STYLE AND THE READER: DIALECTIC IN BEN JONSON'S EPIGRAMMES

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ABSTRACT

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Recent studies of Ben Jonson's poetry have assumed one of Jonson's major poetic techniques to be the demonstration of certain critical faculties, and their consequent development in Jonson's audience. In the Epigrammes, Jonson's classical plain style, and the arrangement of the 133 poems enable readers to learn, by practicing, processes of discrimination and judgment essential to the growth of their moral and aesthetic sensibilities. Hence Jonson's major didactic strategy is the carefully structured activity of reading the Epigrammes as a book, rather than the presentation of encapsulated wit and wisdom modeled on the comical and satiric epigrams of Martial.

Though the idea of the readers' active "process" through the collection is vital to understanding the Epigrammes, Jonson's arrangement implies a "progress" as well. The sequence as a whole moves generally from satire to praise, celebrating in particular those who use language well--historians, translators, poets. We come gradually to note that Jonson places himself in a fellowship of the learned and the good, whose common denominator is the wise and honest use of language. Moreover, readers can aspire to places in this fellowship as they learn to appreciate Jonson's praise of a judicious intelligence that both bespeaks and fosters wisdom.

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Both Jonson's epitaphs, and the final poem of the collection, the mock-epic "The Famous Voyage," diverge significantly from Jonson's chosen model in the epigram, Martial. These poems illustrate Jonson's own definition of himself as a poet, and the particular poetic tasks he has assigned himself. In addition, the lengthy, scatological "Voyage" demands of its readers sophisticated literary and moral judgements--evaluations for which the brief preceding poems have prepared them. My study explores and defines Jonson's notion of the tasks of the poet by examining in detail the problems posed and resolved in the epitaphs, the poems of praise, and "The Famous Voyage." Above all, I see Jonson's "chaste book" of Epigrammes as just that--a coherent work which asks members of its audience to find and define its coherence for themselves.

To my mother and to the memory of my father

PREFACE

Writing a dissertation is a solitary task, but for me it was not a lonely undertaking. Fortunately! Warm gratitude and affection to all the members of the Tuesday Group, who helped me to take it one step at a time; to Philip McGuire, whose lectures nourished my love of Renaissance lyric; and to Jay Ludwig, for asking the right questions. I thank my friends (I know to whom I write), always lovingly and happily there, whether I yelled for help or just wished for company. And my deep thanks to my family, especially to my mother and my brother, for their steady nurture of me and of my work.

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INTRODUCTION

Two recent studies of Ben Jonson indicate that, at last, his lyric poetry is being seen for the rich experience it is. In "Ben Jonson's 'Workes of Judgement': A Study of Rhetorical Strategies in the Epigrammes," H. Jennifer Brady examines Jonson's book of Epigrammes as a collection arranged to educate its readers in a process of moral self-scrutiny.[1] Rather than moving toward culmination in a statement of specific insights, or promulgating definitive precepts, by their arrangement the poems provide a continuing exercise of the critical faculties of their audience.

Richard S. Peterson's "Imitation and Praise in Ben Jonson's Poems," augments and redefines the concept of "imitation" as one of the guiding principles for aspiring poets.[2] Based on his reading of Discoveries, Peterson finds that, for Jonson, "imitation" does not imply merely the copying of literary models for one's own artistic development. Rather, it is the critical process of careful selection, study, and use of models--both by the working literary artist and by the virtuous members of a society. Jonson's poems of praise celebrate those who are able to "imitate" successfully, in their reading and writing, and in their manner of living.

The studies cited above are important because they assume one of Jonson's major poetic techniques to be his demonstration of the play of certain critical faculties, and their consequent development in his

audience. In the Epigrammes, Jonson's classical plain style and the arrangement of the 133 poems enable readers to learn, by practicing, processes of discrimination and judgment essential to the growth of their moral and aesthetic sensibilities. Hence Jonson's major didactic strategy is the carefully structured activity of reading the Epigrammes, rather than the presentation of encapsulated bits of wisdom and wit after the manner of the satiric and comical epigrams of Martial.

Though the idea of readers' "process" through the collection is vital to understanding the Epigrammes, Jonson's arrangement implies a "progress" as well. Necessary to Jonson's definition of his task as a poet, certain themes and concerns show themselves throughout the book, particularly in several difficulties that readers encounter in the course of the collection.

Like Martial, Jonson places epitaphs among his poems of satire and praise; but he diverges considerably from his Roman model in the themes and tone of these poems. Two are about his own dead daughter and son (22; 45); one, the only acrostic of the collection, praises a noblewoman's devotion to her brother (40); two are titled "epitaphs," the only poems of the book named by genre (120; 124). Read in the order of their appearance in the collection, the poems recapitulate the movement of the sequence as a whole. Presenting his own dilemma as grieving father and artist (22; 45), Jonson demonstrates the inadequacy of traditional epitaphic formulae and convention. Paradoxically, he manages to supersede such conventions by his moving demonstration of their insufficiency in the face of intense emotion. In these, possibly the most accessible poems of the collection, readers find thmselves

compelled to focus on questions that apply to the Epigrammes generally: what is the role of the poet? how do the issues of the honest use of language, virtuous action, and relationships with other human beings, plagued by pain and paradox, affect members of Jonson's society? How do they affect the members of his audience? Far from rejecting language as a strategy for imposing order, closure, and a measure of emotional ease, Jonson's last two epitaphs--and his book as a whole--affirm a faith in letters; both book and epitaphs set out the realistic terms on which that faith is based.

The sequence as a whole moves generally from satire to praise, celebrating in particular those who use language well--historians, translators, poets. We come gradually to note that Jonson places himself in a fellowship of the learned and the good, whose common denominator is a wise and honest use of words. Moreover, readers can aspire to places in this fellowship as they learn to appreciate Jonson's praise of attitudes of mind, a judicious intelligence that both bespeaks and fosters wisdom.

Like the epitaphs, the final poem of the Epigrammes, "The Famous Voyage," diverges from Martial, Jonson's announced model. Because it is a lengthy, scatological mock-epic, it demands that readers make sophisticated moral and literary judgments: evaluation of themselves in relation to the vices that Jonson describes more graphically here than anywhere else in his "chaste book," and, more difficult, placement of the poem in the context of the Epigrammes as a whole.

Based on Herford and Simpson's edition of Jonson's Works, my study explores Jonson's definition of his sense of his poetic mission by

examining in detail the problems posed--and resolved--in the epitaphs, the poems of praise, and "The Famous Voyage." Above all, I see Jonson's "book" of Epigrammes as just that--a coherent work which asks its audience to find and define its coherence for themselves.

NOTES

[1]H. Jennifer Brady, "Ben Jonson's 'Works of Judgement': A Study of Rhetorical Strategies in the Epigrammes," Dissertation, Princeton, 1980.

[2]Richard S. Peterson, "Imitation and Praise in Ben Jonson's Poems," English Literary Renaissance 10(1980).

CHAPTER ONE

As poetic touchstones placed among the one hundred thirty-three poems of the Epigrammes, the epitaphs in the collection provide us with five opportunities to study in some detail Jonson's handling of issues fundamental to his art and to his ethical stance. Individually, "On My First Daughter" (22), "On Margaret Ratcliffe" (40), "On My First Sonne" (45), "Epitaph on S.P. A Child of Q. El. Chappel" (120), and "Epitaph on Elizabeth, L.H." (124), bring into sharp focus characteristics of Jonson's persona and his sense of his poetic task, especially as it is revealed through Jonson's handling and reshaping of traditional poetic subjects and themes.

Roberts W. French summarizes several of these issues, made specific in the epitaphs, before his discussion of epigrams 22 and 45, on Jonson's daughter and son, respectively:

> How does one write about one's own dead children? Who except Emerson has ever tried such a thing? The situation and the subject seem difficult beyond imagining. There are obvious dangers, including the easy descent into sentimentality, emotionalism, self-pity, effusiveness; but perhaps not so obvious is the danger that in objectifying the subject, in treating the deaths of his children as materials for poetry, the poet may become un-emotional, conventional, cold. If emotion doesn't overcome artifice, then artifice may overcome emotion; as Donne wrote in 'The Triple Foole,' "Griefe brought to numbers cannot be so fierce, / For, he tames it that fetters it in verse." Tame grief, however, is hardly better than hyberbolic grief;either way, the poem fails.[1]

But because it confronts these very difficulties, "On My First Daughter" (22) is a successful poem. In its brevity and simplicity, it seems a very type of epitaph as Puttenham defines the genre:

> An Epitaph is but a kind of Epigram only applied to the report of the dead persons estate and degree, or of his other good or bad partes, to his commendation or reproach; and is an inscription such as a man may commodiously write or engrave upon a tombe in a few verses, pithie, quicke, and sententious for the passer by to peruse, and judge upon without any long tariaunce: So as if it exceede the measure of an Epigram, it is then (if the verse be correspondent) rather an Elegie than an Epitaph.[2]

As O.B. Hardison points out, few poets of the Renaissance are more successful than Jonson in capturing the spirit of the classical epitaphs as they are known in the Greek Anthology, and the epitaphs scattered among Martial's twelve hundred epigrams.[3]

But in choosing his daughter as the subject for the first epitaph in the collection, Jonson is already diverging from Martial, whom he names several times as his deliberately-chosen model.[4] Largely because of the poet's detachment from his subjects, Martial's epitaphs, aside from a few which are satirical, display "to perfection that vein of sentiment and pathos, often half-playful, in which he excelled. Many of the best are on children, chiefly young slaves, or on animal pets. Others are composed for the benefit of his friends. Closely akin to these, but more conventional and of less merit, are his mere jeux d'esprit, concerning his friends' pets or dealing cleverly with objects of art or natural curiosities, such as the bee enclosed in amber."[5] Jonson, in his choice of subjects, has already set himself a peculiarly difficult--and Jonsonian--poetic task.

But he chooses to work out an unconventional task in conventional terms; the result is a poem which "generates much of its emotive force from the tension created between the insistence on restraint and the human inability to maintain that restraint."[6] The twelve lines of tetrameter couplets establish, initially, a kind of pattern: exposition-comment followed by consolation, a pattern which holds throughout the poem.

Lines one and two, conventionally, identify the poem with the actual location of the grave; we know the deceased not only by name but also by her special place in the life of the family: "Here lyes to each her parents ruth / Mary, the daughter of their youth."[7]

The stock (and stoic) notion of lines three and four, life as merely a loan whose payment inevitably comes due, comforts at least one parent:[8] "Yet all heavens gifts, being heavens due, / It makes the father, lesse, to rue" (ll. 3-4).

Even here there is a hint in "lesse" that the poet's attitude may not be one of resignation. He may "rue" "lesse" than the mother of the child; he may mourn "lesse" than he would without the comfort derived from the notion that repayment of the child is, after all, inevitable. But he does note his own share in the mother's "ruth." Oblique hints at his own pain are also present: though the poem is titled "On My First Daughter," the poet refers to himself throughout in the third person,suggesting an effort at detachment. Nevertheless, from these hints of the poet's own emotion we are moved quickly to simple exposition of the child's brief history--also in conventional terms:[9] "At six moneths end, she parted hence, / With safetie of her innocence" (ll. 5-6).

A comment follows, a Christian bit of consolation directed specifically at the child's mother--a nice division of classical and Christian wisdom between male and female parents, certainly, but we should also note that the poet deliberately excepts "the father" from whatever solace the Christian commonplace offers: "Whose soule heavens Queene, (whose name shee beares) / In comfort of her mothers teares, / Hath plac'd among her virgin-traine" (11. 6-8).

The last three lines are a curious mingling of allusions to two traditions: the classical and the Christian seem to share emphasis, but the poet's farewell is a line used so routinely in Greek, Latin, and Martialian epitaph that it was commonly abbreviated.[10] The actual emphasis falls on the physical, the dead body, the final resting place, and on the poet, since for the first time he uses the second person: "Which cover lightly, gentle earth" (1. 12).

The formulaic line distills and focuses emotion rather than leveling or diffusing it; moving as it is, however, line twelve is merely the final note in a subtle rendition of the father's grief, which throughout the poem lies just beneath the surface. We have been prepared for this evidence of emotion.

The simple diction of the poem seems to set forth only the unadorned "fact" of a brief life now ended. But complications of syntax and rhyme--slight dislocations of form--add another dimension to the apparently simple content, asking reconsideration of both its simplicity and its resigned tone. Lines one through six contain the least complicated syntax of the entire poem. Though we must wait until line two for a completion of "Here lyes" (1. 1.), the conventionality of the

opening lines makes no special demand on the reader. The simple statement of the child's death is followed by an equally simple acknowledgement of the death as wholly predictable, in keeping with the nature of things. Such acknowledgment apparently eases the father's grief: "Yet all heavens gifts, being heavens due, / It makes the father, Iesse, to rue" (ll. 3-4).

In the next two lines, the child's history is completed; the end-stopped couplets and simple masculine rhymes of lines one through six give the poem thus far a neat, inscriptional quality.

But at line seven begin complications of syntax and dislocation of rhyme that place heavier demands on the reader, suggesting that we must give this simple situation more attention. If verse cannot quite contain and subdue emotion, it will give us a faithful rendition of the painful circumstance of losing a daughter and of writing a poem about that loss--ostensibly a farewell, but, more accurately, a depiction of the father's personal and artistic struggle. In its simple content and in its selection and use of highly formal structures, we have the situation as it seems at first--a young child's death, a father's resignation. But in the subtle violation of the formal features, and in the placement and the loading of conventional ones, intensifying rather than lessening emotion, we have the situation as it is--a farewell spoken by a grieving father who has not quite mastered himself in the face of death.

Lines five and six are an end-stopped couplet, but the semicolon at line six alerts us to expect more. At line seven, another clause begins, to be tacked onto line six; "shee" (l. 5) is, of course, the antecedent of "whose" (l. 7). But the remainder of the sentence,

ending at line eleven, includes inversions, subordinate clauses, and a clause interrupted still further by clauses and phrases. "Heavens Queene" is the subject (l. 7); but we must wait until line nine for its verb, "Hath plac'd," remembering that "whose soule" (l. 7) (that is, the soul of the child) is the real object of the verb. We are twice interrupted along the way, however. A parenthesis reminds us that the child shares a name with heaven's queen (l. 7); a prepositional phrase (l. 8) assigns the Christian view of the afterlife to the consolation of only one parent--"in comfort of her mothers teares" (l. 8).

Line ten begins with the relative pronoun "where," referring to the "virgin-traine" (l. 9) immediately preceding it; but this subordinate clause is interrupted by another, "While that sever'd doth remaine" (l. 10). To what does "that" refer? Presumably it refers to the child's soul in heaven, now separate from her body. Though this is a version of Christian belief--"while" indicates an eventual reunion--it is, as Roberts W. French suggests, a "curious way" for a father to speak, suggesting that "it is the soul that has been severed from the body, rather than saying what we might expect, that the body has been cast off and the soul liberated."[11] Moreover, "sever" is a surprisingly violent term to use in such a context, connoting abrupt and terrible physical separation--more akin, perhaps, to the separation the father feels from the daughter, rather than to soul from body. Certainly such separation is reflected in the syntax; the poet has interrupted the straightforward syntactical arrangement over and over again.

Now the soul "remaines" in heaven; usually it is the lifeless body which "remains," once its animating principle has gone. "That"

also looks forward to line eleven, since the idea of severance requires us to visualize the soul separated from something else. Both the choice of verb and the last three lines emphasize the physicality of the "something else," the child's body in the grave, to which the poet devotes most of his attention.

Line eleven, "This grave partakes the fleshly birth," at last completes the where-clause begun in line ten; finally we have come to a full stop. "Fleshly birth," however, commands attention: the phrase recalls the very young age of the child. But the association of the grave and a birth is not quite Christian: rather than an entry into a new dimension of existence--the death as a re-birth--the effect here is oddly earth-bound, suggestive of still-birth, undercutting the Christian consolation.

The knotty syntax and the new connotations attached to traditional sentiments disturb us in the final lines; we are also deprived of the neatness of the opening couplets of the poem. The couplet structure remains, but sense and rhyme no longer coincide. The dislocation begins at lines seven and eight. At best, "beares" and "teares" are half-rhyme. These two lines also form the last end-stopped couplet. The sense and syntax of lines seven through eleven compel the reader to proceed without the pause that the rhyme might otherwise allow at line eight (beares / teares) and at line ten (train / remain). Despite the commas at lines eight and eleven, and the colon at line nine, the pauses are quite weak: the ear hears completion, but the mind is left unsatisfied. Only at line eleven, an off-line which should introduce a new thought, is line seven closed satisfactorily: "This grave partakes the fleshly

birth." So strong is the completion that the poet marks it with a period. His description of the present state-of-things has ended heavily. We have a dead child, a tearful mother, an apparently stoic father. The child's soul has gone to heaven, her body occupies a newly dug grave on earth, some day to be reunited with the soul. But the formal structure of the poem, the rhyme, has yet to be completed, and at line twelve, merely by appending a stock statement, the poet reveals a completely un-stoic attitude.

"Which cover lightly, gentle earth" literally localizes the grief only hinted at in the diction of the first eleven lines, surfacing in the gradual dislocation of sense and rhyme. The rhyme demanded by "birth" (l. 11) is satisfactorily completed, but the full stop at the end of line eleven allows us to hear line twelve as an appendage, a tender after-thought that finally articulates the poet's real concern and grief. The emphasis on the present, the physical, is here; after the Christian depiction of the afterlife (despite its undercutting), we are returned to corporeal reality, sharp and painful, by means of a classical formula that, by virtue of its placement, is formula no longer.

The effect of line twelve, then, is precisely the opposite of epitaphic ritual: it draws abrupt attention to the emotion of the father, confirming the uneasiness hinted at earlier in the poem. Surely we have been prepared by the highly wrought syntax of lines seven through eleven for this belying of the father's resignation; but it comes by contrast, in the form of a simplicity whose customary effect is radically altered by its context.

In a general discussion of Jonson's nondramatic poetry, William Spanos finds characteristic of Jonson's poetry a "resonance," a deepening of emotion not immediately apparent, or only subtly so. As a metaphor Spanos uses Marianne Moore's part-definition of poetry as presentation of

> imaginary gardens with real toads in them . . . . The imaginary garden, in sharp if implicit contrast with the real toad, is a formally perfect artifact; a symmetrical unity, but an abstract and therefore lifeless one. The real toad, which is a deformity or, perhaps, an imperfection in the ordered pattern and yet an integral denizen of gardens, is what charges the garden world with a tension that gives it the impression of animation.[12]

Among his examples Spanos includes "On My First Daughter," specifically line twelve, to illustrate the sort of tension that generates emotional force:

> The final line is a poignantly personal utterance that intentionally violates both the thought that precedes it and the form in which it is embodied. The sudden shift of tone, underlined by the expression of the plea to the gentle earth in the form of a sentence fragment, throws the meaning of the preceding lines into a new and surprising light. They do not merely constitute a conventional epitaph after all. They represent, rather, an effort on the part of the poet to formalize and thus give distance to his grief. In other words, the tonal shift, which at first appears to be an imperfection, is actually the source of the emotional energy that spreads, like rings of disturbed water, over the still, glasslike surface of the poem.[13]

I would alter Mr. Spanos' final simile just slightly--to allow for a richer reading of the poem. The final line is an inevitable outbreak of the emotion that the poet struggles to contain throughout; yet, ever the artist, his final effort too is couched in utterly conventional terms: pressured as he is by the slowly-growing force of his difficulty at confronting the fact of his daughter's death, the

father still remains a consummate poet--and his last effort at convention deepens the poignancy of his pain as a father.

This difficulty of artistic containment and adequate expression of grief is not confined to poems about his children, although "On My First Sonne" offers the most intense and moving presentation of the poet's dilemma. But between "On My First Daughter" and "On My First Sonne" we find "On Margaret Ratcliffe," which, in poetic strategy and effect, strikingly resembles the epitaphs that precede and follow it.

As Herford and Simpson note, Margaret Ratcliffe is the daughter of Sir John Ratcliffe, to whom Jonson addresses epigram 93. A long contemporary account describes Margaret's grief at the death of her brother John in Ireland; her mourning took a physical toll that was believed the cause of her own death. Though Jonson writes commendatory verse to her father, no special relationship is noted between him and Margaret: "her epitaph [is] at St. Margaret's, Westminster . . . Jonson's lines were not placed on her tomb."[14]

In "On Margaret Ratcliffe," Jonson faces a task similar to the one he confronts in the poems on his children. In the face of death, what are the appropriate human and artistic responses? How does one make each of these responses ring true without negating the other? But because of the absence of familial tie or special association between poet and subject, Jonson must now see these questions from another side: he will not inject a false grief into the poem, nor will he indulge in fulsome praise.

Jonson holds that high art is also consummate truth: "Truth is man's proper good; and the only immortall thing, was given to our

mortality to use . . . Beside, nothing is lasting that is fain'd; it will have another face then it had, ere long; as Euripedes saith, no lye ever grows old."[15] In keeping with this critical tenet, Jonson in epigram 40 makes "art" through a just depiction of the "facts" as he sees them: he relies on a rendition of the essential nature of the situation.

"On Margaret Ratcliffe" is a seventeen-line poem; its four tetrameter couplets rhyme abba. As in "On My First Daughter" the poet gives us the sense that the poem--and the reader--are present at the actual burial place, here evoked through Jonson's direct address of the "marble" of the tomb (l. 1), and reinforced by the artifice of the acrostic on her name, as if set into the marble of the gravestone. The function of names in this poem, and in the first epitaph, is significant: in "On My First Daughter" the poet capitalizes on the fact of the child as namesake of the queen of heaven, which seems to establish a special link between the name and the ultimate fate of her soul, with its placement in the Virgin Mary's "traine." The acrostic on Margaret's name immediately establishes a highly wrought, artificial structure for the poem. The poet's freedom to "play" with the name, to turn it to such artistic use, suggests that a special link between him and its bearer is being forged in the making of the poem itself: suffering and death, delicately and honestly, are being transformed into art. The use of Margaret's name calls a special attention to the artistic possibilities inherent in the truth of situations, in their faithful rendition, even in what seems the most fundamental of facts--the identity of the deceased. Moreover, though the acrostic is an artistic device that may be used with

any name, the finished poem is by design unique to the person and situation because of this particular constraint imposed by the poet himself. As in "On My First Daughter," what seem mere device and formula become the vehicles for special, highly charged poetry.

Through line twelve, syntax and rhyme coincide, giving a strong sense of neatness and containment. Margaret's physical beauty, devotion to truth--manifested in her outward beauty for all to "read"--and wit, are extolled. Significantly, Margaret was herself her own "story"--history--analogous to the truth and glory sought by those who seek to read meaning in the configurations of stars; perhaps this is, too, an oblique compliment to Margaret. All that she was, and is, shines out in her person. The poet describes this without enlarging on it, or even becoming very specific; of necessity written by another hand, only the circumstance of her death is given in any detail.

At line ten, Jonson introduces this somewhat unusual note; later underscored by the rhyme scheme and by caesural variation, we find commemoration of, and commentary on, the cause of Margaret's death. Time wins initially by "bestowing" her; as the OED explains, time "makes ill, puts aside"; so strengthened by its weakening of Margaret, time eventually triumphs: "Till time, strong by her bestowing, / Conquer'd hath both life and it" (ll. 11-12).

At line thirteen, the poet goes outside the immediate context of the poem to note that Margaret's grief for her brother is unusual, "out of fashion / In these times" (ll. 13-14). Interestingly, "time" and "times" demand our attention: unchanging devotion despite the passage of time, sub specie aeternitatis, has claimed Margaret's life; in direct

(and complimentary) contrast to those who see evidence of such emotion as "out of fashion" in "these times"--the fickle time of the sublunary world, rather than the inexorable process of Time itself, against which all things must be measured--Margaret is found to have "true" passion: emotion that is genuine, not false; "true" (fitting) to situation, and lasting, as Jonson's "true" art lasts. According to the attributes the poet chooses to present us in the poem, Margaret herself is responsible for her own transformation into the stuff of art, by her extraordinary worthiness.

Nevertheless, at the heart of Margaret's death, and, consequently, at the heart of the poem, is an inescapable difficulty: the true passion for which Margaret is extolled is the cause of her death. "True" is a nicely ambiguous word; so is "passion." In this case, devotion has in some way caused suffering and death, for which, (paradoxically), the deceased is praised and commemorated by a simple renditon of the facts of the case.

That this paradox disturbs somewhat is remarked by the violations of a structure that, to line thirteen, remains extraordinarily neat. At lines thirteen and fourteen we have the first enjambment in the poem, an incomplete sentence which comes to a strong stop in the middle of line fourteen, and, perhaps in place of a verb, a phrase in apposition to "life" describing the situation as it presently exists in a static (verb-less) manner. Lines fourteen and fifteen are similarly enjambed; the complete sentence begun after the caesura in line fourteen is halted by another caesura in line fifteen: "In these times. // Few have so ru'de / Fate, in a brother" (ll. 14-5).

We are given the second pause perhaps to reflect once again on the devotion bestowed here not on a lover or a husband, but on a brother. As if to re-establish the sense of neatness momentarily lost, the poem ends: "To conclude, / For wit, feature, and true passion, / Earth, thou hast not such another" (11. 15-7).

But rhyme, caesura, and enjambed lines belie the neatness otherwise associated with epitaph; indeed, after the first two feet of line fifteen, the line seems an afterthought, an appendage in meaning, but, simultaneously, demanded by considerations of form. The completion of the acrostic, the completion of the fourth quatrain (the rhyme begun at line thirteen, "fashion"), the filling out of line fifteen with the requisite number of syllables, all make it necessary. But Margaret's "wit, feature, and true passion" have been set forth once. Formal considerations demand this summary; sense does not.

Yet is the funtion of these last two and a half lines merely formal closure? On the contrary, as in "On My First Daughter," what appears to be a continuation of the containment of emotion is used in a direct counterpoint to the sense of the poem, so that the formulaic touches jar the ear rather than satisfying it (while in "Daughter" the ear is satisfied as the mind is forced to recognize that the satisfaction is merely aural).

Line seventeen is an odd line; it necessarily completes the thought begun at line fifteen, but only the acrostic warrants its presence; at best it is a half-rhyme with lines one and four. In effect, it completes the sense of lines fifteen and sixteen, re-emphasizes Margaret's specialness, and jars the aural (while satisfying the visual)

artifice we have so far. Moreover, it is the second direct address of the poem. The first is to "marble," to weep with the poet for what it entombs, and an entreaty to protect Margaret's remains: verbal artifice is directed at plastic art to call attention to the customary purpose of all such art--containment, protection, commemoration. The apostrophe to marble, the references to Margaret's "true passion" (l. 14), and its rarity in these times, indicate the poet's handling of unwieldy emotion that kills because it cannot be contained. The attributes that make Margaret Ratcliffe a worthy, memorable human being are assigned responsibility for her death. Paradoxically, her passionate loyalty to the bonds of familial love is the cause of her removal into the realms of death and art, where the vicissitudes of ties with other human beings do not exist.

"Earth, thou hast not such another" (l. 17) leaves us feeling very much as we do at the end of "On My First Daughter": there is no softening of reality here, merely its structured (but faithful) re-presentation. As in "On My First Daughter" we remain oddly earthbound: earth has not such another living being to grace it since Margaret has died; nor does the earth, the ground, hold and protect another deceased person who shares the attributes for which she is eulogized. The final line calls attention to Margaret's physical absence from the living, and to her dead presence in the tomb. In the face of incontrovertible fact, the poet simply reiterates the obvious. "Earth, thou hast not such another" is the last word, not necessarily of comfort, but certainly of truth.

In "On Margaret Ratcliffe," then, as in "On My First Daughter," what seems conventional epitaph is undercut by a number of devices which violate the forms of such poems and belie the resigned commemoration usually associated with epitaph. Despite the difference in the poet's relationships to his daughter Mary and to Margaret Ratcliffe, the problem of couching emotional response in the appropriate terms is the same in each poem; the poetic strategies used in both epitaphs illustrate that in neither case has Jonson "solved" his dilemma. He has instead elected to depict it, masterfully. That same unflinching depiction is the source of the power of the third epitaph in the collection of Epigrammes, "On My First Sonne" (45); the same issues are brought before us. Because of the specialness of the father-son relation, they come into focus even more sharply and movingly; indeed, it might be said that in "On My First Sonne," the boy is the nominal subject of the poem, Jonson the real one.

"On My First Sonne" has been read as a poem through which Jonson, as bereaved father, achieves for himself a measure of consolation, largely through conventionally Christian realizations of the proper place of human love in relation to divine love.[16] Without recourse to contemporary theology, Barbara Hernstein Smith agrees that, finally, Jonson masters his grief:

> . . . we might say that the occasion of this poem would seem to lend itself more to lyric than to epigrammatic utterance. This, however, is not precisely the source of its power, for the poem ultimately serves not as an expression of emotions but as a containment of them. The measured rhythm and language of tenderness in the opening lines convey a sense of grief just under control. Although emotion breaks out in the fifth line, by the conclusion of the poem it has been securely mastered, and the last lines complete what we understand to have been, in every sense, a last farewell--it will not, and

> need not, be spoken again . . . the characteristic effects of strong closure have been achieved through . . . ironic understatement. An epigram . . . tends to define its subject for eternity, sub specie aeternitatis. The understatement with which this epigram concludes puts grief into that perspective; it yields emotion, which is not stable, over to wisdom, which is.[17]

Though I think Smith is correct in seeing a certain "containment" in the poem, her description of unstable emotion yielding to stable wisdom is not quite complex enough. "On My First Sonne" is the most moving of Jonson's epitaphs, but its poetic strategy is fundamentally the same as the two that precede it: as before, neither the strength of emotion nor the force of wisdom triumphs. Rather, both are simultaneously present throughout the poem, indicating Jonson's struggle to hold them in balance. Ultimately, wisdom does not control emotion; the two exist in a delicate, tense reciprocity that gives Jonson's art its profoundly moral implications, and an emotional depth that can be sounded only through close reading.

For the first time in an epitaph, Jonson addresses his subject directly. His direct address is made more powerful by his scrupulous faithfulness to the "thing itself." As before, we are given the literal facts of subject and situation. The title sets out the special relation between poet and subject. In line one the boy is addressed with absolute correctness, with a literal translation of his name that sums up his significance to the poet; the immediate focus is a just rendition of what he is. Only peripherally, as a tender after-thought, does Jonson show his feelings: "Farewell, thou child of my right hand, // and joy" (l. 1; my emphasis).

Line two moves for a moment back to the poet: "My sinne was too much hope of thee, lov'd boy" (l. 2). In lines three and four, however, we are returned to careful rendition of the occasion for emotion, rather than to emotion itself. Jonson uses a classic epitaph formula in which death is seen as a part of the order of things, since life is only a thing lent: "Seven yeeres tho'wert lent to me, and I thee pay, / Exacted by thy fate, on the just day" (ll. 3-4).[18]

Even so, Jonson presents himself as not entirely passive here; perhaps the activity of "I thee pay" indicates how deep is the pain of relinquishing the child. In contrast to "On My First Daughter," in which the child is also "lent," Jonson's son is not a gift to be returned to heaven but is seen as having simply lived out his time. No heavenly power recalls him; his own fate is responsible, not some real or mythical or religious external power. A bleak situation is nevertheless perceived as "just," and it is presented starkly.

Into a universe operating somehow in terms of "lendings " "payment," "exaction," Jonson's emotion intrudes painfully, as he indicates with his placement of line two: "My sinne was too much hope of thee, lov'd boy" (l. 2). What is "too much hope"? Who decides? No deity, Christian or pagan, is invoked here; the poem is conspicuously not religious. But for whatever "justice" is at work, Jonson's hope of the boy seems to have exceeded some boundary, violated some instinctively-felt decorum of the father-son relation. The regularity of rhyme (aabb) and the nearly matching placement of caesurae in the first four lines(in lines one and two, after the eighth syllable; in lines three and four, after the sixth) emphasizes the constraints imposed by situation--just,

perhaps, but constraints nonetheless; "sinne" and "too much hope" are curious locutions in a context of such formal regularity and scrupulous justice to situation.

Lines five through eight reckon with emotion more directly. "O, could I loose all father, now" is the last explicit statement of the nature of the link between poet and subject. They are the only unsubdued lines of the poem, but their emotional force carries us through line eight as well as reinforcing the sense of muted pain in line two. After the caesura, "for" is the simplest, most loaded of one-word reminders of the bond between father and son, uncracked even now: reasonably, no man laments "the state he should envie... / To have so soone 'scaped worlds and fleshes rage, / And, if no other miserie, yet age" (ll. 6-8). The still-unsevered connection--built of love, not reason--causes Jonson to mourn what for the boy is an escape from earthly pain.

Only in light of the fact of the child's death does Jonson see now--because of the depth of his grief--that his "hope" for the boy is somehow a sinful excess. Jonson does not note an excess of affection, but rather, of hope, the virtue linked to time: confidence, perhaps presumption, of a future that was not his to expect. In this universe (as Jonson reminds himself now) the duration of the boy's life is not for his father to determine. Despite the strong pause after "O, could I loose all father, now," "for" links the emotional outcry to the reasoned assessment of death which follows it; the enjambment and the imperfect rhyme (why / envie) suggest less-than-complete acceptance of the rational view. Ironically, intense emotion--an excellent thing in

the woman--is celebrated as a virtue and blamed for a death in "On Margaret Ratcliffe." In a similar irony, the faithful outline in "On My First Sonne" of an equally passionate attachment results in the father's most powerful poetry.

Lines nine and ten seem to return to the ritual function of the epitaph: a farewell after the relatively subdued emotional outburst, and placement of words in the mouth of the dead child, in the traditional manner:[19]

> Rest in soft peace, and, ask'd, say here doth lie
> Ben Jonson his best piece of poetry.
> For whose sake, hence-forth, all his vowes be such,
> As what he loves may never like too much (11. 9-12).

Conflating his roles of father and artist, Jonson has begun to focus on the dilemma which is the genesis of the poem. "Here" is the actual physical resting place of the child, the grave, reminding us that this is indeed epitaph; "here" is the place of the epitaph in the pages of the collection of Epigrammes. What lies here also has a number of referents: the twelve-line poem, the child himself, Jonson playing on the sense of "poet" as "maker."[20] Jonson has described (but not commented on) the paradox of making the best poetry under the worst of circumstances, and, conversely, of choosing to believe that verbal art is as good a "making" as a first son. But he chooses neither. One is not better than the other; they are inseparable, and that is precisely the problem. The dead child now exists only in the poem; the powerful poem exists only because Jonson has lost the living child. Here, at least, Jonson's greatness as a poet is linked in a terrible way to his fatherhood. The concluding lines of the poem delineate the problem; they do not provide its resolution.

Line twelve has called forth a number of glosses. Herford and Simpson give as its source the final line of one of Martial's epitaph's on Glaucia (6.28), a slave child: quidquid ames, cupias non placuisse nimis, usually translated as "whatever you love, desire that it does not please you too much," common sentiment among classical writers of epitaph.[21] The flourishing of the young, the good, the beautiful, attracts the attention of the gods, the Fates, or both, and causes the Fates to cut short promising young lives because of jealousy or a desire to have the favored ones with them.[22]

Though it provides closure for the poem, with a learned glance at Jonson's model, a closer look shows that for Jonson such a line hardly constitutes resolution for the pain in "On My First Sonne." Indeed, the array of glosses to lines eleven and twelve suggests that the epigrammatic neatness of Jonson's final lines is belied by the number of ambiguities readers have found there.

As he has loaded the innocuous connective "for" (l. 5) to underscore the strength of his bond with the child, so also Jonson loads the difficult last lines of the poem, especially the word "like." White et al., offer "to delight in [?]"[23] as a possible reading; Ian Donaldson quotes Herford and Simpson but adds cryptically that Jonson has "altered the emphasis";[24] William Hunter gives "thrive" as a synonym for "like."[25] The OED supports both "delight in" and "thrive" as possibilities. And both versions make sense. In the first, Jonson asks that he not take too much delight in what he loves because of the unbearable pain of its inevitable removal--a reading surely supported in particular by lines one through four, by the emotional "O, could I

loose all father, now" (l. 5), and by Jonson's subtle depiction of the relationship itself as the reason for his lamentation of a death that, reasonably speaking, he should see as the child's release from pain.

Hunter's reading, "thrive," brings the line much closer to the spirit of Martial: "As what he loves may never thrive too much." Certainly this is possible, but its implications are grim. Jonson has selectively borrowed the form, merely. No Christian or classical deity or fate is present here. The boy is dead, Jonson acknowledges, merely because his "just day" has come. Moreover, since the final four lines are spoken by the child (significantly Jonson chooses to place these words in the mouth of his "best piece of poetry" as an answer to posterity--conflating once again the child and the poem, the roles of father and artist), the child's having to speak the line reinforces the sense of impotence the father feels on this occasion.[26] Martialian formula, if it is meant here to de-fuse emotion, succeeds instead in calling attention to the depth of emotion, especially in view of the power of the preceding eleven lines.

In their gloss to line twelve, Abrams et al. note that "the obscure grammar of the last line seems to refer back to the feeling in line two, that too much affection is fatal to the loved one."[27] But as the discussion above has shown, line two is not about love but about hope--presumption--and the poet's realization that his deep grief is commensurate with the strength of the father-son bond; his temporary, happy illusion that his son is more than merely lent him is presumptuous. Love has not, in some mysterious way, slain its object; rather, the

possessor of too much hope finds himself his own victim. The boy is beyond his reach.

Herford and Simpson also refer the reader to Martial 12.34, a poem on the close friend who bears the same name as the poet:

> Thirty summers and four there were, which, if I mind me, I spent, Julius, with you. Thereof the sweets were blended with the bitters, but yet were the pleasant things the more, and if all the pebbles were sorted, on this side and on that, into two heaps of diverse color, the white heap will outnumber that more dark. If you wish to shun some bitternesses and to beware of sorrows that gnaw the heart, to no man make yourself too much a comrade; your joy will be less and less will be your grief.[28]

In spirit the poem is quite close to the reading of Jonson's epigram offered by White et al.: what does not please or offer to delight you unduly, cannot be greatly mourned when it passes. But Martial uses a formulaic farewell to a slave to whom he has no special closeness; only the second poem is to a close friend. In the latter, with "the white will outnumber [vincet] the dark," he suggests that joy does compensate for the risk of intimacy. But in neither case is the speaker bidding farewell to a first-born son who bears his name.

Here lies the difficulty in Jonson's final lines: as in "On Margaret Ratcliffe," they are meant to set out the dilemma, not to resolve it. The lines are teasingly close to their classical sources; but Jonson is exploiting the rich possibilities of an English diction here almost homely. The fineness of the emotional shading between "love" and "like" takes on new meaning when a father tries to distinguish them in relation to a son.

"'Like' is often contrasted (as expressing weaker sentiment) with 'love,'" says the OED. The grammar of the line allows "he" to be

the subject of both "love" and "like":

As what he loves [he] may never like [it] too much.

For the second time in a twelve-line poem, Jonson uses "too much." Clearly he has in no way harmed the child either by loving him or hoping in him. Indeed, the final line is a half-prayerful valediction on his father's behalf spoken by the child: "Spare yourself further pain; in memory of our bond, whose duplication is impossible, may you never feel for anyone else precisely what you feel for me." The specialness of the father-son relation has perhaps tempted Jonson to love the boy as a miniature of himself, naming him, "making" him, in his own image: "like" can also mean "to fashion in a certain likeness . . . to make a likeness of; to imitate," according to the OED.[29] This way too lies pain, since what seems a unique possession / creation must be relinquished.

The identification of the boy with Jonson's "best poetry" is surely significant because it is the final irony of the poem, the final articulation of Jonson's dilemma, both human and artistic: he brings forth his best poetry under the saddest of human circumstances; he ends the poem with an epigrammatic couplet whose obscurity of grammar belies the neatness of its rhyme and the regularity of its iambic pentameter. The couplet enjoins Jonson to vow the nearly impossible: to keep his distance; to temper his own delight in human bonds; to cease to re-create and perpetuate, in the flesh of natural human relationships, or in word, the ties of love and justice that make a social order as they simultaneously shape individual human identities. But we should note that Jonson himself is not the last speaker here; the vow remains

conditional, spoken by the child to an undefined audience. The first eleven lines of the poem draw painfully close in their direct address in first person; they explore fully the depth of love and consequent pain at the child's death; and they give us the child's likeness simply by naming him with loving accuracy, leaving us with the "best piece of poetry"--child and word made virtually identical, inseparable from one another, as Jonson cannot separate his roles of poet and father.

As close readings of the first three epitaphs show, Jonson never forsakes convention even when he has chosen the most difficult of subjects for epitaph, his own children. Yet in these poems Jonson most clearly maps out his dilemma, establishing guidelines for the reader: the third person "father" of "On My First Daughter" speaks with sudden intimacy in the final line of the poem, the conventional valediction unconventional by its placement and by its separation in tone and person from the eleven lines that precede it. Convention jars expectations rather than fulfills them. In "On Margaret Ratcliffe" the rigid formality of the acrostic causes a necessary violation of rhyme scheme: Margaret's devotion has been, ironically, the cause of her death. The neatness of the poem is as deceptive as the nature of such praiseworthy devotion is ambiguous. In "On My First Sonne," Jonson uses the conventions of the boy justly lent him now being repaid. Among the words he places in the mouth of the dead child is the Martialian stock sentiment, but with deliberately obscure grammar Jonson has transformed a convention to upset our expectations once again. He causes us to re-examine both the situation and the conventional sentiments that have become more than convention because of the emotional weight they carry.

But perhaps the conventions do not bear that emotional weight as much as call attention to a burden that they cannot take on. Convention calling attention to, rather than de-fusing, emotion is one source of the "resonance," the "tension," that Spanos sees in Jonson's poetry. The public form is simply insufficient to carry lyric weight. By his choice of difficult subjects--children, a devoted sister--Jonson has chosen to depict intimate human bonds at the moments of their irreparable severing. No wonder the apparent resignation is subtly belied in each case: rather than attempts at consolation and closure, Jonson's renditions are true, just depiction of both situation and emotion.

"Justness" is another source of the tensions in the first three poems. For Jonson to see his bonds with his own children, or Margaret's with her brother John, solely in terms of justice, is inadequate to the nature of the relations, as the conventional epitaph form is inadequate to the weight it is asked to carry. "Yet all heavens gifts, being heavens due" (22. 3) has not much lessened parental grief; reaching after still another conventional sentiment in the final line of the poem, the poet finds his emotion transforming it into the lyric expression to which he has not given voice. Margaret Ratcliffe embodies truth, true glory, and a "true passion" extraordinary and precious; her purity and depth of emotion hasten her death, depriving earth of a blessed presence: her grief is justly commensurate with her love, but the death that results smacks of irony and injustice. Jonson "pays" his first son back on the "just day"; but his grief is magnified because the father-son relation cannot, finally, be understood in this way. Certainly it is not <u>felt</u> in these terms.

In each of the first three epitaphs, the force of emotion is not conveyed in direct language; the jarring of convention and the violation of form do that instead. In the third, Jonson introduces a variation as well. The distinction between word and person (poetry / boy) and between emotional nuances (love / like), the latter a fine shading that may somehow enable Jonson to understand the "just" boundaries of relations and so save him future pain, are blurred: the first, by Jonson's deliberate identification of the boy with poetry, the second by the difficult grammar of the line. The syntactically precise Jonson here chooses to allow grammar to make his meaning troublingly ambiguous rather than appropriately sharp. If ever we want resolution and clarity, we want them at the end of "On My First Sonne."

Jonson has allowed grammatical distinctions to collapse, as he has allowed word-thing to become interchangeable. In relations and perceptions founded wholly on justice such distinctions are possible, and, indeed, necessary: justly, Jonson has not abandoned all the conventions of epitaph in these three poems; he maintains a rhetorical bond with the reader. But he also represents the inadequacy of what is available to him as a poet in the face of his pain as a human being. In his depiction of human relations which rest on love as well as justice, the tension (justly) shows. As a delicate reciprocity exists between Jonson's roles of poet and father, so does that same reciprocity characterize the tension between justice and love. In which, finally, is the father-child relation grounded? Jonson can barely distinguish them: dead child and living poem become interchangeable, the product of Jonson's love, the just rendition of his dilemma.

me, all you that read / This little storie" (ll. 1-2). Classical epitaphs often are directed at audiences, but always designate them as "travellers" who stop to read; even the self-conscious Martial calls the reader of his epitaphs "traveller" rather than "reader," which is the form of address used in many of his other epigrams.[30]

From the outset Jonson uses artifice almost dispassionately, diminishing occasion and event, appealing to that part of the reader that appreciates art (little stories) rather than weeps over dead children. As Wesley Trimpi points out, "the form is very intricate, with varying length of line and alternating masculine and feminine endings, and despite this intricacy the ordinary order of prose syntax is never violated. This takes the greatest skill and is characteristic of Jonson's most complicated songs."[31] In line three, death is leveled to the status of a fellow mourner rather than a force to be feared, welcomed, or even deciphered; simply, "Death's self is sorry" (l. 4). Lines five through eight describe the child generally; the most specific information we are given is his name, placed in the title, but in no way connected to the meaning of the poem, or to the child's fate, as in the earlier epitaphs:

> 'Twas a child, that so did thrive
> In grace and feature
> As Heav'n and Nature seem'd to strive
> Which owned the creature. (ll. 5-8).

Lines nine through twelve begin with the information that, in lines thirteen through eighteen, will become the heart of the conceit of the poem:

> Yeeres he numbred scarse thirteene
> When Fates turn'd cruell
> Yet three fill'd Zodiackes had he beene
> The stages jewell. (11. 9-12)

Though here Jonson "has beautifully retouched a fancy of Martial (10.53) on Scorpus, a chariot driver at the Circus Maximus who won many important victories, in a short career" the figure becomes his own, with deeper implications than mere fancy:[32]

> And [he] did act (what now we mone)
> Old men so duely
> As, soothe, the Parcae thought him one,
> He plai'd so truely. (11. 3-6).

The fancy is touching; it celebrates the boy for his acting ability in a charming way. By its skillful employment, Jonson undercuts a potentially maudlin rendition of the child's death. It is, after all, set firmly in the context of "this little storie"; other than his age and profession, no specific information is given us--and his profession becomes the fanciful "explanation" of his death. At line thirteen Jonson interrupts the story briefly with the parenthetical "what now we mone"--a first person plural that can serve partly as invitation ("weep with me") and partly as a description of what is actually occurring.

Line sixteen provides the key to the poem. The boy's death is a mistake by the Parcae, who think he is an old man because he has "plai'd" so "truely." "Playing truly" is precisely what Jonson does here, and what he asks the reader to do: to participate (weep,read, mourn) briefly in a form acknowledged as artifice that cannot begin to explain or justify the death of a thirteen year old boy. Bypassing such attempts, it offers instead to take us through a process of mourning,

emotional closure, using a situation in which neither Jonson nor his audience ("all you that read / This little storie") has much at stake.

Many conventional sentiments of classical epitaph are brought to bear: the boy is too good for earth; well-favored, he dies young; the fates are unbearably cruel to take him, but, perceiving his goodness, they repent while they vow to keep him. Artificially, painlessly, we have moved through a ritual of weeping, extolling the deceased, berating fate, and, finally, acknowledging that the boy's proper place is in heaven.[33] We have lost him irrevocably. Jonson adds two elements to these conventions: the artificial context of the entire poem, and the specific celebration of the boy and the "explanation" of his death in terms of his acting skill. Salomon Pavy is commemorated for his role as an actor, one who makes himself like--in his case, so "truly like" that his skill is prettily blamed for his demise. In "On My First Sonne," Jonson placed an impossible final injunction to himself in the mouth of his child, now a verbal creation as much as a human one. The painful play that acted out the poet's grief did not resolve it.

But in "Salomon Pavy" Jonson shows complete faith in his function as maker. He has orchestrated a situation similar to the one in the epigram on his son, but far less intimate. Directed by Jonson, we enter wholly into "playing truly," a kind of verbal miming of the mourning process that is offered and understood immediately as its likeness. Surely that is the point. Depiction of grief gives way to imitation of the mourning process itself.

By focusing our attention on the artifice of the fancy about the boy, and on the neatness and simplicity of the poem itself, Jonson demonstrates the efficacy of language beyond mere depiction. Yet he is not "feigning." The core of the poem, the paradox of the boyish acting skill that fools even the Fates and kills its possessor, is true to the inexplicable nature of the grim actuality: the talented child dies young, his promise cut short. Jonson cannot explain, but he makes no attempt to do so. He has transformed the event, directing its beholders in simultaneous contemplation of event and poem.

The final poem, "Epitaph on Elizabeth, L.H." (124), is similar in many ways to the epitaph on the child-actor. This last poem is also explicitly called an epitaph; it addresses the reader directly, and it focuses at least as much attention on itself as it does on its (nominal) subject, particularly since "the epitaph is intentionally obscure, especially in the closing lines, and no identification [of Elizabeth] is possible."[34]

But if the "Epitaph on S.P." has made much of artifice, convention, this last epitaph makes even more conscious use of its classical antecedents.

Even the first two lines, addressed directly to the reader, concern themselves with a kind of poetic challenge: "Wouldst thou heare, what man can say / In a little? Reader, stay" (ll. 1-2). As critics have noted,

> a curious aspect of rhetorical theory is the fact that just as length could add stature to a composition, so could brevity. . . . This figure should not be confused with what Thomas Wilson calls diminution . . . and which is the opposite of amplification. The present topic is literally the use of brevity to achieve great effects, and . . . it might well explain some of the interest of Renaissance authors in epigrams and epitaphs.[35]

Certainly the opening lines focus squarely on Jonson's concern with style; "brevity" is the first characteristic that he lists in Discoveries as essential to a good style.[36] And for Puttenham, brevity is the defining characteristic of epitaph, differentiating it from elegy:

> So as if it exceed the measure of an epigram, it is then rather an elegie than an epitaph, which error many of these bastard rhymers commit, because they be not learned, nor (as we are wont to say) their crafts masters for they make long and tedious discourses and write them in large tables to be hanged up in churches and chauncells over the tombes of great men and others, which be so exceeding long as one must have half a days leasure to reade one of them, and must be called away before he come half to the end, or else be locked into the church by the sexton, as I myself was once served reading an epitaph in a certain cathedral church of England.[37]

None of Jonson's five epitaphs would delay Puttenham unduly (even if he were a slow reader); the longest, 120, is 24 lines long, and the poems to his son, his daughter, and on Elizabeth are each twelve lines. But in the last the poet directs the reader's attention most specifically to the strictness of his adherence to the decorum of the genre.

The poem is six tetrameter couplets; lines one and two are enjambed, and in line 12, "Farewell," completing the rhyme with "to tell" (l. 11) is set off from the six syllables that precede it by a caesura. The effect of finality, closure, derives more from the pause and the final word than it does from the completion of the rhyme. This "irregularity" (though that is too strong a word) is the only significant variation of form in the poem.

Despite conjecture on Elizabeth's identity and comment on the "enigma" of the poem by critics, I prefer the simple explanation offered

by O.B. Hardison, who cites Jonson's indebtedness to the Greek Anthology in his use of one of the oldest of epitaph conventions, nil nisi bonum de mortuis, here slightly elaborated and self-conscious:[38]

> Which in life did harbor give
> To more vertue than doth live.
> If, at all, she had a fault,
> Leave it buried in this vault. (11. 5-8).

In the Greek Anthology, as well, "there is precedent for the single name and . . . for the theme and tone of Jonson's poem."[39] Jonson himself emphasizes both that faithfulness to genre and the conventional use of epitaph in the final lines: "Fitter, where it died to tell, / Then that it liv'd at all. Farewell" (11. 11-12).

The surname of the deceased is allowed to die, in recognition of the understanding that the art form will commemorate whatever the poet chooses to include--but here he has chosen only to include the "fact" of Elizabeth's death as appropriate to epitaph. Hardison points out:

> The idea that death is a terminus is expressed in two statements to the reader. Both advise against asking about Elizabeth's life. . . . Now that she is dead,it makes no difference who she was. The concluding farewell completes the poem aesthetically. The strategy of brevity culminates in a curt, single-word sentence that occupies only one metrical foot of the short tetrameter line. After it, there is nothing left to say. The farewell is all the more effective because of its Greek Anthology associations. The reader's attention is subtly shifted from life to literature--from the pain of personal loss to the impersonal world of art. . . . The reader does not see death but a picture of death.[40]

Once again, then, we have been asked to fix our attention on a likeness. Not only, however, does Jonson shift our attention from the pain of pesonal loss to the world of art in this poem; we have gradually made this particular shift as he takes us through the sequence of the five epitaphs.

Epitaphs are often a kind of sophisticated memento mori. They commemorate specific persons, of course, but often directly or indirectly remind the living of their own mortality. More specifically, however, Jonson's epitaphs cause us to examine relationships among human beings against the backdrop of our consciousness of death; that same consciousness outlines more sharply the need to define the role of poetry and the task of the poet sub specie aeternitatis.

Although the epitaphs do not appear in the order of their composition, their arrangement is instructive since Jonson himself edited his Epigrammes.[41] The miniature sequence indicates an evolution in Jonson's attitude toward the issues of death and art on which the poems focus. Finally, the poems come to rest on the kind of resolute definition characteristic of epigram. Jonson achieves closure of the sequence in part through understatement; the poems not only commemorate their subjects, but also define their own function, moving from unwieldy emotion to the stability of wisdom. Arranging the poems as he does, Jonson maps out his dilemma as poet (maker, doer) and as human being (sufferer) to demonstrate the cost at which his wisdom has been achieved, and the efficacy of language in its achievement. Moreover, he includes his readers in this movement toward wisdom, and our inclusion emerges as a part of the poetic task Jonson has assigned himself in the Epigrammes.

One may be tempted to see Jonson's use of convention and artifice in the two final epitaphs as retreat from the painful situations depicted in the first three, especially in "On My First Sonne." Jonson is related by blood neither to Salomon Pavy, whom he knew as a fellow

professional in the theatre, nor to Elizabeth, L.H., whose connection to him Jonson deliberately obscures. Of the five epitaphs, the last is the most conventional--Jonson makes it his own, in fact, by exaggerating convention rather than by altering or omitting the conventional. What sort of experience, then, is the poet structuring for his readers in his arrangement of the five poems?

As I pointed out earlier, although the epitaphs are apparently very different from one another, the strategies and assumptions that inform each poem are remarkably alike. Jonson's special relation with two of his poetic subjects, his daughter and his son, pull these issues and his handling of them into sharper focus; but the issues are present in each poem. The arrangement of the five poems, then, shows Jonson's realization of the demands of his task as a poet: he must translate personal / lyric situation into a public mode. This he does, certainly, in the first three epitaphs, simultaneously demonstrating the struggle and the decisions he undertakes as a poet: his personal pain is related in a special way to his choice of vocation, as "On My First Sonne" shows. But in the last two epitaphs, Jonson demonstrates how such stuff becomes art directed to an acknowledged audience from whom he creates poetic vehicles to be used to come to terms with painful issues--in this case, death, especially the death of the young, the innocent, and the beloved.

The key word here is a catchword of the period--imitation. Madeline Doran summarizes the three ways in which the word is understood--each a category with its own complicated assumptions:

> First there is Plato's philosophical idea of the phenomenal world as an imitation of the world of forms and ideas. Secondly, there is his idea that poetry, in representing the phenomenal world, is an imitation of an imitation. . . . Thirdly, there is the use of the term so common in the Renaissance as meaning

> imitation of other men's work. In this sense it was both an important pedagogical principle and a critical touchstone in evaluating the work of authors ancient and contemporary.[42]

In Discoveries, Jonson makes explicit his understanding of "imitation," an understanding that can just as well be deduced from a careful reading of his poetry. With exercise, study, and art, imitation is one of the requisites for the poet, the ability to

> convert the substance, or riches of another Poet, to his owne use. To make choice of one excellent man above the rest, and so to follow him, till he grow very Hee . . . Not, as a creature, that swallowes, what it takes in, crude, raw, or indigested; but, that feedes with an appetite, and hath a stomacke to concoct, divide, and turne all into nourishment. Not, to imitate slavishly, as Horace saith, and catch at vices, for vertue: but to draw forth out of the best and choicest flowers, with the Bee, and turne all into Honey, worke it into one relish, and savour. . . . But that which we especially require in him is an exactnesse of studie, and multiplicity of reading.[43]

Jonson's understanding of "imitation" explains Doran's brief statement of the third sense of the term; in his use of Martial as his model for epigram, he clearly follows his own critical advice.

But Jonson also understands that the basis of much of art is verisimilitude:

> Poetry and Picture, are Arts of a like nature; and both are busie about imitation. It was excellently said of Plutarch, Poetry was a speaking picture, and Picture a mute Poesie. For they both invent, fain, and devise many things, and accommodate all they invent to the use, and service of nature. . . . Whosoever loves not Picture is injurious to Truth: and all the wisdom of Poetry. Picture is the invention of Heaven: the most ancient and the most akinne to Nature. It is itselfe a silent worke.[44]

Poetry begins in imitation: in just depiction. As Jonson shows in the first three epitaphs, it begins as the speaking picture, lineaments of speaker and situation laid out for the reader's scrutiny.

Another part of the poet's function enters in the last two epitaphs, however; as poetry eventually diverges from painting, so does the poet from the painter:

> Yet of the two, the pen is the more nobell than the pencill. For that can speak to the understanding; the other but to the sense. They both behold pleasure and profit, as their common object, but should abstaine from all base pleasures, lest they should erre from their ends and while they seeke to better mens minds, destroy their manners. They are both born artificers, not made. Nature is more powerful in them than study.[45]

The poet begins by imitation, by "making likenesses"--but if he is to speak to the understanding, something more is necessary: "His art, an art of imitation or faining; expressing the life of man in fit measure, numbers, and harmony according to Aristotle. . . . hee is call'd a poet, not hee which writeth in measure only; but that fayneth and formeth a fable, and writes things like the Truth."[46]

So the poet writes in the image of truth, and imitates nature's role as well as her creations themselves. In the last two epitaphs Jonson is at his most self-consciously "literary," "artificial," in order to console, but also in order to call attention to the way he perceives his role as a poet, and to the way in which, shaped by the poet, language becomes a vehicle by which we not only see and contemplate, but also with which we see and do:

> The true Artificer will not run away from Nature, as he were afraid of her; or depart from life, and the likeness of Truth; but speak to the capacity of his hearers . . . he knows it is his only Art, so to carry it, as none but Artificers perceive it . . . An other Sage, or juster men, will acknowledge the vertues of his studies; his wisdom, in dividing, his subtilties, in arguing, with what strength he doth inspire his Readers; with what sweetnesse hee strokes them . . . How he doth ragne in mens affections, how invade, and breake in upon them; and make their minds <u>like the thing he writes</u>.[47]

If the poet has the power to make minds like the thing he writes, then, as Jonson notes, he has a double obligation--faithfulness to the thing, but simultaneous duty to the minds that perceive it. With this last, perhaps it is possible to re-examine the final lines of "On My First Sonne": "For whose sake, hence-forth, all his vowes be such, / As what he loves may never like too much." In this case, what he loves is no longer his, yet "likeness" to the thing itself serves as a perpetual reminder of pain. While it is an admission of the depth of his grief, it is also an indirect imputation of the power of language to create likenesses. Jonson's understanding of the power of words, like his understanding of the power of his feeling for his son, has, at this point in the poem, a somewhat desperate edge. But in the pained realization lies Jonson's aesthetic and his understanding of how one cultivates wisdom. The last epitaphs exemplify his faith in language, and the role of the poet as central to the <u>teaching</u> of wisdom to the reader.

NOTES

[1]Roberts W. French, "Reading Jonson: Epigrammes 22 and 45," Concerning Poetry 10 (Spring 1977):5.

[2]George Puttenham, The Arte of English Poesie, ed. Gladys Dodge Willcock and Alice Walker (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936), p. 56.

[3]O.B. Hardison, The Enduring Monument: A Study of the Idea of Praise in Renaissance Literary Theory and Practice (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1962), p. 124.

[4]In epigram 18, Jonson addresses his "meere English censurer" in order to set forth criteria for judgment of his Epigrammes; he has deliberately returned to "the old way and the true," to the classical epigram as developed by Martial. But Jonson and Martial differ considerably in tone and in their respective estimates of their own poetry. For a fine close study of Martial's tone and its contrast with Jonson, see Jean M. Humez, "The Manners of Epigram," Dissertation, Yale, 1971.

[5]T.K. Whipple, Martial and the English Epigram from Sir Thomas Wyatt to Ben Jonson, University of California Publications in Modern Philology 10 (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1925), p. 287.

[6]French, p. 9.

[7]Ben Jonson, ed. C. H. Herford and P. Simpson, 11 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925-52), VIII, 23. All references to Jonson's poetry and prose are made to this edition, hereafter cited as H&S. Numbers of epigrams and lines cited follow each quotation in parentheses.

[8]Richmond Lattimore, Themes in Greek and Roman Epitaphs, Illinois Studies in Langugae and Literature 28 (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1942), pp. 65, 72.

[9]Lattimore, p. 192.

[10]Ibid., p. 72.

[11]French, "Reading Jonson," p. 8.

[12]William V. Spanos, "The Real Toad in the Jonsonian Garden," in Seventeenth Century English Poetry: Essays in Criticism, ed. William R. Keast (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 204.

[13]Spanos, p. 211.

[14]H&S XI, p. 8.

[15]Ben Jonson, Timber; or Discoveries, in H&S VIII, p. 598.

[16]For three discussions which view "On My First Sonne" in the framework of contemporary theology, see Francis Fike, "Ben Jonson's 'On My First Sonne,'" The Gordon Review 11 (1969): 205-220; W. David Kay, "The Christian Wisdom of Ben Jonson's 'On My First Sonne,'" SEL 11 (1971): 125-136; and J.Z. Kronenfeld, "The Father Found: Consolation Achieved through Love in Ben Jonson's 'On My First Sonne,'" SP 75 (1973): 64-83. Each of these discussions concludes that Jonson achieves consolation. Fike says that the poem ends on a note of rational, self-addressed moral exhortation; Kay, that Jonson's final attitude is close to the view of "blessedness" of St. Augustine. Kronenfeld says that Jonson finds solace through discovery of the natures of human, temporal love, and divine love, respectively. Jonson's final lesson, learned through his son's death, is that the former, necessarily limited and imperfect, should never be allowed to supersede the latter. In "Ben Jonson's 'Works of Judgement': A Study of Rhetorical Strategies in the Epigrammes," Dissertation, Princeton, 1980, pp. 70-88, H. Jennifer Brady finds tension between Jonson's private grief and universal Christian and classical reflections on man's fate; she too concludes that Jonson achieves consolation and closure because he is finally able to transform personal loss into a universal inscription that defines the workings of God's providence.

[17]Barbara Herrnstein Smith, Poetic Closure: A Study of How Poems End (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 204.

[18]Lattimore, Themes in Greek and Roman Epitaphs, p. 65.

[19]Ibid., p. 230.

[20]H&S XI, p. 10.

[21]H&S XI, p. 9. The standard translation, cited by Herford and Simpson, is Walter C.A. Ker, trans., Martial: Epigrams 2 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1919).

[22]Lattimore, p. 89.

[23]Seventeenth Century Verse and Prose, ed. Helen C. White, Ruth Wallerstein, and Ricardo Quintana (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1971), I, 137, n. 26.

[24]Ben Jonson: Poems, ed. Ian Donaldson (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 27, n. 12.

[25]The Complete Poetry of Ben Jonson, ed. William B. Hunter, Jr. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1968), p. 20, n.3

[26]I owe the idea of Jonson's powerlessness in these last lines to a conversation with Carol Duane, a doctoral candidate in Renaissance literature at Michigan State University.

[27]The Norton Anthology of English Literature, ed. M.H. Abrams et al. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1968), I, p. 927, n. 8.

[28]Martial, Epigrams, trans. Walter C.A. Ker (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1919), II, 210.

[29]Judith K. Gardiner, Craftsmanship in Context (Paris: Mouton, 1975), p. 51.

[30]Lattimore, Themes in Greek and Roman Epitaphs, p. 242.

[31]Wesley Trimpi, Ben Jonson's Poems: A Study of the Plain Style (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), p. 252.

[32]H&S XI, p. 27.

[33]Lattimore, pp. 31; pp. 180-182; 183; 258.

[34]H&S XI, p. 26.

[35]O.B. Hardison, The Enduring Monument, p. 126.

[36]H&S VIII, p. 681.

[37]Puttenham, The Arte of English Poesie, p. 56.

[38]Hardison, pp. 228-229, n. 5.

[39]John Major, "A Reading of Jonson's 'Epitaph on Elizabeth, L.H.," Studies in Philology 73 (1969): 182.

[40]Hardison, p. 126.

[41]H&S XI, p. 5.

[42]Madeline Doran, Endeavors of Art: A Study of Form in Elizabethan Drama (1954; rpt. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1972), p. 71.

[43]H&S VII, p. 683.

[44]H&S VIII, pp. 609-610.

[45]Ibid., p. 635.

[46]Ibid.

[47]Ibid., p. 587.

CHAPTER TWO

The epigrams of praise that make up roughly one half of the collection of Jonson's Epigrammes are, like the two last epitaphs, public in emphasis. Like the five epitaphs, the epigrams of praise, individually and in groups, are about the poet's relationships with individuals, but they focus simultaneously on Jonson's assumptions about his artistic mission and the tasks proper to it. These include the articulation and ongoing demonstration of an unbreakable bond between poetry and history.

Interestingly, the first epigram of praise in the collection after the dedication to James I (epigram 4) is to Jonson's teacher William Camden. Certainly gracious thanks to a teacher from a former pupil now illustrious is appropriate; but this fourteen-line poem is more than an expression of devotion. First it sketches Jonson's past and present bond to Camden: if Camden is praised, it is justly, praise given partly in the spirit of the repayment of an affectionate debt. Second, though Jonson begins by thanking Camden for his instruction -- "Camden, most reverend head, to whom I owe / All that I am in arts, all that I know" -- he apparently devotes only one other line specifically to Camden's ability as an instructor: "Men scarse can make that doubt, but thou canst teach" (l. 10). Significantly, most of the poem commemorates Camden as historian and antiquarian. Implied in the choice of the terms of the commemoration is Jonson's view of the importance of these two roles.

At line three, Jonson begins to depict those of Camden's achievements which extend far beyond the classroom: by virtue of Camden's efforts and compilations the "country owes / The great renowne, and name wherewith she goes" (ll. 3-4). Because of the titles of Camden's major works (Britannia; Remaines Concerning Britain), "name" is here meant literally, but "renowne" (1.4) implies "reputation" and "fame" as well. Camden shares this task of "naming" with the poet, one of whose major functions is to name, or to withhold names, as we have seen Jonson do in the epitaphs. Johnson himself comments on the omission of names in his dedication to Pembroke:

> But I foresee a neerer fate to my booke, then this: that the vices therein will be own'd before the virtues (though, there, I have avoyded all particulars, as I have done names) and that some will be so readie to discredit me, as they will have the impudence to belie themselves.[2]

Jonson will play with names in the epigrams of praise which are to come. In epigrams nine and ten, he sets out the decorum of the use of specific names in poetry, as well as the recognition of their own vices that the withholding of names produces among the guilty:

TO ALL, TO WHOM I WRITE

May none, whose scatter'd names honor my booke,
    For strict degrees of ranke, or title looke:
'Tis 'gainst the manners of an Epigram:
    And, I a Poet here, no Herald am. (9)

TO MY LORD IGNORANT

Thou call'st me Poet, as a terme of shame:
    But I have my revenge made, in thy name. (10)

Aside from James, Camden is the first man identifiable by name, virtue, and accomplishment. According to Herford and Simpson, Jonson uses Pliny to praise Camden:

"Then thee the age sees not that thing more grave, / More high, more holy, that shee more would crave" (11. 5-6). The Latin source reads: "Observatur oculis ille vir quo neminem aestas nostra graviorem sanctorem subtiliorem tulit"[3] /That famous man is respected than whom our age has raised no one more grave, more holy, more discriminating. My translation/. In his translation, Jonson alters little in the original. But he does change "neminem" (nemo, neminis, m / f, no one, nobody) to "thing."

Lines seven through nine are also renditions from Pliny. "Quam peritus ille et privati curis et publici! quantum rerum, quantum exemplorum, quantum antiquitatis tenet! Nihil est quod discere velis, quod ille docere non possit . . . . Iam quanta sermonibus eius fides, quanta auctoritas"[4] becomes: "What name, what skill, what faith thou hast in things! / What sight in searching the most antique springs! / What weight, and what authority in thy speech!" (11. 7-9).

Line seven establishes a connection between Camden, the historian, and Jonson, the poet. Camden, as a historian, rests his own fame and reputation in his work: "What name . . . in things!" as Jonson has indicated about himself in epigram 10: "I have my revenge made, in thy name" (1.2). In addition, as a historian, Camden has spent his time collecting, naming, speaking, and writing about the "things" of his findings, much as Jonson has in setting out the nature of his collection of poems, both in his dedication to Pembroke and in epigram 102. To a degree, then, poet and historian have in common their tasks as collectors who define and classify the things they collect.[5]

What, precisely, is the nature of these "things"? Surely poet and historian work in different spheres. But Jonson's use of the lines from Pliny, in his lines five through nine, suggests that this poet wishes to draw attention to the common ground of poet and historian, and to the way in which the poet depends on the matter of history.

In line five, Pliny's "neminem" becomes, in reference to Camden, "thing"; in line seven, Jonson's "things" are, in Pliny, "sermonibus." Why is "thing" used here twice? And in what senses does Jonson use the word?[6]

Jonson's second use of "things" (l. 9) illuminates the first. In his edition of Jonson's poetry, William B. Hunter glosses "things" as "facts or events."[7] His is an accurate gloss, but only a partial explanation of the richness that the term carries for Jonson in his rendition of "sermo" as "things."

In an explication of Jonson's development of the plain style, Wesley Trimpi traces it to its classical origin in the sermo, or the "conversational style" (since sermo itself means "talk, conversation, discourse, especially learned conversation; a subject of conversation; in writing or speaking, a familiar conversational style or prose; a manner of speaking, language, style, or expression"). It is born in the Socratic school: "Morris Croll, describing its original intention, says, 'Its idiom is that of conversation or adapted from it, in order that it may flow into and fill up all the nooks and crannies of reality and reproduce its exact image to attentive observation.'"[8]

Camden's "faith in things" thus becomes the trust of the historian in facts, events, objects, as means to the truth. The phrase

implies that his faith does not rest merely in the concrete, but in "things of the mind" as well, in the images of fact, event, and object, wrought from attentive observation,and reproduced in plain dialogue between sympathetic minds: between, for example, the minds of Camden and his students; between Jonson and his readers. Because it sees accurate knowledge of the world as the first requirement for wisdom, it relies on and reproduces the "things" from which general conclusions are drawn; such a style thus becomes primarily the vehicle for instruction.

Jonson's continued praise of Camden in the following lines further delineates the complexities of the "things" of line seven: "What sight in searching the most antique springs! / What weight, and what authority in thy speech! / Men scarse can make that doubt, but thou canst teach" (11. 8-10). Camden amasses historical evidence, objects; on these rest the "weight" and authority in the speech that renders his findings to the minds of others. Such faith to things gives us an implied definition of the nature of teaching -- and of the function of the historian: he reveals the nature of what is.

Read in this light, "Then thee the age sees not that thing more grave, / More high, more holy, than shee would crave" (1. 5) takes on new significance. Jonson's alteration of "nemo" to "not that thing" implies that Camden's life and work has a significance in itself. Like the objects of history that Camden preserves, records, and uses as the basis of instruction, Camden's life and work itself are hard realities, facts from which to learn. Camden is a model, "matter" from which to draw lessons. "Things" -- objects, facts, events, duly recorded, are

transformed into "things" of the mind, here because of Jonson's portrait of his teacher in epigram 14. Jonson thus hints at the function shared by historians and poets.

The final four lines are additional compliment to Camden; they too imply a likeness between Camden and his pupil:

> Pardon free truth, and let thy modestie,
> Which conquers all, be once overcome by thee,
> Many of thine this better could, than I,
> But for their powers, accept my pietie. (11. 11-14)

Camden's modest nature, the man unadorned, usually shuns praise, but Jonson's praise is, after all, merely "free truth" which a historian can hardly ignore. Virtuous and good, Camden is urged to subdue his modesty this once, to accept plain homage -- Jonson's "truthful" poem, which is not only a simple statement of unadorned virtue, but itself virtue unembellished by ornamental language: "Many of thine / that is, Camden's former pupils/ this better could, than I, / But for their powers, accept my pietie" (11. 13-4). As Camden is modest, Jonson urges him to strip away even modesty and allow compliment -- which also happens to be simple truth, offered by an almost-filial former pupil. In his piety (a tie to history learned from Camden, perhaps: the Roman pietas) Jonson has been, like Camden, simply "faithful" to the man himself, and his language -- seemingly the almost colloquial language of the sermo -- is the result of Camden's teaching, and a literal demonstration of it. It shows a faith in Camden, and hence, in "things"; and, without the "powers" of Camden's better pupils, simple faith to things.

Jonson begins the first of three poems (epigrams 43, 63, 64) to Robert, Earl of Salisbury, with the same emphasis on "fact" that marks his poem to Camden. Like Camden himself, Salisbury is the best advertisement of his own greatness, as shown in the opening of epigram 43:

> What need has thou of me? Or of my Muse?
> Whose actions so themselves doe celebrate;
> Which should thy countries love to speake refuse,
> Her foes enough would frame thee in their hate. (ll. 1-4)

In fact, Salisbury's stature reverses what Jonson asserts to be the traditional relations between great men and poets: "'Tofore, great men were glad of Poets; Now, / I, not the worst, am covetous of thee'" (ll. 5-6).

The arrangement of lines five and six gives the reader pause. Line six in paraphrase reads, "I, not the worst /of poets/, am covetous of thee" (1.6). But a second paraphrase is also possible, one which elevates the poet: "I, not the worst /of men/ am covetous of thee."

Salisbury's actions are clearly matter appropriate for poetry; hence the poet literally covets Salisbury himself. But Jonson is not subservient; the very slight ambiguity of line six shows that his estimate of his own stature places him quite close to his subject. Subtly, he celebrates his own fitness, making it clear that he is eminently suitable not to invent Cecill but to discover him:

> When in my booke, men reade but Cecill's name,
> And what I write thereof find farre,and free
> From servile flatterie (common Poets shame)
> As thou stand'st cleere of the necessitie. (ll. 8-12)

Line eight through twelve make clear that line seven is no mere modest disclaimer; Cecil is the subject of this poem because he needs no help from Jonson. Indeed, the poem is remarkable for what it does not say

about the Earl of Salisbury, and for what it claims for the poet, as best among poets. Jonson recognizes that he makes his name as a poet merely by invoking the name of Robert Cecil; discovery, judicious selection, is all-important. Much less important is poetic embellishment or flattery; Jonson continually shows it to be superfluous and, more seriously, unworthy of both subject and poet: "And what I write thereof find farre, and free / From servile flatterie (common Poets shame) / As thou standst cleere of the necessitie" (11. 9-12).

A nice ambiguity in line 11 allows a slightly richer reading of the parenthetical phrase: flattery is both the shame of common poets (but Jonson is not common, since he does not flatter) and the "common . . . shame" of poets (a seemingly inescapable vice which Jonson has avoided successfully, in part by choosing his subject wisely). At line twelve, Jonson tempers his self-praise by making his lack of servility stand in reciprocal relation to Cecil's virtue: he will not supply unnecessary flattery; he has the judgment to allow Cecil's real nature full play.

In his poem to Camden Jonson has delineated the function of the historian as showing what is; in his poem to Salisbury he makes apparent the similarity of the poet's task to that of the historian, already defined. "Faith in things" -- in objects, events, facts -- underlies Camden's search in the antique springs to collect objects and records.

"Faith in things" -- in these facts, in their verbal representations, in the lives of men like Camden -- informs Jonson's act of selecting Salisbury from the multitude of contemporary people and events. The invocation of his name as a worthy example, sufficient unto itself, is an attendant decision that the first choice makes inevitable.

One of the major characteristics of the poet, then, is this faculty for judicious selection, and the plainness and accuracy of the consequent re-presentation.

Like Camden, the Earl is a "thing" for men to admire and to learn from; the greater part of the poem remarks on the lack of necessity for poetic embellishment in his celebration.

Jonson is able to praise Salisbury, and, simultaneously, to delineate the nature of the relationship between the poet and the stuff of history. He demonstrates as well the social relation between the poet and a man of Salisbury's high rank; nevertheless, the bond between them has much in common with Camden's relation to the things that make up the history of Britain. As Jonson's subtle self-praise makes evident, as a poet he is as vital to Britain as men of Salisbury's stature and office.

Thus far, Jonson prefers to select and re-present the thing itself, using subtle word-play (based on the names themselves rather than on rhetorical decoration) multiple meaning, and rich syntactic arrangement to show not only a "faith in things" but to instruct his audience in a similar faith.

Jonson's sense of his double obligation as a poet is set forth in Discoveries; he pledges faith not only to his poetic matter but also to the minds that encounter it. He understands clearly that it is the poet's task to structure that encounter. He must "speak to the capacity of his hearers"; "ragne in mens affections . . . invade and breake in upon them; and make their minds like the thing he writes."[9] The nicely ambiguous final phrase conflates both the written word and its subject

matter; men's minds must be "made like" both these things. Jonson's own method in the Epigrammes is, first, knowledge, and second, plainness of style; his translation of a key passage in Horace's Ars Poetica demonstrates his own theory:

> Scribendi recte, sapere est et principium et fons.
> Rem tibi Socraticae potereunt ostendere chartae,
> Verbaque provisam rem non invita sequentur.[10]

In Jonson's hand, the lines become:

> The very root of writing well, and spring
> Is to be wise; thy matter first to know;
> Which the Socratick writings best can show:
> And, where the matter is provided still,
> There words will follow, not against their will.[11]

But the root of writing well is in wisdom. From Jonson's Epigrammes, and from his extensive use of Juan Luis Vives in Discoveries, we might conclude that the definition of wisdom at work here also comes from Vives:

> True wisdom is to judge a thing correctly and to identify it for what it actually is. Wisdom neither covets the cheap as though it were precious, nor rejects the precious as though it were worthless; neither criticizes matters deserving of commendation, nor commends things deserving of censure.[12]

Clearly, Jonson wants to praise true wisdom in others; he does so in his epigram to Camden, who initiates the process of the formation of wisdom in himself and in others by virtue of his work as a teacher-historian. Such a faculty, by definition, must be grounded in the close study of "things." As clearly, however, Jonson shows in the poem to Salisbury that he himself possesses that faculty. He demonstrates this faculty by applying his art as a poet in such a way that he makes apparent his knowledge of when to stop, allowing a delineation of the nature of the "thing" to speak for itself.

In epigram 63, the second of the poems of praise to the Earl of Salisbury, Jonson demonstrates a talent for speaking to the capacity of his hearers; if he is unable to "ragne in mens affections" he becomes a poet without an audience -- no poet at all. Once more Salisbury is put forward as a model, but in epigram 63, the poet is still very prominent. One might well ask here, as in the epitaphs, whether Salisbury or the poet-at-work is the real subject.

> Who can consider thy right course run
> With what thy virtue in the times hath won,
> And not thy fortune; who can clerely see
> The judgement of the king so shine in thee (ll. 1-4)

In the first quatrain Salisbury is praised for running a "right course"; for making political headway virtuously rather than with his fortune. In the ambiguous fourth line, he is praised for having earned the approbation of the king, and, perhaps, for being the transmitter / vehicle for the king's judgments as well.

> And that thou seek'st reward of thy each act
> Not from publick voyce, but private fact;
> Who can behold all envie so declin'd
> By constant suff'ring of thy equal mind (ll. 5-8)

The second quatrain informs us that Salisbury sees virtuous action as its own reward, rather than seeking the approbation of the public, and that he bears all envy patiently, equably. But what have we actually learned? No specific action, "fact," or "event" has been commemorated here. Instead, Jonson acts most like a poet and a teacher (rather than as pure historian) because he generalizes from the specific deeds of the real Salisbury (of which his audience is no doubt aware) to deduce principles of exemplary behavior: the poem rests on history, but the "things" of history have been turned to other uses. How has Jonson effected their transformation?

First of all, the poem is written as a series of three lengthy rhetorical questions:

Who can consider . . .(l. 1)	(thy right course run)
Who can clearly see . . .(l. 3)	(the judgment of the king)
Who can behold . . . (l. 7)	(all envie so declin'd / By constant suff'ring of thy equall mind)

But the verbs in each of these sentences are deceptively simple; the first is predicated on the ability to observe judiciously Salisbury's progress in the state; the last two have as their objects abstractions. Demanded is a specialized readership of poetry; understanders who can follow Jonson's series of questions and hold until lines nine and ten for their completion. Implied too by the difficulties of syntax and abstraction is a politically perceptive audience, who, because they can "clearly see" and "behold," are able to recognize the "judgment of the king," and, most difficult, also recognize the actions (if they <u>are</u> actions, and not merely Salisbury's states of being) of Salisbury's deflection of envy, born of an equanimity of mind. This last is yet another abstraction, manifested only in actions that still need to be recognized as such manifestations (that is, seen and appreciated for what they <u>are</u>). Couching the questions as he does, Jonson shrewdly pays Salisbury high compliment, and simultaneously is able to limit his audience, making these abilities special, their possessors an elite. Who can perceive all these, he asks, since they are so evidently the nature of the man, and yet

> can to these be silent, Salisburie
> Without his, thine, and all times injurie?
> Curst be his Muse, that could lye dumb, or hid,
> To so true worth, though thou thy self forbid. (11. 9-12).

No true (perceptive) poet can lie dumb under such circumstances; the effect that Salisbury has on him will define him as a poet -- as the ability to answer the questions that Jonson poses also defines the proper audience for both the poem and for appreciation of Salisbury himself. Should the poet keep silent, he will be unjust to himself (for failing to avail himself of the proper matter), untrue to his self-definition as a poet; to Salisbury (who clearly merits un-servile depiction); and to posterity, who ought to be educated from this properly re-cast historical matter, while the faculty for judgment and discernment is formed simultaneously.

Line eleven is, of course, the key line; "his muse" has limited these special abilities to the perspicacious vision of the poet, who sets forth not only Salisbury's virtue but also the mental processes necessary to deduce those virtues from the facts of Salisbury's life: "Curst be his Muse, that could lye dumb, or hid, / To so true worth, though thy self forbid" (11. 11-12).

Fittingly, Salisbury has not asked for such acclaim; but the genuine poet (by defintion) finds he cannot remain silent at such worthiness; a kind of extension of Jonson's rendition of Horace is proven here:

> thy matter first to know;
> Which the Socratick writings best can show.
> And, where the matter is provided still,
> There words will follow, not against their will.

Jonson has made Salisbury's worth seem self-evident; on closer examination, the things for which he actually praises Salisbury require a specialized perception, and thus the intervention of the fact-conscious poet.

Similarly, the last poem to Salisbury, "To the Same (Upon the Accession of the Treasurership to Him)," sets the poet apart from the congratulatory throng surging about the newly-created treasurer. By introducing five clauses with negatives in the first eight lines of the poem, Jonson severely limits the grounds for rejoicing at Cecil's new honor, progressively stripping away fawners and false-congratulators to get at the essence, the implications and true meaning of Cecil's appointment, both for the man and for his society. "Society" here, of course, is another definition for Jonson's audience -- we are society, with the poet as the first among us.

> Not glad, like those that have new hopes, or sutes,
> With thy new place, bring I these early fruits
> Of love, and what the golden age did hold
> A treasure, art: contemned in the age of gold. (ll. 1-4)

In addition, Jonson takes the opportunity in the first four lines to compare the venal present to the idyllic past, and in so doing, places his present artistic effort (this poem) in a historical context. In this "age of gold," in contrast to the "golden age," "art" is no longer held to be a treasure. The compliment to Cecil, however, is a nice point, since he has acceded to the treasurership, but still possesses the perspective and the discrimination to know that "the golden age" and the "age of gold" are not synonymous: Jonson's syntax indicates the difficulty of making such a distinction. Contrary to present practice, then, Cecil will esteem Jonson's art for the treasure that it actually is.

> Nor glad as those, that old dependents bee,
> To see thy fathers rites new laid on thee.
> Nor glad for fashion. Nor to shew a fit
> Of flatterie to thy titles. Nor of wit. (ll. 5-8)

Jonson clears away more history here, in this case to make a space around the newly appointed Cecil and himself. He dismisses the dependents of Cecil's father; the fawners for "fashion" -- that is, attentiveness to present trend without regard for past or future. He cuts through adulation based on Cecil's assumption of titles (not, significantly, his assumption of the office). Nor has he written the poem to demonstrate his own ingenuity (l. 8).

Having stripped away trappings, falsities, and irrelevancies, in the following lines Jonson defines the essence of Cecil's appointment, weighing, interpreting, setting in rhyme the significance of one historical "fact": "But I am glad to see that time survive / Where merit is not sepulcher'd alive" (ll. 9-10). Though the golden age is dead, vestiges of it remain in particulars, in people like Salisbury himself:

> Where good mens virtues to them honors bring
> And not to dangers. When so wise a king
> Contends to have worth enjoy, from his regard
> As her owne conscience, still, the same reward. (ll. 11-14)

Lines ten through fourteen depict nothing less than the rare attainment of justice in the socio-political order: public voice has rewarded private fact. In a rare display, the rewards of public life are commensurate with the reward of the private upright conscience. In epigram 43, if Salisbury has been praised because he is steadfast within no matter what the external pressue, in this poem Jonson points out that the inner and outer forces acting on men of conscience have achieved an uncommon equilibrium. Private good is publicly extolled, and not only by the poet.

> These (noblest Cecil) labour'd in my thought,
> Wherein what wonder see thy name hath wrought?
> That whil'st I meant but thine to gratulate
> I ' have sung the greater fortunes of our state. (ll. 15-18)

The last four lines of this poem are in some ways the most interesting, because they bring into sharp focus the relation between Salisbury, the figure defined by Jonson as historically important, and the poet. Clearly it is a reciprocal relationship; the poet's selection of Salisbury is credited with shaping the poem. The chief "wonder" is here "wrought" by Cecil's name (as it gives form to the poet's laboring thoughts). So significant is Salisbury, and so significant is his appointment, that to praise him is simultaneously to note enormous political consequences. As Jonson gives form to the event in a poem, the moral man imposes order (form) on the chaotically amoral (or immoral) forces around him; the poem reminds us that for Jonson, ethical choices have aesthetic implications. But it remains for the poet to point them out; Jonson sees implications and consequences in the present act: "That whilst I meant but thine to gratulate, / I've sung the greater fortunes of our state" (11. 17-18) His poet's office, then, predicates as well as makes use of accomplished fact. There is a nice play, too, on "fortunes" (1. 18). They are Cecil's political fate, and the fate of the order of which he is a part, certainly; but the monetary connotations of "fortune" (since his is a treasurership) neatly conflate the opposition that Jonson has noted earlier, between the "golden age" and the "age of gold." In Cecil, then, the poet points out that the true meaning of fortune -- money, and circumstance -- are rejoined, and will work reciprocally, in Cecil, for the good of the state.

In the three epigrams to Lucy, Countess of Bedford, Jonson further delineates the reciprocal relation between living subject and poet dedicated to his mission. In these poems we see the poet-patron

relation itself demonstrated, of course; moreover, Jonson subtly illustrates just how his artistry is bound to the realities before him. As in the poems to Salisbury, praise is the poet's intention, but the process of composing praise (and, in addition, a tacit definition of what he is NOT doing) is the actual focus of epigram 76, "To Lucy, Countesse of Bedford." The poem enacts Jonson's quest for "matter." How does the poet proceed from "thing" to "word"? As he continues to do throughout the Epigrammes, Jonson demonstrates in epigram 76 that for him the poetic process is less inspired invention than it is a judicious discovery, the location, distillation, and celebration of what truly is.

Jonson begins by sketching his attempt to frame a poem about an ideal woman, "as Poets Use" in honoring, loving, and offering service, especially (but not exclusively) in poetry. The opening lines seem to echo the conventional quest for, and compliment to, the creature of the sonnet sequences; indeed, Anne Ferry makes a telling comparison between Jonson's poem to Lucy and Sidney's sonnets to Stella, especially the first sonnet, which is also apparently about composing poetry. As Ferry points out,

> the fact that /in Jonson _/ there is so much conscious effort "as Poets use" so much explicit comment on the speaker's role as poet-lover, calls in question whether he actually feels what his use of conventional language implies. He does not sound as if he were "rapt" with flames of either divine inspiration or passionate feeling, for there is something down-to-earth and practical about being "timely rapt" just "this morning" when he was getting ready to write a poem. There is also calculation rather than rapture in "I thought to forme," similar to Astophil's self-directed plan to write.[13]

Jonson seems to me to be even more humorously anti-conventional than Ferry's reading admits. "As Poets use" provides an immediate signal

that what follows will somehow alter a traditional way of creating this "kind of creature" (l. 3); the second phrase similarly implies that Jonson will play with, or against, a stock notion of "kind;" he discards type, eventually, in favor of a particular -- Lucy herself. In addition, as Ferry notes, the first words of the poem introduce a deflatingly prosaic note into the appearance of poetic rapture:

> This morning, timely rapt with wholy fire,
> I thought to frame unto my zealous Muse,
> What kind of creature I could most desire
> To honor, serve, and love, as Poets use. (11. 1-4)

Surely Jonson is poking gentle fun at conventional descriptions of the supposed mode of poetic creation. On this particular morning he already has in mind the woman who <u>is</u> the creature he wants to honor, serve, and love:

> I meant to make her faire, and free, and wise,
> Of greatest blood, and yet more good than great;
> I meant the daystar should not brighter rise,
> Nor lend like influence from his lucent seat,
> I meant she should be courteous, facile, sweet,
> Hating that solemne vice of greatnesse, pride,
> I meant each softest virtue there should meet,
> Fit in that softer bosom to reside. (11. 5-12)

But as demonstrated by the buried puns and plays on Lucy's name (11. 7;8) and the metaphor drawn from it, this poet already knows where he is going. He continues:

> Onely a learned, and a manly soul
> I purposed her; that should, with even powers,
> The rock, the spindle, and the shears control
> Of destiny, and spin her own free hours. (11. 13-6)

The combination of the ideal, soft, feminine virtues, and the touch of masculine firmness and independence exerted in a domain traditionally female[14] (the latter reinforced by the allusion to the fates, 11. 15-6) make the still unnamed subject no less ideal, but they give her a

peculiar specificity; she has been too sharply defined to be the stock figure that most poets use. Moreover, that specificity is re-emphasized in the final couplet; the play on "Lucy" (as more "lucent" than the daystar)

> seems to emphasize still more the point of "Bedford" appearing where their presence would lead the reader to expect "Lucy." For to invoke his ideal as "Lucy" in the last line would allow her transformation by the Muse into a metaphorical figure such as he perceives Stella to be in Sidney's sonnet, whereas to celebrate "Bedford" is to insist on her actuality outside the mythological world created by the language of his poem.[15]

The epigram, then, is not mere compliment but also reminder: Lucy, existing independent of the poem, is already the kind of creature to be honored, served and loved; she waits to be discovered, not invented. Jonson relies on "words" enough to burlesque mere artfulness, yet the glances at convention in this poem, and the word-play on Lucy's name demonstrate what might be called the artfulness of utility: Jonson uses what is as one of the instruments in the exploration of its own nature, and in the process itself of exploration and discovery, as fully as possible. He shows her that, happily, intention, creation, and reality -- mind, matter, and thing -- coincide in the last two lines of the poem. Thus the poet "is both recorder and creator, his power that of maker as well as mirror, his poem at once history and feigning."[16] For Jonson, "history" is at least as important as "feigning," and that "feigning" itself must rest in the judiciousness of observing and selecting from what is. As Ferry points out,

> The parallel with Sidney's sonnet . . . make/s/ the message of Jonson's Muse a humorous critique of the lesson to Astrophil as Jonson's poem perceives it. His becomes, by pointed contrast, an admonition to the poet to seek inspiration outside of the demanding confines of his own "desire." His Muse

> urges the poet's disinterested recognition of the ideal existing independently in the human and social world rather than in his own "heart."[17]

Indeed, the next two poems to Lucy draw beautifully from just the milieu to which Jonson's Muse directs him. Not only is the poet ranging outside the zodiac of his own wit; he uses that wit to make poetic capital out of virtually any occasion. But the key word is occasion: the point is that Jonson repeatedly emphasizes the reciprocal relation between history (reality) and the poetic faculty by demonstrating in poetry the reciprocal bonds in life which through his art he helps to maintain. "To Lucy, Countesse of Bedford" (84) opens with a brief description of Jonson's request of a lord for a buck, the lord's denial, and Lucy's consequent grant, presented unasked to the poet:

> Madame, I told you late how I repented,
> I ask'd a lord a buck, and he denyed me;
> And, ere I could ask you, I was prevented;
> For your most noble offer had supply'd me. (ll. 1-4)

Thus far we have what appears to be straightforward compliment, a prelude to gracious thanks from the poet for the gift of a gracious patron. But Jonson's poem takes a slightly different turn; with the buck Lucy supplies him with an occasion to comment on the traditional role played by the poet in the conventional bond of poet and patron:

> Straight went I home, and there most like a Poet,
> I fancied to myself, what wine, what wit
> I would have spent: how every Muse should know it
> And Phoebus-selfe should be at eating it. (ll. 5-8)

The poem takes an unconventional turn because Jonson is here NOT discussing the gift he actually received, but instead narrating the imaginings that Lucy's grant has prompted: she has freed him from the genteel beggary he would otherwise have had to practice. Jonson as well gently burlesques the behaviour of the poet required under patronage,

his humor evident in the slight irony of "most like a poet" (l. 5). He juxtaposes the supposed sublimity of the function of the traditional poet in this role, and the more mundane details of simply getting a meal: "What wine, what wit / I would have spent: how every muse should know it, / And Phoebus-selfe should be at eating it" (ll. 6-8). Pray, how does Phoebus ask for, and eat venison?

The rhyme, particularly in the second quatrain, reinforces the humor: "Poet . . . know it"; "what wit . . . eating it." Lines five and six use feminine rhyme, for Jonson a satiric device.[18] But the final couplet of the poem differs slightly in spirit from what precedes it. Lucy's grant has quite literally saved Jonson from the situation depicted in the second quatrain (he's free to go home, for example), physically "transferring" him elsewhere. He presumes, then, on the reciprocity of a poet-patron bond quite different in spirit from the one he attempted to put to use, only to be rebuffed. He asks in the couplet for an additional favor which will confer additional freedom: "O, Madam, if your grant did thus transferre mee, / Make it your gift. See whither that will bear me" (ll. 9-10).

Jonson's distinction between "grant" and "gift" subtly draws attention to his estimate of himself in relation to Lucy. The OED notes that a "grant" is a "favour asked for"; "an authoritative bestowal," or a "conveyance by deed." The last meaning is the specialized legal sense of the term. But all three meanings admit somewhat legalistic connotations, rather rigidly defining Jonson's relationship with Lucy -- as the Lord, by his refusal, has apparently defined his relationship with the poet. The "grant" is his due; as the poet-patron bond requires,

she is obliged to see that he gets it. A "gift," however, implies a free bestowal -- given by one friend to another.

As readers move through short sequences of poems of praise to members of the nobility, it becomes apparent that Jonson gradually grows more specific on themes that are present from the beginning in short sequences of poems within the collection. The reciprocal bond between poet and patron is demonstrated in epigram 84, analogous to the larger, more abstract notion of the reciprocal relation between words and things begun in epigram 76, and first pointed out in the poem to Camden (14). In the two poems to Lucy Jonson delineates poetic inspiration at work, to show the poet's inseparability from "matter," if he is to make "matter" of his own. Thus, the use of nobility as exempla becomes more than poetry of praise. Living figures in history provide Jonson with artistic sustenance; simultaneously they enable him to show that, though he remains rooted in reality, the subsequent rendition of that reality is the province of the poet, as "judicious selector."[19]

Accordingly, short sequences of praise of individual figures, and the collection of Epigrammes as a whole, moves toward subtle self-praise by the poet, toward praise of texts, and toward praise of makers of texts, including authors of histories and translations. But as we might expect, the sequence reveals that the poet is not only the most praiseworthy, but the most necessary of all these makers.

The presentation to Lucy, as patroness, of the work of a fellow poet gives Jonson an occasion rich for comment on various reciprocal relatioships whose partners nourish and enrich one another, and their relation itself, indefinitely. In a play on her name reminiscent of

the buried puns of epigram 76, Lucy is invoked in the first two lines of epigram 94 as "You brightness of our sphere who are / Life of the Muses day, their morning starre!" (ll. 1-2). But Lucy does not merely illuminate; she animates, as well. Jonson celebrates her and uses her as a source to be drawn on, simultaneously. Our continual awareness of Lucy as both "matter" and "audience" grows as we become aware that, in this poem, Jonson continues to define the art of reading, with Lucy as an example of its practice. The text, too, becomes as prominent as its reader and its maker.

Lines three and four begin to accord the book a status equal to that of its live patron-reader: "If workes (not th'authores) their own grace should look / Whose poems would not wish to be your book?" (ll. 3-4).

Interestingly, the figure of the poet is no longer present. Here, and throughout the poem, books acquire their own identities. Lines three and four are lines loaded to demonstrate the relation between book and audience: these books both seek ("look" for) and "embody" or "represent" their own "grace." If they are able to <u>seek</u> their own "grace," the reading of the line becomes even richer: "grace" is the gift of audience, freely given to recipients favorably disposed; it is also the end for which they were made. "Grace" also implies the nobility of their usual audience. If books simultaneously embody or represent their own "grace" -- that is, they themselves are noble, the bearers of a free gift conferred only on a worthy ricipient -- Lucy is still complimented because she is sought after by works of such quality: "Whose poems would not wish to be your book?" (l. 4).

Lines five and six repeat the reciprocal relation in reverse order: "But these, desir'd by you, the makers ends / Crowne with their owne. Rare poems ask rare friends" (ll. 5-6). Whatever the purposes of the author of the text, they are superseded by the needs of a reader, whose desires complete and enhance the original text; "crowne," like "grace" continues to imply a specially fit audience, an elite, here personified in Lucy. Jonson reinforces by repetition: "Rare poems ask rare friends" (l. 6). In a relation that duplicates that of poet and patron, books demand readers that suit them exactly: rarity meets -- and demands -- rarity.

Lines seven through fourteen return to the particulars of the occasion for this epigram, and to a specialized reading problem:

> Yet satyres, since the most of mankind bee
> Their unavoided subject, fewest see:
> For none ere tooke that pleasure in sinnes sense
> But when they heard it tax'd, took more offense. (ll. 7-10)

By definition, satires do not present "another nature"; their matter is human beings themselves, the converse of what Jonson makes use of in the poems of praise. Satire plumbs human vice; equally rooted in reality, Jonson explores virtue. The text under consideration, satire, allows him to define virtue in terms of vice in this epigram: specifically, he re-exploits the reciprocity of text and reader by defining Lucy in terms of her relation with Donne's book.

Jonson is able first to praise the genre itself for accomplishing its purpose; its "matter" is a process of discomfiting self-recognition:

> since the most of mankind bee
> Their unavoided subject, fewest see:
> For none ere took that pleasure in sinnes sense
> But when they heard it tax'd, took more offense. (ll. 7-10)

The readership of the genre is defined in lines eleven through fourteen:

> They, then, living where the matter is bred,
> Dare for these poems, yet, both ask and reade,
> And like them too; most needfully, though few,
> Be of the best: and 'mongst those, best are you. (11. 11-14)

A nice play on "matter" (l. 11) reminds us of the nature of satire. Stressing for us the inseparability of text and contemporary milieu, "matter" includes the milieu in which Lucy belongs. Living, breeding human beings, the subject of all satire and the specific vices become textual "matter" in Donne's book. "Where the matter is bred" is an inexhaustible source for satire; but this poem to Lucy demonstrates that the contemporary milieu engenders more than satire. By virtue of her celebrated fitness for "rare books," her exemption from inclusion as matter for satire, Lucy has become the matter for this poem of Jonson's, nourishing his poetry as she has in epigram 84, by supplying an occasion for it. But this time, notably, she is celebrated as a reader. In satire, most of mankind sees and recognizes itself, and so shuns the book. In satire, Lucy sees a definition of herself by virtue of her pleasure in the genre; by its definition, she will find in Donne's book only what she is not. Instead, she finds herself in Jonson's, the "rare poem" seeking -- and finding -- the "rare friend": "most needfully, though few, / Be of the best: and 'mongst those, best are you" (11. 13-4).

Interestingly, as Donne's Satyres point to where the "matter is bred," Jonson's poem of praise illustrates that its own aim is identical. The purpose of Donne's text is to stay rooted in reality, drawing attention to "sinnes sense"; here Jonson imitates that same purpose and the process of audience recognition in an ideal form which, addressed to

a living reader, is no less real. And while Jonson shows that the fit reader is indispensable to the text, he has also demonstrated that the text itself "seeks out" its audience; that is, that the ethos of a particular reader can be defined in terms of a text wrought by a poet who sees his primary function as "judicious selector." Both Donne, as satirist, and Jonson, as encomiast, work in the same way.

In epigrams 85 and 86, to Sir Henry Goodyere, praise of the "judicious selector," as well as of Goodyere, is evident once again. The first poem is a compliment drawn from Goodyere's love of hawking. The second, more general praise of the man, is significantly couched in terms of study, books, text. As in the poems to Lucy, genuine praise of a noble subject simultaneously becomes a vehicle for the faculties of the judicious poet, and for words, text, and study, the instruments and creations of the poet.

An intimate of Goodyere, Donne, like Jonson alludes in prose and in verse to his friend's hawking. Jonson, then, remarks a characteristic activity as material for compliment, but makes of it insight to the praiseworthy nature of the man.

The poem begins simply. Jonson establishes himself as scrupulous observer by telling how he lately spent his time: "Goodyere, I'm glad, and grateful to report, / Myselfe a witnesse of thy few days sport" (ll. 1-2). Significantly, the poem is addressed to Goodyere, who undoubtedly is well-aware of how Jonson has just spent his time. "Report" and "witness," however, establish scrupulous observation as the starting point for wisdom. Jonson follows not with a rendition of what he has actually seen, but of the lesson he has learned from his

observations: "When I both learn'd, why wise-men hawking follow, / And why that bird is sacred to Apollo" (ll. 3-4). The god of poets and wisdom is named here; Jonson unfailingly links the attribute with the vocation. In lines five through ten, he makes the bird's behavior emblematic of the exemplary behavior that all men should strive for, specifically in pursuit of knowledge -- accurate "witness":

> She doth instruct men by her gallant flight
> That they to knowledge should so toure upright,
> And never stoupe, but so strike ignorance,
> Which if they misse, they yet should re-advance
> To former height, there in circle tarrie,
> Till they be sure to fool their quarrie. (ll. 5-10)

As Jonson's editors point out, "toure," "stoupe," and "strike" are all hawking terms; moreover, in lines eight through ten, we have "an exact description of the falcon's habit when she has missed her prey. She does not fly after game in a stern chase, as the greyhound courses the hare, or the short winged hawk pursues its quarry. She must needs soar aloft, and then swoop down."[20]

Significantly, Jonson does not describe the flight of a particular hawk; he uses the technical terms to make precise an analogy of the man seeking actively to obliterate ignorance to a hawk hunting its quarry. Lines one through four establish Jonson's credentials as accurate observer, and announce a lesson based on those observations. Lines five through ten deliver the generality of the lesson filtered through the particularity of Jonson's experience (ostensibly, Goodyere's): observation and lesson are conflated in Jonson's careful use of exact terminology. We are scarcely aware that we are <u>not</u> seeing a hawk in flight; between its flight and the abstraction to be deduced from it lies the vital perception of the poet.

Jonson ends with a compliment to Goodyere: "Now, in whose pleasures I have this discerned, / What would his serious actions me have learned?" (ll. 11-12). But the apparent praise of Goodyere is much less a compliment to the man's choice of pasttime than it is a laudatory puff to Jonson's own judiciousness. The exact description of the bird ascending is accurate; but it remains for Jonson to make explicit just what "wise men" (if they are truly wise) find in the sport. The analogy itself (ll. 5-10) the implicit rendition of the lesson, establishes Jonson as first among the wise. Just who he is really complimenting becomes clear in the subject and verb of line eleven: "Now, in whose pleasures I have this discerned" (l. 11).

The wisdom and discernment are all Jonson's; all his, the praiseworthy ability to find value in "a few days sport." The center of praise and attention is the falcon; Goodyere is praised only peripherally; since he is being addressed here, he too needs to have the significance of his own pasttime brought home to him. If Goodyere's play can reveal this emblem of wisdom in action (as the poem itself shows Jonson's wisdom in the act of observation) "What would his serious actions me have learned?" Much more valuable lessons will obviously be found in less frivolous pasttimes; more to the point, they will give Jonson's faculty for discerning and judging more substantial material on which to work.

Thus Goodyere receives only a rather backhanded compliment; it remains for Jonson to discern the value of what he does and to re-present it. By giving us the lesson drawn from a conflation of Goodyere's recreation and the precise description of the falcon in flight, he demonstrates his own discernment. Line twelve reminds us, as epigram 84 to Lucy does, that virtually anything is grist for Jonson's poetic mill.

Richard S. Peterson points out that

> . . . the ideals which animate Jonson's writing have their parallel in his ideals of conduct, determining the particular kind of virtue he chooses to praise . . . what marks good imitation, in conduct as well as in writing, is the dynamic process of judicious gathering in and transforming . . . these two aspects of the process are symbiotically related in conduct (as they are in writing).[21]

Jonson has been at some pains to show that reciprocal relation, for him, between living subjects and poetic texts; the epigrams to Lucy show that the readers of such texts undergo the same scrutiny and judgment as the subjects of the poems of praise. As composer of a poem, the poet searches his milieu for usable subjects; but as Jonson says explicitly in epigram 94, eventually the terms of the texts themselves determine their own fit readership, and one may be judged as much by relationship with reading "matter" as by the assessment of the living poet; the poet, after all, has set the terms of the text as permanently as he has fixed the exemplary figures in the poems of praise.

It is not surprising, then, that in epigram 86, the second of the poems to Goodyere, we find Jonson examining and praising him in terms of his relations with human companions and with books: as Peterson points out, the same process of assessment, of bringing wisdom to bear, operate both in matters of conduct and in the realm of art.

But it is, after all, Jonson's task to identify this particular brand of wisdom, and simultaneously to exhibit it in an eight-line poem that takes every opportunity to emphasize the interchangeability of terms on which one meets fellow human beings, and texts.

Seeking to define the essence of a praiseworthy man, Jonson begins:

> Whe I would know thee, Goodyere, my thought looks
> Upon thy well-made choice of friends, and books.
> Then do I love thee, and behold thy ends
> In making thy friends books, and thy books friends. (11.1-14)

As he has done already in epigram 85, in this second poem to Goodyere Jonson emphasizes his own intellectual activity, his ability to discern, even as he praises Goodyere: seeking to know, this "thought looks / Upon thy well made choice of friends, and books" (11. 1-2). Goodyere is praised for similarly active , intelligent choice; deliberation on both sides has clearly preceded Jonson's wishing to know him.

As Judith Gardiner has remarked, the chiasmus of lines three and four stresses the reciprocity between text and social bonds.[22] Notably, Jonson begins line three with "then": Only after discerning study will Jonson profess love for Goodyere; only then is he able to see Goodyere's "ends": both his purposes, and the happy conclusions to which his care in living and in reading brings him.

Both Goodyere and Jonson "study" and "choose": "Now I must give thy life, and deed, the voice / Attending such a study, such a choice" (11. 5-6). But it remains for Jonson to call attention to these activities shared by the poet and the virtuous man.

Jonson demonstrates, literally, just how one "makes" a "friend" a "book" by using Goodyere's wisdom as his text: but clearly, man and choice up to this point have lacked the "voice" that only Jonson can supply. Only the poet can put Goodyere's choices into terms that make them serve didactically for others whose ability to discern is not yet developed.

But the two final lines conflate the tasks of the poet and his subject once again; they also re-emphasize that knowledge is the basis for wisdom and for love: "Where, though't be love, that to thy praise doth move, / It was a knowledge, that begat that love" (11. 7-8).

His knowledge of Goodyere prompts Jonson's love; love occasions praise. But knowledge -- since Goodyere too "studies" and "chooses" -- is also the basis for Goodyere's love of human companions and of books. Thus the referent for "that love" may be either Jonson or Goodyere, appropriately; their mode of knowing and loving is the same. It remains only for Jonson to explicate this mode for the instruction of a wider audience than even an exemplary figure can reach.

Despite the emphasis on the reciprocal relations of poet and subject, and on the way in which critical intelligence, applied to books and to human relations works interchangeably, the reader moving through the Epigrammes finds a subtle, but unmistakable preference given to activities scholarly, verbal, or literary in emphasis.[23] The final effect is the elevation of the task of the poet, and, similarly, the highest estimate of texts themselves -- in particular, poetry. This emphasis becomes apparent if the terms in which Jonson continues to describe and praise his noble subjects are examined carefully.

Jonson's epigram to William, Earl of Pembroke, for example, takes that emphasis, subtle up to now, and makes it much more obvious. Epigram 102 relies on the metaphor, previously used in the poem to Goodyere, of the good man as text; the reader is reminded that metaphors work reciprocally: Pembroke is praised as the living exemplar not of particular virtues, but of a mode of choosing how to live and to be

good. Simultaneously, the text itself is celebrated for its embodiment of, and instruction in, this same mode of being, living, and learning, to an audience which shows its true colors by its reaction to the text. We have seen Jonson delineate the process before: in epigram 94, his praise of Lucy, Countesse of Bedford, rests on her delight in the satires that most of mankind cannot bear to read.

Since Jonson dedicates his book of Epigrammes to Pembroke, Pembroke-as-text is doubly meaningful. In epigram 102, the poet quite literally "makes /his/ friends books, and /his/ books friends":

> I doe but name thee, Pembroke, and I find
> It is an epigram, on all man-kind;
> Against the bad, but of and to the good:
> Both which are ask'd too have thee understood. (ll. 1-4)

As satire, Jonson's Epigrammes act the same way Donne's book does; we have already been shown in epigram 94. As a good man, Pembroke, simply by being what he is, is a measuring device of those around him, "against the bad, but of and to the good." In his portraits of living people, Jonson is of course being faithful to the demands of the genre he has chosen: primarily satiric, epigrams are necessarily connected with contemporary persons and events. But in his employment of a metaphor which names Pembroke himself an epigram, Jonson expands the concept of what has heretofore been a rather modest kind of poetry. Not only does the epigram draw from and depend on the contemporary milieu -- the raw stuff of history -- but its rendition of that milieu is just and wise enough to embrace extremes of bad and good, necessities for the understanding which is in turn a prerequisite for the formation of wisdom in readers. The poet does not surpass the historian, as Sidney says, because he constructs from his own wit the sort of examples

his audience needs; instead, he "predigests" the matter of history for us. Accuracy is important; but more important, as Jonson's epigram 102 begins to make apparent, are the poet and the text themselves, because of the processes they require the reader to examine and to learn by himself.

In the lengthy poem to Pembroke Jonson depicts a struggle central to the life of the perceptive individual. As Pembroke has had to, each person works continually to define himself in relation to the warring extremes of good and evil:

> Nor could the age have mist thee, in this strife
> Of vice and virtue; wherein all great life
> Almost, is exercis'd; and scarse one knowes,
> To which, yet, of the sides himself he owes.

The common means of discernment is material gain:

> They follow virtue, for reward, today;
> Tomorrow vice, if shee give better pay;
> And are so good, and bad, just at a price
> As nothing else discerns the virtue or the vice. (11. 9-12)

In the shifting values and struggle between virtue and vice that define all life in society, the highest of compliments is paid to Pembroke:

> But thou, whose noblesse keeps one stature still,
> And one true posture, though beseig'd with ill
> Of what ambition, faction, pride can raise;
> Whose life, even they, that envie it, must praise. (11. 13-8)

Line 16 is almost flat applause; Pembroke is so exemplary that even the envious must take note. But in lines 17 through 19, the man-as-book metaphor is exploited more subtly; as line 16 has done more conventionally, it depicts Pembroke in terms of his effect on an audience:

> That art so reverenc'd, at thy comming in,
> But in the view, doth interrupt their sinne;
> Thou must draw more: and they, that hope to see
> The commonwealth still safe, must studie thee. (11. 17-20)

Pembroke's presence has an effect similar to the Epigrammes themselves. As Jonson says in his dedication, readers are free to define themselves in terms of the virtue and vice set forth in his text. Once again, as in epigram 94, reading becomes a matter of self-recognition:

> . . . I here offer to your Lo: the ripest of my studies, my Epigrammes, which, though they carry danger in the sound, doe not therefore seeke your shelter: For when I made them I had nothing in my conscience, to expressing of which I did need a cipher. But if I be fallen into those times, wherein, for the likenesse of vice, and facts, everyone thinks anothers ill deeds objected to him; and that in their ignorant and guilty mouthes, the common voyce is (for their secuirite) Beware the Poet, confessing, therein, so much to love their diseases, as they would rather make a partie for them, then either be rid, or told of them: I must expect, at your Lo: hand, the protection of truth, and libertie, while you are constant to your owne goodnesse. In thanks whereof, I returne you the honor of leading forth so many good, and great names (as my verses mention in the better part) to their remembrance with posteritie. Amongst whom, if I have praysed, unfortunately, anyone that doth not deserve; or, if all answere not, in all numbers, the pictures I have made of them: I hope it will be forgiven me, that they are so ill pieces, though they be not like the persons. But I foresee a nearer fate to my booke, then this: that the vices therein will be own'd before the virtues (though, there, I have avoyded all particulars, as I have done names) and that some will be so readie to discredit me, as they will have the impudence to belye themselves. For, if I meant them not, it is so.[24]

Thus the bonds between audience and Epigrammes and audience and Pembroke are set in identical terms. Both the man and the poetry are the products of wisdom, and stand still in the midst of certain dialectical processes, among them the struggle between good and evil, between raw experience and its assimilation, and the interaction between reader and text. Both the man and the poetry initiate and measure, by virtue of what they are, the processes and choices of their audiences.

Lines 19 and 20 imply the mutual necessity of history and poetry, man and text: "Thou must draw more: and they, that hope to see / The commonwealth still safe, must studie thee" (ll. 19-20).

According to the OED, "draw" means "to attract by moral force, persuasion, etc.; to induce to come (to a place); to attract sympathy (to a person); to convert to one's party of interest; to lead, entice, allure, turn"; "to influence in a desired direction; . . . to bring about as a result; entail, induce, bring on."

In the case of Pembroke, Jonson calls attention to "moral force"--persuasion by example. But is "thou must draw more" an exhortation to a virtuous man, or a comment on his audience? The ambiguity of "more" supports the reading that Jonson is commenting on the audience rather than on his subject. The commonwealth needs both "more" of an audience receptive to what Pembroke (and Jonson) have to teach them; it also needs the additional results, the choices made by a well-schooled audience: "more" moral action.

Interestingly, "draw" implies simultaneously activity and passivity. Pembroke attracts virtue, prompts right action, halts vice, simply by being what he is; what he actually does is not mentioned here. It need not be. As in the poems to Lucy and to Goodyere, Jonson implies that the simplest actions of the virtuous are manifestations of inner dispositions. It remains for the discerning (the figure of the poet) to see them accurately, and to draw from them examples to illustrate that wisdom. The observer, then, must be as praiseworthy as the observed; the ability to recognize such virtue itself bespeaks movement toward wisdom. Neither party in this process is passive; the process is largely an intellectual one.

So the bookish term "study" is exactly the right choice for a subtle continuation of Pembroke-as-text begun in line two. Pembroke himself, of course, is to be studied. But primarily he is to be studied as Jonson presents him here. Such study will prompt the correct -- specifically political-- action, an additional drawing together of poetry and history. Poetry has not only drawn from history; it may also, Jonson hopes, influence it.

In the context of the entire collection of Epigrammes, this last is a reasonable inference. Texts become as prominent as the men who write them; authors, as worthy of praise as the political and noble personages on whom the collection focuses. Clearly, as we have seen, each group needs the other to define and to carry out its own function; both are vital to the workings of the contemporary socio-political (and aesthetic) order.

As the final example of the importance of history to literary activity, and of both as vital to a healthy commonwealth, I wish to close a discussion begun with epigram 14, "To William Camden" with the poem that can serve as its companion piece, "To Sir Henry Savile" (95). Jonson celebrates Camden as mentor, but his ability to teach is second to his vocation as antiquarian and historiographer; on his research and work Britain rests its name and reputation. Jonson reveals "faith in things" as the basis for Camden's solidity: after literally amassing objects, Camden weighs, selects, draws conclusions, and teaches. Concrete objects are the bases of the informed discourse of a gifted teacher. So collected and used, things of the physical world become things of the mind, the "matter" of discourse among the sympathetic. The highest

compliment Jonson can pay Camden, then, is that there is associated with him no division between word and thing. The raw matter of experience -- history -- becomes the weighty matter that Camden records as historian, and transmits to his pupils, in revelations of what has been and what is.

About Sir Henry Savile, Herford and Simpson note that "he became provost of Eton in 1596. He founded chairs of geometry and astronomy at Oxford. He translated four books of the Histories of Tacitus, 1591, with an original section, The Ende of Nero and The Beginning of Galba. His great edition of Chrysostom in eight volumes, printed at Eton, appeared in 1610-1613. He was perhaps the most learned Englishman of his time."[25]

Lines one through six introduce a species of compliment that we have not yet seen in Jonson's Epigrammes. The skill of Savile's translation causes Jonson to call upon the Pythagorean doctrine of the transmigration of souls to convey that the essence of the Roman historian is very much alive:

> If, my religion safe, I durst embrace
> That stranger doctrine of Pythagoras,
> I should believe the sould of Tacitus
> In thee, most weighty Savile, liv'd to us;
> So hast thou rendred him in all his bounds,
> And all his numbers, both of sense and sounds. (ll. 1-6)

Significantly, Savile's faith to his original is the basis of Jonson's praise; scrupulous language makes the soul of Tacitus live again. But the compliment also implies that Jonson detects a special understanding of Tacitus; across time, Savile and Tacitus share a vocation and a fundamental sympathy that quite literally animates Savile's translation. Where minds meet, language follows. (Faith to words leads to knowledge of the thing.)

Lines seven through twelve praise an original piece of work, based on Savile's historical researches, complimenting the man himself more directly:

> But when I read that special piece, restor'd,
> Where Nero falls, and Galba is ador'd,

Jonson encourages Savile to begin to write English history from direct observation.

Interestingly, Savile is a translator of Tacitus, who, according to G.K. Hunter, "For Jonson and the English avant garde . . . offered an acerb and disenchanted observation of the gradual strangulation under the Empire, of all those ethical wonders of Republican Rome." In the later part of the sixteenth century, about the time of Savile's translation (1591), the English view of Roman history was changing; no longer, says Hunter, was it seen as "a combination of political truth and aesthetic power" accepted as unquestioningly as the Elizabethan world-picture. Skepticism was beginning to bear on the English conception of Rome, and on the English concept of itself; such a critical view underlies Jonson's use of Tacitus for Sejanus and prompts the poet to the view that "'the State' /was/ an ethically neutral machine for self-perpetuating the possessors of power."[27] Savile's kinship with Tacitus, then, has important implications if his critical cast of mind is to be brought to bear on contemporary Britain.

Jonson makes clear, in the next seven lines, that Savile's personal ethos -- like Sallust's -- fit him uniquely for this task. Jonson has commented in Discoveries that Sallust is a greater historian than Livy; "the reason for Sallust's superiority as an historian was his greater concern for historical fact, for the accuracy of his

content."[28] Coupled with the faculties of a Tacitus, such accuracy is what the state needs:

> For who can master those great parts like thee
> That liv'st from hope, from fear, from faction free,
> That hast thy breast so cleere of present crimes,
> Thou needst not shrinke at voyce of after times;
> Whose knowledge claymeth at the helm to stand
> But wisely, thrusts not forth a forward hand,
> No more than Sallust in the Roman state.
> As then, his cause, his glorie emulate. (11. 17-24)

Complimenting the man by emphasizing his fitness for an exacting task, Jonson outlines more specifically in lines 25 through 34 the role for which Savile is fitted. As in epigram 76, to Lucy, it is not quite clear whether Jonson's idea of the role has originated first, or whether he has recognized in Savile the qualifications necessary to undertake a role he is then able to sketch:

> To thine owne proper I ascribe then more,
> And gratulate the breach, I griev'd before,
> Which Fate (it seems) caus'd in the historie. (11. 7-12)

In these lines, Savile is praised for an activity nearly analogous to that of the poet: the original writing he has done is meant to restore lost history, so he is constrained by actual events. But by ascribing them to Savile's own "proper" (personal gift, characteristic) Jonson begins to praise a selective and shaping intelligence very much like the one he himself has exhibited and praised in the poems of compliment, a mode of perception marked by "the dynamic process of judicious gathering in and transforming."[29] Seen in the context of the recorded history he studies, Savile, according to Jonson, has the style and the texture of it virtually internalized. His gift is the ease of a man of letters who <u>also</u> understands the forces of history and experience well enough to move among the documents of

different ages, and not only to translate them, but to emend them. He should, says Jonson, use his gift to other such texts: "O wouldst thou add like hand, to all the rest!" (l. 13).

At line 14, however, the emphasis of the poem changes. Jonson turns from praise to exhortation. The best application of Savile's talents is to Britain herself: "Or, better worke, were thy glad countrey blest, / To have her storie woven in thy thred; / Minerva's loom was never richer spread" (ll. 14-16).

A nice allusion to myth links Savile to Rome: proven to be a skilled weaver by the breach he has already mended, Savile should now employ the raw materials of history and his personal (timeless) style and sensibility to weaving of the story of Britain in his own thread. Jonson's compliment, then, comes by way of commentary on the correct employment of the materials of history, and the necessity of a shapping intelligence behind them.

The descriptions of Savile's task as a translator, and of the task that Jonson proposes for him, do not rest so much on Jonson's estimate of Savile as an historian, but on something else. He has not written from direct observation,but from texts; in a recognition that the intelligence at work on the text is the same faculty required for the ethical conduct of a Goodyere or a Pembroke,

> Although to write be lesser than to do
> It is the next deed, and a great one too.
> We need a man that knows the several graces
> Of historie, and how to apt their places;
> Where brevitie, where splendor, and where height,
> Where sweetnesse is requir'd, and where weight.
> We need a man, can speak of the intents,
> The councills, actions, orders and events
> Of state, and censure them: we need his pen
> Can write the things, the causes and the men. (ll. 25-34)

The last eight lines of this section serve as expansion of lines 26 and 27, a gloss that fully exploits their implications. Sallust retired from a career as a soldier to write history and to offer political advice: "doing" and "writing" are the two phases of life of service, and they seem in line 25 to be sharply differentiated, the former active, the latter unclassified. But line 26 begins to heal the division. Writing is no less active in kind, since it too is a deed.

In what sense? The next four lines (11. 27-30) join the need for a command of historical fact to a knowledge of how it should be written, making inseparable knowledge of matter and a sense of the style appropriate to that matter. Savile's cast of mind, so similar to that of Tacitus, has already been demonstrated (11. 11-12). Far from being static or passive, such intelligence concerns itself not only with direct observation, judicious estimate of men and events, and even with probabilities (11. 31-34), but also with crucial decisions of style, and the transmission of events through texts. Savile has already made an important decision in choosing to translate Tacitus: he has decided which of the texts from antiquity he wishes to transmit. Such decisions, as Jonson takes pains to emphasize here, are not those of a retired contemplative; they are "deeds" because the intelligence behind them shapes and filters texts and deeds through its own ethos. Clearly, they too will shape history in the making, as they have shaped history by re-making it in translation.

The final couplet is reminiscent of the terms of praise Jonson has had for Camden: "But most we need his faith (and all have

you) / That dares nor write things false, nor hide things true" (11. 35-6).

The placement of "false" in line 36 allows the reader to understand it adverbially as well as in the sense of "false things" to parallel "things true." The adverbial sense, "writing things falsely," is a fine shading that reinforces the notion of writing as a deed. Writing falsely or truly implies decisions made, evidence examined, as to accurate renditions of the natures of things, rather than merely a matter of writing falsehood or concealing truth. In addition, the initial decision of whether to write truly or falsely is an ethical one.

"Faith," here, then, is still the basis for Jonson's praise, but it has become the basis of a process even more sophisticated than that for which he has praised Camden. Ultimately, Savile is not praised here because he is a historian -- though his connection with history, past and contemporary, is vital -- but because he is a stylist, as Jonson himself is. The activity and the necessity of it cannot be emphasized too heavily; for the poems of praise examined here exemplify Jonson's belief that "style" is brought to bear in conduct, in reading, in writing.[29] Jonson recognizes this in Savile; as we have seen, he has applauded it in himself throughout the Epigrammes.

NOTES

[1]Below, I discuss specifically poems to Camden (14), Robert Earl of Salisbury (43, 63, 64); Lucy, Countess of Bedford (76, 84, 94); Sir Henry Goodyere (85, 86); William, Earl of Pembroke (102) and Sir Henry Savile (95). I have considered these poems and groups of poems in the order in which they appear, and for their use as examples of Jonson's major concerns and strategies in the Epigrammes. But they are just this, representative examples; Jonson's themes and strategies are just as evident in the other poems of praise in the collection. For additional examples, see the following: "To Sir Thomas Roe" (98), with the poems to Goodyere; "To Mary Lady Wroth" (103), and "To Susan, Countesse of Montgomery" (104), with the poems to Lucy; "To Sir Henry Nevil" (109) and "To Sir Thomas Overbury" (113) with the epigram to Pembroke; and "To Sir William Jephson" (116), with "To Henry Savile" (95).

[2]H&S VIII, p. 26.

[3]H&S XI, p. 4, n. xiv, pp. 5-6.

[4]H&S XI, p. 4, n. xiv, pp. 709.

[5]E.B. Partridge, "The Named and the Nameless," Studies in the Literary Imagination 6 (April 1973): 158-198. My indebtedness to Partridge informs the entire discussion of Jonson's epigrams of praise. In an extremely rich (but brief) study of Jonson's Epigrammes as a book arranged by the poet, Partridge calls attention to the importance of the arrangement of the poems for the education of the reader; to Jonson's almost obsessive consciousness of his audience; to the importance of naming and withholding names as indicative of the poet's major function of penetrating and revealing the "mysteries of things" (194-5), and, hence, their true natures. He also notes the movement of the book toward praise of artists, writers, translators. But Partridge's remarks, though rich, are merely suggestive; I have examined some of these suggestions at greater length.

[6]For an excellent summary of the "res-verba" problem, and a discussion of "res" as "subject matter," see A.C. Howell, "Res et Verba: Words and Things," in Stanley Fish, ed. Seventeenth Century Prose: Modern Essays in Criticism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 187-99. For Jonson's references to "matter" and "words," see, for example, Discoveries, in H&S VIII, pp. 573-4, ll. 338-342; "things of the mind," p. 628, ll. 2125 ff.; p. 633, l. 2288, for the importance of "conversation."

[7]The Complete Poetry of Ben Jonson, ed. William B. Hunter, p. 9, n. 3.

[8]Wesley Trimpi, Ben Jonson's Poems, p. 6.

[9]Discoveries, in H&S VIII, p. 588, ll. 791-793.

[10]Q. Horatius Flaccus, et recensioni et cum notis, atque emendationibus, ed. Richard Bently (New York: Garland Publishing, 1978), p. 158, ll. 309-311.

[11]H&S VIII, p. 349, ll. 440-444.

[12]Vives' Introduction to Wisdom: A Renaissance Textbook, ed. Marian Leona Tobriner, S.N.J.M. (New York: Teachers College Press, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1968), p. 85.

[13]Anne Ferry, All in War With Time: Love Poetry of Shakespeare, Donne, Jonson, and Marvell (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975), p. 144.

[14]Barbara Lewalski, Donne's Anniversaries and the Poetry of Praise: The Creation of a Symbolic Mode (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), p. 37.

[15]Ferry, p. 147.

[16]Ibid., p. 149.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Trimpi, p. 99.

[19]Ferry, p. 146. For an extended discussion of "To Lucy, Countesse of Bedford" (76), see also Harris Friedburg, "Ben Jonson's Poetry: Pastoral, Georgic, Epigram," English Literary Renaissance 4 (1974): 111-136, especially pages 111-119. Ferry and Friedburg give parallel readings of epigram 76, but Friedburg's conclusions differ from both Ferry's and mine. Friedburg says that in the epigrams, "Jonson dramatizes . . . the poet's selection of equivalents to reveal his subject's inner nature. The act of praising becomes an act of selection . . . . Jonson's style . . . functions as his primary instrument of discrimination" (124-6). But he adds that ultimately "significance no longer resides in feigning" (111) and that Jonson's plainness of style is a result of the discovery that "words are not co-extensive with reality" (124). Thus Jonson's plainness is a result of the poet's conclusion that language is ineffective; his major function as a poet is to "discriminate" rather than to express. The phrase "judicious selector" is Friedburg's.

[20]H&S XI, p. 16, n lxxxv, pp. 8-10.

[21]Richard S. Peterson, "Imitation and Praise in Ben Jonson's Poems," English Literary Renaissance 10 (1980): 281. Jonson's ideas about the relationship of the acquisition of knowledge to the growth of personal wisdom are discussed in remarkably similar terms by Wesley Trimpi, Ben Jonson's Poems, pp. 144-49, and by George Parfitt, Ben Jonson: Public Poet and Private Man (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1976), pp. 25 ff.

[22]Judith K. Gardiner, Craftsmanship in Context, p. 37. Gardiner notes the relation but does not discuss it.

[23]Note especially epigrams 110 and 111, to Clement Edmonds on his translation of Caesar; 123, a celebration of Benjamin Rudyerd as writer and critic; 130 and 131, to Alphonso Ferrabosco "on his Booke"; and 132, praise of Joshua Sylvester for his translation of DuBartas' Divine Weekes.

[24]H&S VIII, pp. 25-6.

[25]H&S XI, p. 19, n. xcv.

[26]Peterson, p. 281.

[27]George K. Hunter, "A Roman Thought: Renaissance Attitudes to History Exemplified in Shakespeare and Jonson," in Brian S. Lee, ed. An English Miscellany Presented to W.S. Mackey (London: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 104.

[28]Hunter, p. 104.

[29]Jonson remarks on style in these terms in Discoveries, H&S VIII, pp. 592-3, ll. 948-958. For the connection between the poet and the good man, both as writer and as audience, compare Jonson's Dedication to Volpone, H&S V, 17-21.

CHAPTER THREE

I

The judicious, shaping intelligence that Jonson demonstrates and wishes to help his reader cultivate as the basis for wisdom is a faculty that is a central concern of Jonson's Epigrammes. Thus far, we have observed the poet in his role as a judicious selector, who produces careful renditions of things as they are so that we may learn from his selection; moreover, Jonson asks us to attend to those who write -- poets, historians, translators -- as the best examples of the faculty we are to develop in ourselves. In order to understand the complexity of Jonson's didactic purpose in the Epigrammes, we need to examine more closely just what is meant by the possession of that "judicious, shaping intelligence."

Richard Peterson's explication of Jonson's idea of imitation provides a rich context for the learning Jonson offers us in the Epigrammes; Peterson emphasizes as well the centrality of a particular mental activity to Jonson's ethics and to his art. Peterson first explains Jonson's idea of literary imitation:

> Imitation as it flowed directly from the springhead of the ancients was a generous affair, based on selecting a number of the best models, rather than a single one, and capturing the spirit rather than the letter of their substance. At its heart was a paradoxical combination of affectionate respect for authority and rigorous independence . . . to imitate in the true sense is to assimilate and to remake in a spirit of admiration that inevitably shades over into active emulation and rivalry.[1]

True imitation is a "dynamic act" in which the "activities of gathering in and transforming are intimately related"; it produces a coherent whole, a process at once "eclectic and discriminating."[2] As a process

which offers a sophisticated means of dealing with what it consumes, imitation makes its practitioner "thrall neither to vain matter nor to vain words"; one values, seeks and attempts to produce works "in which the severed halves of thought and eloquence are reunited."[3] In this literary process, words, matter, and manner are inseparable in the new creation which results from the best of the old.

Jonson's suggestive metaphors in Discoveries stress

> . . . in varied yet related ways the importance of ranging widely and boldly, collecting the best, and assimilating and making it one's own: the production of honey from nectar, conversion of nourishment to flesh and blood, incorporation of timber in new structures, incursion into foreign territory to gather intelligence, and exploration to establish a thriving trade. The result in each case is something wholesome, valuable, and profitable, which paradoxically enriches readers even as it asserts the writer's resourceful, proprietary individuality.[4]

In addition to his concern for good imitation in literature, Jonson uses the same principle as a way to talk about wise conduct; for him there is a

> close identity between the way a good writer works and the way a good man thinks and acts . . . . The study, gathering in, and transforming into the personal that go on in both the literary enterprise and the business of conduct result ideally in an enhanced whole rather than the patchwork achieved by plagiaries, fools, and knaves. Thus, paradoxically, it is the process of imitation, despite its initial gathering in of fragments, that when successful gives the greatest originality and greatest cohesiveness to a literary work or to a life.[5]

Peterson notes that the term "study" for Jonson is used in both spheres, "for the whole process of gathering in and drawing forth the best"; one studies men, manners, books, the contemporary milieu, interchangeably, as the men-as-text metaphors illustrate.[6] Ultimately,

then, the fit reader is one who "imitates," who "studies"; his active scrutiny of what is, coupled with careful thought and check against previous knowledge, enable him to judge and to assimilate and use, or to discard what he discovers, as he deems appropriate. He then turns his discoveries to his own purposes -- to the composition of new texts, or, equally valuable, to careful attendance to his own conduct.

Thus it is not difficult to see why Jonson values so highly activities which result in coherent texts. Done well, poems, translations, history, prose, and oratory provide example of the judicious sensibility that Jonson discovers and reveals again and again in the luminaries who populate the Epigrammes.[7] Language misused, seen in plagiarism, falsehood, or affectation, demonstrates the utter lack of that sensibility, an inner emptiness which makes the plagiarist or the fool incapable of judging, transforming, and using literary models.[8] Such misuse also shows itself in conduct. Jonson emphasizes the importance of language as the revealer of the self in Discoveries:

> Language most shewes a man: speak that I may see thee. It springs out of the most retyred, and inmost parts of us, and is the image of the Parent of it, the mind. No glasse renders a man's forme, or likenesse, so true as his speech.[9]

Fundamental to the good imitator, and a prelude to any actual composition that he may undertake, is the ability to read well. Reading well involves both the judicious choice of texts, and mental processes preparatory to the appropriate response to that text:

> To make choise of one excellent man above the rest, and so to follow him, till he grow very Hee: or, so like him, as the topic may be mistaken for the pricipall. Not, as a Creature, that swallowes, what it takes in, crude, raw, or indigested; but, that feedes with an appetite, and hath a stomache to concoct, divide, and turne all to nourishement. Not, to imitate servilely, as Horace saith, and catch at vices, for vertue: but, to draw forth out of the best, and

> choisest flowers, with the Bee, and turne all into Honey, worke it into one relish, and savour . . . . But, that, which we especially require in him is an exactnesse of Studie, and multiplicity of reading, which maketh a full man. Not alone enabling him to know the History, or Argument of a Poeme, and to report it: but so to master the matter, and Stile, as to shew, hee Knowes, how to handle place, or dispose of either with elegancie, when need shall bee . . . . Hee must read many; but ever the best and choisest.[10]

The passage above is a part of Jonson's definition of the Poet; but its emphasis on imitation, choice, and judgment make it appropriate as well for the "good imitator" who learns from both texts and events. Good imitation is founded on such "study"; that is, "to understand" is prerequisite for both sound composition and sound conduct.

Since Jonson has put himself forward as a possessor of this particular sensibility, and since he has chosen fit models for the reader of the Epigrammes,[11] it remains for that reader to respond appropriately. The text itself becomes the index of the fitness or unfitness of its audience. In the Epigrammes, then, bad writers are singled out for scorn -- but unfit readers are scorned equally for their failure to recognize Jonson's text for its virtues, and, simultaneously, the vices within themselves which preclude any such recognition.

Since language, matter, and manners (conduct) remain inseparable, bad imitation implies bad conduct as well as inappropriate response to language. In fact, the former is invariably present with the latter; unfit reading is only one of the many ways in which a lack of wisdom and an inability to "study" show themselves. Necessarily, then, Jonson's epigrams on unfit readers connect and simultaneously criticize other blameworthy modes of conduct with the inability to read well.

TO PLAYWRIGHT

> Playwright me reades, and still my verses dammes,
> He sayes, I want the tongue of Epigrammes;
> I have no salt; no bawdrie he doth meane.
> For witte, in his language, is obscene.
> Playwright, I loath to have thy manners knowne
> In my chaste book: professe them in thine owne. (49)

Clearly, Playwright has criticized Jonson on false grounds. He has mis-defined "salt" to mean "bawdrie"; he lacks the ability to see in Jonson a true imitator whose model is Martial.[12] His own definitions (or mis-definitions) of the kind of language Jonson uses have impeded his understanding; moreover, his own language is apparently both the cause and the effect of his manners (ll. 5-6). Thus reading, writing, and manners are inseparably joined; they eventually coalesce in Jonson's assessment of Playwright's response to his Epigrammes.

Courtling reacts dishonestly to Jonson's work, but the poet sees his false behavior accurately:

> Courtling, I rather thou shouldst utterly
> Dispraise my work, then praise it frostily:
> When I am read, thou fain'st a weak applause,
> As if thou wert my friend, but lack'st a cuase.
> This but thy judgment fooles: the other way
> Would both thy folly and thy spite betray. (52)

Responding falsely, Courtling is a hypocrite; responding truly and negatively, he reveals that his nature is foolish and spiteful. Since in the context of the Epigrammes the court and its lesser lights are often personifications of affectation, stupidity, and foppery,[13] Jonson reveals that his estimate of Courtling's response to his poetry is preceded by his knowledge of the type; Courtling's response simply confirms what Jonson already knows to be true about him; the poet chooses to couch his criticism in terms of measurement of Courtling by his response to the text.

The same is true of both "Groome Ideot" and "To Fool, or Knave"; although the grounds for Jonson's disapproval vary in these two poems, his judgment of manners apparently precedes his criticism of the responses to his poetry.

TO GROOME IDEOT

Ideot, last night I pray'd thee but forbeare
To reade my verses; now I must to heare:
For offering with thy smiles, my wit to grace
Thy ignorance still laughs in the wrong place.
And so my sharpnesse thou no less dis-joynts;
Then thou didst late my sense, loosing my points.
So have I seene at Christmasse sports one lost
And, hoodwink'd, for a man, embrace a post. (58)

"To Foole, or Knave" (61) is more terse: "Thy praise, or dispraise , is to me alike, / One doth not stroke me, nor the other strike."

Epigram (28) provides another telling link between the ability to read well and to conduct oneself appropriately.

ON DON SURLY

Don Surly, to aspire the glorious name
Of a great man, and to be thought the same,
Makes serious use of all great trade he knowes,
He speakes to men with a Rhinorcerotes nose,
Which he thinks great: and so reades verses too,
And, that is done, as he saw great men do.
H'has tympanies of businesse, in his face,
And, can forget mens names, with a great grace,
He will both argue, and discourse in oathes,
Both which are great. And laugh at ill-made clothes,
That's greater yet: to crie his owne up neate,
He doth, at meales, alone, his pheasant eate,
Which is maine greatnesse. And, at his still boord,
He drinkes to no man: that's, too, like a lord.
He keeps anothers wife, which is a spice
Of solemne greatnesse. And he dares, at dice,
Blaspheme god greatly. Or some poor hinde beat,
That breathes in his dogs way: and this is great.
Nay, more, for greatnesse sake, he will be one
May heare my Epigrammes, but like of none,
Surly, use other arts, these only can
Stile thee a most great foole, but no great man. (28)

Surly slavishly apes the manners of great men, following them to the letter -- without the spirit -- and so proclaiming his lack of understanding of the real implications of greatness, and, worse, the inner generosity that characterizes it. Jonson portrays him as a bombastic figure, pompous, hollow, with "tympanies of businesse in his face" (l. 7) swellings or tumors, a metaphor that reinforces Surly's empty noisiness. All manner, no matter, Surly argues in oaths -- by the book, by formula; ridicules clothes (the "style") of others while proclaiming (ironically) the aptness of his own style (l. 11). More serious vices follow: blasphemy, cruelty, adultery. Surly "will like none" of Jonson's poems; possessing such atrocious manners, he must necessarily misuse language and respond inappropriately to good language. He "stiles" himself a fool long before he encounters Jonson's text.

Jonson's choice of the verb "stile" in line 22 is significant, of course. Surly is all style and no substance; the divorce between what he is, and what he wishes to appear, occasions Jonson's satire and is the source of the irony in the poem. An additional irony, however, is that style <u>is</u> substance as Jonson presents Surly here: his manners and language define him as a fool, through and through. Used as a verb, "style" indicates and emphasizes the vital connection between what one is, what one does, and how one speaks and reads; far from being an extraneous coating or removeable garment, it is instead a "last outer layer" of one's inner substance, an inextricable manifestation of the very core of the self.[14]

Given this emphasis on a particular mode of perception and judgment, and on "style" as virtually any and all manifestations of it, it is not surprising that in the empigrams of praise, the excellent

actions of the virtuous are often left unspecified.[15] Rather, Jonson simply selects subjects and proclaims them exemplary:

TO ROBERT, EARLE OF SALISBURY

What need hast thou of me? or of my Muse?
Whose actions so themselves doe celebrate,
Which should thy countries love to speake refuse
Her foes enough would frame thee in their hate.
'Tofore, great men were glad of Poets: Now
I, not the worst, am covetous of thee.
Yet dare not, to my thought, lest hope allow
Of adding to thy fame; thine may to me,
When in my booke men reade but Cecill's name
And what I write thereof find farre,and free
From servile flatterie (common Poets shame)
As thou standst cleere of the necessitie. (43)

Because Jonson's main concern is to praise a sensibility, a way of judging and using information gleaned from texts and from events and people, he demonstrates that even the most apparently trivial of actions bespeaks an inner soundness in one who possesses the ability to "imitate." Such ability to discern and assimilate must necessarily precede any action; conversely, any and all actions demonstrate its presence (or absence). Jonson praises Goodyere's pasttime of hawking in epigram 85; the final couplet refers to his own ability to "imitate," to transform his observation into the poem which in its turn educates the reader into an awareness of Goodyere, and, more generally, of the kind of mind that discovers an emblem of wisdom even in a good man's recreation:

Now, in whose pleasure I have this discerned,
What would his serious actions me have learned? (85, ll. 11-12)

Epigram 86, also to Goodyere, reinforces the idea that the shaping intelligence is present in all the activities in which the good man engages.[16]

In epigram 86, Jonson finds it his responsibility to give voice to "such a studie, such a choice" (1.6). Careful and active scrutiny of both men and texts is a necessity for the good imitator; just as Jonson rarely specifies praiseworthy actions for the reader to emulate directly, so also does he present the exemplary figures with instruction to us on how to attend to them so that the terms of their virtue become apparent.

> Thou art so reverenc'd, as thy comming in
> But in the view, doth interrupt their sinne.
> . . . they, that hope to see
> The commonwealth still safe, must studie thee. (102, ll. 17-8; 19-20)
>
> I must believe some miracles still bee
> When Sidneys name I heare or face I see. (114, 1-2).
>
> I need no other arts, but studie thee. (122, 1. 9).

"Understanding" is born of "study." To "understand" is to appreciate language rightly used; to see and feel the connection between language and manners, and to acknowledge that language and the "inmost and retyred parts" of the mind and self are indissolubly linked. Finally, "understanding" includes an acknowledgment that one's capacity to judge and react to language (and events) is as important an indicator of one's real nature as any other species of conduct. Language processes are themselves reciprocal; one cannot produce well without first perceiving and processing accurately.

Thus, Jonson educates his audience with his presentation in the Epigrammes of the connections between language, manner, and a mode of "study" to be employed so that it underlies and affects both. The subjects of the satiric poems study badly, betraying a gap between style

and substance; while in the epigrams of praise, all actions of the subjects manifest an inner soundness cultivated by the worthy through wise study.

But the nature of Jonson's book of Epigrammes offers readers more even than these demonstrations and depictions of praiseworthy and damnable sensibilities. Jonson's direct addresses to his audience, indicative of a concern for the reader almost "obsessive," reflect the desire of a poet to exert the tightest possible control not only over his matter but over manner: in how the book is perceived and received.[17] As Wesley Trimpi's now-classic study indicates, Jonson's use of the plain style is born of the poet's desire to erase the split between word and thing, form and content, endemic to more ornate styles.[18] But it also reflects Jonson's concern to teach his readers by engaging them as directly as possible in the processes of the text itself. Trimpi's observations on Jonson's style hint at the complexity in the poet's plainness:

> In the plain style the denotative and the connotative most nearly approach each other in the exclusion of irrelevant associations from the context. The denotative statement defines the writer's experience so sharply that it will not admit further qualification other than his attitude toward the experience, which will itself be the context. Connotation,then, can only be perceived by an act of understanding, of insight into what the writer is saying about his experience and about his attitude toward it. It ceases to be a series of feelings evoked by association, as, for example, by means of figurative language, and becomes the awareness of the differences and similarities between the attitude by which the writer qualifies what he says, and the reader's own experience; it is the commentary of the reader's experience upon what the writer is saying; it is, in a sense, the reader's experience itself. That the intensity of connotation will be in proportion to the relevance of the reader's experience explains why a poem of Jonson's in the plain style is so difficult to teach to a young student; he does

> not have any comparable experience of his own to accompany what the writer is saying, and there are few images -- sometimes none at all -- to evoke whatever feelings are within his grasp.[19] (My emphasis)

"The reader's experience itself" is exactly the point. Jonson's definition of style, his concern for care in language, and his attention to the responses of his readers bespeak a conviction that reading is itself a significant act; that it has inseparable moral and aesthetic implications which reveal a shared foundation in the self of the reader. Moreover, the process of reading is itself unbreakably reciprocal: as a person reads, so is he; as he is, so will he read.[20]

More and more literary criticism is coming to acknowledge contemporary theories of perception, cognition, and reading regarding the manner in which a reader meets a literary work. Theoreticians have in common at least one premise; after observing several readers interpret a short poem by Frost, an early theorist writes,

> The readers of the quatrain demonstrated very clearly that, whatever the "model," the reading of a poem is not a simple stimulus-response situation. There was not a simple additive process, one word-meaning added to another. There was an active, trial-and-error tentative structuring of the responses elicited by the text, the building up of a text which was modified or rejected as more and more of the text was deciphered.
>
> The fact that a reader of the quatrain might be able to assign "meaning" to each of the verbal symbols and to each of the separate lines did not guarantee that he would be able to organize these into a significant structure of idea and feeling. The reader had to pay attention to much more than the "meanings" of individual words or their syntax before he could relate the four lines meaningfully. He had to respond to many elements, of diction, rhythm, association, possible figures of speech or levels of meaning. In order to sense the particular way of voicing the last line to himself, he had to select a particular implied persona with a particular point of view or tone or attitude toward the subject about which the poem might center.

> Thus the text, pattern of signs, is interpreted as a set of linguistic symbols. But the text also serves as more than a set of stimuli or a pattern of stimuli; it is also a guide or continuing control during the process by which the reader selects, organizes, and synthesizes -- in short, interprets -- what has emerged from his relationship with the verbal symbols. The text is not simply a fuse that sets off a series of responses. As a pattern of linguistic symbols derived from the signs on the page, the "text" also underwent a series of transformations during the process of arriving at the poem[21]

The "poem" is the result of the reader's reading, association, and interpretation of the written text -- the result of the process of his experience with the text. Readers attend not only to the words on the page, but also to what the stimulus of the text calls forth within them -- the "residue of past experiences with these words in different contexts, attention to the overtones of feeling and the blendings of attitude and mood. All [are] needed before even a tentative organization of an interpretation [is] possible." Thus the poem is an experience; it is "what the reader lives through under the guidance of the text and experiences as relevant to the text."[22]

This first premise of the poem as an experience is altered somewhat by various critics; the kind of interplay that takes place between reader and text is extraordinarily difficult to characterize. Where, precisely, does the reader's consciousness begin, and the "text" leave off? How much, and what sort of mental activity do readers bring to texts?

Hypotheses vary. Norman Holland, a critic whose theory is based in psychoanalysis, emphasizes the interpretation of a text by an individual reader as a kind of map of the reader's psychic terrain:

> For a reader to take pleasure from a reading, he has to protect that pleasure. He must recreate for himself from the text rather precisely all or part of the structures by which he wards off anxiety in real life . . . as though the text can enter the subterranean depths of his mind only to the extent he has exactly shaped it to pass through a tunnel. Once he has done so, however, the subterranean chamber turns out to be large and open. The reader can very freely shape for himself from the literary materials he has admitted a fantasy that gives him pleasure. He projects into the work a fantasy that yields the pleasure he characteristically seeks.[23]

The language of the work itself serves as a check on the reader's projection; though a range of responses to any work is possible, the text itself ensures that these responses will share some features despite the individuality of the respective readers. But Holland stresses reader response almost at the expense of the text; a "positive reading experience" is one that is hardly an expansion of what the reader is, but a continual confirmation of his self from which he derives pleasure: "Only if a reader can achieve a transformation of unconscious into conscious content that fits his lifestyle will style [that is, the reader's mode of apprehension] have found itself. Only then can the reader have a positive experience of the literary work"; "the reader builds for himself out of the raw materials of the work his particular pattern of adaptation and defense."[24]

Holland's emphasis on the confirmation of one's projected fantasies, wishes, and dreams in order for a pleasurable reading experience to take place does stress the importance of the reader's role as crucial to interpretation; but it seems to me to characterize the narrow minded reader (like Jonson's Don Surly) who comes to the poem only to find a mirror for what he already is. However accurate Holland's

theory may be, it seems at best a partial explanation for what happens when a reader meets a text. Even Holland's use of the reading-as-ingestion metaphor has an oddly passive cast, apparently excluding the possibility of readers discovering in the text anything truly new:

> Thus the literary situation . . . draws on a whole sequence of past experiences of real or imagined gratifications coupled with inaction: all kinds of nurture, artistic pleasures reaching back to being read to as a child, dreaming--a most important version of this experience--and, the root of it all, the experience of being fed by a loving mother.[25]

But reader activity, restlessness, is essential; nor is it necessarily unpleasant to encounter the new and the disturbing in a text, as Holland implies. "Reading well" requires more independence of mind and consciousness than Holland grants the individual reader. Rosenblatt stresses activity (and rigor) with a metaphor allied to Holland's that throws some light on their differences: "No one else can read the poem or the novel or the play for him. To ask someone else to experience a work of art for him would be tantamount to seeking nourishment by asking someone else to eat his dinner for him."[26]

Those theorists based in phenomenology, especially Georges Poulet and Wolfgang Iser, whom I quote extensively below, acknowledge a complete involvement of the reader in the work; yet in their writings, the reader's interpretation is enlarged by the very assumption of the task of reading itself.

Poulet, for example, says that books only take on their full existence in the reader. The book itself is

> the consciousness of another, no different from the one I automatically assume in every human being I encounter, except that in this case the consciousness is open to me, welcomes me, lets me look deep inside itself, and even allows me . . . to think what it thinks and feel what it feels . . . . Whatever I think is part of my mental world. And yet here I am thinking a thought which manifestly belongs to another mental world, which is being thought in me just as though I did not exist. Already the notion is inconceivable, and seems even more so if I reflect that, since every thought must have a subject to think it, this thought which is alien to me and yet in me, must have a subject which is alien to me. It all happens then, as though reading were the act by which a thought managed to bestow itself within me with a subject not myself. Whenever I read, I mentally pronounce an I and yet the I which I pronounce is not myself.[27]

Wolfgang Iser, whose work is based in phenomenology and cognitive psychology, strikes a note midway between Poulet and Holland. Neither complete projection of one's identity for confirmation and gratification of the inner self, nor a complete surrender of one's consciousness to the "other," the book itself, reading demands that the reader oscillate between states of engagement and detachment in his relation with the text. This model of the reading process sees the work as a set of possibilities to be actualized by the reader; hence, Iser takes into account both the reader's activity and individuality, and the demands of a specific work. Like Rosenblatt, Iser sees the interplay between text and reader as dynamic and enriching.

Three aspects form the relation between reader and text: the process of anticipation and retrospection, the consequent unfolding of the text as a living event, and the resultant impression of life-likeness.

> Any "living event" must . . . remain open. In reading, this obliges the reader to seek continually for consistency, because only then can he close up situations and comprehend

> the unfamiliar. But consistency-building is itself a living process in which one is constantly forced to make selective decisions -- and these decisions in their turn give a reality to the possibilities which they exclude, insofar as they may take effect as a latent disturbance of the consistency established. This is what causes the reader to be entangled in the text-"gestalt" that he himself has produced.
>
> Through this entanglement the reader is bound to open himself up to the workings of the text and so leave behind his own preconceptions. This gives him the chance to have an experience in the way G.B. Shaw once described in: "You have learnt something. That always feels at first as if you had lost something." Reading reflects the structure of experience to the extent that we must suspend the ideas and attitudes that shape our own personality before we can experience the unfamiliar world of the literary text.[28]

But we do not leave ourselves behind in the process. Rather, says Iser, in reading there are two levels -- the "alien 'me' and the real, virtual 'me' -- which are never completely cut off from each other." In order to make someone else's thoughts an absorbing theme for ourselves, the virtual background of our own personality must be able to adapt to it.

> Every text we read draws a different boundary within our perosnality, so that the virtual background (the real "me") will take on a different form, according to the theme of the text concerned. This is inevitable, if only for the fact that the relationship between the alien theme and virtual background is what makes it possible for the unfamiliar to be understood.[29]

Hence the reader who wishes to "understand" cultivates the attitude that permits an acceptance of what is before him in the text -- at least momentarily, for purposes of comparison. As he compares what is before him with prior experiences, thoughts, feelings, moods, he "discovers" and learns both from what the text offers, and from what is within himself; he draws from the interplay that makes these discoveries possible.

H. Jennifer Brady has mapped Jonson's didactic strategy fully by assigning much of the responsibility for it, quite properly, to the reader. Through what she calls a "rhetorical contract" with his reader, Jonson's major purpose in the Epigrammes is "remedial reader education":

> The reader becomes the pivotal center of Jonson's conception of the ideal function of literature, and more specifically, of his own work. Only when we agree to collude with this moral guidance can the Epigrammes effect their true purpose, be read well . . . . What Jonson tells us in "To the Reader" is that we will be judged by our readiness to engage in a process of judgment, not only of others, but of ourselves.[30] (Emphasis mine)

According to the principle of "radical antithesis," Jonson juxtaposes epigrams of praise, blame, and speculation, continually unsettling his audience. The reader thus comes to depend on the poet in order to cope with the continual disruption of his expectations of the text, and with the temporariness of the poetic closure that Jonson allows, only to remove, time after time:

> In order for our moral complacency in unassisted reason to be overcome, we must feel disoriented, in need of superior guidance. Nor is this confined to the beginning of the book. Jonson orders the poems so as to sustain reader tension throughout . . . the education here more intimately involves a strategic interplay between the poet-speaker and the reader.[31]

Thus, Brady concludes, the "coherence of the collection as a 'book' relates less to any idea of formal progression to a point of final resolution and stasis than to a consistent alternation between dramatic tension and moments of calm, reflective wisdom."[32]

Brady is quite right to see the collection as a process in which the reader is engaged. The importance of Jonson's ideas about imitation, and the activity required in scrutiny of texts or events to cultivate wisdom, support and augment Brady's remarks on the tension and adjustment of expectation that the reader undergoes as he reads Jonson's Epigrammes. Moreover, as we have seen, Jonson has specifically defined and depicted (in epigrams of praise and blame) the faculty that Brady says the reader must use: to see things as they are, including himself; to turn information from the text (and contemporary milieu) to his own use. Jonson offers the collection of poems as the occasion for the reader to learn by doing. "Study" of the examples thus implies a means of active scrutiny, comparison, assimilation, judgment, rather than a passive receptivity. Peterson has called this engagement iself "imitation"; it is in part a definition of the nature of reading.

But I wish to qualify Brady's remarks somewhat in order to connect more closely the learning accomplished by the reader to several other of Jonson's concerns. Note that I have said "the learning accomplished by the reader": already I have begun to disagree with Brady. While I believe that it is difficult to identify a "point of final resolution or stasis" in the collection, one must take its alteration of content into account as it reveals Jonson's expectations of his audience. Over the years, his audience has tried to live up to those expectations.

The history of the criticism of the Epigrammes, particularly in the last twenty years, is very much a history of attempts to find order in the collection.[33] Herford and Simpson are dismayed at what

they call the rather wild disarray of the poems; but a number of studies and dissertations try to map Jonson's terrain: as a portrait of its persona; as deliberate recapitulation of one of Martial's books of epigrams; as drama; as theatre; as city. Others group the poems in the collection by theme or by genre, aligning them with their fellows in Jonson's later work. The final suggestion is Brady's, who sees the organizing principle as one of method rather than of content: "radical antithesis" demands the cooperation of the reader in what is intended as an exercise in self-scrutiny.

Surveying these suggestions of order in the collection, one can honestly say that each of them makes a good deal of sense. Brady's reading differs from the others because it explains apparent disorder as purposive in itself. I think this is precisely Jonson's point: the reader is expected to find -- to make -- his own order in the collection; indeed, the impulse is part of what we now know about the process of reading:

> While expectations may be continually modified, and images continually expanded, the reader will still strive, even if unconsciously, to fit everything together in a consistent pattern. "In the reading of images, as in the hearing of speech, it is always hard to distinguish what is given to us from what we supplement in the process of projection which is triggered off by recognition . . . it is the guess of the beholder that tests the medley of forms and colours for coherent meaning, crystallizing it into shape when a consistent interpretation has been found." By grouping together the written parts of the text, we enable them to interact, we observe the direction in which they are leading us, and we project onto them the consistency which we, as readers, require. This "gestalt" must inevitably be colored by our own characteristic selection process. For it is not given by the text itself; it arises from the meeting between the written text and the individual mind of the reader with its own particular history of experience, its own consciousness, its own outlook . . . ." . . . comprehension is an individual

> act of seeing-things-together, and only that." With a literary text such comprehension is inseparable from the reader's expectations, and where we have expectations, there too we have one of the most potent weapons in the writer's armory -- illusion.[34]

Jonson makes the reader work quite hard to impose an order on the Epigrammes; that there are so many varied interpretations, and that no order is self-evident is perhaps indicative of just how much responsibility is being placed on the reader. But that too is on purpose, since it makes the reader examine the process of reading itself:

> Whenever "consistent reading suggests itself . . . illusion takes over." Illusion, says Northrop Frye, is "fixed or definable, and reality is best understood as its negation." The "gestalt" of a text normally takes on (or rather, is given) this fixed or definable outline, as this is essential to our own understanding, but on the other hand, if reading were to consist of nothing but an uninterrupted building up of illusions, it would be a suspect, if not downright dangerous process: instead of bringing us into contact with reality, it would wean us away from realities . . . . However, even if an overdose of illusion may lead to triviality, this does not mean that the process of illusion-building should ideally be dispensed with altogether . . . we still need the abiding illusion that the resistance itself is the consistent pattern underlying the text . . . in the individual literary text we always find some form of balance between /the conflicting tendencies between complete illusion, and the continual disruption of illusion/. The formation of illusions, therefore, can never be total, but it is this very incompleteness that in fact gives it its productive value.[35]

The reader confronts the disorder of Jonson's text as he confronts the sensory (or moral) disorder of raw experience. Both demand his "shaping intelligence" to make coherent wholes from which he learns -- and, further, Jonson seems in addition to ask him how to learn, to examine the process he undertakes while it occurs. The creation of this

coherent whole is, as Peterson says, a species of "imitation," a process not limited to texts but vital to good conduct. Jonson is not giving the reader an experience analogous to the faculty necessary for virtuous action; he is providing an orchestrated opportunity for its performance, simultaneously teaching the reader the value of "imitation" in the text as applicable in the world of day-to-day experience. The cluster at the end of the collection of epigrams in praise of literary activities and men of virtue who construct texts, read well, and are themselves to be "read" as "texts" seems to confirm that Jonson expects us to come to value this sensibility, to see its true importance, as a result of reading the Epigrammes. It is a faculty best understood through explanation in literary terms; in works of literature we have the product of this faculty at its best. But it is not limited to the manuscript or to the book-lined study.

Jonson's strategy in the Epigrammes undoubtedly has its basis in his high estimate of his mission as a poet; it simultaneously demonstrates his confidence in his art as a means of instruction.[36] And if the formation of an ability to "read well" is so vital to the world of affairs as well as to the literary sensibility, that also explains Jonson's emphasis on the presentation of what is. In Discoveries, Jonson's comments illustrate his conviction that a good poet must enlist the active cooperation of his audience -- to keep his audience, of course, but also because of the nature of the mind itself:

> The true Artificer will not run away from Nature, as he were afraid of her; or depart from life, and the likenesse of Truth; but speake to the capacity of his hearers. And though his language differ from the vulgar somewhat, it shall not fly from all humanity, with the Tamerlanes, and the

> Tamer-chams of the late Age, which had nothing in them but the scenicall strutting, and furious vociferation, to warrant them to the ignorant gapers. Hee knowes it is his onely Art, so to carry it, as none but Artificers perceive it. In the mean time perhaps hee is call'd barren, dull, leane, a poore writer (or by what contumelious word can come in their cheeks) by these men, who without labour, judgement, knowledge, or almost sense, are received or preferr'd before him. He gratulates them, and their fortune. An other Age, or juster men, will acknowledge the vertues of his studies: his wisedome, in dividing; his subtiltie, in arguing: with what strength he doth inspire his readers; with what sweetnesse hee strokes them: in inveighing, what sharpnesse; in Jest, what urbanity hee uses. How he doth raigne in mens affections; how invade, and breake in upon them; and makes their minds like the thing he writes. Then in his Elocution to behold, what word is proper: which hath ornament; which height; what is beautifully translated; where figures are fit; which gentle, which strong to shew the composition Manly, And how hee hath avoyded faint, obscure, obscene, sordid, humble improper or effeminate phrases; which is not only prais'd of the most, but commended, (which is worse) especially for that it is nought.[37]
> (Emphasis mine)

One uses apparently "barren" style the better to render the "thing he writes" accurately, and, as Trimpi points out, the better to enlist the reader's cooperation. The reader himself helps to make his own mind like the thing the poet has written. Jonson comments too on this particular kind of activity:

> Knowledge is the action of the Soule, and is perfect without the senses, as having the seeds of all science, and Vertue in itselfe; but not without the service of the senses; by those organs, the soule workes; she is a perpetuall Agent, prompt and subtile; but often flexible, and erring; entangling herselfe like a silk worme; but her Reason is a weapon with two edges, and cuts through. In her Indagations oft-times new Scents put her by; and shee takes in errors into her by the same conduits she doth Truths.[38]

Herford and Simpson note in a gloss to this passage that exact knowledge includes a knowledge of the causes of a thing, and not merely its

appearance; they quote from Histriomastix:

> If this bee certain then which comes from sence,
> The knowledge proper to the soule is truer;
> For that pure knowledge by which we know
> A thing to bee, with true cause how it is,
> Is more exact then that which knowes it is,
> And reacheth not to knowledge of the cause.[39]

By definition, knowledge is never a static quantity, but a process, continually subject to modification, adjustment, to the weighing of new information about "cause." That same soul must seek to know itself:

> I know of no disease of the Soule, but Ignorance; not of the Arts, and Sciences, but of it selfe: Yet relating to those, it is a pernicious evill: the darkner of mans life; the disturber of his Reason, and common confounder of Truth: with which a man goes groping in the darke, no otherwise then if hee were blind.[40]

One of the conduits to the soul is reading; from the soul comes the language of a particular speaker. Thus Jonson continually emphasizes the inseparability of "language" and "manner" (behavior), with both as true indications of the morality of particular persons, and consequently, of whole states:

> There cannot be one colour of the mind, another of the wit. If the mind be staid, grave, and compos'd, the wit is so; that vitiated, the other is blowne, and deflower'd. Doe we not see, if the mind languish, the members are dull? Looke upon an effeminate person; his very gate confesseth him. If a man be fiery, his motion is so; if angry, 'tis troubled, and violent. So that wee may conclude: wheresoever manners, and fashions are corrupted, Language is. It imitates the publicke riot. The excesse of Feasts, and apparrell, are the notes of a sick State; and the wantonnesse of language, of a sick mind.[41]

Jonson makes us aware of yet another unbreakable, reciprocal bond, vital for us to recognize; equally vital is the health of the manners and language of individuals for the maintenance of their society.

In Ben Jonson: Private Man and Public Poet, George Parfitt comments:

> To Jonson, words and ideas can be distinguished and the former are finally justified by the quality of the latter. It is the literary mind of the man who believes "things" to be more important than words. As a view of the relationship between idea and language it is undeniably oversimple, apparently showing little appreciation of the complex interrelationship of the two. But in practice, Jonson, like other artists of his time, was quite capable of grasping the complexity of the situation . . . . Form is finally the bodying forth of "matter": that is its limitation but also its importance, because unless the embodiment is appropriate and wholly adequate the matter will not be apprehensible without distortion and will thus be vitiated . . . . This is close to the neoplatonic theory about the relationship between the beauty (or otherwise) of appearance and the virtue (or otherwise) of the inner being.[42]

Of course it is. The bodying forth of a good man's matter, his inner substance is his language and his behaviour. Jonson connects both language and manner once again in Discoveries with a telling metaphor: "A good life is a maine Argument."[43] Once again, morality is couched in the terms of an exemplary text; moreover, the good man expresses himself and behaves so as to reveal no dichotomy between what he says and does, and what he is.

The mode of learning ("study" "imitation") and action both in living well and in reading and writing, the metaphors of men-as-texts, and texts-as-friends, and Jonson's self-praise as the judicious selector presenting us accurate renditions of things for assimilation, suggest finally that well-crafted lives, and well-crafted poems are vital to one

another. At the very least, they share the same virtues: no dichotomy exists between style and substance; both conduce others to good. Lacking them, our alternatives are the disorder of the world or raw experience without the guidance of men of affairs or of the poet who gives us texts against which to cross-check our experiences, even as we scrutinize ourselves in relation to both good books and good men.

> Almost literally, the world only makes sense if the efficacy of virtues is admitted: without its operation we live by mob-mindlessness or by the selfishness of parasites or by the counsel of cynical empiricists. The moral world is the only alternative to chaos.[44]

Finally, moral behavior is a species of art; it obeys the same principles of order, consistency, perspicacity, as does a well-formed composition. Aesthetics and morality are joined not only because all art may carry an explicitly didactic message, but because both art and moral behavior originate in the same impulses: impulses to clarity, unity, and the assimilation and use of the best precedents available.

The link between art and life, then, is intimate and vital. Jonson's main concern with this link is most evident in the kinds of reciprocal bonds he chooses to depict: word and thing; substance and style; the emotional private man, deeply involved and affected by human relationships, and the judicious artist.[45] Jonson's triumph even in the early work of the Epigrammes is to convert potentially warring entities into mutually necessary members of a fruitful dialectic. Implicitly or explicitly, Jonson depicts each abstraction as complete in itself; in his art he joins them so that we see them as distinct yet inseparable.

Realization of the necessity for this "marriage" and play of dialectic is possible only if the reader engages himself in the experience of the text, and agrees to undertake the "cross-checking" and the self-scrutiny essential to such engagement:

> The need to decipher /a text/ gives us the chance to formulate our own deciphering capacity -- i.e., we bring to the fore an element of our being of which we are not directly conscious. The production of the meaning of literary texts . . . does not merely entail the discovery of the unformulated, which can then be taken over by the more active imagination of the reader; it also entails the possibility that we may formulate ourselves, and so discover what had previously seemed to elude our consciousness.[46]

"What had previously seemed to elude our consciousness" is, for Jonson, a true realization (literally) of our moral natures, a necessity for additional "reading well," for living well, and for the "understanding" that precedes and underlies both.

II

In addition to revealing the literary sensibility as vital and as a sensibility applicable in the world of affairs, the poems of praise at the end of the Epigrammes show Jonson at his creatively imitative best. Using his own principles of the ancients as "guides, not Commanders" the poet presents us with a modified mythology suited to the present day -- informed by Jonson's immersion in the classics, but molded finally by his supreme awareness of contemporary society and of the necessity of portraying things as they are.

Examining Jonson's relation to poetry, history, and mythology, Achsah Guibbory notes that, imitating the ancient poets

> in an attempt to rival and even perhaps to surpass the classics, Jonson in his own panegyric poetry transforms the men and women who are his modern examples of virtue into mythological figures which provide England with a counterpart to the gods and heroes of classical Greece and Rome.[47]

Of course, Jonson's purpose in the poems of praise is accurate portrayal of living exempla; moreover, his verse makes these figures immortal. As he has done in the epitaphs, however, Jonson simultaneously draws attention to the tradition he employs, demanding that it be re-examined for its utility.

Sometimes, for example, modern English figures alter classical precedents just slightly, to emphasize Jonson's special purposes here. In "To Sir Thomas Overbury" (113), Jonson places himself before Phoebus to be judged for a poetry that is accurate in its plainness: "So Phoebus makes me worthy of his bayes / As but to speake thee, Overbury is praise: / So where thou liv'st, thou makst life understood" (ll. 1-3). The address to Phoebus is statement, not supplication: thus Phoebus makes him worthy as a poet, of the praise of a god -- because Jonson has recognized Overbury and simply spoken his name. Phoebus judges in terms of wise selection and accurate rendition -- very much as Jonson himself does.

Mrs. Philip Sydney (114) has a quite uncharacteristic effect on the traditionally blind Cupid; in her, and from her, the love god has learned to recognize inner beauty as well as "meere out-formes" (l. 4). He

> Hath chang'd his soule, and made his object you:
> Where finding so much beautie met with vertue,
> He hath not onely gained himself his eyes,
> But, in your love, made all his servants wise. (ll. 5-11)

Since the epigrams of praise, explicitly or implicitly, are about the formation of wisdom based on the accurate perception of things as they are, Jonson's depiction of Cupid transformed is more than pretty compliment to Mrs. Sydney. The final line of the poem also implies that love and devotion are founded in realistic vision and that, conversely, devotion to the worthy itself fosters wisdom. The future of Cupid, his sight restored, thus embodies another of the reciprocal relations Jonson continually points out. Often, however,

> Jonson's English subject does not merely revive the classical figure but actually replaces it, and in this case the mythological comparisons are based on a sense that the cycles of history are characterized by a forward direction; the present does not simply repeat the past but takes its place, or is its culmination.[48]

In "To Lady Mary Wroth" (105), Jonson remarks the superfluousness of classical models for graces and virtues even as he compiles a catalogue of mythological compliment and allusions which Lady Mary Wroth both embodies and exceeds:

> Madam, had all antiquitie been lost,
> All historie seal'd up and fables crost,
> That we had left us, nor by time nor place,
> Least mention of a Nymph, a Muse, a grace,
> But even their names were to be made anew,
> Who could not but create them all from you?
> He, that but saw you weare the wheaten hat,
> Would call you more than Ceres, if not that.
> And drest in shepeards tyre, who would not say,
> You were the bright Oenone, Flora, or May?
> If dancing, all would cry th'Idalian Queen,
> Were leading forth the graces on the green:
> And, arm'd to the chase, so bare her bow
> Diana ' alone, so hit and hunted so,
> There's none so dull, that for your stile would aske
> That saw you put on Pallas plumed caske:
> Or, keeping your due state, that would not cry,
> There Juno sate, and yet no Peacock by.

So you are Nature's Index, and restore
I'yourselfe, all treasures lost of th'age before. (11. 1-20)

The classical models are still in use here -- but only so that Jonson may note that, as models, they are being superseded. Interestingly, it is Lady Wroth's "stile" -- a pun on outward behavior and writing instrument -- that make the plumed cask of the goddess of wisdom appropriate for her, but by lines 17 and 18, she no longer requires the emblem of the other goddess whom her manner resembles: "Or, keeping your due state, that would not cry, / There Juno sate, and yet no Peacock by" (11. 17-18). Finally,she is to be looked upon in the way that such mythological figures have been admired before; but by the end of the poem, she is seen as complete in herself, and the specific references to classical models are no longer needed: "So are you Nature's Index and restore / I'yourself, all treasures lost of the age before" (11. 19-20).

"Perhaps the variation most frequently employed by Jonson is that of including realistic (usually natural English) details in an essentially Greek or Roman atmosphere."[49] "To his Lady, then Mrs. Cary," (126) is another of the poems which makes us pause to note that, by domesticating mythological allusion, Jonson is gradually, purposefully supplanting a foreign mythic past with the eminently accessible present:

Retyred, with purpose your fair worth to praise,
'Mongst Hampton shades and Phoebus grove of bayes,
I pluck'd a branch; the jealous god did frown;
And bad me lay th'usurp'd laurel downe:
Said I wrong'd him, and (which was more) his love,
I answered, Daphne now no paine can prove.
Phoebus replyed. Bold head, it is not shee,
Carey my love is, Daphne but my tree. (11. 1-6)

In the final line of the poem, Jonson has wrought a metamorphosis worthy of Ovid. Daphne has become merely a pretty traditional emblem; wisdom, art, and praise for art -- represented in the laurel of Phoebus -- now reside in Cary. Jonson plays neatly on a reversal of the mythic transformation of the fleeing Daphne into a laurel tree: Mrs. Cary, the living woman, is celebrated for what she is; to transform her is contrary to Jonson's first precept as a poet. Indeed, it is in her own person that she is essential to poets (Phoebus); she remains available as subject, audience, patron, the bonds duly noted by Jonson in line eight, with "love."

The last specific allusion to myth in the epigrams of praise is in many ways the most telling. In "To Sir William Roe" Jonson renames his contemporary: "Roe" becomes "Aeneas":

> Roe, (and my joy to name) th'art now to goe
> Countries and climes, manners and men to know,
> T'extract, and choose the best of all then knowne,
> And those to turne to bloud, and make thine owne;
> May winds as soft as breath of kissing friends
> Attend thee hence; and there, may all thy ends
> As the beginnings here, prove purely sweet,
> And perfect in a circle alwayes meet,
> So when we, blest with thy returne, shall see
> Thy selfe, with thy first thoughts, brought home by thee
> We each to other may this voyce inspire:
> This is that good Aeneas, past through fire,
> Through seas, stormes, tempests: and embarqu'd for hell
> Came back untouch'd. This man hath travail'd well. (128)

This particular poem of praise is, in addition, a final, inclusive example of various kinds of imitation -- by Jonson on the page, and by Roe, who will in his travels "countries and climes, manners and men to know, / T'extract, and choose the best of all then knowne, / And then to turne to bloud, and make them thine owne" (11. 2-4).[50]

"Travail" of course, implies the activity of a shaping intelligence; Roe will not be passively acted upon by what he encounters in his journey, but rather extract what is best and most useful and make it his own. By re-christening him "that good Aeneas" Jonson once more emphasizes the importance (and, perhaps, the comparative rarity) of men who can "travail" in this way.

But if Jonson finds in Roe the status and virtue comparable to those of the founder of Rome, the fact that he says "this is that good Aeneas" (emphasis mine) draw our attention to the fact that this is not merely comparison. Roe replaces Aeneas; that replacement indicates a re-definition of epic heroism. Jonson suggests that a particular sensibility, a shaping intelligence, and discernment, constitutes heroism. The specific exploits of a good Aeneas have been superseded by the kind of virtue on which they rest. The same emphasis, of course, has been present throughout the epigrams of praise. But here Jonson's allusion, especially coming as it does at the end of a series of allusions altered for appropriateness to the contemporary milieu, suggest that Jonson has indeed given us new models of virtue, a new kind of heroism, in epigrams of plain praise rather than in an epic.

Interestingly, though perhaps Jonson saw himself as England's Virgil who presents in epigram what the Roman poet provided in epic, there is little of the emphasis in the collection on the immortalizing power of poetry that one might expect.[51] It might well be argued that, by definition, epigrams include this emphasis; but the genre is, at the same time, heavily dependent on topicality in reference, making it somewhat ephemeral as well.[52] But this difficulty in the genre (if

it can be described this strongly) also bears out the fact that Jonson is celebrating principles rather than specifics (though, of course, he needs the specifics from which to draw principles, and also to illustrate them); that his purpose in the Epigrammes is to set forth enduring principles of selection, a redefinition of heroism applicable to any age, as well as to praise contemporary embodiments of it. He does this by making the collection itself a species of "travail," an occasion for the reader to learn and to practice the kind of imitation for which Jonson praises Roe, engaged in a dialectic of experience and thought necessary for the growth of wisdom. Jonson replaces mythological heroes with unembellished portraits of contemporaries. The plain language seeks to make the reader aware that he is to participate in the process of marrying word and thing, the world of texts, and the world of experience, and that such a process is mental travail essential to the growth of wisdom.

It is, then, the powers of the mind, rightly used, that Jonson finally celebrates and instructs in the Epigrammes; and this is why both the poet and the reader have such prominent places in the collection. The poet selects great minds, tied inextricably to their times and places; they alone are agents of order, models, in the otherwise disorderly world of experience, as the poet who selects them is also an agent of order:

> Good men are the Stars, the planets of the ages wherein they live; and illustrate the times. God did never let them be wanting to the world: As Abel, for an example, of innocency; Enoch, of Purity, Noah of Trust in Gods Mercies, Abraham of Faith, and so of the rest . . . they, plac'd high on the top of all virtue, look'd down on the stage of the world and contemned the Play of Fortune.[53]

Jonson's metaphor emphasizes the inviolability of the good man; perhaps it also suggests inaccessibility.[54] But I think that, by their arrangement and by the terms of praise which Jonson uses, the Epigrammes define and demonstrate, and ask us to learn, actively, that this new heroism is accessible to the reader willing to be instructed, and to learn to "understand," and that the final hero is the mind willing to "travail" in order to build wisdom for itself. Out of such wisdom emerges exemplary language, exemplary manners. The wise know too of the reciprocal bonds and dialectical fruitfulness of entities apparently opposed or irreconcilable: words and things, style and substance, and vastly different kinds of men and women. For the Epigrammes to work as a didactic collection, even the most vicious of the satirized types must be present for "radical antithesis" for a reader's struggle to accommodate and to choose. The resulting dialectical play emerges from this apparent disorder, given order by the mind of the reader. With Roe, he has the chance to be a good Aeneas, in order to found his own mind in equanimity.

NOTES

[1]Richard Peterson, "Imitation and Praise in Ben Jonson's Poems," pp. 265-69.

[2]Ibid., pp. 271; 274.

[3]Ibid., p. 274.

[4]Ibid., p. 276.

[5]Ibid., p. 266.

[6]Ibid., p. 266. See also chapter two, above, pp.

[7]See, for example, epigrams 94, 95, 110, 111, 132. Edward Partridge has noted as well that the second half of the collection emphasizes literary composition of various kinds, and especially "how words can be used artistically" in contrast to "how they are often abused by fools and frauds." See "Jonson's Epigrammes: The Named and the Nameless," pp. 174ff.

[8]Peterson, pp. 278-79.

[9]Discoveries, H&S VIII, p. 625.

[10]Discoveries, H&S VIII, pp. 638-9, ll. 2469-2477; 2482-88; 2507-8. See also Jonson's "To the Reader" heading the Epigrammes: "To read it well: that is, to understand" (1. 1. 2).

[11]See above, chapter two, pp.

[12]Jonson establishes early in the collection criteria for reading the poems correctly; his "old way and the true" (18. 1. 2) is specifically not the way of his contemporaries, Davies and Weever. See also epigram 36, "To the Ghost of Maritall."

[13]See, for example, epigrams 10, 15, 25, 52, 61, 62.

[14]W.K. Wimsatt, Jr. "Style as Meaning," in Samuel Chatman and Seymour Levin, eds., Essays on the Language of Literature (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1967), p. 371.

[15]See chapter two, above, for discussion of epigrams 43 and 64, both to Robert, Earl of Salisbury. For examples of epigrams which praise states of mind, attitudes, or unspecified actions, see 53, 54, 56, 74, 91, 93, 99, 102, 106, 109.

[16]See above, chapter two; Peterson, p. 266.

[17]Peterson, p. 164.

[18]For detailed discussion of Ciceronianism as an example of the kind of style which tends to divide word and thing, see Wesley Trimpi, Ben Jonson's Poems, pp. 43ff.

[19]Trimpi, p. ix. For a discussion of style in comparable terms, see also Wolfgang Iser, The Implifed Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), p. 291.

[20]My discussion of reading-centered literary theory and criticism is almost excruciatingly brief; I include these three practitioners in order to illustrate the wide variation among current approaches. For the theoretical bases of Iser's phenomenological method, see also Roman Ingarden, The Cognition of a Literary Work of Art, trans. Ruth Ann Crowley and Kenneth R. Olson (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973); and Wolfgang Iser, The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response (Baltimore : The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978). In Self-Consuming Artifacts (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), Stanley Fish offers essays in a reader-centered criticism largely rhetorical in emphasis; he interprets seventeenth century prose and poetry in terms of reader response. Jonathan Culler sets forth the necessity for a theory of reading and "reader competence" for a coherent theory of literary criticsm and aesthetics in Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics, and the Study of Literature (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975).

[21]Louise Rosenblatt, "Toward a Transactional Theory of Reading," in her The Reader, the Text, the Poem (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978), p. 127.

[22]Rosenblatt, p. 128.

[23]Norman Holland, Poems in Persons: An Introduction to the Psychoanalysis of Literature (New York: Norton, 1973), p. 77.

[24]Ibid., p. 96.

[25]Ibid., p. 82.

[26]Rosenblatt, p. 128.

[27]Georges Poulet, "Phenomenology of Reading," New Literary History 1 (1969-70):54; 56.

[28]Wolfgang Iser, The Implied Reader, p. 291.

[29]Iser, pp. 293-4.

[30]H. Jennifer Brady, "Ben Jonson's 'Works of Judgement': A Study of Rhetorical Strategies in the Epigrammes," Dissertation, Princeton, 1980, p. 63.

[31]Ibid., p. 108.

[32]Ibid., p. 110.

[33]Until fairly recently, criticism of the Epigrammes as a self-contained book was rare, as E.B. Partridge notes in "The Named and the Nameless." "A quite unmanageable array of verse forms" was the description given by Herford and Simpson (II, 341); and in his landmark study of Jonson's poetry, Wesley Trimpi makes no attempt to discuss the collection as a book, commenting only on individual poems. David Wykes' "Ben Jonson's 'Chast Book' -- The Epigrammes," Renaissance and Modern Studies 13 (1969): 76-87, notes the alternation of satire and eulogy, suggesting that Jonson asks the reader to move through the"two faces of the social world," "malediction" and "benediction" (85). Commentators after Wykes invariably comment on Jonson's juxtaposition of praise and blame. Partridge proposes the movement from folly to praise as the presence of a characteristic of the Jonsonian masque, from the disorder of the antimasque to the harmony of masque and revels (71). Jean Humez sees in Jonson's imitation of Martial an attempt to pattern his book on the Roman poet's eleventh book of epigrams (Dissertation, Yale 1971). Others look to the social emphasis of Jonson's poetry for suggestions of structure in the Epigrammes. R.H. Miller proposes that Jonson's book is much like a populous urban landscape; the city scene gives unity to diversity, demonstrating Jonson's social ethic /DAI 33 (1972): 280A-IA (Columbia)_/. Bruce R. Smith likens the Epigrammes to a sequence of portraits, and the reader to a member of a theatre audience, in "Ben Jonson's Epigrammes: Portrait Gallery, Theatre, Commonwealth," Studies in English Literature 14 (1974): 91-109. Jonathan Kamholtz finds in Jonson's three collections of poetry the three stages of a "feigned commonwealth" /DAI 37 (1975): 332A (Yale)_/; while Anthony Mortimer finds the hallmarks of the commonwealth in a brief study that draws on all of Jonson's lyric poetry, in SEL 13 (1973): 69-79, "The Feigned Commonwealth in the Poetry of Ben Jonson." Finally, Eric Sundquist sees the symbolic plan of the modern city in the collection; Jonson reveals order in apparent disorder through his praise of the virtuous, who correspond to models in the Golden Age of Greece and Rome (Dissertation, Columbia, 1976).

[34]Iser, pp. 283-4.

[35]Ibid., p. 284.

[36]See above, chapter one.

[37]Discoveries, H&S VIII, pp. 587-88, 11. 772-800.

[38]Ibid., p. 588, 11. 811-820.

[39]H&S XI, p. 239, n. 811. Compare Trimpi's discussion of "Queen and Huntress," Ben Jonson's Poems, p. 207, for Jonson's belief in the Aristotelian principle of virtue as an activity: ". . . Jonson implies that perfection is an activity, as virtue is an activity for Aristotle."

[40]Discoveries, H&S VIII, p. 588.

[41]Ibid., pp. 592-3.

[42]George Parfitt, Ben Jonson: Private Man and Public Poet (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1976), p. 34.

[43]Discoveries, H&S VIII, p. 566.

[44]Parfitt, p. 30.

[45]See above, chapter one.

[46]Iser, p. 294.

[47]Achsah Guibbory, "The Poet as Mythmaker: Ben Jonson's Poetry of Praise," Clio 5 (Spring, 1976): 315.

[48]Guibbory, 319.

[49]William V. Spanos, "The Real Toad in the Jonsonian Garden," in William R. Keast, ed. Seventeenth Century English Poetry: Modern Essays in Criticism, Rev. ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 205.

CHAPTER FOUR

I

We have in Roe a new Aeneas; we have in the other named luminaries of the Epigrammes men and women whose virtue is celebrated but whose actions, the specific manifestations of that virtue, often go unnamed. Ripeness is all: observation, study, assimilation of learning culled from the world of experience, culminate in the formation of wisdom.

Jonson offers a new definition of heroism; most important, he places it within the grasp of readers willing to undertake the "travail" of the Epigrammes. Studying well, such readers at the end of the collection find themselves with a newly cultivated appreciation of language, letters, and an appreciation of the sensibility that underlies, and is formed by, reading well, writing well, and living well.

Consequently, Swinburne's estimate of Jonson's Epigrammes is a judgment with which few readers of Jonson will now agree:

> How far poetry may be permitted to go in the line of sensual pleasure or sexual emotion may be debated between the disciples of Ariosto and the disciples of Milton; but all English readers, I trust, will agree with me that coprology should be left to Frenchmen . . . . It is nothing less than lamentable that so great an English writer as Ben Jonson should ever have taken the plunge of a Parisian diver into the cesspool.[1]

Swinburne did find merit in "On Lucy, Countesse of Bedford" (76), and "Epitaph on Salathiel Pavy" (120; sic), but, no doubt, when he complained of Jonson's coarseness, he had in mind the final epigram of the collection, "The Famous Voyage" (133).

The one hundred ninety-six line mock-epic is the narrative of the adventures of two wights of Jacobean London who, in seach of prostitutes, undertake a trip to Holborne -- by means of a rowboat up Fleet Ditch, the sewer which collected refuse from London's public privies. It is usually read as a parody of trips to the classical underworld, particularly the trip made by Aeneas in Book VI of Virgil's Aeneid.[2]

But this last poem has presented problems other than coarseness to readers of the Epigrammes.[3] If the defining characteristics of the genre are brevity and pointedness, what are we to make of 196 lines in heroic couplets?[4] Moreover, in "Voyage," Jonson names actual people and places; he has refrained from doing so in the brief satiric epigrams, instead allowing "the vices . . . be owned" as members of the audience recognize themselves in the various nasty behaviors depicted in the text.[5] With this specificity, at such great length, the poet seems to be putting his powers to a slightly different use here than he has in the rest of the collection. Judging by its length, its form, and its position at the end of the collection, (the last half of which consists primarily of praise) Jonson has given this poem particular significance.

Brady's principle of "radical antithesis" explains a part of that significance: so dramatically different from the poetry that precedes it, so much more explicit and coarse than any of the other satires, "Voyage" must surely disrupt any complacency readers may feel at this point in the text. The poem seems to call into question especially what has been thus far learned about reading. This is a part of Jonson's purpose: to jar readers' expectations; to confront them

at almost the last possible moment with yet another kind of reading experience, a purposeful disruption of a disorder that may, at this point, be growing predictable. But Brady herself never discusses "Voyage." While her principle of "radical antithesis" helps in understanding the poem and its placement, this idea provides at best only a partial and rather unsubtle explanation for a poem which, despite its apparent crudity, contributes sophistication, irony, and complexity to Jonson's Epigrammes.

In the twenty-line prelude to "The Voyage It Selfe," Jonson seems to declare his purpose by discarding the classical Greek and Roman epic ideal of the past. To the definition of heroism personified in the re-named William Roe (128), he adds negative weight:

> No more let Greece her bolder fables tell
> Of Hercules or Theseus going to hell
> Orpheus, Ulysses, or the Latine Muse
> With tales of Troyes just knight our faiths abuse. (133. 1-4)

Since in Roe we have a new Aeneas, Jonson emphasizes that we no longer need the old one. As we have seen, in the context of the Epigrammes, "faith" is a loaded word. Jonson discards the epic heroes of the past in part because they must necessarily outrage our carefully nurtured sense of faith to things, and our sense of faith in things as they are. Thus far we have come to depend on Jonson for a just depiction of those things: the people and places of the contemporary world, and the relations among them, complicated, painful, or benevolent. We are now about to embark on the most explicit of these renditions. "The Famous Voyage" supplies the most topical subject matter, solidly rooted in reality, of any poem in the collection; and Jonson has made his values

clear once again: to depict accurately, faithfully, even a scurrilous reality is not an abuse of readers' faith. In this context, an insistence on outworn fable plays havoc with the expectations, needs, and credibility of readers -- all of which Jonson himself has carefully nurtured and re-educated by means of the content and arrangement of the collection itself.

Since "Voyage" is the story of an adventure in a sewer, with a questionable moral purpose as its motivation, faith to a reality so nasty does give many readers pause, their expectations of realism notwithstanding. But this decision too is absolutely in keeping with Jonson's purposes as he has so far defined and demonstrated them in his "chaste book." Jonson's idea of "imitation" has been applied, above, to modes of living well, and of writing well; included, moreover, is the idea of the reciprocal necessity of these activities. Good imitators, in life, letters, or both, produce honey from nectar, turn nourishment into flesh and blood, make incursions into foreign territory to gather intelligence, incorporate timber into new structures, and explore to establish a thriving trade.[6] Failure to turn materials to flesh and blood is a "perversion of the healthy gathering instict of the good imitator," an unhealthy hoarding; such lifeless stores include the excrement of Fleet Ditch as Jonson represents it in epigram 133.[7] Alternatively, "in another variant of the inability to transform to flesh and blood, the excrement or vomit that results from this digestive disorder may be hastily and freely dispersed rather than hoarded."[8] The two wights in the rowboat must literally dodge the effects of such hasty and free dispersion of unassimilated matter.

But who is hoarding? Who "disperses"? And, most important, what are we to make of the results? In the answers to these questions lie Jonson's complexity and his irony, as well as an additional explication of the role he wishes his readers to undertake.

Once again, "imitation" is the key principle. Most obviously, Jonson "imitates" by copying and re-presenting contemporary London. As Peter Medine points out, though, through its specificity the poem is able to come to a general judgment of the entire milieu in which it takes place, since

> . . . the pervasive topicality creates an impression of realism and inclusiveness, making the poem into an image of the times. Throughout, however, the poet has proceeded with great irony. So what he celebrates he actually exposes as preposterous and repugnant, thereby fulfilling the satirical intent: to amuse and yet to offer genuine criticism of Jacobean England.[9]

Additionally, however, Jonson presents other species of "imitation" and "imitators" in the poem. As a "serious indictment of the times,"

> . . . the actual subjects of "Voyage" are "men" (i.e., manners) and "studies." The action of "The Voyage It Selfe" suggests the base conduct of the day; and the two heroes represent the decline of literature and science . . . each of the principal verse paragraphs refers us to particular examples of current scholarship and behavior. By including such matters in his satire, Jonson thus calls our attention to the moral and intellectual condition of the age.[10]

For Jonson, of course, manners and studies are everywhere linked; when one declines, so, inevitably, does the other. Their unmistakable reciprocal relationship is crucial to the health of the social order.

Thus the two main figures of the poem are prime examples of bad imitators. Medine identifies "Shelton" (l. 5) <u>not</u> as the traditionally

given Ralph Shelton, whom Jonson praises in epigram 119, but rather as Thomas Shelton, a contemporary poet on the edges of respectable literary life in London, and a translator of Don Quixote.[11] His partner on the trip, Christopher Heyden, is identified for the first time; he is a minor writer and politician whose "involvement in the controversy over astrology, as well as his connection with Essex" make him the vehicle for satire of contemporary science and politics.[12] A demonstration of the current sad states of literature, science, and public affairs -- letters, the study of "fact," and the health of the commonwealth -- are thus issues concentrated in the two main figures of the poem. Neither is able to write well; by his engagement in false science, one demonstrates a lack of care for "things." Their inability to understand the implications of what they witness of their voyage, their inability to carry out their intention for the voyage, makes especially apt the choice of the conventionally "wise" as those whom we accompany on the trip, since professionally, and in their choice of recreation the two men represent a decline in manners that necessarily indicates poor health in society as well.

Peter Medine has pointed out in some detail that

> . . . their voyage impugns men's manners. For as several topographical references make clear, the heroic undertaking entails an unsuccessful quest for women of pleasure. The heroes ordinarily would have visited Bankside, the southside of the Thames and the location of many of London's bordelloes. Circumstances dictated otherwise, however, since
>
> It was the day, what time the powerfull moone
> Makes the poor Banckside creature wet it' shoone,
> In it' owne hall: when these [Shelton and Heydon]
> . . .
> At Bread-Streets Mermaid, having din'd and merry,
> Propos'd to go to Holborne, in a wherry (11. 29-38)

> When the tide flooded their houses, prostitues -- "creatures" -- who worked within the liberties of the Bishop of Winchester and who were referred to as "Winchester geese" -- could not ply their trade. Consequently, the heroes must go elsewhere, and choose Holborne, primarily known as a legal quarter but with a reputation for vice as well.[13]

The trip up the sewer in this questionable pursuit is a graphic depiction of the underside of London, portrayed by Jonson to satirize gluttony, sexual excess, and fraud. The two wights in the wherry make their trip through the tangible evidence of the contemporary failure to "imitate well" -- to live and work honestly and wisely. The loathsomeness of Fleet Ditch proves that, indeed, bad imitators abound; evidence of their bad imitation is distressingly evident. It can hardly be ignored.

But a second species of imitation is present here as well, significant especially for readers of the Epigrammes. Loaded as it is with references to the gods, goddesses, and creatures of Greek and Roman myth, begun with an epic invocation, with an epic simile as one of its prominent features, and with its underworld-passage motif, "Voyage" itself is a prime example of ostentatiously bad literary imitation -- on one level at least, we have a poet deliberately using his classical sources as "commanders" rather than as "guides." As we have seen, the terms of heroism to be emulated by readers have just been demonstrated in epigrams of praise, in plain language; high style, mythic heroes assisted by the gods, and a past golden age are precisely what Jonson has chosen NOT to celebrate. The "good imitation" of the epigrams has led him to a creative synthesis of Martial and Horace, to produce literature tailored both to his own pesona and to the needs of his English audience -- and to a definition of that audience.

Jonson has delineated and fostered a sensibility that is perceptive, generous, wise, founded in equanimity. This is the stuff of Jonsonian epigram; no less an epigram for all its length and satiric specificity, "Voyage" deliberately out-epics the epics to make us look more closely (as the entire collection has) at what is.

Significantly,

> . . . examination of Renaissance comments about epic shows that whatever else they believed almost all critics agreed that epic is a form of praise . . . . The debt of the Aeneid to history is less simple than that of the Cyropaiedia but it is the same kind . . . . Whatever Virgil may have felt about the validity of his sources later critics almost unanimously accepted Aeneas as a true historical character, and believed that there was an historical basis for the main outlines of the Aeneid . . . . Topical allusion remained a standard device of Renaissance epic.[14]

In the Jonsonian universe created in the Epigrammes, the relationship of the English nobility to their milieu and to their audience is very much like the one that Hardison describes the Renaissance as seeing between Aeneas and his milieu and audience. Similarly, the demands of historical truth, topical allusion, and patterns of virtue are accomplished in Jonson's inclusion of satire and encomia, with the emphasis in the collection on praise almost exclusively in the latter half. As Aeneas grows in piety and valor after the travail of the first six books of the Aeneid, so does the reader educated to recognize more perceptively find patterns of virtue to emulate in the second part of the Epigrammes. Clearly, growth in perception is expected of us.

Jonson's constant attention to the nobility as figures who do not need more than judicious pointing out makes a convincing case for the redefinition of his own task as a poet, and for the collected Epigrammes which takes the place of the classical epic, by reason of the figures it names and celebrates, and the principles it articulates, among these Jonson's high expectations of his readers. This, perhaps, is what leads Jonson to call his book the "ripest of his studies."[15] The purposes of epic -- education, the presentation of a national heroic model to which the reader aspires -- remain;[15a] but the form in which they appear is a product of Jonson's creative recasting of the purposes of two genres, epigram and epic, in order to refine the first as one kind of poetry to supplant the second. The classical plain style and skillful arrangement of his book have accomplished these purposes for him.[16]

Thus, to see the final poem of the collection only as a topical satire, or merely as a burlesque of a poetic form perceived as no longer useful (and, ironically, it is useful -- as a model that becomes a foil) is to miss most of the poem's complexity, and to underestimate the sophistication of the task assigned to readers. The "Voyage" demands yet a third kind of imitation.

Emulating Aeneas, readers face their most difficult "travail" in "The Famous Voyage." Recognizing the poem as both satire of the times and burlesque of an outworn form and its concomitant ideals is a difficult task, since it is the negative counterpart of the affirmations of ideals and of art that have gone before. More difficult yet is the readers' struggle to "turn all to nourishment" -- the real test of the

ability to read well. The audience must somehow form a coherent whole out of the collection of 132 brief epigrams and their 196-line counter-weight, assimilating into their new knowledge this last, apparently anomalous work.

II

Much of the filth of Fleet Ditch of course indicates ill-health of various kinds -- flatulence, constipation, heaps of excrement, offal, vomit, are symptoms of bad digestion and venereal disease. But the actual existence of the sewer (and especially the poetic image of it placed included in the Epigrammes) calls attention to the need for physical and moral purgative. In itself, the heaped waste of Fleet Ditch is not the worst of loathsomeness; far worse are the moral disorders that have produced some of it, and the absence of a perception that cannot move knowledgeably in this uncharted landscape. The adventurous (but fundamentally passive) Shelton and Heyden reveal their utter indifference and confusion when placed in these malodorous surroundings.

Given the emphasis in the collection as a whole, it is right that in "Voyage" moral disorder shows itself in two ways: in excess physical nastiness, and in inappropriate style. The latter needs qualification.

Jonson's language in the mock-epic remains plain, as it has been throughout the collection. But the sublime treatment of the most scurrilous of matter is a violent dislocation of the correspondence of word and thing -- a breach that all of the preceding poems have worked to mend. This disjunction is one of the sources of the humor and irony

of the poem, of course; but because we are aware of it at every turn, it becomes in addition a didactic strategy for Jonson. We are made to see beyond this disjunction of word and thing; by means of it, we are helped to see both language and "thing" -- milieu, persons, deeds -- for what they are; the humor of such depiction allows us a chance to free ourselves of the "privy faults" that may express themselves similarly, in inappropriate language, or in vile deeds. Simultaneously, we realize the necessity of such purgation -- so that Jonson teaches us (as we witness the failure of the two wights) to discard what we must, and to accommodate the Ditch itself into a scheme of "things" (both physical and mental) for the sake of our new moral health. The relation between spirit and matter, like the analogous relations between word and thing, and form and content, is a complex one.

Interestingly, Jonson precedes "The Famous Voyage" with the last poem of praise, this one to Joshua Sylvester in his role of translator. Sylvester's best known work was a translation from the French of Guillaume du Bartas' Divine Weekes, a hexameral poem.[17] The terms of Jonson's praise of Sylvester are similar to the terms of praise in an epigram to Clemont Edwards, who translated Caesar into English; in both poems, Jonson says, the original is re-created (well-imitated), given such vibrant life that it is

> true Promethean art
> (as by a new creation) part by part,
> In every counsell, strategeme, designe,
> Action or engine, worth a note of thine,
> T'all future time, not only doth restore
> His life but makes, that he can dye no more. (121, 11. 17-20)

and

> Bartas doth wish thy English now were his.
> So well in that are his inventions wrought
> As his will now be the translation thought,
> Thine the originall; and France shall boast
> No more, those mayden glories shee hath lost. (132, ll. 10-14)

Jonson assesses the facts of the translators on the basis of his own ability to "conferre" (132. 1. 6), that is, to "compare" translations with originals. According to the OED, to "confer" is to bring together the original with the translation in order to construe meaning. "The Famous Voyage" requires just this ability. As a kind of "translation," both a re-making and a parody of the old for its significance to a new age, "Voyage" is an exaggerated example of the task imposed on readers, especially in the Epigrammes: For understanding on the simplest level, "Voyage" requires that readers "confer." They may bring to bear the Latin model for the poem, the Aeneid, Book VI, for an appreciation of Jonson's parody. They may compare it with the milieu that it depicts -- the underside of seventeenth century London. They must compare it with the poems that precede it, for an understanding of its inclusion in the collection, and for a fuller understanding of the poems of praise -- a delineation of vice that acts as a last foil to the virtue of the good men and women who are the subjects of Jonson's praise. And, finally, within the context of the "Voyage" itself, readers "confer" meanings on several levels -- scatological, sexual, and satiric puns demand an awareness of shades of meaning. Much of the humour of the poem is built on such distinctions;[18] their conflation is necessary for a full understanding of the extremes and apparent incongruities that Jonson brings together here.

In a twenty-line prelude to the body of the poem, Jonson reveals his fundamentally serious purpose, informs his audience of the sort of journey they are about to undertake, and reveals the need for "subtle distinctions" (l. 10) to be made both by the two wights in the wherry (whose failure at such subtlety we will witness) and by us, his readers, who learn such distinctions in order to hone our ability to purge and to accommodate -- to discard and to assimilate, knowledgeably, the various kinds of experience that we will encounter.

In lines one through six Jonson himself begins to discard his mythological predecessors, first eliminating the Greeks (who will reappear below in humorous allusions) and then, significantly, the hero of Virgil, the "Latin Muse," (l. 3), Aeneas:

> No more let Greece her bolder fables tell
> Of Hercules, or Theseus going to hell;
> Orpheus, Ulysses: or the Latine Muse,
> With tales of Troyes just knight, our faithes abuse.
> We have a Shelton, and a Heyden got,
> Had power to act, what they to fain had not. (11. 1-6)

In epigram 128 we already have a modern, useful counterpart for Troy's just knight -- Sir William Roe, whom we emulate by undertaking the travail of epigram 133. Significantly, the two mock-epic heroes Shelton and Heyden "Had power to act, what they to fain had not" (l. 6). Line six is a neatly ironic reversal of the usual terms of condemnation of writers, terms which Jonson has implicitly worked <u>against</u> throughout the <u>Epigrammes</u>. In addition to a pun on "act," meaning to "copulate,"[19] line six notes an inability to feign -- suggesting a breach between what the two heroes do, and what they write. Jonson's epigrams in praise of

writers, historians, and translators celebrate these achievements as creative acts; in addition, the words (feignings) and actions of the subjects are always in harmony. Moreover, "feigning" for Jonson is never a wandering in the zodiac of one's own wit, but a species of depiction of what is. But Shelton and Heydon are in no sense artists / imitators -- they are powerless to "feign" what they act, and equally powerless to create elaborate imaginings out of their own wits. Such inability leads them to enact the base adventure which is to follow, on one level the most real, most literal voyage possible, a trip through the unrelieved loathsomeness of "matter." Jonson extends his scorn of Shelton and Heyden even further when he depicts the base journey in terms of mock-grandeur: this disjunction of word and thing continually reminds us of the fault of Shelton and Heydon which precede all other moral lapses -- an inability to imitate, even badly.

As readers we are assigned the roles that Shelton and Heydon cannot perform: with Jonson, we feign this base journey in order to learn from it in a way that the two anti-heroes will not learn. Their power to act is quite without foundation; they lack the ability to study / imitate well. Our final exercise in imitation here clarifies for us the crucial moral values as we prepare to leave the text and to re-enter the public milieu ourselves, where similar moral decisions are similarly important. We learn from doing in the texts -- by making our minds like the thing Jonson writes -- the lessons that Shelton and Heydon never learn even by "doing" the journey itself, rather than encountering its likeness.

> All they that boast of Styx, of Acheron
> Cocytus, Phlegeton, our have prov'd in one;
> The filth, the stench, the noyse; save only what was there
> Subtly distinguish'd, was confused here. (11. 7-10)

Our heroes will experience all at once the terrors of each of the four rivers of Hades. As the most meticulous geographer of the underworld, Virgil sets out clearly the names of the rivers, the regions they border, and the differences among them.[20] Acheron is the river of woe, "that mud-dark stream, wide, swirling, sucking down, / Sinking and rising to belch Cocytus' sands," the latter the river of lamentation. Styx is ruled by the ferryman Charon, the river of "stern requital" by which the gods swear. The boundary of the domain of Rhadamanthus, where practitioners of fraud suffer, Phlegeton is the river of flame.[21] No such clarity exists in Jonson's mock-Hades, just as there is no relief or counterpart to the regions of the blessed: "Only what was there [in Virgil] / Subtly distinguish'd, was confused here" (11. 9-10).

Jonson sets out terms of comparison to make that confusion even more apparent; the modern Hades is more crowded, confused, and infinitely more debased than its model. Replacing their identifiable classical counterparts, un-named figures multiply, filling the noisy landscape:

> Their wherry had no sail; ours too had none:
> And in it, two more horrid knaves than Charon.
> Arses were heard to croak, instead of frogs;
> And for one Cerberus, the whole coast was dogs.
> Furies there wanted not: each scold was ten.
> And for the cryes of ghostes, women and men,
> Laden with plague sores, and their sins were heard,
> Lash'd by their consciences, to die, affeard.
> Then let the former Age, with this content her,
> She brought the Poets forth, but ours the adventer. (11. 11-20)

Unlike the pure spirits of Virgil's underworld, the ghosts of Jonson's Fleet Ditch are not ghostly at all. Corruption in the soul manifests itself in ailing flesh; the two are distinct, but not separable. In this parody region, all things convert to the basest of contraries. Ironically, this age produces "acts," not feignings (l. 20).

Jonson's use of the conversion to contraries is not entirely humorous. One gloss suggested for "adventer" (l. 20) is that it is a "play on Christ's advent and his harrowing of Hell; . . . . Some hints [below] also suggest Judgement Day."[22] Were it not for the sons of gods that Jonson mentions in lines two and three, this last suggestion might seem just a bit preposterous. However, Hercules, Theseus, Orpheus, and Ulysses all made trips to hell on similar missions. Theseus accompanies his beloved friend Pirithous to Hades in a foolish scheme to help him kidnap Persephone for his bride; his devotion to his friend leads him to this adventure (which is itself prompted by a kind of perverted love), and he is finally rescued by Hercules.[23] Hercules has been to Hades at least twice, once as part of his Twelve Labors: he frees Theseus from the Chair of Forgetfulness, where Pluto has placed him, and brings Cerberus up from the underworld with his bare hands. In a deed prompted by his desire to do a service for his host, Hercules rescues Alcestis from the underworld and returns her to her husband Admetus. Orpheus braves hell to rescue his beloved Eurydice.[24] And Odysseus is conducted just to the edge of the underworld so that he may talk with the seer Tieresias about what is in store for him on his wanderings.[25]

All of these forays into hell are mentioned early in Book VI by Virgil. Like Orpheus, Theseus, Hercules, and Christ, Aeneas too is prompted by love in his desire to visit Hades. He asks the Sybil to

> allow me to see my well-loved father's face;
> ...
> Still more: he used to plead that I seek out
> your door in humble access. Lady, have mercy
> On father and son!" (VI. 11:108; 115-116)

Moreover, Anchises has appeared to Aeneas in a dream (Book I) to urge this visit. The Sybil, Aeneas' guide -- who, as a guide, has no counterpart in the journey of the wights through Jonson's region of crude confusion -- replies that only love makes possible a return from the underworld, though entrance is easy:

> O child of blood divine, Anchises' son, descent to hell is easy:
> All night, all day black Pluto's door stands wide.
> To recall the step, escape to air and sky --
> This, this is the task and toil! Some few -- those loved
> Of Jove, those heavenward rapt by valor's flame,
> The sons of god -- have done it.
> ...
> But if you have at heart such love and lust
> Twice to cross over Styx, hell's darkness twice
> To behold, and this mad project gives you joy,
> Heat what is first to do. (VI. 11. 125-131; 133-136)

As Odysseus has in his meeting with Tieresias, Aeneas will also receive a vision of the future in his touching reunion with his father Anchises.

All of the classical adventures to which Jonson alludes have been prompted by friendship, married devotion, or filial love, and by a healthy desire for knowledge, to which the hero is clearly entitled if he is to carry on with his mission; experiencing the travail of a visit

to hell also entitles him to this knowledge as he takes heart for the terror ahead. Christ's harrowing of hell, undertaken for love of man and the redemption of all men, present and future, as well as the redemption of time itself, seems quite appropriate in such a context. The classical references and the more subtle glance at Christianity emphasize the utter grossness and folly of the journey of Shelton and Heydon; their search for whores becomes the basest of foils to the heroic and divine missions it parodies, an overwhelmingly physical perversion of love, graphically nasty into the bargain. Jonson heaps on another indignity when their quest, unlike the others, proves unsuccessful. Shelton and Heyden demonstrate their impotence once again (l. 191), adding yet more irony to Jonson's assertion that they "Had powers to act, what they to feign had not" (l. 6).

The next lines play even more heavily and self-consciously with minor epic devices. Jonson continues to jab at his heroes by undercutting any claims they may ever have had to inclusion in an epic. He begins by imitating Virgil's form, but immediately qualifying his own more trivial subject matter:

> I sing the brave adventure of two wights
> And pity 'tis, I cannot call 'em knights. (ll. 21-22)

Next, Jonson qualifies the disclaimer of line 22, then compares the sexual prowess of his two heroes:

> One was [a knight]; and he, for brawne, and braine, right able
> To have been stiled of King Arthurs table.
> The other was a squire of faire degree;
> But in the action, greater man than hee. (ll. 23-26)

The two lines that follow, to complete this introduction of the heroes, confuse Jonson's qualification. The antecedents of "hee" (l. 26), and "who" (l. 27) are deliberately ambiguous:

> The other was a squire, of faire degree:
> But in the action, greater man than hee:
> Who gave, at his returne from Hell,
> His three for one. (ll. 25-28)

"Three for one" (l. 28) commentators agree, refers to high profit from a voyage, paid to its underwriters.[26] Shawcross and Emma offer additional suggestions: "the return of three men for each that descended into this Hell" is one of them. This last reinforces the scene that Jonson offers in lines 1-20, the underworld as a place where beings and figures multiply to become nearly indistinguishable from one another; vice seems to lead to loss of clear identity, as descents into the underworld by heroes validate both their identities and their missions. Moreover, the ambiguity of which of the wights gives three for one (l. 27) is, like much of the description Jonson offers, more confusion than clarification. Jonson appears to be making subtle distinctions"; close reading reveals no such subtlety.

Continuing the faint Christian reference begun above, "three for one" also suggests that "the Trinal concept" is humorously pertinent, since Christ's ascent into Heaven after the harrowing of hell completed the "Three for one."[27] This last is an establishment of a complex identity (the persons of the Trinity are distinct but not separable). And the "wight" whose "action" (sexual prowess) is, ironically, a "greater man" even in failure than the Son of God!

With a direct and "typical epic address," "Now lordings, listen well," Jonson sets the scene of the voyage itself -- an immediate reminder that there is a wide gap between the stuff usually addressed to "lordings" and the adventure he describes:[28]

> It was the day, what time the powerful moone
> Makes the poor Banckside creature wet its shoon
> In it' own hall; when these (in worthy scorn
> Of those, that put out moneys, or returne
> From Venice, Paris, or some inland passage
> Of six times to, and fro, without embassage,
> Or him that backward went to Berwick, or which
> Did dance the famous Morris, unto Norwich)
> At Bread Street's Mermaid, having dined, and merry,
> Proposed to go to Holborn in a wherry:
> A harder task than either his to Bristo:
> Or his to Antwerp. Therefore, once more, list ho! (11. 29-40)

Lines 29-31 set the scene for trivial action -- as Medine notes, the "poor Banckside creature" is a whore, forced to move by spring floods. Scorning contemporary adventures, undertaking a "harder task" the two wights must proceed to Holborne on their quest. But once again, the parentheses (11. 31-36) and the comparisons of tasks and journeys is deceptive, for though it appears to be a "subtle distinction" it is instead a list of contemporary travels (travails) some legitimate, some foolish: the trips to Venice and Paris are simply journeys undertaken by men who are not government emissaries.[29] The trip backward to Berwick is a "much publicized stunt of the day"; Will Kemp's Morris dance is made in the same spirit.[30] The journeys to Bristol and Antwerp are both contemporary feats of endurance, commemorated simply as "dangerous and memorable."[31] Thus, the categorization of the present trip among these varied adventures, undertaken for varying reasons, is left for

the readers; and, with an injunction to pay attention which also imitates the warning given as one shoves off from a dock, we are launched: "Therefore, once more, list ho" (1. 40).

> A Docke there is, that called is Avernus,
> Of some Bridewell, and may in time concerne us
> All, that are readers. (11. 41-43)

Even in these three lines Jonson is able to conflate contemporary scene, classical reference to Virgil, sexual allusion, and address to his audience. At Bridewell Dock, Fleet Ditch empties into the Thames:

> The pun involved is made clear by a definition of "dock" (a basin to receive vessels, shutting in water), and by reading "Bride's Well." Bride's Well was a prison near Ludgate (on the way to Holborn); and a second pun is seen by another meaning of "dock" (the place where a prisoner stands in court) and by remembering that Fleet Street was the center of legal activities.[32]

And that dock may concern us that are readers, that seek to understand for by means of any and all of its referents: if not the classic entrance to Hades in Virgil's Aeneid, then perhaps in its legal or penitentiary sense; if not these, then perhaps in its sexual sense. Jonson's joining of these meanings leaves the "subtle distinctions" to those who read well, who will grasp what they can, and conflate the meanings again to see that one source of Jonson's humor is this working on more than one level at a time -- the sublime and the scatological, with topical references sandwiched somewhere in between; from the most public (the classical and topical allusions) and general, to the most private and specific (Bride's well). We must remember that, whatever the

means, "descent to hell is easy." Also, here Jonson makes "skillful use of the satiric technique of 'diminishing': exposing men's sexual pleasures to ridicule by associating them with unworthy things."[33] Later, sex and scatology will be more specifically associated; here, one can note that such diminution works both ways -- legal activities and prisons are similarly diminished by the association of Fleet Street with sexual excess and excrement.

Jonson follows this self-conscious word play immediately with additional self-reference:

> I have forgot some god
> Or goddess to invoke, to stuff my verse,
> And with bombard style and phrase, rehearse
> The many perils of this Port, and how
> Sans' help of Sybil, or a golden bough,
> Or magick sacrifice, they past along! (ll. 44-49)

Thus far the poet has managed quite well without such a guide and bombard-stile; the epic machinery he does employ contributes (and ridicules) bombast sufficiently, as this reference to the absence of <u>further</u> bombast indicates. Since the Sybil, the Golden Bough, and the sacrifice (perhaps the pit filled with animal blood offered by Odysseus at the entrance to the underworld) are all missing, there is no need for a style commensurate with divine and magic happenings. Thus Jonson's subsequent invocation to Hercules calls attention to the breach between matter and manner; as the poet calls into question epic convention, he looks askance even at the reputation of Hercules himself -- relayed through classical texts:

> Thou hast seen hell (some say) and knowest all nooks there
> Canst tell me best, how every Fury looks there,
> And art a God, if Fame thee not abuses,
> Always at hand, to aid the merry Muses. (11. 51-54; emphasis mine)

More inversion. In the context of the Epigrammes, "Fame" is not a particularly trustworthy entity.[34] Hercules aids the merry Muses -- Thalia, the Muse of Comedy and epigram, the muse of Martial -- Jonson's muse here, rather than the muse of epic poetry. Jonson also continues to join the divine and the base by invoking Hercules as Alcides, "identified with Christ," and with allusions to Hercules sexual labors:[35]

> Great Club Fist, though thy backe, and bones be sore
> Still, with thy former labors; yet once more
> Act a brave worke, call it thy last adventry. (11. 55-57; emphasis mine)

Readers must somehow continue to attempt to reconcile the disparities -- the classical hero associated with Christ, yet sore from too much sex (even as Jonson seems to be inviting him to more of such indulgence), an aid to the merry Muses, and here about to descend (with us) into a passage that bears an uncanny resemblance to the entrance of the womb; Hercules must do no more than

> hold my torch, while I describe the entry
> To this dire passage. Say thou stop thy nose:
> 'Tis but light paines: Indeed, this docke's no rose.
> (11. 58-60)

With one word Jonson manages to blur distinctions between word and thing, and among things themselves: "passage" refers to the voyage, to the text, and to the dark and vicious places (at least as they are

represented here) where men get pleasure -- "this dock's no rose" is perhaps another such reference.

A pun on the familiar name for mother, "Mud," again confirms this reading of the Fleet Ditch itself as an emblem for women, here depicted viciously, in the continual association of sex with disease, deformity, and scatology:[36]

> In the first jawes apper'd that ugly monster
> Ycleped Mud which, when their oares did stirre,
> Belch'd forth an air, as hot as at the muster
> Of all your night-tubs, when the carts doe cluster,
> Who shall discharge first his merd-urinous load
> Through her wombe they make their famous road
> Between two walls; where, on one side, to scar men
> Were seen your ugly Centaurs, ye call Car-men,
> Gorgonian scolds, and Harpyes: on the other
> Hung stench, diseases, and old filth, their mother,
> With famine, wants, and sorrows many a dosen,
> The least of which was to the plague a cosen. (11. 61-72)

Jonson continues his burlesque on the self-conscious archaism and word coinage with "ycleped" (1. 62) and "merd-urinous" (1. 65). The monsters -- Gorgons, Harpies, and Centaurs -- appear here as they do at the beginning of Aeneid, VI, but here the similarity ends. In Jonson's malodorous inversion, the Carmen rush to "discharge their merd-urinous load," after their oars have stirred up the mud, in a kind of dreadful sexual / scatological release. The passage is fraught with creatures -- all of them female, except for the Centaurs, whose lower bodies are just as dreadful as those of the female monsters; their sight (and touch?) is enough to "scar men." A similar sight frightened the good Aeneas so much that he

> drew his sword
> and showed the charging creatures his bare blade;
> and had his guide, who knew, not warned that these
> were lives unsubstanced, flitting empty shapes,
> he had attacked and wasted blows on shadows. (VI. 11. 290-294)

Lacking a guide,the two wights are not at all afraid; interestingly, Jonson's inversion, the wights' apathy and Aeneas' terror offer a comment on the relationship between spirit and matter that "Voyage" continually demonstrates and explores. Too dimwitted to understand physical danger, and oblivious to moral peril,

> They unfrighted pass, though many a privie
> Spoke to 'em louder than the ox in Livie. (11. 73-4)

The privies may, like Livy's ox, portend more danger, but the two press on:

> And many a sinke pour'd out her rage anenst 'hem,
> But still their valour, and their virtue fenc'd 'em,
> And on they went, like Castor brave, and Pollux,
> Ploughing the mayne. (11. 75-8)

As Medine notes, Jonson celebrates, satirically, a "heroic indifference to what is foul and malodorous."[37] The indifference is, of course, the utter inability of the two sailors to perceive anything amiss with their journey, its purpose, and their present surroundings. Fittingly, Jonson alludes to the celestial twins, special protectors of sailors, who also "ploughed the main." But the allusion also opens once more the relation between spirit and matter, heaven and hell. Devoted to one another, Castor and Pollux, twin brothers of Helen of Troy.

> are always represented as living just before the Trojan
> War, at the same time as Theseus and Jason and Atlanta . . . .

> The two went, we are not told why, to the land of some cattle owners, Idas and Lynceus. There, Pindar says, Idas, made angry in some way about his oxen, stabbed and killed Castor. Other writers say the cause of the dispute was the two daughters of the king of the country, Leucippus. Pollux stabbed Lyceus, and Zeus struck Idas with his thunderbolt. But Castor was dead and Pollux was inconsolable. He prayed to die also, and Zeus in pity allowed him to share his life with his brother, to live
>
> Half of thy time beneath the earth and half
> Within the golden domes of heaven.
>
> According to this version the two were never separated again. One day they dwelt in Hades, the next in Olympus, always together.
>
> The late Greek writer Lucian gives another version, in which their dwelling places are heaven and earth; and when Pollux goes to one, Castor goes to the other, so that they are never with each other. In Lucian's satire, the two share immortality, and in the service of Poseidon, they save ships in distress.[38]

One irony of the allusions is obvious, of course: the brothers exemplify devotion, one visiting hell for the sake of the other. In addition, we see in their pairing, the spiritual dimension that the two wights utterly lack. In these twins are the two extremes brought together in epigram 133 (and more generally, in the book of Epigrammes): heaven and hell, spirit and matter, the moral dimension of life, and the physical. In the reference to Castor and Pollux are given another hint of the necessity for distinguishing among paired entities while never divorcing them from one another -- only from their inseparability do we learn to make choices, to "confer," to turn knowledge to nourishment. Only by encountering extremes can we forge our own middle way through them; from them we form an assessment and an accommodation and judgment of ourselves and our place in the world.

> When see (the worst of all lucks)
> They met the second Prodigie, would feare a
> Man that had never heard of a Chimaera.
> One said, it was bold Briareus, or the beadle

(Who hath the hundred hands when he doth meddle)
The other thought it Hydra, or the rock
Made of the trull, that cut her father's lock. (11. 78-84)

After the monster "ycleped mud" in lines 62, the second horror appears in line 79; once more faithful to his classical model, Jonson compares this terror with an inhabitant of Virgil's underworld, the Chimaera, a female monster with a goat's body. The two men in the wherry do not think in these terms, however; both identify the second prodigy incorrectly, referring to other classical monsters -- Briareus and the Hydra, or to a minor annoyance of the day, "the beadle / (Who hath the hundred hands when he doth meddle)" (11. 81-2). The misogynistic references of lines 83 and 84 are explained by Herford and Simpson, who note that "Jonson has copied the Roman poets in confusing the sea-monster Scylla with Scylla the daughter of Nisus of Megara who, to win the love of Minos, cut off her father's hair on which his life depended."[39] Jonson's confusion aside, either entity fits nicely into the misogynistic web of allusion. Moreover, the two wights demonstrate again the inability to make the crudest of distinctions. Homely annoyances, epic monsters, all fall together in this setting; the proliferation of names introduced by Jonson and by the two men in the wherry as points of comparison and possible identities rarely clarifies but more often confuses further.

The alert reader discards all these possibilities as false because neither Briareus, Hydra, nor Scylla has a place here; more in keeping with the surroundings,

coming neere, they found it but a liter
So huge it seem'd they could by no means quite her
Back, cry'd their brace of Charons: they cry'd, no,

> No going backe; on still you rogues, and row.
> How hight the place? a voyce was heard, Cocytus. (11. 85-89)

A barge loaded with offal is the next Prodigy. The proliferation of ferrymen (whose single classical model mans a boat on which no flesh is allowed) effectively trivializes the epic reference. One bewildered man in the wherry asks a name, to locate himself: "How hight this place?" (1. 89); "Cocytus" is the river of wailing in Virgil's underworld.[40] Neither wailing nor a chorus of frogs (from a classical satire) is heard here, however: "No, guts, wind-bound / Over your heads" (11. 92-93) another literal emphasis on the inversion everywhere apparent in this underworld.

> at this a loud
> Crack did report itself, as if a cloud
> Had burst with storm, and downe fell, ab excelsis,
> Poor Mercury crying out on Paracelsus,
> And all his followers, that had so abus'd him
> And, in so shitten sort, so long had us'd him:
> For (Where he was the god of eloquence,
> And subtiltie of mettals) they dispense
> His spirits, now, in pills, and eek in potions
> Suppositories, cataplasmes, and lotions.
> But many Moones there shall not wane (quoth hee)
> (In the meane time, let'em imprison mee)
> But I will speak (and know I shall be heard)
> Touching this cause, where they will be affeard
> To answer me. And sure, it was th'entent
> Of the grave fart, late let in Parliament,
> Had it been seconded, and not in fume
> Vanish't away: as you must all presume
> Their Mercury did now. (11. 92-110)

Shawcross and Emma point out another minor pun at line 93, Jonson exploiting every chance for introducing multiple meanings. "Report" can mean either to "re-open" or to "go through again"; "a port is also the opening in the side of a ship."[41] A product of the wind-bound guts, the loudness of the crack occurs in a masterly juxtaposition

of the sublime and the scatological, much to the disadvantage of the sublime, framed in an epic simile which takes on its own plot for some twenty lines and gives Mercury a chance to speak. Peter Medine explains the appropriateness of the allusions by means of examples of perversions in contemporary studies:

> For example, the sixteenth century alchemist Paracelsus had opposed Galen, the first systematic exponent of the humors. He and his followers had controverted beliefs which had been received for centuries and which Jonson himself took quite seriously. By focusing on the Paracelsans' practice of purgation, Jonson indicates the absurdity of their theories . . . . To suggest the decline of oratory, Jonson includes the compliant of Mercury, who as patron of speech and "subtiltie" now presides over the treatment of constipation and syphilis (11. 100-103). Mercury is determined to speak again, to rectify the current debasing of eloquence, but in the meantime, he, like Henry Ludlowe's reply in Parliament, vanishes away. The allusion to Henry Ludlowe's indelicate way of saying "noe" in Parliament provides a specific example of [the] delince [of oratory]; that discipline which distinguishes man from the beasts, has degenerated into the passing of flatulence.[42]

Ineffectual here, Mercury is, in other contexts, "the conductor of the dead," so, as another element of classical trips to the underworld, his inclusion here is doubly appropriate, especially since he does not function as a guide in Jonson's underworld.[43]

As the learned gloss by Medine shows, the inclusion of Mercury allows Jonson to satirize by means of juxtaposition and several levels of allusion, studies, manners, and contemporary politics, this last a final manifestation of the decline of the first two. "Subtle distinction" must be made by readers picking their way through the simile: what precisely, is being satirized? Moreover, as we must do within the poem in its entirety, here we must note that, on the literal level, catharsis /

purgation, is a necessary remedy for constipuation and syphilis -- this last a disease whose moral implications cannot be missed. Metaphorically, the depiction of grossness in mock-epic terms allows Jonson to help work a catharsis in his readers: are we to accommodate -- or discard -- the theories of Paracelsus and Galen? Accommodate or discard the process of purgation itself? Of what value is it? What are we to make of the epic simile and the absurdly learned "ab excelsis"? By his mixture of incongruent elements, Jonson gives clues but not decisive judgments -- the decisions are left to readers. In any case, Mercury has been heard -- in the form of the scatological noise he induces, and in the speech he manages before he disappears. The form of eloquence that appeals to readers -- that of Ludlowe, of the wind-bound guts, or Mercury's speech -- tells as much about the temper of respective readers as it does about the current decline in manners, which has reached even to Parliament.

The "well-greased wherry" moves on with another allusions to epic:

> By this, the stemme
> Of the hulke touch'd, and as by Polypheme
> The slie Ulysses stole in a sheepes skin
> The well-greas'd wherry now had got betweene,
> And bad her farewell sough unto the lurden
> Never did bottom more betray her burden. (ll. 111-116)

With a sigh the wherry passes a barge whose cargo betrays itself by smell rather than sight. The pun of line 116 neatly summarizes one of the major themes of the poem. The burdens of excess vice, excess food, and promiscuity reveal themselves (and purge their practitioners, at least momentarily) here, in the underside of seventeenth

ephemeral than spirit since here "several ghosts . . . / of farts" (11. 124-5) appear. Distinctions among ideas and entities, what to accommodate, what to purge -- all these are crucial to a knowledgeable trip through Jonson's underworld.

The two men in the wherry remain singularly untroubled by all that they have been through. Clearly, then, ability to distinguish, and a particular activity of mind must be cultivated by readers as a counterpoint to this "heroic indifference" as heroism is redefined, negatively. Explicitly and implicitly, attitude, discerment, sensibility, is all-important:

> For yet, no nare was tainted,
> Nor thumb, nor finger to the stop acquainted,
> But open, and un-armed encountered all:
> Whether it languishing stuck upon the wall,
> Or were precipitated down the jakes,
> And, after, swum abrod in ample flakes,
> Or that it lay, heap'd like an usurers' masse,
> All was the same to them, they were to passe,
> And so they did, from Styx to Acheron
> The ever boyling flood. (11. 133-142)

To us, of course, all should not be the same; we are armed with a capacity to imitate, and we are armed either to purge or to accommodate the "matter" which,Jonson suggests here, is inescapable. The "age's general lack of integrity, where the deception of others (and frequently onesself) results in conduct so vulgar and corrupt that it offends the senses" is made apparent in this passage and more literally in the lines that follow (11. 144-145), an account of the fraudulent, and disgusting, practices of the cooks in Fleet Lane, who try to sell offal as nourishing food. Rhadamanthus, king of the region where

century London; more generally, the "bottom" the hidden underside of any entity, is necessary for a full understanding of its true nature. Interestingly, the allusion to Cyclops (l. 112) reminds us that sight in this milieu is not trustworthy, as illustrated by the wights' earlier mistakes in identifying what they see. Smell is the only sense that has a chance, but overwhelmed as it is here, we can hardly expect to make distinctions among varieties of sewage, though such distinctions are apparently (and ironically) meant to "try the unused valour of a nose" (l. 133).

But distinctions must be made; humorous or not, that is the whole point, as Jonson makes such distinctions in the next four lines. The barge that has just passed smells worse than anything else:

> The meat boat of Bear's College, Paris Garden,
> Stunke not so ill; nor when shee kist, Kate Arden.
> Yet one day in the yeere, for sweet 'tis voic't,
> And that is when it is the Lord Mayor's foist. (11. 117-120)

The meat boat of line 117 carries offal to Paris Gardens, where bears and dogs were kept for baiting.[44] Even scraps of food, or the famous whore Kate Arden, smell better than the barge that has just passed. But Jonson's satire grows more complex in these lines:

> Men seek the corrupt pleasures of fornication, cruel entertainments, and so forth, at considerable risk to their own mora -- even physical -- well-being. Similar behavior is detected in the Lord Mayor's Feast and procession in an elaborately decorated vessel. Jonson alludes to the annual procession here by identifying the reeking ship with the Mayor's colorful barge: in spite of the ship's present malodorous condition, during "one day in the yeere, for sweete 'tis voic't / And that is when it is the Lord Mayor's foist" (11. 119-120). The word foist, besides signifying vessel, suggest feast (hence the "lord Mayor's Feast"). But foist also plays on its meaning as an emission of flatulent gas, and so indicates the essential vulgarity of the Feast and its procession.[45]

The reference to the Mayor may also indicate the kind of eloquence typical among the public figures who appear in Jonson's mock-Hades. But Jonson's irony demands that we ask whether distinctions are possible -- how do politicians and whores differentiate themselves in this underworld? Are cruel sports, fornication, the excesses of feasts, and political speeches distinguishable in terms of the harm they do, or the condemnation they deserve? Here, by his deliberate confusion of elements, Jonson seems to suggest that all these things, whose basest elements have been revealed, have been brought to their lowest common denominator; more important, disparate as they seem, in terms of indications of corruption, they have much in common, and their close association here is meant to level them, to diminish each of them by association with the others.

Certainly this is a valid reading. But because the poem makes us focus so relentlessly on purgation of various kinds, on the necessity of sorting and identifying, I suggest that in these four lines, as elsewhere,Jonson leaves the complexity of the satire for readers to unravel -- where, in the scheme of the reader's morality, do these various transgressions fit?

> By this time had they reached the Stygian poole
> By which the Masters sweare, when, on the stoole
> Of worship,[46] they their nodding chins do hit
> Against their breasts. Here, sev'rall ghosts did flit
> About the shore, of farts, but late departed,
> White, black, blue, green, and in more forms outstarted,
> Than all those Atomi ridiculous,
> Whereof old Democrite, and Hill Nicholas,
> One said, the other swore, the world consists. (11. 121-129)

Jonson satirizes current philosophical statements repellent to him which revived the materialistic arguments of Democritus and Epicurus:

> Like the theories of the Paracelsans, the doctrine that matter was indestructible and that the world resulted from a chance collision of atoms offended Jonson's strict orthodoxy and conservatism. He alludes here to Nicholas Hill's Philosophia Epicuria (Paris, 1601), which not only bordered on heresy but also was clouded in vagaries and occultisms. Accordingly, Jonson associates Hill with the "shore of farts" illustrating the actual value of his work and connecting it with the other intellectual endeavors of the age.[47]

But this allusion to the controversy over the nature of matter also provides a nice counter to Anchises' explanation to Aeneas of the "order of things" (VI. 1. 723). In answer to his son's question, "Must I think men's souls rise up from here to the air, and to the sluggish flesh / return? Poor fools! Whence this mad lust for life?" (11. 719-721), Anchises replies:

> To begin: the heavens, the earth, the watery wastes,
> The lucent globe of moon, the sun, the stars,
> exist through inward spirit. Their total mass
> by mind is permeated: hence their motion.
> From mind and spirit comes life -- of man, of beast,
> Of bird, of monsters under the foam-flecked seas.
> Life is from heaven -- a seed of fire that glows
> bright, so far as flesh cannot repress it,
> or earthly, death-bound bodies dull its glow.
> From flesh come fear, desire, pain, and joy:
> its pitch-dark prison blinds us to the light.
> And even on that last day when life departs,
> Not all our evil, all the body's foul
> corruption leaves us: deep ingrained, in ways
> past comprehension, much has hardened fast.
> Our souls, then, suffer pain, and pay the price
> for wrongs done years before: some, like a cloak
> laid off, hang to the winds; some lose their stains
> by flood and swirl, or cautery of fire.
> We suffer, each, our ghostly selves, then pass --
> some few -- to gain Elysium's fields of joy.

> The years go by; Time makes his cycle just,
> our hardened filth is sloughed; intelligence
> pure, as of heaven, is left, and breath, and fire.
> After a thousand circling years, God calls
> These souls to Lethe in a long parade
> to gain forgetfulness, then view the sky
> once more, and wish to put on flesh again. (VI. 11. 724-751)

Anchises' discourse is "a theory of metempsychosis based on traditional Greek speculation (Pindar, Plato, and the Stoics)."[48] I do not wish here, to explore the intricacies of Greek and Roman speculation on matter, nor to discuss Virgil's interest in, and later casting off, of Epicureanism. But the reference to "Atomi ridiculous" is surely a glance at this speech of Anchises on the nature of matter; moreover, Jonson's glance is not simple satire of a theory he wants to ridicule, but a suggestion, again, of the importance of this journey. Aeneas learns much about the nature of the world as a result of his descent into the underworld; this speech of Anchises plays a large part in his education, especially since it is a prelude to Aeneas' vision of the Roman future, the procession of personages who will inhabit the city of Rome. Notably, however, the speech is a celebration of mind, and of the complex relationship between spirit and matter to one another. Jonson's "Atomi Ridiculous" are pure matter -- and the whole emphasis of the mock epic thus far illustrates the utter folly and grossness of "pure matter" -- that is, matter separated from spirit, from mind is merely waste, excrement, and moreover, such excrement is often the result of actions -- fornication, gluttony -- which are governed neither by mind nor spirit. Nor can "pure spirit" exist on its own -- without its partner, matter / flesh, it is flatulent, ineffective (as Mercury is), even more

frauds are punished in Virgil's Hades, rules here as well. Things are not what they seem.

As additional proof of that, and as an embodiment of all things turning to their basest opposites in Jonson's underworld, the two voyagers meet Bancks,"the juggler, our Pythagoras" (1. 156), transmuted to a cat (while the reference to Pythagoras is another allusion to the theory of the transmigration of souls) who assumes, in part, the role of the dog Cerberus. He spits three times and scolds the heroes:

> How dare
> Your dainty nostrils (in so hot a season
> When every clerk eats artichokes, and peason,
> Laxative lettuce and such windy meat)
> Tempt such a passage? When each privies seat
> Is filled with buttock and the walls do sweat
> Urine, and plaisters? When the noise doth beat
> Upon your ears, of discords so unsweet?
> And out-cries of the damned in the Fleet?
> Cannot the Plague Bill keep you back? nor bells
> Of loud sepulcheres with their hourly knells
> But you will visit grisly Pluto's hall? (11. 164-175)

This particular reference to the contemporary juggler Bancks, a showman of the '90s who employed a performing horse, and later an ape and an elephant, [51] summarizes

> all the foolish vulgarity criticized in the previous references to bearbaiting, prostitution, the Lord Mayor's Feast, and the cooks of Fleet Lane. At the same time, since many pseudo-sciences were based on the mathematics ascribed to Pythagoras, the reference to the mountebank as "our Pythagoras" suggests the charlatranry of the times; intellectual endeavors, presented earlier by Paracelsus, Henry Ludlowe, and Nicholas Hill. In this way, Jonson's two chief concerns fuse in a single image, in which Banks epitomizes the corruption symbolized throughout the poem by the various examples of contemporary manners and studies.[52]

Bancks' catty (more misogyny) scolding emphasizes the utter indifference to filth of any kind exhibited by the men in the wherry. Filth, disease, cacphony, have not deterred them (nor called forth much response at all) in their quest. Interestingly, because the motive for the journey is somewhat veiled, it seems precipitated less by intense desire than it is by taking on a motion of its own once the initial decision is made. Peter Medine has explained that early lines in the poem tell us the two men are looking for whores; in another pun, they answer the question directly:

> They cry'd out Pusse. (l. 183)

They are, of course, addressing directly the monstrous cat, and playing, simultaneously, on slang for female pudenda.[53] They can only laugh at Bancks' (l. 185), seeing no lesson for themselves in his transmigration; it is left to Bancks' last references to suggest the seriousness of the degradation sought by the two wights:

> But you will visit grisly Pluto's Hall? . . .
> Tempt not his fury, Pluto is away,
> And Madame Caesar, Great Proserpina,
> Is now from home. (l. 175; ll. 179-181)

"Madam Caesar" is a female ruler, but also the "proprietress of a brothel";[54] her den is synonymous with the hall of the rulers of hell, as she is synonymous with Proserpina, queen of hell and personification of summer now away in the upper world, as Bancks indicates the season by listing the clerks' menu (ll. 166-7).

No bribe is necessary for <u>this</u> Cerberus (l. 186); the two wights call a soap-boiler, an alehousekeeper, and an "ancient, pur-blinde

fletcher" to witness their voyage (11. 187-191). Interestingly, Rhadamanthus rules the fate of those who suffer for fraud; all three pass sentence and judgment on all of the souls who enter the underworld.[55] In this world of inversions, the two wights leave unimpeded, unjudged -- and still unjudging. Their impotence in discernment takes a fittingly literal form: they can get no satisfaction:

> The word protraction [1. 192] indicating that they simply returned without delay -- plays on the meaning of the Latin root, protractus, a prolongation, to suggest an erection. (A protractor muscle is one which extends a part).[56]

Jonson concludes appropriately with a jibe at what is recognized as heroic these days in the life of the City: "In memory of which most liquid deed / The City hath rais'd a Pyramid. / And I could wish, for their eterniz'd sakes,/My Muse had plough'd with his, that sung A-JAX" (11. 193-6).

Even conscientious in the education of his reader, Jonson does not cast us out of the poem -- and out of Fleet Ditch -- unassisted. He provides a last reminder in his allusion to Harington's Metamorphosis of Ajax that the world of the book remains useful. The two wights remain impotent physically and morally, at the end of "Voyage"; in contrast, Jonson says he wishes "/his/ Muse had plough'd with his, that sung A-JAX" (1. 196). This interplay among texts can take place, in the mind of the reader; Jonson suggests by his allusion that it should. "Plough'd," say Shawcross and Emma, is an obscene pun for copulation; despite the obscenity, Jonson's reference is not necessarily a mere jab at Harington, nor merely an excuse to end the mock-epic with a real groaner of a pun. For their success, puns depend on a recognition of

two levels of meaning, and an ability to conflate those meanings while continuing to see the disparity between them. To be able to recognize and appreciate a pun, readers must be able to "confer" -- to compare words, things, shades of meaning. Comparisons, at the level of the word and of the sentence, are what Jonson has asked of us throughout the collection -- how does one "like" a son rather than "love" him? How does a "grant" differ from a "gift"? The juxtaposition of satire and praise throughout the collection demands as well that we compare practitioners of vice with models of virtue.

The process of comparison, "conferring," then, is not a new one by the time we reach epigram 133. Jonson has prepared us for its puns, for the subtle distinctions we are asked to note, and for the form of parody itself -- since parody must depend on comparison for its success. And as we have done throughout the collection, we compare the poem with our own experiences (reading experiences, and otherwise) to evaluate what we find there.

It is not surprising, then, that in the final line of the mock-epic Jonson asks us to make another such comparison -- to join one text with another for purposes of reasoned evaluation. Significantly, he leaves us with a reference to another book: he confirms the literary bias of the Epigrammes even in the final line of the collection.

Potentially, comparisons can result in the fruitful "marriage" of two texts; this is a possibility in the case of Jonson and Harington. Harington's work can be seen as an enlightening, extended gloss on Jonson's mock epic, and on the Epigrammes generally, since its themes and concerns, set out prosaically and explicitly, parallel Jonson's intents in a remarkable way.

Appearing in 1596, Harington's A New Discourse of a Stale Subject, called the Metamorphosis of Ajax, is ostensibly a manual on the necessity and the construction of efficient privies (including diagrams). The topic provides Harington the opportunity for the same kind of low word play in which Jonson indulges at the end of his collection of poems. Harington's title is a fair example; much of the Metamorphosis is in the vein of an encomium on a trivial or unworthy subject. In the spirit of Rabelais and Erasmus, Harington loads his discourse with examples, anecdotes, illustrations, discussing the unworthiness (but maintaining the necessity) of his topic, and examining the use of privies through history. Harington

> . . . further exploits the discursive method in order to present the "true intent" of the book which, in sum, is a satire of contemporary persons and practices. That his readers should not miss this intent, he states it in direct terms at the end of the New Discourse. The prologue and the first part are directed chiefly against "malcontents, Epicures, Atheists, heretickes, and carelesse & dissolute Christians, and especially against pride and sensualitie"; the second part, largely an account of Roman rulers who had exhibited concern for the problem of sanitation, "gives a due praise without flatterie, to one that is worthie of it, and a just checke without gall to some that deserve it"; the third part "as it teacheth indeed a reformation of the matter in question, so it toucheth the sport, a reprehension of some practices too much in custome," namely monopolies.[57]

Even this brief outline shows that, in his intent at least, Harington has much in common with Jonson -- they include topical satire in more general concern for the manners of mankind. The core of Harington's book is best summed up in a couplet that might well be an epigraph to Jonson's mock epic: "To keep your houses sweet, cleanse privie vaults / To keep your souls as sweet, mend privie vaults."[58]

Though his tone and form differ considerably from Jonson's, Harington too concerns himself with truth, the purgation of vice, and a balance in his readers' views of the relationship between spirit and matter: "I wish all readers may find as sure a way to cleanse, and keep sweet the noblest part of themselves, that is, their souls, as I shall shew them a plain and easy way to keep the basest part of their houses, their sinkes."[59]

Lest we disdain the comparison, Harington tells a story that sets out the relationship between spirit and matter, baseness and goodness, as explicitly as possible. Though he will not swear that the story is true, it comes to him from a "grave and godly Ladie, and grandmother to all my wives children." A holy hermit is conducted to a great city by an angel, to see the wickedness there; in the street he meets a carter with a wagonful of dung. Like all other men, the hermit stops his nose hastening to avoid the wagon, but the angel seems entirely unaffected. A moment later, a beautiful woman, richly dressed and perfumed, and attended by many servants, passes by. Refreshed by the "sweet savor," the hermit stands to watch her pass. But "on the other side, the Good Angell, now stopped his nose, and both hastened himselfe away, and beckoned his companion" from the place. At which the Hermit more marvelling then before, he was told by the Angell, that this fine courtesan laden with sinne, was a more stinking savour afore God and his holy Angels, then that beastly cart, laden with excrements."[60]

Closely allied to Harington's eagerness to demonstrate the emphases of good morals is his concern that his readers are not falsely offended at his diction. Of necessity, his words are plain, homely:

he will not employ euphemism in discussions of matters common to all. The explanation is comparable to his brief allegory of the hermit and the angel:

> I hope they will do me that favour, and themselves that right, not to reject a matter teaching their owne care and cleanlinesse, for the homelinesse of the name; and consequently, they will excuse all broad phrases of speech, incident to such a matter, with the old English proverbe, the ends this: for Lords and Ladies do the same. I know that the wiser sort of men will consider, so I wish that the ignorant sort would learne, how it is not the basenesse, or homelinesse, wither of words, or of matters, that make them foule and obscenous, but their base minds, filthy conceits, or lewd intents that handle them.[61]

So we should not reject the physician who handles excrement to cure disease, says Harington; similarly, we should disdain neither his topic nor his language, since they may help us toward moral health.

With this injunction to readers to look to their own minds and hearts, to examine their own intents, Harington invites his readers to measure their moral worth by means of their reaction to his book:

> Beleeve it (worthy readers, for I write not to the unworthie) A-Jax when he is at his worst, yields not a more offensive savor to the finest nosthrils, then some of the faults I have noted do, to God and the world. Be not offended with me for saying it, more than I am with some of you for seeing it. But this I say, if we would amend our privie faults first, we whould afterward much better reform the open offenses, according to the old proverbe: Everie man mend one, and all would be mended. Trust me, they do wrong me that count me satyrical . . . . If you will say there is salt in it, I will acknowledge it, but if you will suspect there is gall in it I renounce it: I name not manie and in those I do name, I swarve not from the rule Play with me and hurt me not: / Jest with me and shame me not. For some that may seeme secretly touched, and be not openly named, if they will say nothing, I will say nothing. But as my good friend M. Davies said of his epigrammes, that they were made like dublets in Birchen Lane, for everyone whom they will serve: as if any man in these my lines any raiment that sutes him so

> fit, as if there were made for him, let him weare it and spare not, and for my part I wold he could ware it out. But if he will be angrie at it, then (as the old saying is) I beshrew his angrie heart: and I wold warn him thus much (as his poore friend) that the workman that could with a glaunce only and with a light view of his person make a garment so fit for him, if the same workman come and take a precise measure of him, may make him another garment of the same stuffe (for there needs go but a paire of sheeres between them) that in what sheere soever he dwelleth, he may be known by such a coat as long as he liveth. Well, to conclude, let both the writer and the readers endeavor to mend ourselves, and so we shall the easier mend others, and then I shall think my labour well bestowed in writing, and you shall think yours not altogether lost in reading.[62]

I have quoted this passage at some length because it provides several possibilities for comment on the connection between Harington's text and Jonson's Epigrammes, with the inclusion of the troublesome "Voyage" in the latter.

Harington's persona in the passage above emerges as a chatty native wit, unaffectedly sincere. Unmistakably English, he draws from a common stock of proverbs and folk wisdom as one of his more subtle appeals to his audience for a hearing. His analogies too are homely ones (the "dublets" comparison allows him a gleeful, and obvious, play on "sheeres" -- shires), their message clear: readers are to take account of themselves. The association of sex and scatology, the appeal to religious authorities and Biblical examples, in part one of this three-part work, emphasize again and again the same message, which Harington says, plainly, above: secretly-cherished faults are the worst; but in one way or another, "bottom" will betray its burden. Like Davies' epigrams, the thrust of Harington's book is homespun. Both Davies and Harington write about the folly of vice -- as Jonson does; but in the plethora of example, anecdote, and proverb, and in Davies'

inability to "point" an epigram tersely for the proper (classical) epigrammatic effect, readers will find few surprises. Despite any initial difficulty because of the crudity of Harington's subject matter, his prosey folksiness attracts rather than repels.[63]

Obviously, both Jonson and Harington have deliberately focused on physical baseness in order to move readers to consider the greater ugliness of immorality and hypocrisy. Harington baldly appeals to us to re-examine our thinking; attitude will either foster or hinder an understanding of his book. If we take offense, the fault lies in us, not in the text: "Wherefore shame to them that shame think".[64] In Discoveries, Jonson notes his characteristic of mind: "It is the mind, and not the event, that distinguisheth courtesie from wrong."[65]

But in "The Famous Voyage" there is no such explicit direction to readers, nor does Jonson aid us in fitting the poem into the context of the Epigrammes. Demanding a more subtle understanding of his readers, Jonson gives us remarkably little help with the mock-epic. But in his reference to Harington's book, he provides a direction that we may use or ignore, as we see fit.

It is easy enough to see that Harington's genial prose provides an explicit statement of Jonson's concerns in the mock-epic: both poems satirize manners, morals, study, by inverting current custom and learning for examination of what is "at bottom." The less astute readers of Jonson can find in Harington an extended prose gloss of Jonson's more difficult poetic satire. But an explication of the poem is only a partial explanation of its purpose; it remains for the fit reader not only to "confer" texts, but to compare the kinds of reading

experiences offered by their respective authors. Moreover, accounting for the position of Jonson's mock-epic, and its relationship to what precedes it, is as important as a study of the poem itself.

Peter Medine points out that Jonson's reference to Harington in epigram 133 may be a criticism of Harington's epigrams. To Drummond, Jonson criticized both Harington's translation of Ariosto and his collection of epigrams.[66] His comments on the epigrams of both Harington and Davies are couched in the same terms: "A great many epigrams were ill, expressed in the end, what should have been understood"; Harington's epigrams too are not understated, but are rather "narrations." Jonson hopes in his own collection that his epigrams are deliberately unlike those of his contemporaries, since he has returned to Martial's "old way, and . . . true": "thou has seene / Davis and Weever, / And mine come nothing like. I hope so" (18. 11. 4-5).

Medine wonders why Jonson deliberately chooses to criticize Harington's tendency to narrative (if, indeed, that is the focus of his allusion) in the only narrative form in the collection of Epigrammes. Medine calls the reference an "irony,"; indeed, he finds Jonson's inclusion of the mock-epic "ironic," but he does not explain why. Yet if we note the difficulty of unraveling the "subtle distinctions" of Jonson's satire in 133; and, more important, since we are left to "understand" for ourselves both the reference to Harington and the inclusion of the mock epic in a body of poems so radically different from this final one, we can begin to see both the reference and the inclusion of the poem as an example of Jonson's witty pointedness. He leaves the reader to understand (by "conferring") what he leaves unstated.

Inescapably, we must first examine the kind of reading experience offered by the final poem. Although the poem repays close study, and is, I think, as consistent and as well crafted as any of the briefer epigrams, reading it is an ambiguous pleasure at best. Jonson's imitation, his artfulness, his word-play -- these can be noted in detail in epigram 133; appreciated, but hardly savored. The matter of the poem remains distasteful. This, I think, is just the point: an easy assimilation of the poem by readers would undercut Jonson's purposes in the Epigrammes as he has so far demonstrated them. Our "understanding" is a matter of reaching after what is left unstated, of seeing relationships between words, lines, sentences, portraits, in juxta-position, and of evaluating the quality of those relations. Again and again, the reader is thrown back to himself to "confer" -- continually, he pits his experience and his reactions to the poems against the renditions of experience that Jonson offers.

About the experience of reading Bacon's "Of Love," Victor Ehrlich writes, "The manifest subject is love. The manifest experience is perceptual frustration. I assume the juxtaposition of subject and experience is not arbitrary."[67]

Subject and experience juxtaposed -- at odds, perhaps -- confronts us also in "Voyage," and, to a degree, in the Epigrammes as a collection. The manifest subject is satire on contemporary manners and study. But the experience of the final poem is complex. As we strip away Jonson's levels of meaning and recognize his allusions and word play, we can see that, potentially at least, this journey is our journey: "In time, this passage may concern us / All that are readers" (l. 42-43).

We are all readers -- here, of Jonson's text; but as I have indicated above, "reading," "imitating" implies an engagement in the world of experience as well. In this poem we will determine what sort of readers we are.

I suggest, then, that our reactions may include laughter, disgust, recognition, and a kind of uneasiness as we determine whether to accept or to reject the many questions and ambiguities that epigram 133 offers us.

Earlier, Jonson has jabbed at vices similar to the ones represented here; he has done it almost gracefully. For example, epigram 24 is terse political satire, in two lines; epigram 34 seems to be merely an affirmation of faith, but it is also an attack on those who have no faith: "He that feares death, or mournes it, in the just / Shewes of the resurrection little trust." "On Old Colt" (39) attacks adultery, but does so indirectly: "For all night-sinnes, with others wives, unknowne, / Colt, now, doth daily penance in his owne." At the very least, Jonson omits names, and brevity and understatement lend wit to the attacks. But the hyperbolic crudity of the "crown" (sic) of the collection is impossible to admire in this way. It cannot be seen as a graceful poetic trifle. Readers must question themselves regarding the vices graphically depicted, to the bombast Jonson satirizes. Has Jonson violated the unspoken decorum of his "chaste book" by including "Voyage"? Will the "most of mankynd" (94. 1. 7) who need it most, read it and come to understand?

The answer to the final questions allows us to arrive at a definition of ourselves as readers. Either we have "conferred" properly --

or we have not; either, as Lucy can with Mr. Donne's Satyres, (94) we may read satire with a knowledge that we are not its targets -- or we can't.

The middle ground (for, it seems to me, Jonson always offers a middle ground) is to examine the quality of the experience that the conclusion of the poem offers us. Our purpose, our "travail" here, is to read with "understanding"; it is principles, not facts, that Jonson seeks to teach. We may discard the poem as unfit for inclusion in the Epigrammes, rejecting the portrait of the times as indecorous even while we acknolwedge the truth of the rendition. In that case, we have made a sophisticated literary judgment. We may reject the poem and its inclusion as unfit for us, newly educated to the plain virtue Jonson celebrates in the collection: thus the poem is a purgative, the vehicle of its own rejection. But we must decide: the decision, and the process of reaching it, are the entire point. The most difficult of our judgments as readers growing in moral and aesthetic capability faces us at the end of the Epigrammes.

Harington's genial, easy prose offers no such rigor; it gives us answers, axioms, wisdom we already know. But Jonson demands moral scrutiny rather than simply asserting its necessity; it is literally impossible to "make sense" of his text on any other terms.

What is Jonson's role here? The personae of the earlier poems seem to be missing. Gone is the anguished friend and father of the epitaphs; the gracious encomiast of the poems to Lucy; the acidic teacher of Playwright and Don Surly; the warmly grateful pupil of William Camden. Jonson seems to pull away from us, deliberately relinquishing

his earlier personae for the more public -- almost precious -- mask that parody allows him. Any sense of kinship or affinity we feel is diminished, if not extinguished. The preponderance of epigrams of praise at the end of the collection suggests that this bond in the fellowship of the good is precisely the one we are supposed to acknowledge -- and savor -- at this point in the collection.

Once again, it is a matter of "conference." Confronted with "Voyage," apparently abandoned by the persona, we are forced to re-examine the poet-reader bond as well. Jonson works to make himself less necessary. He can offer only "just depiction" in the poignant situation of his own loss of a child, leaving us to acknowledge a painful dilemma. Here too he concerns himself with the cultivation of a particular kind of perception. Along with him, we are engaged to stand outside the world of compulsion, aggression, nastiness, seeing it (and possibly rejecting it) for what it is:

> Irony, alas, is a fractious term which literary critics are struggling to put to bed after a long and exhausting day . . . . Its commonest application to drama, as we know, describes the situation when a playwright shares secret with his audience at the expense of his characters; its pervasiveness then depends on how many of the characters are deluded for how much of the time, and its depth depends on the meaning to be drawn from their delusions. But in explaining Jonson's major comedies, /and his mock-epic/ we have to deal also with another form of irony which is directed against us as spectators or readers. Far from being invited to share its secret, we are challenged to see that it exists. Its meaning is to be found in our own responses, and its pervasiveness in the fact that we are, or should be, engaged all the time. If we fail to perceive it, it is we who are deluded; we become its victims.[68]

Potentially we are the subjects of Jonson's satire; but if we examine our responses, we may find ourselves in a fellowship of fit readers who

share the judicious intelligence necessary to see beyond the satire of the times, beyond the satire on letters, to Jonson's final affirmation of letters as touchstones of moral scrutiny; as places to stand and evaluate the flux of the world of raw experience. Failing to achieve such a perspective, we too become the "victims" of Jonson's mock epic -- much like Shelton and Heyden, who lack the ability to engage themselves and to detach themselves in order to examine their involvement in experience, their relationship to "things."

This ability -- a kind of ironic stance -- is both prerequisite and result of the ability to imitate well. Jonson's inclusion of such radically opposed persons, places, things, experiences, in the Epigrammes, suggests that life and art can share disparity, contradiction, irresolvable paradox:

> The equilibrium of opposed impulses, which we suspect to be the ground plan or our most valuable aesthetic responses, brings into play far more of our personality than is possible in experiences of a more defined emotion. We cease to be orientated in one definite direction. More facets of the mind are exposed, and, in what is the same thing, more aspects of things are able to affect us. To respond, not through one narrow channel of interest, but simultaneously and coherently through many, is to be disinterested in the only sense of the word which concerns us here. A state of mind which is not disinterested is one which sees things only from one standpoint or under one aspect. At the same time, since more of our personality is engaged the independence and individuality of other things becomes greater. We seem to see "all around them," to see them as they really are; we see them apart from any one particular interest which they may have for us. Of course without some interest we should not see them at all, but the less any one particular interest is indispensable, the more detached our attitude becomes. And to say that we are impersonal, is merely a curious way of saying that our personality is more completely involved (Emphases in text).[69]

What we long for at the end of the Epigrammes -- as we do at the end of "On My First Sonne" -- is unambiguous closure. Instead, Jonson gives us the most troublesome poem of the entire collection; as a clue toward our understanding both the mock-epic and the Epigrammes, he offers us yet another text. But the allusion too is ambiguous; we are never sure of Jonson's attitude toward Metamorphosis of Ajax. Sending us to the less-demanding Harington may even reflect a kind of scorn for readers who, at the very last, still fail to "understand." Availing ourselves of Metamorphosis of Ajax, we may fail to note the ambiguities of the reference to become ourselves the "victims" of the irony which Douglas Duncan has noted as one of the marks of Jonson's sophistication.

"The Famous Voyage" is another fact of experience necessary for the complete engagement and response that Richards suggests as the "ground plan" of aesthetic experience. It is also the ground plan of morally didactic experiences. As Jonson notes in Discoveries, in the poet we require "exact knowledge of all vertues, and their contraries; with ability to render the one lov'd, the other hated, by his proper embattaling them."[70] Jonson necessarily offers both of these in the Epigrammes; "how" we learn to love virtue and hate vice rests in Jonson's plain style, skillful arrangement, and the demands of each of these on the reader. "Comparison" is prerequisite for growth of both moral and aesthetic sensitivity.

The simultaneous engagement and detachment of the mind, reading, that Richards describes as characteristic of an aesthetic response is very much like Wolfgang Iser's depiction of the experience of reading. We oscillate so quickly between these states of engagement with the text, and detachment from it, that we are scarcely aware that the oscillation

takes place at all.[71] But experience and its immediate comparison with what we are and with what we know are imperative if we are to grow morally, and to respond, aesthetically. Jonson's text reflects his implicit understanding of the two responses as mutually necessary; the aesthetic response can perhaps be described as a heightening of the moral one. But for both, we must "read well."

Were Jonson to end the Epigrammes unambiguously, neatly, he would do his readers a grave disservice in light of his sense of his own task as a poet. Thus far he has presented us with what is -- including disparities in the behavior of men and women; irony and paradox in his own roles of father and artist; the existence of Fleet Ditch beneath a commonwealth ruled by the "best of kings" (epigram 4, 1.1) and a host of revered luminaries. "On My First Sonne" (45) is an emblem of Jonson's artistic honesty: he offers no easy resolution resting in skilled artifice. The author of the Epigrammes finds that impossible, as is demonstrated by his compilation of such a varied body of poems into a single work. To omit the gross counterweight of the final poem would be a failure to admit that the persons, situations, and the milieu he has presented all along are troubling, flawed, confusing, nasty. The necessity of our coming to terms with the two final lines of "On My First Sonne" and with the inclusion of epigram 133 is actually the same aesthetic task: how to reconcile the apparently irreconcilable?

Ultimately, Jonson does not seek to transform his milieu, but rather to metamorphose minds. The first transformation is more Sidneyan than Jonsonian; Sidney's poet neither lies nor affirms -- but especially,

he does not affirm a faithfulness to things as they are.[72] The golden world he creates is not the world of experience. Jonson too relies on "wit" for the extraordinarily difficult task of changing minds: he depicts -- and asks us to experience -- the vicissitudes of the mind of a stylist directly engaged in the world as it is.

Direct engagement engenders flexibility, judgment, the ability to assimilate and use experience. Jonson's comedies, says Robert Ornstein, "disclose the impossibility of transformation in lives that are wholly momentary, compelled by appetite, obsessed by fantasies, untouched by memories or chastened by regret."[73] In the Epigrammes Jonson appropriately calls those so compelled by the names of their motivating vices -- "Colt," "Cod," "Would-Bee," "Surly." Determined to see the world only through the narrow tunnel of their own desires, they can only live out the compulsions that animate them, by definition unfit readers destined to remain that way. These Jonson would send down Fleet Ditch.

Those seeking admission to Jonson's fellowship of the good can learn, literally, to comprehend all, to discard sin and compulsion, as they would an unfit text; to turn appropriate experience -- and texts -- to nourishment. Jonson's emphasis on a metamorphosis of the mind cannot be underestimated. Such changes can only be achieved by a fullness of knowledge of things as they are, not merely by wandering in the zodiac of one's own wit. Necessarily, then, one of the main didactic strategies of the Epigrammes is its inclusiveness.

The tension between the contraries and extremes everywhere in the collection -- noticeable especially between the mock-epic and the

poems that precede it -- is a creative tension, rather than merely an irritant, because Jonson wants us to recognize differences and contradictions. Only when we set them against one another do people, places, events, minds, take on clarity and sharpness of outline. Wisdom comes through a knowledge of the way things are, neither more nor less. Hence Jonson's presentation of what is is quite enough. He needs to impose no ingenious pairings of dissimilar elements on his readers, and he refuses to impose on the chaos of experience an order that sacrifices its discordant elements. With Jonson, we must move one step beyond the identification of concordia discors to the state of mind that best copes with it.[74] And that attitude of holding all things in fruitful equilibrium is one that Jonson exemplifies and seeks to cultivate in the readers of the Epigrammes.

"Engagement," then, is the key. We are not to range in the zodiac of another's wit, but to scrutinize actively, milieu, literature, and language, with a dynamic self as a touchstone against which all experience is checked and re-checked. The Epigrammes show that language, literature, and self are so intertwined and connected that the relations among them are hardly separable. The reciprocity of the bonds among language, literature, self, are all the more reason for us to monitor our own responses and utterances. Our reactions and our language truly show our inner selves.

In the epitaphs especially, Jonson illustrates his awareness of reciprocal bonds, both social and aesthetic; of when distinctions and fine shadings of experience are possible -- and impossible -- to make. The mock-epic in particular leaves similar decisions to Jonson's

fellow-voyagers. The poet's major purpose is to illustrate their existence, strengthening both the connections among readers, texts, and behavior, and heightening our awareness of those connections. The relative health of literature, language, inner selves, depends on their interplay; Jonson demonstrates through his rendition of that interplay the uselessness of speculating on a hierarchy among them. The poet simply wants these bonds -- human, textual, linguistic -- seen, felt, attended to.

Jonson's plainness, then, should never be mistaken for simplicity. He speaks plainly the better to evoke from readers an acknowledgement that the powers of the mind, called into play by his text, must be brought to bear on the complexity of the bonds between word and thing, spirit and matter, soul and body, and between one human being and another. From this acknowledgement emerges the acceptance of the irresolvable dilemmas of life and art that helps us to find a fruitful wisdom rather than merely frustration in the paradoxes and contradictions we encounter. Reading the Epigrammes shows Jonson to be a poet who is didactic not because he utters epigrammatic moral truths, but because he demands recognition of the similarity between his office and the task of individuals who aspire to goodness. By making our minds like the things he writes, we style ourselves among his best pieces of poetry.

NOTES

[1]A.C. Swinburne, A Study of Ben Jonson (London: Chatto & Windus, Piccadilly, 1889), p. 95. Herford and Simpson call the poem a "hideous and unsavory burlesque" (H&S II, 339).

[2]The Complete Poetry of Ben Jonson, ed. William B. Hunter, p. 67, n. 1. John T. Shawcross and Ronald David Emma, eds., Seventeenth Century English Poetry (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1969), p. 91.

[3]For a concise summary of critical reaction, see Peter Medine, "Object and Intent in Jonson's 'Famous Voyage,'" Studies in English Literature 15 (1977), 97, n. 2. The poem has been variously called a "burlesque" and an "antimasque"; but no one, including Medine, has explained its place in the collection of Epigrammes.

[4]Wesley Trimpi notes that Jonson uses feminine endings a good deal in this poem; they become for him a satirical device. Trimpi discusses "Voyage" briefly as a satire--and a rejection--of the high style, Ben Jonson's Poems, pp. 97, 99.

[5]H&S VIII, 26.

[6]Richard Peterson, "Imitation and Praise in Ben Jonson's Poems," 276.

[7]Peterson, 276.

[8]Peterson, 276.

[9]Medine, "Object and Intent," 97, 98.

[10]Medine, 100.

[11]H&S XI, 30, n. 5: "For Sir R. Shelton see Ep. cxix. Heyden we have not identified." Medine (101 ff.) takes pains to point out that "Since Jonson despised Cervantes' novel, thinking it simply another example of the popular romances, the translation would have made Shelton into an excellent symbol of the decline of letters in his eyes" (102-3). For one example of Jonson's disparagement of Don Quixote, see Underwood 43, 29ff.

[12]Medine, 103.

[13]Medine, 104.

[14]O.B. Hardison, The Enduring Monument, p. 79.

[15]H&S VIII, 26.

[15a]Puttenham, The Arte of English Poesie, 39-42. Puttenham briefly defines epic in these terms.

[16]For a discussion of the classical plain style in the service of dialectic, whose purpose is to discover and seek the truth, see Trimpi, pp. 5-19; Trimpi also comments that "Jonson's epic would deal with human beings and the problems of human life" (p. 97), though he never actually wrote the epic that he discussed.

[17]But despite Jonson's praise in epigram 132, Trimpi asserts that a "likely target for Jonson's parody, in tone and descriptive details, is Joshua Sylvester's translation 'The Furies,' which constitutes the third part of the "First Day of the II Week" of Du Bartas' La Seconde Sepmaine ou Enfance du Monde (1584)" (p. 97). If Trimpi is correct, the juxtaposition of the mock-epic and the brief poem of praise heightens Jonson's irony. Jonson later told Drummond that Sylvester's translation was "not well done, and that he wrote his Verses [i.e., epigram 132] before it err he understood to confer" (H&S I, 133). Nevertheless, Jonson allows both praise and parody to remain in his collection.

[18]Jonson makes interesting use of "subtle distinctions" elsewhere in the Epigrammes. In epigram 45, "love" and "like" (l. 12) are distinctions hardly applicable to Jonson's feelings for his son; his language admits of such fine shadings, but the emotion-fraught situation cannot. Lines nine and ten of "To Lucy, Countesse of Bedford" (84) distinguish "grant" from "gift"; should Lucy assent to Jonson's nicety here, their poet-patron relation will assume a different footing. In both examples, Jonson draws attention to fine shadings by using words as close in sound as they seem to be in meaning. And in both examples, we are being asked to scrutinize carefully the possibilities of the distinctions (and the similarities) to which he draws our attention.

[19]Shawcross and Emma, eds., p. 92, n. 57.

[20]Edith Hamilton, Mythology (New York: Mentor Books, 1963), p. 39.

[21]Virgil, Aeneid, trans. Frank O. Copley (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1965), p. 127. All subsequent references to the Aeneid are made to this edition; book and line numbers cited follow each reference in parentheses.

[22]Shawcross and Emma, eds., p. 91, n. 20.

[23]Hamilton, p. 156.

[24]Hamilton, pp. 103-105.

[25]Homer, Odyssey: The Story of Odysseus. Trans. W.H.D. Rouse (New York: A Mentor Classic, 1937), pp. 124-137.

[26]Hunter, ed., p. 68, n. 13; Shawcross and Emma, eds., p. 91, n. 28.

[27]Shawcross and Emma, eds., p. 91, n. 28.

[28]Shawcross and Emma, eds., p. 91, n. 21.

[29]Hunter, ed., p. 68, n. 15; Shawcross and Emma, eds., p. 91, n. 39.

[30]Hunter, eds., p. 68, n. 16; Shawcross and Emma, eds., p. 91, n. 35.

[31]H&S XI, 30, n. 36.

[32]Shawcross and Emma, eds., pp. 91-92, n. 41.

[33]T.G.A. Nelson, "Death, Dung, the Devil, and Worldly Delights: A Metaphysical Conceit in Harington, Donne, and Herbert," Studies in Philology 76 (1979): 282.

[34]See, for example, "To My Muse" (65); "To Thomas, Earle of Suffolke" (67), ll. 3-4; "To John Donne" (96), l. 12; "To Sir Thomas Roe" (98); "To the Same" (99).

[35]Shawcross and Emma, eds., p. 92, n. 50; 55.

[36]Shawcross and Emma, eds., p. 92, n. 62.

[37]Medine, 100.

[38]Hamilton, pp. 41-42.

[39]H&S XI, 31, n. 84.

[40]H&S XI, 31, n. 89.

[41]Shawcross and Emma, p. 92, n. 94.

[42]Medine, 107-108.

[43]Shawcross and Emma, eds., p. 93, n. 96.

[44]Hunter, ed., p. 71, n. 50.

[45]Medine, 106-107.

[46]Shawcross and Emma, eds., p. 92, n. 122-3.

[47]Medine, 108.

[48]William S. Anderson, The Art of The Aeneid (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1969), pp. 60-61.

[49]Medine, 107.

[50]Medine, 99; 107.

[51]Shawcross and Emma, eds., p. 93, n. 156.

[52]Medine, 108-109.

[53]John S. Farmer and W.E. Henley, eds., A Dictionary of Slang and Its Analogues, Past and Present, V (London: Printed for subscribers only, 1896), p. 332-3. Farmer and Henley give two meanings for "puss" which apply here: "Sometimes complacently used of a woman suspected of loose morals (cf. CAT)"; the earliest printed usage noted is 1553. For "puss" as a synonym for pudendum, the editors note Charles Cotton, in Virgil Travestie (1664), as their first example. However, I think the second meaning is quite possible in Jonson's "Voyage"; interestingly, the reference is to a parody by Cotton.

[54]Shawcross and Emma, eds., p. 93, n. 180.

[55]Aeneid VI, l. 566.

[56]Medine, 105.

[57]Sir John Harington's A New Discourse of a Stale Subject, Called the Metamorphosis of Ajax, ed. Elizabeth Story Donno (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), pp. 19-20.

[58]Harington, p. 186.

[59]Harington, p. 85.

[60]Harington, p. 85.

[61]Harington, p. 83.

[62]Harington, pp. 184-186.

[63]Jonson comments on the inability of both authors to "point" an epigram in Conversations with Drummond, H&S I, 133.

[64]Harington, p. 160.

[65]Discoveries, H&S VIII, 578.

[66]H&S I, 133.

[67]Victor Ehrlich, "Reading Conscious and Unconscious," College English 36 (1975): 771.

[68]Douglas Duncan, Ben Jonson and the Lucianic Tradition (Cambridge: Harcourt, Brace, & Co., 1928), p. 1.

[69]I.A. Richards, Principles of Literary Criticism (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & Co., 1928), pp. 251-2.

[70]Discoveries, H&S VIII, 595.

[71]See above, chapter three; see also, Iser, The Implied Reader, p. 288.

[72]Sir Philip Sidney, "An Apology for Poetry," in Criticism: The Major Texts, ed. Walter Jackson Bate, enlarged edition (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Jovanovich, 1970), pp. 85; 97.

[73]Quoted in Joseph A. Bryant, The Compassionate Satirist: Ben Jonson and His Imperfect World (Athens: Univ. of Georga Press, 1972), p. 4.

[74]Earl Wasserman, The Subtler Language (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1959), p. 54. Wasserman lists Jonson's Hymenai as one of a number of works from the period illustrative of the concept of concordia discors. Written in 1606 for the wedding of the Earl of Essex and Lady Jane Howard, the antimasque has four humours and four affections (lords of the court) who offer to disturb the masque. After the entrance of Juno, Reason, and Order, all are paired in a dance with eight ladies of the court; potential disorder becomes an element of order. The epithalamium that follows celebrates the new circle of society with Reason, visually, at its center.

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