuming fire" (H-836, 8). So it is not surprising that Herrick hints at a kind of repentance when he calls upon the power of music to "make me weep/My pains sleep." The fever here is as much spiritual as physical.

But the religious imagery is clearest in the final stanza where Herrick takes his "flight/For Heaven." Here the descent of music and its soothing qualities are compared to such an unobtrusive and imperceptible natural process as the falling of dew. (Notice the effective use of falling rhythms in the first foot and the bisyllabic words):

Fall on me like a silent dew,  
Or like those Maiden showrs,  
Which, by the peepe of day, doe strew  
A Baptime o're the flowers.

The source of the music, like the dew, is from the heavens. But this "dew" has spiritual significance since it sanctifies the "flowers" with "Baptize."

Herrick uses exactly this image in the final stanza of "To Daffadills" (H-316), where the religious imagery is even more unobtrusive than in the earlier poem. Here, however, the "dew" represents the soul, which will return to its heavenly
homeland just as "the pearles of Mornings dew" are evaporated by the morning sun. That the dewdrops are "pearles" suggests permanence rather than ephemerality. This is yet another instance of Herrick's intimations of immortality:

We die,
As your hours doe, and drie
Away,
Like to the Summers raine;
Or as the pearles of Mornings dew
Ne'r to be found againe. (11. 15-20)

The "dew" of "To Musique" also has a heavenly source, and is thus able not only to "becalme" the fever but also to restore order to the soul. So when Herrick urgently implores the music to "melt, melt my pains" he principally means his spiritual "paines" which must be purified and "eased" before he can be carried to "Heaven."

"To Musique," too, bears a close resemblance to a poem like "His Letanie, to the Holy Spirit" (N-41) in Noble Numbers where the context is unambiguously religious and sacred. Here Herrick calls upon the "Sweet Spirit" which, like the music of the earlier poem, can heal his bodily and spiritual ills:

When I lie within my bed,
Sick in heart, and sick in head,
And with doubts discomforted,
Sweet Spirit comfort me! (11. 5-8)

This is just another proof that Herrick's works "humane" and "divine" do not differ as much as the title-page of Hesperides would seem to suggest. Herrick implies in a "humane" poem like
"To Musique" that his song has a higher source than the classical muse. And Herrick regards himself in Hesperides not just as a secular or "humane" poet, but as a poet-priest who brings together classical and Christian traditions. In "An Hymne to the Muses" (H-778), he calls upon the "sweet Maids (thrice three)" (1.5) to "crown" his "Priest-hood" with "bayes." (1.11). There is no strict separation between the world of Hesperides and the world of Noble Numbers.

Herrick, then, regards song and verse as of divine inspiration, a view he shares with Virgil, Dante, Milton and the great tradition of Western poetry. But this does not leave the poet to be merely an involuntary secretary, or oracle, of the divine afflatus. As we suggested before, Herrick asserts that both Apollo (reason) and Bacchus (inspiration) are essential to the creation of good verse. Inspiration must come first, and then the difficult task of revising, polishing and reworking lines to meet the stringent demands of decorum. The poet must keep his "wit" or faculty of invention under control, and not become inebriated under the wine of poetic inspiration. Pegasus must be bridled if the poet is to mount Parnasus. And although Herrick espouses an aesthetic of "wilde civility," there is no doubt that his verses are far more civil than wild. That the poet receives his inspiration from the muses does not absolve him from being a careful and responsible craftsman.

Herrick's model poet is, of course, his master Ben Jonson. For Herrick, as for his century, Jonson is the Horace of his
age, its literary dictator and arbiter of classical standards. He is the poet who perfectly balances inspiration and discipline, "wit" and learning. Herrick acknowledges his debt to Jonson in several poems, and expresses his gratitude to the master who taught him his craft. He offers his lyrics to his patron "Saint Ben", who makes "the way smooth" for him (H-604). And Herrick admits, in "A Bacchanalian Verse" (H-653), that though he can quaffe "nine" "mighty" bowles of wine to his "Johnsons soule," he can never "thrive in frenzie" like the master. This profound respect for his poetic forbears and humility before tradition is quite unlike the anxiety from which the Romantic or modern poet supposedly suffers in his drive for originality and his need to cut out his own creative space. The Romantics, for instance, never display as much respect for Milton as Herrick does for his poetic father.

Herrick's last and best tribute to Jonson is undoubtedly "An Ode for him" (H-911). Here he commemorates, at the end of the volume, his poetic father, just as he paid his respects at the tomb of his natural father near its beginning (H-82). In its two stanzas, the poem defines and dramatizes the "wilde civility" which is Herrick's aesthetic ideal. Herrick displays genuine nostalgia for the vita bona of good company, abundant wine and food and high culture that Jonson and his Sons enjoyed in the taverns of London. But Jonson and his "Guests," as much as they must have drunk, were "nobly wild, not mad" (1.7). These "Lyrick Feasts" were more bacchanalia of poetry than of wine. And
Jonson, the epitome of the inspired poet here, is still the model of craft and discipline. Herrick calls upon Jonson in the second stanza to teach his disciples how "wisely to husband" (1.16) the "precious stock" of "wit" they inherited from him. As a poetic saint, Jonson is able to dispense his superogatory merits to his Sons. They live off his surplus "wit," and must adopt a policy of restraint before it depreciates:

**AH Ben!**
Say how, or when
Shall we thy Guests
Meet at those Lyrick Feasts,
Made at the Sun
The Dog, the triple Tunne?
Where we such clusters had,
As made us nobly wild, not mad;
And yet each Verse of thine
Out-did the meate, out-did the frolick wine.

**My Ben**
Or come agen:
Or send to 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.

Ben is viewed as a kind of poetic god here who dispenses his "wits great over-plus" to his disciples. He is their master to whom they must account, as the allusions to the biblical parables of the wise husbandman and the talent suggest. After his death, Jonson has been deified and made sole monarch of "wit." Post-Jonsonian poets must live off the "precious stock" he has left them.
Herrick displays great ingenuity in his metrics in this ode. The pyramidal shape, descending from the monometer of the first line to the pentameter, wonderfully reflects the content and tone of the poem. The first line of each stanza is a sigh of regret; the last line the heroic line associated with the stature and scope of Jonson's wit and verse. Examples of metrical "wit" can be found in the handling of line lengths and the placement of caesurae. Take, for instance, the last three lines of the first stanza:

As made us nobly wild, // not mad;
   And yet each Verse of thine
Out-did the meate, // out-did the frolick wine.

The caesura in the first line, where the drinkers are "nobly wild" but "not mad," appears in an irregular position after the sixth syllable. But the last pentameter line, with its repetition of the verb, its parallelism and regularly placed caesura, suggests the massive authority and stability of Jonson's verse as compared to "the frolick wine." Or take the lines on Jonson's "wit" in the second stanza. The heavily accented syllables of line four, concerning Jonson's "over-plus" of "wit," are followed by short lines describing the husbanding of that "wit." The final lines, on the other hand, suggest a contrast between the "precious stock" bequeathed to the Sons and the massive "store" belonging to the father:

And having once brought to an end
   That precious stock; // the store
Of such a wit the world sho'd have no more.
The strong caesura in the second line, emphasized by a semi-colon, highlights the phrase "That precious stock." The last foot runs over to the following line, with which it forms a syntactic unit. This series of monosyllables makes this a very capacious statement. Moreover, the symmetry of the sound patterns make it also a most resonant conclusion to the ode:

the store / Of such a wit the world sho'd have no more.

As always, Herrick deliberately and "wisely" places every syllable of the poem to produce the maximum effect.

To conclude, Herrick's aesthetics and poetics are basically those of the classical tradition. But his poetic practice is somewhat idiosyncratic in his love of the *discordia concors* and "delight in disorder." He prefers "wilde civility" to the classical definition of beauty as a golden mean. He views his own function as both that of a *vates* and a responsible craftsman, and considers "Nature" and "Art" both to be of importance in the creation of verse. Herrick's verse is more elaborate and less "regular" than Jonson's, and far less rigid than that of a neo-classical poet like Pope. His verse displays that same "Freedome in Captivity" which is his ethical, political and amatory ideal. In other words, Herrick's world-view is of a piece: the content and style of his verse, matter and manner, are perfectly united in his work. This is more true of Herrick than of most other poets.

Herrick's classicism, too, is qualified by his basically "metaphysical" and religious world-view. His fondness for paradox,
oxymoron and extensive use of religious imagery and biblical allusion is something we usually associate with the "Metaphysicals." Indeed, Herrick may not be so far apart from his contemporary, George Herbert, as is usually assumed. Both are consummate lyricists who wrote well wrought poetical books, both stress the importance of ritual and sacrament in their verse, and both share the common body of assumptions of their age. There is much more that unites than divides them. If anything, Herrick's range is more extensive than Herbert's, since he covers both "sacred" and "profane" levels of existence. His place in seventeenth-century literature is really on a level with Jonson, Donne and Herbert and not with the "Cavaliers." And his primary distinction is as the author of the most elaborate and sophisticated poetical book of his age.
NOTES


4 For example, see Henry Morley, ed., Hesperides: or, Works both Human and Divine of Robert Herrick (London and New York: George Routlege & Sons, 1884). Morley indicates in his introduction that he has omitted eighteen pages of poems which "would interfere with the free reading of Herrick in our English homes."

5 The subtitle of an outdated biographical and critical study, Leon Mandel, Robert Herrick: the Last Elizabethan (Chicago: Argus Press, 1927). For an early article which recognizes Herrick's concern with mortality, see Alan H. Gilbert "Robert Herrick on Death," MLQ, 5(1944), 61-68.


11Ibid., p. 47.

12Ibid., p. 45.


14L.C. Martin, p. xxxix.

15For example, see Richard L. Capwell, "Herrick and the Aesthetic Principle of Variety and Contrast," South Atlantic Quarterly 71 (1972), 488-95.


17Ibid., p. 9.


19Ibid., p. 259.

20See the essays in the issue entitled "Augustan Poetry Books" in Arethusa, 13, No. 1 (1980).

22 John Van Sickle, "The Book-Roll and Some Conventions of the Poetic Book," Arethusa 13, No.1 (1980), 5-42. This and the following paragraph are based on Van Sickle's analysis of the format and provenance of the ancient poetry book.


24 Ibid., p.16.

25 Ibid., p.16.


29 Ibid., p.171.

30 Ibid., p.173.

31 Ibid., p.164. This is the Renaissance critic Scaliger's definition of the Silva genre.

32 See, for example, the classic study by Joseph Summers, George Herbert: His Religion and Art (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1968).


34 All quotations from Herrick are followed by "H" (Hesperides) and poem numbers and lines from The Complete Poetry of Robert Herrick, ed. J. Max Patrick (New York: Doubleday, 1963).

For example, J. Max Patrick, ed., *The Complete Poetry of Robert Herrick*, p.11.


See Achsah Guibbory "'No lust theres like to Poetry': Herrick's Passion for Poetry" in "Trust to Good Verses," pp.79-87. Guibbory argues that "in Hesperides, there is a close relationship between art, particularly poetry, and what Herrick calls 'lust.'" (p.79).


Ibid., p.248.


See, for example, Harold Roland Swardson, Jr., "Herrick and the Ceremony of Mirth" in Poetry and the Fountain of Light: Observations on the Conflict Between Christian and Classical Traditions in Seventeenth-Century Poetry (Columbia: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1962), pp.40-63. Swardson argues that Herrick "felt the sense of opposition between his poetry and his religion" (p.42). Also Anthony Low, Love's Architecture: Devotional Modes in Seventeenth-Century Poetry (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1978). Low sees Herrick developing a "religion of pleasure;" however, "Herrick's love of beauty and pleasure in the service of religion" leads him "to surrender to Epicureanism" (p.214). Herrick thus solves the conflict between his Christianity and classicism by reverting to "paganism." In Low's view, few of Herrick's poems "could not have been written by a Roman Stoic or Epicurean" (p.208).


Stephen Spender, Eliot (New York: The Viking Press, 1976), pp.4-5. Spender writes, "... there is no contradiction between a poet writing in rhythms and using images that are unique to his sensibility and his writing poetry that does not express his confessional personality." Like Eliot, Herrick abjures "self-expression" in his poetry, but is nevertheless "a very personal poet."


