

**ROBERT HERRICK'S SELF-PRESENTATION IN *HESPERIDES*
AND *HIS NOBLE NUMBERS***

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Abstract

Literature has tended to be cut from the moorings of its authorial origins under the influential literary criticism of the past forty years. This thesis is an attempt to re-moor a work of literature to its authorial origins; particularly a work of literature in which the author-poet's self-referential markers are so overtly and persistently present as is the case in *Hesperides* and *His Noble Numbers*. Although there is a significant overlap between the real-life Herrick and the Hesperidean Herrick, the two figures cannot be regarded as identical. Instead, Herrick's deployment of specific genres and not of others, his chosen conventions for ordering a collection of miscellaneous poems, and his adoption of certain conventional poetic stances provide him with a semi-fictionalised way of declaring who he understands himself to be and how he wants himself to be understood. At the same time, the rich classical mythological associations of Herrick's title, *Hesperides*, declare his status as an inheritor of the classical literary tradition, whose hallmark during the Renaissance was the melding of classical, Christian and secular associations into new and complexly polyvalent literary works. For example, Herrick's appropriation of the classical mythological figure of Hercules provides him with both a narrative way and an allegorical way of reconciling the so-called secular, or profane poetry of *Hesperides* with the so-called religious, or divine poetry of *Noble Numbers*. In *Noble Numbers*, Herrick reveals new facets of his self-presentation to the reader, whilst also making explicit the theological congruencies between the two works. Herrick's religious self-presentation demonstrates his expansive scholarly interests, as well his instinct to include, rather than to exclude, the religious beliefs of others within his syncretistic sense-of-self. Finally, the placement of *Noble Numbers* after *Hesperides* is not a signal that Herrick privileged the

former, or took his religion less seriously than he did his love for classical poetry, but rather that in Herrick's understanding of his world, man's fleeting glimpses of God in the secular sphere give way to a fuller comprehension of Him in the divine sphere.

(336 words)

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List of short titles/ cue titles

The Bible: Authorized Version (Bible)

The Booke of common prayer, and administration of the sacraments. And other rites and ceremonies of the Church of England (BCP)

The Loeb Classical Library Series (*Loeb*) – NB. Not all Herrick’s classical sources are available in Loeb translations, see bibliography.

The Oxford Classical Dictionary (*OCD*)

The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church (*ODCC*)

The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography online (*ODNB*)

The Oxford English Dictionary online (*OED*)

The Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetry and Poetics (*Princeton Encyclopaedia*)

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Introduction

Literature has tended to be cut from the moorings of its authorial origins under the influential literary criticism of the past forty years. My thesis is an attempt to re-moor a work of literature to its authorial origins; particularly a work of literature in which the author-poet's self-referential markers are so overtly and persistently present as is the case in *Hesperides* and *His Noble Numbers*.¹ This study aims to recover the notion that a poem and its poet are indivisible, that poetry is an essential part of what poets do in constituting their identity, and that poetry cannot exist without the author's intention to write poetry in a particular context, under particular conditions and with a particular outcome in mind.

When one reads *Hesperides* one is made aware of a figure, a presence if you will, with an engaged life, who has directed the material one reads in such a way as to make one aware of his existence, and whose poetic conduct cannot be understood without reference to that life, without ever being identical with it. In each of the chapters which follow, I shall attempt to show, by focussing on four main aspects of Herrick's life in turn, how and why he is able to make us aware of his presence as an agent shaping and directing his work. Taken together, these chapters will provide a holistic understanding of Herrick's poetic project which helps to make sense of much that has been misunderstood about him and his work.

In the first chapter, I shall sketch Robert Herrick's biography briefly, before proceeding to discuss the autobiographical elements in *Hesperides*. Even though it remains the richest primary source of biographical details we possess about Herrick to this day, however, I shall argue that *Hesperides* is not an autobiography. The chronology of Herrick's life is disrupted to a great extent by the arrangement of his poems. The most that can be said about *Hesperides* is that it is a manifestation of Herrick's conduct as a poet, and therefore contains autobiographical traces, while always remaining a fictional

¹ Combined under the title *Hesperides*, and hereafter both subsumed under the one title in my discussion, except when I am explicitly referring to *Noble Numbers*. References to specific poems in this thesis provide the poem number in J. Max Patrick's 1968 Norton edition (e.g. H-1), followed by the page number in L.C. Martin's 1956 Clarendon edition (e.g. 5), and followed by the line number in the poem, when appropriate. Each reference is separated by the slash/virgule, as in the following example: "*The Argument of his Book*", (H-1 / 5 / 1-2).

construct. Nevertheless, it is between the interstices of fact and fiction that Herrick is able to present himself both as what kind of person and poet he understands himself to be, and as what kind of person and poet he aspires to be. By rejecting the notion that *Hesperides* is autobiographical, one can move away from making simple, reductive and misleading one-to-one equivalences between the “real Herrick” and his Hesperidean persona.

In the second chapter I shall argue that Herrick’s poetic practices – his deployment of specific genres and not of others, his chosen conventions for ordering a collection of miscellaneous poems, and his adoption of certain conventional poetic stances – are manifestations of his poetic conduct. They enable him to declare who he understands himself to be and how he wants himself to be understood as a poet. Genre theory is a particularly revelatory entry point to Herrick’s self-presentation, because genres constitute a mutually comprehensible code of communication between poet and reader. However, genres constantly shift and change, which requires that we study the constituent genres of *Hesperides* within their seventeenth century context, and within what we know about Herrick’s biographical context, as far as is possible. On their own, genres provide the reader with minimal understanding about what the poet is attempting to say. As such, genres cannot be considered apart from the contexts and purposes in which they are used.

In a second, related, section of Chapter 2, I shall outline the ways in which Herrick guides his reader through *Hesperides*, using generic signals, literary conventions and a persona who is a poet grappling with the challenges of creating such a large work. At the same time, Herrick creates a sense of place (the partly-mythological, partly-allegorical Hesperidean isles) and a sense of time passing (the poet gets older, for example, and historical events intrude) to heighten the impression that he and the reader have both embarked on a poetic journey towards an increasingly distinctive and defined destination. The destination is not only the end of the work, but also the point at which Herrick fulfils his aspirations as a laureate poet, and is acknowledged as such by the reader.

In the third chapter, I shall discuss Herrick’s self-understanding as a Renaissance humanist inheritor of the classical tradition. Having lost the thoroughgoing classical education of the Renaissance, modern critics are wont to either understate or overstate the extent to which poets like Herrick modelled themselves on their classical predecessors. I

shall attempt to recoup something of the Renaissance humanist grammar school education which would have had a formative influence on Herrick. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge Herrick's agency in adapting the classical tradition to his own purposes. For example, Herrick adopts a three-part classical persona which includes, firstly, poetic and autobiographical equivalences between himself and his favourite classical poets, especially Ovid and Horace. Secondly, Herrick presents himself as conducting himself like a Roman in a general sense, which both can and cannot be linked to the conduct of his classical poetic forebears, but is not reliant on any one poet in particular. Thirdly, Herrick's classical self-presentation extends into the realm of Roman mythology, where he appropriates the figure of Hercules in order to suggest something about his ability as a poet to control and order his work, bringing the contradictions of both his autobiographical self and his Hesperidean persona together and reconciling them to one another.

In the fourth and final chapter, I turn to Herrick's religious self-presentation. As with Herrick's classicism, modern critics no longer have access to the pervasive and all-encompassing Christianity of Herrick's age. The fact that Herrick does not draw overt attention to his career as a priest in his self-presentation in *Hesperides*, as well as the fact that the authorial figure of Herrick is almost completely absent from *Noble Numbers*, has meant that critics have mistakenly assumed that *Hesperides* is a secular work of "humane" poetry and that *Noble Numbers* is a separate religious work of "divine" poetry. Yet if we proceed from the understanding that Herrick conducted himself as a Christian throughout his life – a Christian with a fondness for classical literature, no doubt – then we can reintegrate what has misguidedly atomised the two works, and resolve some of the tensions in Herrick's self-presentation which have troubled literary critics to this day.

CHAPTER ONE: The ‘real Herrick’ and the ‘Hesperidean Herrick’

Hesperides and *Noble Numbers* have puzzled readers and critics for more than three centuries, not least because the two books provide tantalising glimpses of the real-life Robert Herrick woven into the 1404 poems in the collection. This chapter first seeks to outline what we learn about, or have confirmed for us, about Herrick’s life in *Hesperides*, and then how Herrick’s self-presentation – an amalgamation of autobiographical fact and imaginative fiction – lends shape to *Hesperides*.

The basic facts of Herrick’s life are easily established. He was baptised on 24 August 1591 in St Vedast’s Church, Foster Lane, south Cheapside, Westminster. When Herrick was one year old, his father Nicholas allegedly fell, “or did throw himselfe forthe of a garret window ... wherby he did kill and destroye himselfe” on 9 November 1592 (*ODNB*). Robert was adopted by his uncle, William Herrick, a prosperous London goldsmith. At the age of sixteen, Robert was apprenticed to William for ten years. Upon his coming-of-age at twenty one, Robert was legally entitled to his inheritance, at which point he left his uncle’s business to pursue his university education at St John’s College, Cambridge. Herrick graduated with his BA in April 1617 (aged twenty five) and his MA in Law three years later. He was ordained in 1623, by which time he had already begun to build a literary reputation for himself. Among Herrick’s patrons George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham (James I’s and Charles I’s favourite) was the most prominent. Herrick served as Buckingham’s chaplain before, during, and after the disastrous naval and military expedition led by the Duke to relieve the besieged Huguenots on the Île de Ré in 1627. Buckingham’s spectacular failure, combined with a general hatred of him among the populace, led to his assassination in 1628. Herrick was subsequently granted the living of Dean Prior, a Devonshire parish, by Charles I in 1629. For the next seventeen years, Herrick ministered to his parishioners in Devon, while also engaging in some welcome excursions to London to visit friends – in one documented case without the permission of his ecclesiastical superior. There is also somewhat uncertain evidence that he fathered an illegitimate child in early 1640. What we know for certain is that Herrick never married. He was evicted from Dean Prior by victorious Parliamentary forces in early 1646, having been loyal to the soon-to-be-deposed Charles I. He prepared

Hesperides and *Noble Numbers* in London, and published this combined collection of his life's work in January 1648, aged fifty six. According to T.G.S. Cain, "*Hesperides* was and remains the only effort by an important English poet to publish his entire *oeuvre* in one organized collection" (*ODNB*). Very little is known about Herrick's life in the years subsequent to the publication of *Hesperides*, and only one extant poem antedates 1648.² In all probability he lived in London during the *interregnum*, and was dependent on the kindness of his family, friends and former patrons.³ Following the restoration of Charles II in May 1660, Herrick petitioned the King to be reinstated as vicar of Dean Prior. His wish was granted, and for the next thirteen years Herrick lived at Dean Prior, assisted in his duties by a succession of curates upon whom Herrick became increasingly dependent in his old age. He was buried at the church of St. George the Martyr in Dean Prior on 15 October 1674 at the age of eighty three.⁴

Herrick's life, as sketched out briefly above, finds ample expression in *Hesperides*. Autobiographical poems are placed more-or-less chronologically among the first hundred poems in the collection with the speaker presented as a greying country-dwelling bachelor, much as the more-than-forty year-old Herrick was in Devonshire during the 1630s and 1640s. It is almost as if Herrick commences *Hesperides* within the epic literary convention of starting the narrative *in medias res*, as demonstrated by the early examples of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and maintained in Virgil's *Aeneid*, Dante's "Inferno" in *The Divine Comedy*, and Milton's *Paradise Lost*.⁵ For example, in the second poem in the collection, the speaker addresses his muse from a rural setting:

But for the Court, the Country wit
Is despicable unto it.
Stay then at home, and doe not goe
Or flie abroad to seeke for woe. ("*To his Muse*" H-2 / 5 / 17-20)

² See "The New Charon, Upon the death of Henry Lord Hastings", first published in *Lachrymae Musarum* (1650), and also in Patrick / Martin (S-2 / 416).

³ For Herrick's likely patrons during this difficult time, see T.G.S. Cain, "Herrick's 'Christmas Carol': A New Poem, and its Implications for Patronage", *English Literary Renaissance*, 29 (1999), 147-53.

⁴ Biographical information for this brief sketch is provided by F.W. Moorman (1910), George Walton Scott (1974); and T.G.S. Cain (*ODNB*) and online at http://herrick.ncl.ac.uk/Biography_of_Robert_Herrick_by_Tom_Cain.htm.

⁵ For more on Herrick's self-presentation as constituted by genre, including *Hesperides* as epic, see Chapter 2 of this thesis.

His late middle-agedness is revealed fourteen poems into the collection, when the speaker refers to his “gray haire” (H-14 / 9 / 3) and, a few poems later, to his declining libido:

Old I am, and cannot do
That I was accustom'd to. (H-19 / 10 / 3-4)⁶

His bachelorhood is confirmed in another early poem, “*His Answer to a Question*”:

SOME would know
Why I so
Long still doe tarry,
And ask why
Here that I
Live, and not marry? (H-26 / 12 / 1-6)

Meanwhile, the figure lives with “*No Spouse, but a Sister*”, much as Herrick lived with his sister-in-law, Elizabeth, from when they arrived in Devonshire together in 1630 until her death in 1643, during which time she kept house for him (H-31 / 13).⁷ Elizabeth’s presence is felt again, a short while later, except that the poem is spoken at her funeral (H-72 / 23).

In between these two poems on Elizabeth, Herrick refers to himself as living in Devon. “*Discontents in Devon*” reveals his ambivalent emotions about his rural home:

MORE discontents I never had
Since I was born, then here;
Where I have been, and still am sad,
In this dull *Devon-shire*.
Yet justly too I must confesse;
I ne’er invented such

⁶ See also the first of many poems entitled “*On himself*”, placed twenty two poems later, in which he describes himself as “old”, although his libido has perked up somewhat (H-43 / 17). Although a forty year old may not be considered “old” according to average life expectancies in the modern world, the primitive nature of seventeenth century medicine and hygiene means that we ought to consider Herrick’s forty-years-plus as such.

⁷ Herrick cared for his younger brother William’s dependants following William’s death in November 1630. When Herrick moved to Devonshire shortly thereafter, his brother’s widow, Elizabeth, together with her two sons, William and Robert, went with him (Cain, <http://herrick.ncl.ac.uk>)

Ennobled numbers for the Presse,
Then where I loath'd so much. (H-51 / 19)

His “discontents” are partly explained by the subsequent poem, “*To his Paternall Countrey*”, in which Herrick presents himself as an exile with no hope of returning home to his birthplace before his death:

O EARTH! Earth! Earth heare thou my voice, and be
Loving, and gentle for to cover me:
Banish'd from thee I live; ne'r to return,
Unlesse thou giv'st my small Remains an Urne. (H-52 / 19)⁸

The tantalising connections between Herrick and his literary persona continue in “*His request to Julia*”. The speaker is planning to print his poetry, but, with impending old age weighing on his mind, is uncertain whether he will live to see his book printed:

JULIA, if I chance to die
Ere I print my Poetry;
I most humbly thee desire
To commit it to the fire:
Better 'twere my Book were dead,
Then to live not perfected. (H-59 / 21)⁹

Three-dozen poems later, “*TO THE KING, Upon his coming with his Army into the West*” not only continues to locate the speaker in Devonshire again, but can be dated to the summer of 1644, during the Civil War, when Charles stayed in Exeter (about a day's ride away from Dean Prior) for a short while before marching on to Cornwall (H-77 / 25).¹⁰ The dating of this poem is from the same general period of Herrick's life as the 1643 date of Elizabeth's death (see H-72 / 23), and the 1642 date of Queen Henrietta

⁸ This poem recalls the conventional Roman inscription on tombstones, “*Sit tibi terra levis*” [trans. May the earth rest lightly on you], abbreviated as STTL. See Ben Jonson's epitaph “*On my first daughter*” in Ian Donaldson (Ed.), *Ben Jonson* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 229.

⁹ Virgil's deathbed wish to have his unfinished epic, *The Aeneid*, burned set the precedent for the epic convention whereby poets express their desire for their works to be destroyed.

¹⁰ See Patrick, note 1, p. 37.

Maria's departure for the Continent to seek help for Charles I's cause in the Civil War (see H-79 / 26).

The early poems in *Hesperides* continue to read like a linear autobiographical narrative of Herrick's own life during the 1630s and 1640s due to the placement of his farewell poem, "*To Dean-bourn, a rude River in Devon, by which sometimes he lived*", shortly after the poems on Charles and Maria:

DEAN – BOURN, farewell; I never look to see
Deane, or thy warty incivility.
 Thy rockie bottome, that doth teare thy streames,
 And makes them frantick, ev'n to all extreames;
 To my content, I never should behold,
 Were thy streames silver, and thy rocks all gold.
 Rockie thou art; and rockie we discover
 Thy men; and rockie are thy wayes all over.
 O men, O manners; Now and ever knowne
 To be a *Rockie Generation!*
 A people currish; churlish as the seas;
 And rude (almost) as rudest Salvages
 With whom I did, and may re-sojourne when
 Rockes turn to Rivers, Rivers turn to Men. (H-86 / 29)

Two poems placed in proximity to one another, "*His Cavalier*" (H-90 / 30) and "*Duty to Tyrants*" (H-97 / 32), maintain the persona's concern with the ongoing events of the Civil War. The former is a poem of praise to an idealised Royalist soldier, while the latter poem is a stern warning to the victorious forces opposing the King to "Touch not the Tyrant; Let the Gods alone/ To strike him dead, that but usurps a Throne" (5-6). "*Duty to Tyrants*" appears to allude to the King's capture and house arrest from May 1646 until January 1649, when the King was executed.¹¹

Finally, as one nears the hundredth poem in *Hesperides*, the persona turns his attention towards his finished book's reception, with poems addressed "*To the generous Reader*" (H-95 / 32) and "*To Criticks*" (H-96 / 32). These poems anticipate how his readers might respond to his book, much as Herrick would have pondered the same questions throughout 1647 as he prepared his book for publication. Thus, these poems' placement

¹¹ Herrick would not have known about the execution at the time *Hesperides* was published in January 1648, but he may already have begun to fear the worst.

here maintains the linear chronological propulsion of Herrick's autobiographical self-presentation.

As plausible as Herrick's autobiographical self-presentation might seem in these early poems, however, a significant number of other poems disrupt the sense of sequential autobiographical arrangement. In beginning his self-presentation *in medias res*, but then abandoning chronology and melding fact and fiction shortly thereafter, Herrick follows Horace's advice in *Ars Poetica* (148-52). Firstly, the plethora of poems to sundry mistresses – Julia, Perilla, Anthea and others – do not reflect the reality of Herrick's Devonshire years.¹² There is no way that a middle-aged country parson would have kept such a multitude of mistresses at his beck and call. We can safely say that these poems are acts of imaginative fancy, or fantasy. Secondly, the poem “*To the reverend shade of his religious Father*” (H-82 / 27), in which Herrick visits his father's grave in London, is presumed by John Creaser to have been shortly before or after the 1627 Île de Rhé expedition, and intrudes into the chronological scheme before the speaker has bid his bitter farewell to Dean-bourn (H-86 / 29).¹³ Thirdly, there is a sense in which “*Delight in Disorder*”, which is placed immediately after “*To the reverend shade of his religious Father*”, confirms that the hitherto autobiographical, chronological equivalences between *Hesperides*' persona and Herrick the poet can no longer be sustained. Read as a metaphor for *Hesperides*' poetic arrangement, and placed next to one of the poems that create disorder in the collection's early chronological patterning, “*Delight in Disorder*” is crucial to our understanding of the principle behind Herrick's self-presentational strategy throughout the remainder of the work:

A SWEET disorder in the dresse
Kindles in cloathes a wantonnesse:
A Lawne about the shoulders thrown
Into a fine distraction:
An erring Lace, which here and there
Enthralls the Crimson Stomacher:
A Cuffe neglectfull, and thereby

¹² There are thirty two such poems within *Hesperides*' first 100 poems, which outnumber the so-called autobiographical poems discussed above by approximately two to one.

¹³ Creaser provides the most recent and the most comprehensive list of dateable Herrick poems in a “Schedule” appended to his article, “‘Times trans-shifting:’ *Chronology and the Misshaping of Herrick*”, *English Literary Renaissance*, 39.1 (2009), 163-196. The “Schedule” can be found on p.190-6.

Ribbands to flow confusedly:
 A winning wave (deserving Note)
 In the tempestuous petticoate:
 A carelesse shooe-string, in whose tye
 I see a wilde civility:
 Do more bewitch me than when Art
 Is too precise in every part. (H-83 / 28)

It is not long before Herrick's "Art" – or the artful chronological arrangement of autobiographical poems, at any rate – begins to take on a "SWEET disorder", as their placement no longer conforms to autobiographical chronology after the first 100 poems. For example, "A Country life: to his Brother, Master Thomas Herrick" (H-106 / 34) can be dated to around 1610 when Thomas left London to become a farmer, and its placing therefore further destabilises the sense that Herrick has been presenting an autobiographical persona. As one continues to read *Hesperides*, the placement of poems that we can reliably place by composition date or by geographical location swing forwards and backwards, with little or no regard for chronology. For example, we find a poem set at Stanes on the Thames which probably predates 1630 (H-123 / 43), then a poem about a wayward Devonshire parishioner which probably postdates 1630 (H-126 / 44), then a 1610-13 poem to a cousin (H-130 / 46), then a poem which might refer to Herrick's 1640 brush with officialdom over an unsanctioned visit to London (H-136 / 48), then a poem to the Bishop of Lincoln, John Williams, comforting him during his imprisonment sometime between 1637-40 (H-146A / 52), then a 1618 epithalamion (H-149A / 53).

Despite the disordering of autobiographical chronology that begins in earnest after about 100 poems in *Hesperides*, at least two critics have tried to argue that the collection as a whole is organised according to Herrick's life in Devonshire and then his return to London in 1646. For example, John L. Kimmey has identified an "exile-return pattern" (1971: 231) in which "the first half of *Hesperides* focuses principally on Devon and the second places greater emphasis on London" (233). Ann Coiro concludes her study of *Hesperides* with the statement that "Herrick deliberately arranges the volume to give the impression that it suggests his own life," and, like Kimmey, identifies the middle of *Hesperides* as the point at which Herrick turns from poems about the country to poems

about the city (1988: 207). Coiro also points to a generic shift within *Hesperides* to bolster her autobiographical argument:

As the sententious epigrams gradually replace the ceremonial lyrics in *Hesperides*, Herrick seems to be portraying a shift in his own mind, a shift in symbolic space, from Devon to London, and a shift in purpose, from a singer of country festivals and pretty girls to a serious but futile role as a voice of sense in a senseless time. (210)

For his part, Kimmey points out that Herrick is on hand to welcome the King to Devon in “TO THE KING, Upon his coming with his Army into the West” at the beginning of the collection (H-77 / 25), but has moved back to London towards the end of the collection, when he writes a poem “TO THE KING, *Upon his welcome to Hampton-Court*” (H-961 / 300). Coiro also points out the link between two poems, “*To Dean-bourn*” (H-86 / 29) near the beginning of the collection, and “*His returne to London*” (H-713 / 242) towards the end, which set up a distinction between Herrick’s revulsion for Devonshire scenery and its “currish; churlish” people on the one hand (11), and his admiration for the civilised “*Customes*” of Londoners on the other (10). The opposition is resolved by Herrick’s return to his “blest place of my Nativitie” (4), and his vow never to return to Devonshire, “For, rather than I’le to the West return,/ Ile beg of thee first here to have mine Urn” (17-18). Setting aside Herrick’s eventual return to Devonshire thirteen years after the publication of *Hesperides*, the late placement of “*His returne to London*” within *Hesperides* seems to agree with the chronology of Herrick’s life.

However, Kimmey and Coiro’s claims do not account for the simultaneous destabilisation of Herrick’s autobiographical chronology within the collection. Their arguments place too much stock on the arrangement of only a handful of poems. What is more, the all-important placement of “*His returne to London*” soon after the midpoint of the volume is undermined by the non-chronological placement of other autobiographical poems both before and after it. For example, about 250 poems before “*His returne to London*”, and before the middle of *Hesperides* where Herrick supposedly begins to turn from poems about the country to poems about the city, we encounter his exhortation to himself to “COME, leave this loathed Country-life, and then/ Grow up to be a Roman

Citizen” (“*Upon himself*”, H-456 / 171). A hundred poems after “*Upon himselfe*”, he seems to have undergone a change of heart and expresses “*His content in the Country*” (H-552 / 200) once again. Then, despite Herrick’s supposed “*returne to London*” at H-713, he thereafter includes three poems that comment on events in the West Country during the Civil War. These poems are “*To Sir John Berkley, Governour of Exeter*” (H-745 / 251), “*To Prince Charles upon his coming to Exeter*” (H-756 / 254) and “*To the Lord Hopton, on his fight in Cornwall*” (H-1002 / 310). One could argue that the autobiographical persona can still comment on the Civil War from London, but in which case we would expect the second poem to be entitled “*To Prince Charles upon his going to Exeter*”. A poem “*Upon Mudge*” (H-965 / 301) is also placed after Herrick’s supposed return to London, even though Mudge is known to have been a Dean Prior parishioner (Cain, <http://herrick.ncl.ac.uk>).¹⁴ Furthermore, Herrick’s visit “*To his peculiar friend Master John Wicks*” (H-1056 / 321) in the neighbouring Devonshire parish of Shirwell (where Weekes, or Wicks as Herrick spells it, was vicar) is also placed late in the collection. Having been evicted from Dean Prior in 1646, Herrick may have made Weekes his first port-of-call before his return to London, hence the statement that,

SINCE shed or Cottage I have none,
I sing the more, that thou hast one;
To whose glad threshold, and free door
I may a Poet come, though poor (1-4).

However, Herrick has yet to reach London, which further undermines the earlier placement of “*His returne to London*”. Finally, “*His Tears to Thamasis*” – which John Creaser identifies as a 1630 poem written on Herrick’s departure from London¹⁵ – is also placed very late in the collection (H-1028 / 315).¹⁶ These exceptions show the ill-advisedness of trying to find a single all-encompassing organising principle within *Hesperides*. As Randall Ingram notes, “No solution so far fits every poem of *Hesperides*

¹⁴ According to Cain, Mudge shared the house with Herrick when Herrick returned to Dean Prior after Charles II’s restoration to the throne.

¹⁵ See Creaser’s “Schedule” (2009: 190-6).

¹⁶ One could argue that Herrick arranged this poem retrospectively to reflect his persona’s anticipation of death as the end of the work approaches (which is also suggested in poems such as “*His returne to London*”, “*His charge to Julia at his death*” (H-627 / 219) and “*His last request to Julia*” (H-1095 / 329)), even though Herrick lived another twenty six years after his book was published.

into one plan, so troublesome loose ends always remain to frustrate the critic” (1998: 141). What is clear is that a distinction needs to be drawn between the ‘real Herrick’ and the ‘Hesperidean Herrick’, although the points at which the two ‘Herricks’ converge or diverge is not always possible to identify.¹⁷ Herrick’s self-presentation – part-fact, part-fiction – is elusive and prevents the reader from reducing the Hesperidean Herrick to an exact and unambivalent equivalence with the real Herrick.

Nevertheless, there are several ways in which Herrick invites us to read *Hesperides* autobiographically. The first way, which I have outlined in detail above, is to create the impression within the first 100 poems that *Hesperides* is a chronologically-arranged, autobiographical representation of Herrick. It should also be noted that Herrick attempts to foreground his presence strongly within the last 100 poems of the collection. Although the autobiographical poems are not arranged chronologically within these last poems, this section includes six poems entitled “*On himselfe*” which marks a steep increase from the two in the previous 100 poems.¹⁸ *Hesperides* contains twenty six “*On himselfe*” poems altogether, meaning that nearly one-fifth of these poems are concentrated in the last 100 poems of *Hesperides*. In the majority of the poems “*On himselfe*” in these last poems, Herrick indicates in one way or another that the end of his work is approaching. There is a sense in which Herrick foregrounds himself at the beginning and end of *Hesperides* because these are the points at which he can make the strongest and most lasting impression on his reader.

A second way in which we are invited to read *Hesperides* autobiographically is through Herrick’s fleeting references to his physical characteristics. For example, he refers to “my curls” in three poems, one near the beginning of *Hesperides* (“*The Vine*”, H-41 / 16 / 14), one in the middle (“*The bad season makes the Poet sad*”, H-612 / 214 /

¹⁷ Indeed, in an article published only a year after he made his “exile-return pattern” argument, Kimmey seems to have modified his earlier opinion:

Although Herrick directs poems to friends, patrons, and kinsmen, mentions his daily life in Devon and London, and alludes to the Civil War, he is not fundamentally autobiographical. These pieces constitute part of the purpose and structure of *Hesperides*, which concerns a person who bears the poet’s name but is not necessarily identified with him ... Thus the unity of the book is based on this poet-persona and not on the author’s own life, very little of which is used except where it helps to make more meaningful the themes in his work. (1971: 255-6)

¹⁸ See H-1082 / 327, H-1088 / 328, H-1091 / 328, H-1096 / 329, H-1124 / 334 and H-1128 / 335.

11), and one near the end (“*On Himself*”, H-1128 / 335 / 2). Herrick’s curly hair is corroborated by the figure in the frontispiece engraving by William Marshall, which several critics agree is at the very least a partial depiction of Herrick (see page 13).¹⁹

Meanwhile, another physical idiosyncrasy Herrick discloses in *Hesperides* is his short-sightedness. The poem in question is entitled “*Upon himself*”:

MOP-EY’D I am, as some have said,
 Because I’ve liv’d so long a maid:
 But grant that I sho’d wedded be,
 Sho’d I a jot the better see?
 No, I sho’d think, that Marriage might,
 Rather than mend, put out the light. (H-235 / 97)

According to the *OED*, “mop-eyed” means “short-sighted” in a regional dialect. Granted, this poem is more a statement against marriage than a revelation about his eyesight, while its syntax casts doubt on whether Herrick really is short-sighted, or whether his friends say he is in order to mock his reluctance to marry.²⁰ Although Herrick imparts no information about the circumstances under which he became “MOP-EY’D”, Mary Thomas Crane’s account of the difficult and dangerous conditions under which Herrick would have worked as a goldsmith’s apprentice provides grounds for the supposition that Herrick’s eyesight could have been damaged during his early- to mid-teens. Crane refers to seventeenth century goldsmith’s guild records where provision is made for “those who by fire and the smoke of quicksilver have lost their sight” (1990/1: 26). It may well be that Herrick’s eyes were thus damaged during his apprenticeship, resulting in Herrick’s myopic vision which manifests itself in the many *Hesperides* poems that relish in the detail of tiny objects.²¹

¹⁹ Herrick critics are by no means unanimously agreed on this point, however. For arguments in favour of the frontispiece being an accurate likeness to Herrick, see Norman K. Farmer (1978: 20-8), Avon Jack Murphy (1978: 53-4) and Ann Coiro (1988: 123). For arguments in favour of the frontispiece being a partial likeness see Cain (*ODNB*). Skeptical views of any correspondences between Herrick and the frontispiece include J. Max Patrick (1968: 7) and Stephen Dobranski (2005: 161-2), who both argue that the frontispiece is a generalised conventional depiction of a poet.

²⁰ The reference to short-sightedness may also be an oblique reference to the old wives’ tale which links masturbation to blindness.

²¹ See also “*Upon his eye-sight failing him*” (H-482 / 180). There is scope for a paper to be written on the implications of visual perspective in Herrick’s poetry. References to the eyes, or to seeing, can be found in over a hundred poems. Herrick also seems fascinated by other people’s eyes, from the beauty of Dianeme’s

Yet another of Herrick's physical idiosyncrasies we learn about in *Hesperides* is his missing finger. The poem in which he refers to it is placed at the exact centre of *Hesperides*, a position which demands attention in any authorially-arranged poetic collection from the period:

Upon the losse of his Finger

ONE of the five straight branches of my hand
Is lopt already; and the rest but stand
Expecting when to fall: which soon will be;
First dyes the Leafe, the Bough next, next the Tree. (H-565 / 203)²²

Like with Herrick's eyesight, this poem alluding to Herrick's physical characteristics does not so much spell out biographical information as stamp the author's individuality onto his work.

In much the same way that artists and craftsmen preserve intellectual ownership of their productions against unscrupulous hacks and counterfeiters by leaving traces of their singularity embedded within their work, Herrick demonstrates his concern with maintaining the authorial integrity of his collection in the cross-over between metaphors of fatherhood and assaying gold in "*Upon his Verses*":

WHAT off-spring other men have got,
The how, the where, when, I question not.
These are the Children I have left;
Adopted some; none got by theft.
But all are toucht (like lawfull plate)
And no Verse illegitimate. (H-681 / 236)

"two eyes/ Which Star-like sparkle in their skies" (H-160 / 61 / 1-2), to the foulness of "OLD Widow *Shopter*" who "when so ere she cryes,/ Lets drip a certain Gravie from her eyes" (H-1107 / 331 / 1-2).

²² Herrick's contemporary, Thomas Randolph (1605-1635), also lost a finger which occasioned a poem on the subject.

Fig. 1: Frontispiece engraving, *Hesperides* (1648)



As Leah S. Marcus has stated with reference to seventeenth century notions of authorial ownership:

We are accustomed to coming at the seventeenth century from the perspective of the late twentieth, in which an author's possession of the work, his or her marking of it throughout with the stamp of authorial individuality, seems a self-evident feature of literary composition. That was by no means the case in Herrick's own era. His verses circulated widely in manuscript and were sometimes attributed to him in manuscript miscellanies, but many of the poems that would later be incorporated into *Hesperides* made their publishing debut in anonymous anthologies, in which any sense of his authorship was lost. (1995: 173)

For Herrick, leaving his poems to posterity is a risky undertaking which necessitates the subtle encoding of his identity within individual poems and across the collection as a whole.²³

The third way in which Herrick invites us to read *Hesperides* autobiographically is by inscribing his name twenty times within the work, beginning with "To Anthea" (H-22 / 11), concluding *Hesperides* with "His last request to Julia" (H-1095 / 329), and also featuring once in *His Noble Numbers* ("The Recompence", N-112 / 371). As we would expect with Herrick's self-presentation, his name does not only feature in real-life situations, such as the sequestration of his living during the Civil War in "The Recompence", but also in imaginary situations, such as his relationships with his mistresses, Anthea and Julia. Whether they are autobiographical or fictional, the placement of these self-naming poems throughout the collection serves to remind the reader at regular intervals of the agency Herrick has exercised in the creation of the work. The two mistress poems, one to Anthea placed at the beginning of the sequence, and one to Julia placed at the end, reinforce the point about the poet's creative agency by conversely envisioning the poet's death and, with it, the end of his work:

²³ Randall Ingram also believes that, "The poetry of *Hesperides* is overwhelmingly concerned with its own survival" (1998: 128), mainly because "print did not necessarily confer status or long life, especially to lyric poetry" (131). Whereas manuscript miscellanies were compiled with the intention to be preserved, early modern printed works were considered to be cheap and disposable. See Elizabeth Eisenstein (1979: 114-5) and Arthur F. Marotti (1995: 227), cited in Ingram's notes 12 and 13, p.145.

So three in one small plat of ground shall ly,
Anthea, Herrick, and his Poetry. (“*To Anthea*”, 9-10)

when thy *Herrick* dyes,
 Claspe thou his Book, then close thou up his Eyes.
 (“*His last request to Julia*”, 7-8)

The fourth way in which Herrick invites us to read *Hesperides* autobiographically is in the twenty six poems entitled “*On himselfe*” or “*Upon himselfe*” which are spread more-or-less evenly throughout the collection. Yet only five of these poems are straightforwardly autobiographical in that they reflect what we know the real Herrick either did or did not do during his lifetime. Of these poems, three proclaim the poet’s refusal to marry, a fourth announces his intention to return to London, while a fifth declares his desire to be buried among his ancestors in London.²⁴ The bulk of the other poems “*On himselfe*” disclose the Hesperidean Herrick’s moods, which cannot be affixed to any identifiable action, or lack of action, on the real Herrick’s part. Thus, the poems “*On himselfe*” portray Herrick as variously lovesick (H-157 / 60), weary (H-306 / 123), grief-stricken (H-332 / 131), reluctantly in love (H-406 / 155), oscillating between love’s extremes once more (H-915 / 290), grief-stricken again (H-952 / 298, H-954 / 298), and weary once more (H-1088 / 328). Although these poems may not be real in the sense that they state facts about Herrick’s life, they are nevertheless realistic in the way they represent the Hesperidean Herrick’s cyclical changes of mood over time. Ann Coiro is alert to psychological aspects of Herrick’s self-presentation when she writes, “the supreme accomplishment of *Hesperides* is its portrayal of the poet’s mind” (1988: 169).²⁵ F.W. Moorman has characterised Herrick as “a poet of moods” (1910: 97). Indeed, Herrick’s self-presentation in *Hesperides* might be described more fruitfully as psychobiographical, rather than autobiographical.²⁶

²⁴ See H-235 / 97, H-407 / 155, H-490 / 182, H-456 / 171, and H-860 / 278 respectively.

²⁵ Michael Drayton provides a possible precedent for Herrick when he proposes in the prefatory poem to his sonnet sequence, *Idea*, that “*My Verse is the true image of my Mind*” (in Coiro 1988: 93-4).

²⁶ Psychoanalytical studies of Herrick have been pursued by Roger B. Rollin (1978: 3-11 and 1994: 41-60). The onomastic similarities between Herrick’s mother, Julian, and his most-frequently evoked mistress, Julia, could be the starting point for an exploration of the Freudian possibilities surrounding the figure of the absent mother in *Hesperides*. See “*Julia Herrick*” in “*His Tears to Thamasys*” (H-1028 / 315 / 15-16).

Yet here, too, we ought to be wary of making claims about the ‘real Herrick’ because, as he reminds us in the epigram at the end of *Hesperides*, his persona is a fictional construct, not a factual one:

To his Book’s end this last line he’d have plac’t,
Jocond his Muse was; but his Life was chast. (H-1130 / 335)

Whereas most readers would quickly be able to fix an autobiographical collection into a single coherent conceptual framework, a collection which both reflects and does not reflect the actual conditions of the poet’s life and times presents a greater conceptual challenge. If Herrick’s self-presentation were straightforwardly autobiographical, the reader’s need to read his poems would be met after a brief encounter with the work. Instead, the reader is provided with a literary experience which Ingram calls “multiply coherent, permitting multiple readers to participate in the making of multiple patterns” (1998: 144). Thus, the attention and interest of readers is retained for longer, and the longevity of Herrick’s poetry collection is secured.

Herrick’s persona is presented to us from multiple perspectives, and performs multiple roles which the poet is under no obligation to reconcile with one another but which combine to create the impression of a life that has been richly and fully lived. The poems “*On himselfe*” represent a microcosmic summary of these roles, which play out in the far larger ambit of the collection as a whole. Firstly, some of these roles are autobiographical, the most pervasive of which is the poet, whose very name, “Herrick”, sounds like the genre he has achieved the most renown for both during and after his lifetime, “lyric” (see the connection which Herrick makes himself in H-366 / 143 / 3-4). I discuss Herrick’s self-presentation as a poet in the next chapter. Secondly, some Herrickean roles are fictional; for example, the ageing lover “who can twine/ ’Bout a Virgin like a Vine” (H-43 / 17 / 3-4). Yet even this role is conceived in terms of the classical tradition, which forms another important pillar in how Herrick understands himself and in turn wants his reader to understand him. I shall discuss Herrick’s classical self-presentation in Chapter 3. Finally, some roles lie in-between fact and fiction, such as

the “WEARIED Pilgrim” who has “wandred here/ Twice five and twenty (bate me but one yeer)” (H-1088 / 328 / 1-2).²⁷ Herrick’s use of the pilgrim self-presentation is a common Christian metaphor for man’s spiritual journey and need not literally connote a pilgrim or a pilgrimage. I shall discuss Herrick’s self-understanding as a Christian, including his role as a priest, in the fourth and final chapter.

²⁷ If literally true, this poem was written when Herrick was forty nine years old, in 1640.

CHAPTER TWO: Herrick's self-presentation as a poet

It is my contention in this chapter that Herrick's poetic practices – his deployment of specific genres and not of others, his chosen conventions for ordering a collection of miscellaneous poems, and his adoption of certain conventional poetic stances – are manifestations of his poetic conduct. They enable him to declare who he understands himself to be and how he wants himself to be understood.

Genre theory has fallen from grace over the course of the twentieth century, squeezed out by the reader-focussed New Criticism on the one hand and the literary instrumentalism of New Historicism on the other. The main failing of genre theory as it has been perceived in recent times is the limitation it imposes on both the writer to 'be original', and on the readers to bring their 'original' interpretations to bear to the text. But Rosalie Colie advocates a reappraisal of the value of genre theory, arguing that a rigid system of genres "never existed in practice and barely even in theory" (1973: 114). As far as Colie is concerned, genre theory constitutes a set of codes which enables communication between the writer and the reader:

By looking at Renaissance notions of genre and generic system, I hope to convey also some of the social importance of generic systems for writers as members of a profession, a profession which changed over time but maintained a consensus of values which – however different specific opinions were at different times and in different places – offered a ready code of communication both among professionals and to their audiences. (8)

The implications of Colie's argument for this study on Herrick's self-presentation is that Herrick's use of genre can communicate to us – his readers – various ways in which he understands himself as a poet, and the ways in which he wants himself to be understood.

Put another way, Michael Oakeshott argues that a practice, such as a genre, is an intelligent procedure, not a deterministic process, by which agents disclose their self-understandings.²⁸ On its own, a genre is merely "a practice abstracted from all that may

²⁸ Oakeshott gives the following examples of practices: "a morality, a religion, an art, a skill, a genre, a style, a *coutume*, a 'productive' practice, an institution, a cult, a ceremony, a ritual, a 'class', a regime, a

be going on, sketched, delineated, fitted together, explored, and finally understood as an articulated composition of characteristics” (1975: 99). But, Oakeshott continues, when a practice, such as a genre, is “turned back upon the actions and utterances of assignable agents ... it offers itself as an instrument of understanding” (99). Oakeshott’s approach to practices, such as genres, is to see them as intelligible manifestations of human conduct which are “footprints left behind by agents responding to their emergent situations” (100). So, instead of genres being a rigidly prescriptive process which a poet is forced to follow, they are actually an evolving historical practice whose intelligibility is contextual (100).

Modern readers and critics have been handicapped somewhat in that the decline of genre theory has gone hand-in-hand with our diminishing understanding about the ancient canon. As Alastair Fowler has observed, “When the ancient canon became less familiar it was not replaced by any modern canon comparable in authority. Consequently, generic allusion has become more restricted and less delicate. And indirectly the impact on the understanding of earlier literature has been profound” (1982: 92). Which is why, in order to understand Herrick, readers must endeavour to familiarise themselves with generic codes as they were understood, as they were used, and as they changed in their seventeenth century context.

Epigram

In this day and age, the epigram is likely to be conflated with the pithy saying or proverb, and is usually confined to handbooks for the use of public speakers, socialites, or those with a taste for light verse.²⁹ During the seventeenth century, however, the epigram enjoyed something of a golden age. According to Fowler, it held a special place in the education system as a means of teaching young boys the art of poetic control and concision (1980: 222 and 1982: 196). Furthermore, as Barbara Herrnstein-Smith notes, its

profession, an ‘economy’, a *ménage*, or even a ‘society’ or a ‘civilisation’ recognized as a procedure (not a process) and understood as an organization of recognitions, considerations, dispositions, compunctions, rules, etc.” (1975: 99)

²⁹ According to M.H. Abrams’s *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, the epigram is “a species of light verse” (1993: 56). This characterisation does not necessarily pertain to the seventeenth century epigram, although Abrams does go on to acknowledge the epigram’s diversity of uses.

thematic and structural versatility meant that it could be employed in a whole range of different situations – from the satirical to the sacred, from the elegiac to the eulogistic – as long as its most important feature remained its strength of closure (1968: 203). Yet even with respect to its closure, the epigram varies. The Classical epigram (associated most prominently with Martial) is characterised by its brevity, as well as its strong and striking closure, whereas the Hellenistic epigram (featuring prominently in the *Greek Anthology*) is identifiable by its sense of sustained containment and satisfaction deriving from its gradual closure.³⁰ Nowadays, however, the Hellenistic epigram tends not to be recognised as epigram:

Since our present definition of the epigram is so strongly influenced by the example of Martial, we tend to classify the poems inspired by the Greek Anthology as lyric. The Renaissance, however, included under the rubric of the epigram, along with the wit and satiric point of Martial, the elegiac sadness, the prettiness, and the erotic flirtatiousness of the Anthology. (Coiro 1988: 60-1)

In fact, the Renaissance epigram was such a diffuse genre that literary theorists developed a system of categorisation which classified epigrams according to their subject matter. The first category, *fel*, incorporated epigrams about galling subjects. The second category, *acetum*, were vinegary or satiric epigrams. The third category, *sal*, were salty, or witty epigrams. The fourth, *foetidas*, were epigrams about foul or ugly subjects. The fifth category, *mel*, were honeyed epigrams which we associate nowadays with love lyrics.³¹ However, the subtle distinctions between the epigrams were slowly eroded until, by the nineteenth century, the *mel* epigram was classified as ‘lyric’ and elevated above the other categories of epigram, which were frequently ignored or denigrated (Fowler 1980: 138). Hence the tendency among some Victorian editors of Herrick’s poetry to expunge all but his most honeyed lyrics from anthologies and ‘complete’ editions of his

³⁰ For an invaluable discussion of Herrick’s reliance on classical models for his deployment of epigram, as well as Herrick’s similarities with Martial, see Coiro (1988: 45-76). Herrick’s classical self-presentation, which includes his imitation of Martial, is discussed further in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

In addition, Fowler makes the important observation that European scholars only discovered the *Greek Anthology* in the sixteenth century, resulting in a flourishing of studies and imitations of its forms in the early seventeenth century (1982: 222).

³¹ See J.C. Scaliger, *Poetice*, III.cxxvi. According to Coiro, Scaliger (1484 - 1558) was “the foremost literary lawgiver and systematizer of the Renaissance” (1988: 46).

work. Alexander Grosart was an exception: he included the epigrams in his 1876 edition, but also suggested in the critical introduction that Herrick had been deceived by his “overenthusiastic publisher” into handing over his epigrams, “whereupon he or some unskilled subordinate proceeded to intermix these additions with the others”. Henry Morley’s 1884 edition omitted eighteen pages of poems, mostly epigrams, which he believed “would interfere with the free reading of Herrick in our homes”. Alfred Pollard’s “complete” Herrick edition of 1891 stowed the epigrams away in an appendix.³²

To return to the Renaissance, however, the ability of the epigram to treat diverse subject matter was regarded as its major strength. On its own, any one of the five epigrammatic categories is limited, but blended together or juxtaposed with one another, the epigrammatic ‘flavour’ of each category is enhanced. As Herrick himself was aware, “LOVE’S of it self, too sweet; the best of all/ Is, when loves hony has a dash of gall” (“*Another on Love*”, H-1084 / 327). His honeyed epigrams are not meant to be cordoned off from the others, but enjoyed in juxtaposition to them.

Despite a gradual thawing of critical attitudes towards Herrick’s epigrams during the twentieth century, critics remain ambivalent towards them. For example, Fowler refers to Herrick’s foul epigrams as “relatively few, and not very good: his tender heart is not in them” (1980: 245), but also to *Hesperides* as “this greatest of English epigram sequences” in another critique (1982: 197). One suspects that it is in fact Fowler’s tender heart which objects to the foul epigrams, and not Herrick’s. However, Fowler tries to identify why they are “not very good”, concluding that it is “namely through [their] being over-compressed to the point of pointlessness” (245). Gordon Braden observes that “the Roman epigram is clearly the strongest single genre-concept operative in Herrick’s writing in general”, but that Herrick achieves little more than confirming his “haplessness with that genre” (1978: 180). More recently, John Creaser betrays his modern critical preference for the lyric over the epigram by complaining that the proliferation of epigrams towards the end of *Hesperides* and throughout *Noble Numbers* is indicative of Herrick’s “imaginative impoverishment” as his poetic career drew to a close (2009: 16).

³² Quotations from Grosart and Morley are taken from Elizabeth Hageman’s comprehensive chronological bibliographical reference guide to Herrick (1983). A useful contribution to Herrick studies would be a critical survey of nineteenth century critical editions and/or anthologies of Herrick’s poems.

Robert W. Halli is one of the few modern critics to attempt a comprehensive defence of Herrick's epigrams, particularly his 'foul' ones.³³ The attractiveness of Halli's argument lies in his attempt to return the epigram to its seventeenth century context. He points out that the popularity of the genre is reflected in the fact that more of Herrick's epigrams were reprinted than any other genre between the 1648 publication of *Hesperides* and the poet's death in 1674 (1978: 31).³⁴ Further, he argues that "the Renaissance followed the ancient [Aristotelean and Ciceronian] principle that physical or moral ugliness was the basic cause of laughter" (31), before admiring the diversity of techniques Herrick deploys in his epigrams (32-40). While it is possible that the brevity of the epigram made it attractive to poets seeking to hone their skills on a daily basis, or quickly to capture fleeting moments of daily experience, Halli argues that the considerable effort and skill that is required of the poet to compress a limitless variety of subject matter into a limited form is obscured by the epigram's characteristic brevity. As Halli points out, "there is no indication that he [Herrick] spent more time on a lyric line than one in an epigram" (1978: 40). Halli concludes by stating that "when we hear [the epigram] criticized as slight or insubstantial, we should remember that this is an accepted limitation of the genre, not a remedial fault of the poet. Within the scope of the epigram Robert Herrick is a careful and consummate artist" (1978: 41). So, when Fowler observes that Herrick's epigrams are "overcompressed to the point of pointlessness", Halli asks us to recognise that epigrammatic compression requires considerable poetic skill and that Herrick is more than equal to the task.

Lyric

Unlike his epigrams, Herrick's lyrics have received consistent high praise from his critics, none more so than Algernon Charles Swinburne who declared Herrick to be "the greatest song-writer – as surely as Shakespeare is the greatest dramatist – ever born of English race" (in Marcus 1995: 171).³⁵ Herrick himself revels in the onomastic

³³ See also Antoinette Dauber, 'Herrick's Foul Epigrams', *Genre*, 9.2 (1976), 87-102.

³⁴ See Martin's list of *Hesperides* poems reprinted in other collections after 1648 (xxiv-xxvii).

³⁵ Swinburne's comment originally appeared in the preface to Alfred Pollard's 1891 edition of *The Hesperides and Noble Numbers*.

similarities between his surname and the genre as a way of heightening his poetic self-presentation:

Upon himself

THOU shalt not All die; for while Love's fire shines
 Upon his Altar, men shall read thy lines;
 And learn'd Musicians shall to honour *Herricks*
 Fame, and his Name, both set, and sing his Lyricks. (H-366 / 143)

In the preceding poem, he refers to himself as “the Lyrick Prophet” (“*To the most learned, wise, and Arch-Antiquary, Master John Selden*”, H-365 / 142 / 3), and in another poem elsewhere in the collection declares that,

each Lyrick here shall be
 Of my love a Legacie,
 Left to all posterity. (“*Lyrick for Legacies*”, H-218 / 88 / 4-6)

Herrick is well aware that his poetic strengths lie with the lyric, and he wishes to be remembered as a lyric poet. As much as he deserves the recognition that his lyrics have earned him, part of the reason for the high standing of his lyrics in the canon also owes something to the later, overlapping influences of Enlightenment and Romantic thought, which elevated the individual consciousness to pride-of-place and, with it, the self-centred sensibility of the lyric “I/me” viewpoint in poetry.

It also ought to be pointed out that the Renaissance lyric was a broader genre than it has subsequently become. In the interval between Herrick's age and ours, something of lyric's original association with music has been lost. According to the *Princeton Encyclopaedia*, the lyric is “a generic term for any poem which was composed to be sung, and this was the meaning which it largely retained until the Renaissance ... But with the Renaissance, poets began suiting their work to a visual rather than an auditory medium ... [and] the poet ceased to ‘compose’ his poem for musical presentation but instead ‘wrote’ it for a collection of readers” (1974: 461). Herrick, however, seems to have revelled in the lyric's dual function, and his ability to both “compose” and “write” is reflected in a poem entitled “*When he would have his verses read*”, in which he states:

“But when that men have both well drunke, and fed,/ Let my Enchantments then be sung, or read” (H-8 / 7 / 3-4).

Perhaps because of the widening split between lyric poetry and its musical origins, Herrick’s role as a songwriter has been overlooked by all but a few historians and critics. Yet *Noble Numbers* contains a carol and a song whose titles announce that they were sung in the King’s presence at Whitehall, and in their footnotes, added by Herrick, they indicate that they were set to music by Henry Lawes, a prominent court singer and composer.³⁶ Meanwhile, *Hesperides* includes “A Pastorall sung on the birth of Prince Charles, Presented to the King, and Set by Mr. Nic: Lanier” (H-213 / 85). Lanier was an even more high-profile musical figure in the court than Lawes, having been appointed as “master of the king’s musick” by 1626, and also served as Charles’s personal art dealer (*ODNB*). These historical details confirm that Herrick’s ability as a songwriter was well-recognised within Caroline courtly circles. Indeed, he may have owed both his chaplaincy to Buckingham and the King’s gift to him of the living at Dean Prior to having impressed both powerful men with his musical verse, as much as with his written poetry. Nor was Herrick’s reputation as a songwriter limited to Whitehall’s elite. “*To the Virgins, to make much of Time*” (H-208 / 84) was set to music by Henry Lawes’s brother William and became “easily the most popular poem of the century” (Ault 1950: xii). Furthermore, as Louise Schleiner indicates, “at least forty settings of thirty-one poems [by Herrick] are to be found in manuscript and printed song-books from 1624 to 1683, far more than we have of texts from other important English poets of the first half of the century (excluding Campion, who set his own poems)” (1976: 77).³⁷ Any appraisal of Herrick’s lyric worth therefore ought to take Herrick’s self-understanding as both a writer and a songwriter into account. Apart from William Hazlitt, who conjectures that Herrick may have held a post in the Chapel Royal (in Patrick, note 1, p.454), no critics or historians of whom I am aware have suggested that Herrick set his own verse to music, although it is difficult to

³⁶ See N-96 / 364, and N-97 / 365. Lawes (1596 - 1662) was a member of the Chapel Royal by 1627 and a member of the “King’s musick” by 1631 (*ODNB*). *Hesperides* also contains a poem dedicated to Lawes, titled “*To Master Henry Lawes, the excellent Composer of his Lyricks*” (H-851 / 276). In addition, an anthem and two more songs sung before the King and included in *Noble Numbers* are not attributed to any composer, although we do not know whether this means that Herrick composed them himself. See N-17 / 342, N-98 / 366, N-102 / 367.

³⁷ Compare this with Carew’s twenty three, Donne’s twelve and Herbert’s eleven seventeenth century settings (Schleiner note 2, p. 77).

believe, in light of Herrick's seventeenth century popularity as a song-writer, that he was *not* also a capable musician.

Herrick draws his reader's attention to *Hesperides*' musical qualities both explicitly and implicitly. There are nine poems explicitly labelled "Song", another nine which are labelled "Hymne", as well as an assortment of dirges, canticles, psalms, eclogues and dialogues whose titles all indicate that they are meant to be sung. A further twelve poems are about music or song, in which Herrick either praises "smooth", "sweet", "silv'ry" or "rare" singing voices,³⁸ denigrates "hoarse" or "ill" ones,³⁹ or revels in the enchanting or restorative powers of music.⁴⁰ In several cases, these poems are arranged in pairs, or in close proximity to one another, as if Herrick wishes to draw our attention to his music and song as an essential component of his lyric craft.

As Louise Schleiner has shown, a significant but unquantifiable number of poems in *Hesperides* were revised by Herrick to convert them from song-texts into poems for the reader. However, the transformation remained incomplete because the characteristics which critics have come to associate with Herrick's poems – their trivial subject matter, their slightness or spareness, and their brevity – are also essentially characteristic of the song lyric (1976: 88-90).⁴¹ Herrick's reputation as a trivial poet, which held firm for at least 250 years before the advent of the New Historicist criticism of the 1970s and 1980s, may therefore stem in part from critics' failure to take into account Herrick's dual occupation as both poet and song-writer, and his generic understanding of lyric as something to be either "sung, or read".⁴²

³⁸ See "Upon Julia's Voice" (H-67 / 22 / 1), "Againe" (H-68 / 22), "Upon a Gentlewoman with a sweet Voice" (H-228 / 95), "Upon her Voice" (H-252 / 102), "Upon Sapho, sweetly playing, and sweetly singing" (H-362 / 142) and "The Voice and Violl" (H-1101 / 331)

³⁹ See "Upon a hoarse singer" (H-390 / 152) and "Upon Comely a good speaker but an ill singer, Epigram." (H-799 / 266).

⁴⁰ See "To Musick" (H-176 / 67), "To Musique, to becalme his Fever" (H-227 / 95), "To Musick, to becalme a sweet-sick-youth" (H-244 / 99) and "To Musick. A Song" (H-254 / 103).

⁴¹ A. E. Elmore's later article, "Herrick and the Poetry of Song", makes much the same argument as Schleiner (1978: 65-75).

⁴² Edward Phillips complained of *Hesperides*' "trivial passages" in *Theatrum Poetarum, or A Compleat Collection of the Poets* (London, 1675), p. 162; while F.R. Leavis labelled Herrick's poetry as "trivially charming" in *Revaluation: Tradition and Development in English Poetry* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1936), p.36. Sidney Musgrove was one of the first twentieth century critics to take exception to the "trivial" label, arguing that a trivial poet would not have produced such a voluminous quantity of assuredly perfect lyric poetry as Herrick did (1950: 3-4).

Before proceeding to discuss the Renaissance fondness for pairing or combining the lyric and epigram, I want to highlight another of Schleiner's observations which complicates what Herrick himself tells us about the lonely isolation of his rural life, and which many of his biographers and critics have taken at face value. With reference to Herrick's songs, Schleiner writes:

Some of the surviving settings are dateable to Herrick's London years (1623-30), but most of them appear to have been composed in the 1630's and 40's, to judge from their positions in cumulatively compiled manuscript song-books. Thus it would seem that Herrick and his poems were not so forgotten during his exile in "dull Devonshire" as is sometimes supposed, at least not among his musician friends and readers. (78)

Schleiner's observation alerts us once again to the danger of accepting Herrick's self-presentation in *Hesperides* as autobiographical. As I intend to show in the following chapter with reference to Herrick's classical self-presentation, some of the poems which denigrate Devon and emphasise Herrick's misery there are designed to create a fictional pose that is both serious in its imitation of his classical predecessors, and playful in its exaggeration of his hardships compared to theirs. By Herrick's own admission, his muse is capable of being as "jocund" – which applies equally to its playfulness as a 'personality' as it does to its playfulness in rearranging and fictionalising the chronology and circumstances of the poet's life – as his life is "chaste".

I have already noted how the Hellenistic epigram has come to be identified by its lyric qualities, but that it was understood to be epigrammatic during the seventeenth century. The close relation between epigram and lyric in *Hesperides* is a manifestation of what Colie has identified as a Renaissance fondness for pairing "twinned yet opposite" genres together (1973: 67). One of the advantages of this twinning is that the lowly epigram could be raised by its association with the lyric, while the gall of the epigram could act as a counterpoint to the cloying sweetness of the lyric (103). The twinning of lyric and

epigram was facilitated by the development of the English sonnet during the late sixteenth century. Adapting the Petrarchan two-part sonnet with its octave and sestet, poets such as Spenser and Shakespeare developed a four-part sonnet with three quatrains and a concluding couplet. The English sonnet thus possesses some of the distinctive formal qualities of the epigram, especially the sustained progression of argument from quatrain to quatrain, leading up to the much-prized epigrammatic “turn” in the final couplet (Herrnstein-Smith 197). In another variation of the sonnet, the quatrains can also be constituted as rhyming couplets, thereby transforming the sonnet into a succession of epigrammatic statements. An additional structural similarity between the lyric and epigram stems from the fact that they are ideally both brief genres. Whereas brevity in the epigram was necessitated by the practical constraints of its classical origin as an epitaph engraving, brevity in the lyric was, from Homer onwards, believed to be a necessary condition for its characteristic delightfulness (Scaliger in Sonnino 1968: 229).

Between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries, the characteristics shared by epigram and lyric that rendered them attractive as “twinned” genres also placed them on the lowest rungs of the generic ladder (Fowler 1982: 216-7). These characteristics include their brevity as well as their lowly subject matter. However, the Renaissance literary theorist Robortello developed the idea in his *De Epigrammate* (1548) that epigrams (which, as I have shown above, encompass mellifluous lyrics) are “miniature versions of greater kinds” (in Colie 1973: 68). As such, epigrams could be the building blocks of ode, comedy, satire, tragedy and – the loftiest genre of all – the epic.

Epic, or heroica.

“*The Argument of his Book*” which begins *Hesperides* is a masterpiece of generic miniaturisation in which Herrick shows how he intends to create an epic work – the highest calling of any poet – from the lowly generic means at his disposal. Coiro points out that from the moment Herrick begins *Hesperides* with “I SING ...” – a conventional epic rhetorical device known as the *propositio* – he signals the epic intentions of his book

(1988: 31).⁴³ Furthermore, the way in which “*The Argument*” catalogues *Hesperides*’s subjects is reminiscent of the epic technique first made famous by Homer’s Catalogue of the Ships in *The Iliad* (Curtius 1990: 229). As Scaliger explains, the epic “contains within it the universal and controlling rules for the composition of *each* kind, according at each point to the nature of the ideas present and the style appropriate to each subject” (in Sonnino 1968: 228-9). “*The Argument*” therefore provides a foretaste of the wide variety of genres that *Hesperides* as a totality will encompass:

I SING of *Brooks*, of *Blossomes*, *Birds*, and *Bowers*:
 Of *April*, *May*, of *June*, and *July*-Flowers.
 I sing of *May-poles*, *Hock-carts*, *Wassails*, *Wakes*,
 Of *Bride-grooms*, *Brides*, and of their *Bridall-cakes*.
 I write of *Youth*, of *Love*, and have *Accesse*
 By these, to sing of cleanly-*Wantonnesse*.
 I sing of *Dewes*, of *Raines*, and piece by piece
 Of *Balme*, of *Oyle*, of *Spice*, and *Amber-Greece*.
 I sing of *Times trans-shifting*; and I write
 How *Roses* first came *Red*, and *Lillies White*.
 I write of *Groves*, of *Twilights*, and I sing
 The Court of *Mab*, and of the *Fairie-King*.
 I write of *Hell*; I sing (and ever shall)
 Of *Heaven*, and hope to have it after all. (H-1 / 5)

From the “*Brooks*,...*Blossomes*, *Birds*, and *Bowers*” we know that we can expect the pastoral; from “*May-poles*, *Hock-carts*, *Wassails*, *Wakes*” we anticipate the georgic; from “*Bride-grooms*, *Brides*, and...*Bridall-cakes*” we expect the epithalamium; from “*Youth*, ... *Love*, and ... / ... cleanly-*Wantonnesse*” the conventional amatory lyric; from “*Balme*, ... *Oyle*, ... *Spice*, and *Amber-Greece*” the ceremonial mode; from “*Times trans-shifting*” elements of the epic, a genre which is used to narrate events of momentous historical importance; from “How *Roses* first came *Red*, and *Lillies White*” the aetiological poems; from the conventional association of the red rose and white lily as symbols of the English crown and the French crown respectively, and as conventional tokens of beauty and

⁴³ For example, Virgil begins *The Aeneid* with the words, “*Arma virumque cano...*” [“Arms and the man I sing...”]. All Latin translations in this thesis are derived from the *Loeb Classical Library Series* (hereafter *Loeb*), unless stated otherwise.

purity, we can expect the royal panegyric;⁴⁴ from the miniaturisation of “The Court of *Mab*, and of the *Fairie-King*” we can expect the epigram; and, finally, from “I write of *Hell*; I sing (and ever shall)/ Of *Heaven*, and hope to have it after all” we can expect devotional poetry.⁴⁵ The achievement of “*The Argument*” lies in its ability to compact all these generic pointers into a fourteen-line poem which acts as a miniature version of the macrocosmic *Hesperides*.

At the same time as “*The Argument*” reveals the epic aspirations of the collection which it sets in motion, it is constructed of a combination of epigrammatic and lyric features which are in turn appropriate to Herrick’s project of constructing lofty genres from baser ones. Firstly, “I sing” is not only the conventional introductory statement of an epic poet, but it also reminds us of the lyric poet understood in his pre-Renaissance role as a songwriter. The counterbalancing statement, “I write”, is that of the epigrammatist, not least because the earliest manifestation of the epigram was either graffiti or epitaph (Coiro 1988: 83; Herrnstein-Smith 1968: 196-7). Secondly, the octave is dominated by lighter lyric themes, including nature, the seasons and romantic love. The sestet is dominated by darker epigrammatic themes, including history and politics (which the epigram treats either satirically or didactically) and death. This movement from lyric to epigram in “*The Argument*” pre-suggests a similar transition in theme, tone and genre in *Hesperides* itself, which gradually shifts from a predominantly lyric mode to a predominantly epigrammatic one (Coiro 9-12; Creaser 2009: 182). Structurally, too, this poem shares elements of both the sonnet (a lyric form) and the epigram. For example, one can discern the octave-sestet structure of a Petrarchan sonnet, whose *volta* draws one’s attention to the pivotal theme of “*Times trans-shifting*” (9). The Petrarchan sonnet is also evoked by Herrick’s itemisation and categorisation of the forthcoming contents of *Hesperides*; a strategy that is reminiscent of the Petrarchan blazon in which the poet lists his mistress’ physical characteristics. At the same time, the syntax and rhyme scheme of “*The Argument*” are suggestive of an epigram, comprising seven paired couplets which cumulatively press downwards towards the much-admired epigrammatic ‘turn’ at the

⁴⁴ Charles’s queen, Henrietta Maria, was French.

⁴⁵ Sydney Musgrove has observed that, “In this, the argument of his book, Herrick has been content with nothing less than the whole universe; his theme is, in a sense, no narrower than that of *Paradise Lost*” (1950: 6).

final couplet (Herrnstein-Smith 197). This ‘turn’ from the secular themes of groves, twilights and fairy courts to religious themes of hell and heaven also anticipates the ‘turn’ which occurs late in *Hesperides* when, after 1130 poems, Herrick introduces *Noble Numbers*.

Herrick’s understanding that lowly forms could combine to form lofty ones provides him with a way of asserting his laureate credentials while circumventing some of the requirements of the literary system. During the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, public heroic poetry occupied the upper rungs of the generic ladder and was considered to be the preserve of laureate poets. Richard Helgerson argues that a few poets fashioned laureate roles by distinguishing themselves from both their amateur counterparts and from professional writers (those who wrote for money or to entertain a paying audience, such as William Shakespeare) (1983: 37-9). Helgerson’s paradigm groups together Edmund Spenser, Ben Jonson, John Milton and – to a lesser extent – William Davenant and Abraham Cowley – as the Renaissance’s self-crowned laureates. The majority of poets were amateurs, however, who wrote for their own amusement and whose “pursuit of business or pleasure and ... activity as courtiers, soldiers, or scholars was continuous with their literary engagement” (1983: 201). The laureate, on the other hand, saw poetry as “itself ... a means of making a contribution to the order and improvement of the state” (29). The laureate was rare and precious; a public, heroic figure placed at the very top of the hierarchy of value, on a near-equal footing with the King (49-50). Laureates and amateurs also differed in a number of other ways. Firstly, amateurs wrote poems for professional advancement, such as attracting the attention of potential patrons, but then renounced their poetry as being youthful folly once public service had been attained. By contrast, a laureate career spanned a lifetime and laureates did not, as a rule, offer any apologies for writing poetry (17). Secondly, amateurs avoided print, whereas laureates sought it out (29). Thirdly, the laureate displayed “something of great constancy” in his poems that was in marked contrast to the “freedom from seriousness” that characterised amateur poetry. In other words, amateurs were essentially playful and assumed various self-detached *personae*, whereas laureates were serious and grounded their work on a centred and unchanging self whose constancy lent moral *gravitas* to their public, heroic pronouncements (39-40). Fourthly, laureates wrote poems about grave subject matter in

public heroic genres. The amateurs, by contrast, wrote poetry about playful subjects, such as love, and in genres that were essentially private and amatory (74). Fifth and finally, whereas the amateur was usually a literary inheritor, the laureate was essentially a literary innovator (186-9).⁴⁶ These distinctions which Helgerson draws between amateurs and laureates are useful; but Herrick does not fit comfortably into Helgerson's paradigm because he is an amateur in some ways, while he demonstrates laureate pretensions in others.

One major indicator of Herrick's amateur status is his conventional renunciation and repentance of writing love poetry as *Hesperides* draws to a close. As I have just noted, a laureate would not disparage his work in the same way as Herrick does in the following poem:

On Himselfe

IL'E write no more of Love; but now repent
Of all those times that I in it have spent.
Ile write no more of life; but wish 'twas ended,
And that my dust was to the earth commended. (H-1124 / 334)

It should be noted that the placement of *Noble Numbers* after *Hesperides* both complicates and does not complicate Herrick's intention to "write no more of Love". On the one hand, he seems to be referring to the amateur craft of lyric love poetry, whereas *Noble Numbers* is a more serious engagement to write devotional poetry. On the other hand, devotional poetry can be poems expressing one's love for God. In the context of this discussion about Herrick's poetic status, however, his conventional renunciation of love poetry identifies him as an amateur poet.

A second major indicator of Herrick's amateur status is his acceptance of "the *Mirtle Coronet*" in the antepenultimate poem in *Hesperides* ("*On Himselfe*", H-1128 / 335 / 2). Herrick's symbolic acceptance of a myrtle crown is a crucial self-presentational gesture.

⁴⁶ It ought to be noted that Ben Jonson, Herrick's literary 'father', did more than anyone else during the Renaissance to transform the epigram from its status as the poetic dross of his generation into what he calls "the ripest of my studies". Spenser achieved the same transformation with love poetry. However, Helgerson points to this as evidence that laureates distinguish themselves from amateur poets by their ability to redefine generational generic markers, which does not necessarily mean they wrote in lowly genres (1983: 168).

Herrick might have called for a laurel crown, or any other crown associated with the range of conventional literary associations, of which there are many:

The crowns of poets are not made only of myrtle and laurel, but also of vineleaves for fescennine verses, ivy for bacchanals, olive for sacrifices and laws, poplar, elm and wheat for agriculture, cypress for funerals, and innumerable other kinds of leaves for other occasions. (Giordano Bruno in Fowler 1982: 131)

Instead, Herrick calls for a myrtle, which is symbolically associated with Venus, the Roman goddess of love. In ancient Rome, myrtle and laurel crowns were both symbolic of important achievements, but with a hierarchical distinction between the two. The laurel crown was only presented to poets, soldiers and leaders of exceptional ability at pivotal moments of public triumph. The myrtle crown was less prestigious, and was given more regularly on occasions of lesser importance. The same distinction applied to poets: whereas the laurel crown is symbolically given to those who excel in the lofty genres of heroic poetry, the myrtle crown is given to those who excel with lowlier kinds, such as lyric and pastoral poetry.⁴⁷ Indeed, before he accepts the myrtle crown at the end of *Hesperides*, Herrick has already symbolically crowned the late Ben Jonson as a laureate: “THOU had’st the wreath before, now take the Tree;/ That henceforth none be *Laurel crown’d but Thee.*” (H-383 / 150). Taken together with his conventional renunciation of love poetry a few poems before he accepts the myrtle crown, Herrick is identifying himself with the amateur poets of his generation.

At the same time, however, Herrick complicates these conventional signs of amateur poetic status by adopting several generic signals which are more typically associated with the laureate poet, such as calling his poems “Works”, gathering them together, prefacing them with a frontispiece portrait, and publishing them in a book (Helgerson 254-6).⁴⁸ Helgerson subsequently points out that the clear-cut distinctions between amateur poets and laureate poets became more blurred as the seventeenth century progressed. For this reason, *Hesperides*’s appearance in its printed form is therefore not extraordinary.

⁴⁷ For the symbolism of laurel and myrtle, I have consulted *The Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery* (1984: 292) and *The Complete Dictionary of Symbols* (2004: 332).

⁴⁸ Although Helgerson is not specifically discussing Herrick here, I have applied his criteria to *Hesperides*.

However, Herrick's epic pretensions, as signalled in "*The Argument of his Book*" provide a clearer indication of his bid to circumvent his designation as an amateur poet. Thus, in addition to the epic *propositio* of "*The Argument*", the second poem in the collection, "*To his Muse*", is an epic *invocatio*, in which the poet addresses his muse directly and calls for inspiration (Fowler 1982: 102):

WHITHER *Mad maiden* wilt thou roame?
 Farre safer 'twere to stay at home:
 Where thou mayst sit, and piping please
 The poor and private *Cottages*.
 Since *Coats*, and *Hamlets*, best agree
 With this thy meaner *Minstralsie*.
 There with the Reed, thou mayst expresse
 The Shepherds Fleecie happinesse:
 And with thy *Eclogues* intermixe
 Some smooth, and harmlesse *Beaucolicks*. (H-2 / 5 / 1-10)

Although the speaker asks his Muse to restrict itself to lowly genres as befits his lowly station, it is by no means certain whether his Muse intends to comply. What is more, poets were expected to write a bucolic or pastoral before they could attempt an epic poem (Curtius 1990: 231-2). Once Virgil's poetic career had set this early example for epic poets, the likes of Spenser and Milton would later also comply with the tradition.⁴⁹

A third epic signal is when a poet begins a work *in medias res*, which Herrick does by presenting his Hesperidean persona as a middle-aged bachelor living in Devon, like the autobiographical Herrick was during the 1630s and 1640s.⁵⁰ Herrick's autobiographical self-presentation in the collection's early poems, his continued authorial presence throughout the work, as well as the association between his book's title and Hercules's Twelve Labours all combine to suggest that Herrick is presenting himself as his book's own epic hero, which in turn tells the reader two things. One, the creation of *Hesperides* required a superhuman effort on Herrick's part to write, collect, arrange and publish his book. Two, much like the mythical Hercules held up the skies on his shoulders during his

⁴⁹ The bucolic is synonymous with the pastoral (*Princeton Encyclopaedia* 86). Virgil's *Eclogues* preceded the *Aeneid*, Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar* preceded *The Faerie Queene*, and Milton's pastoral elegy *Lycidas* preceded *Paradise Lost*.

⁵⁰ See Chapter 1 of this thesis for more details.

Hesperidean quest in order to prevent the universe disintegrating back into chaos, the author-figure in *Hesperides* lends coherence to the vast work not only by shaping something out of nothing, but also by maintaining a consistent presence throughout the work.⁵¹

It is typical of Herrick's self-presentational slipperiness that he includes these epic signals in *Hesperides*, thereby presenting himself as both an amateur and not an amateur, and as both a laureate and not a laureate. Fowler provides a useful way of reconciling the contradictions of Herrick's self-presentation by referring to him as an "heroic epigrammatist" (1982: 230). Coiro provides another way, calling *Hesperides* an "epic in miniature, where pastoral, georgic, epithalamion, historical allegory, and sacred poetry [are] all encapsulated in epigrams" (1988: 31). Thus, *Hesperides* is both an epic and not an epic. Or, in Roger Rollin's perceptive distinction, the work is epic, but not *an* epic (1992: 11).

By using small, humble generic forms to construct an ambitiously epic work, Herrick neatly circumvents the constraints of the literary system while not allowing himself to be seen as a maverick working outside of the bounds of convention. Crucially, as Rosalie Colie points out, "without a genre-system to play against, all this falls flat ... [but] ... with an awareness of the games played with his own poetic traditions, he seems a considerable craftsman at the very least, and a considerable innovator at the very best" (1973: 26).

Panegyric, Encomium, Horatian Ode, Epithalamium, Valediction, Dialogue, Prospective Poem, Hymn, or, Herrick's "social mode"

Helgerson argues that a work of Renaissance literature was "the product not only of an individual created act but also of a communally established structure of differences in terms of which the individual act had purpose and meaning" (1983: 250). Whereas Spenser, Jonson and Milton each fashioned themselves as laureate poets by distinguishing themselves from the other poets of their own generation, the amateur poets who fell in between the historical interstices of the laureates were literary inheritors,

⁵¹ For more on Herrick's self-presentation as the mythical Hercules, see Chapter 3 of this thesis.

rather than innovators (186-9). Helgerson focuses on the Cavalier poets, among whom Herrick is usually placed, and shows how they “gratefully accepted the literary tradition bequeathed them and were relatively successful and secure members of the ruling establishment” (200). Alexander Pope referred to the Cavaliers as “the mob of gentlemen who wrote with ease,”⁵² while more recently Louis Martz has bracketed them as mannerist poets (in Helgerson 194). Mannerism is a particular kind of art; its name derives from the Italian ‘maniera’, meaning ‘style’. The Cavaliers, Helgerson argues, distinguished themselves from their literary milieu by the ease and stylishness with which they seemed to pen their poetry:

The polish and virtuosity of [the Cavalier poet’s] work, its seemingly effortless savoir faire, depends on the supreme accomplishment of his predecessors. Unable to say more than they, he playfully embroiders and misapplies their way of saying, often decorating the smaller concerns of life in a style forged to express the greater, bidding temporary farewell to a court amour with the gestures of a Hamlet, sitting and drinking with the bravado of a Drake. (194)

Some of what Helgerson says is applicable to Herrick, especially Herrick’s characteristic combination of negligence and virtuosity. Yet even though Herrick is a literary latecomer and an imitator by laureate standards, his self-fashioning as a poet still requires him to take up a position within the literary system, where he defines who he is as a poet in terms of who he is not. The Pindaric ode, the verse treatise, the philosophic poem and, at first glance, the epic are genres that are absent from *Hesperides*, yet they feature in the work of Herrick’s contemporaries, such as Ben Jonson, John Donne and John Milton. What this shows is that Herrick’s poetic genres are deliberate choices on his part, choices which enable him to present himself to us as a very particular type of poet and to distinguish himself from the other poets of his milieu.

I wish to explore Helgerson’s description of the literary system as “a communally established structure of differences” further, however, by arguing that Herrick’s self-presentation does not only emerge from the differences and distinctions he constructs between himself and other poets, but that even more importantly, his self-presentation is

⁵² See Pope’s “The First Epistle of the Second Book of Horace Imitated,” l. 108.

premised on a pre-Enlightenment understanding of the self as a socially-oriented being. So, while the panegyric, encomium, Horatian ode, epithalamium, valediction, dialogue, prospective poem and the hymn title are each distinct genres, what they have in common is that they are occasional poems addressed to other people, on various specific occasions, and have therefore been performed and understood as social acts.

Earl Miner's influential study of Cavalier poetry argues that its radical feature is the "social mode", which distinguishes it from the essentially private poetry of the Metaphysical poets, and from the public poetry of laureates such as Milton, Dryden and Pope (1971: 3). According to Miner, the social mode comprises of "social relations interwoven with personal relations" (12). In other words, one of the benefits of the social mode is that the poet creates a space where social interactions occur that can be both private and public:

The social mode involves, in its general configuration, a mid-aesthetic distance, a position between the world of the poem and the the world of the reader from which the poet can readily turn toward public poetry for certain needs, and toward private for others. (1971: 14)

This is evident in *Hesperides*, where Herrick not only addresses poems to himself, to the general reader, as well as to relatives and friends, but also public poems to fellow poets and artists, patrons, social superiors and people he admires.⁵³ However, I do not believe that Miner sufficiently demonstrates how different the social mode is to the post-Enlightenment self-understandings we hold today, and how different our self-understandings are to those of Herrick and his contemporaries.

Prior to the Enlightenment, as Charles Taylor explains, the self was understood to be part of the public, commonly-accessible domain of objects whose order was regarded as an independent and self-manifesting reality. This self-understanding has dissipated since Herrick's time because of the elevation to primacy of the rational, radically self-reflexive and disengaged self. For example, René Descartes (1596-1650) declared that "*je ne puis*

⁵³ For more on Herrick as a social poet, see Helen Marlborough, "Herrick's Epigrams of Praise", *Herrick Tercentenary Essays*, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1978), pp. 159-69; and A. Leigh DeNeef, '*This Poetick Liturgie*': *Robert Herrick's Ceremonial Mode* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1974).

avoir aucune connaissance de ce qui est hors de moi, que par l'entremise des idées que j'ai eu en moi" ["I can have no knowledge of what is outside me except by means of the ideas I have within me"],⁵⁴ an idea that expresses the widening conceptual gap between mind and matter, and between the self and the domain of objects. Human understanding was in the process of disengaging itself from the self-manifesting world of objects and was adopting a rational stance towards the world instead. The disengagement was furthered by the increasingly rationalistic ideas of John Locke (1632-1704), Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and others, until the individual had assumed a position of instrumental control over a world of objects. An important consequence of this disengaged stance is that the self has become independent, self-sufficient, and solitary; hence the modern notion of individualism, in which we partake almost unquestioningly today. But Taylor argues that the human stance of disengagement from the world, and its corollary – the objectification of knowledge – is not the only method of understanding available to us. We can also turn towards the world with engaged understanding, which is what we do naturally when we throw ourselves unreservedly into our experiences, and when we see objects as they are, and not as abstract concepts of what they purport to be (Taylor 1989: 143-184).⁵⁵ This is to say that for Herrick and his contemporaries, the social mode came to them naturally as a precondition of what it means to be engaged in the way things are in the world, and not separate, above, superior or different to the world by virtue of one's rationalising autonomy. Herrick would have understood himself primarily as a communitarian, other-directed being, participating in a series of interdependent

⁵⁴ Letter to Gibieuf, 19 January 1642; *Descartes: Philosophical Letters*, trans. Anthony Kenny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), p.123. Cited in Taylor (1989: 144 and note 1, p. 538).

⁵⁵ Sidney Musgrove succinctly identifies the effect which the Cartesian split between mind and matter had on English poetry during Herrick's lifetime. The differences between the work of Shakespeare (1564-1616) and that of Dryden (1631-1700) marks a generational distinction between

an imagination which unifies and one which distinguishes and divides, between a world which was the living, though distorted, image of divinity and one which was but the creation of an omnipotent watchmaker, between an age which wrote great tragedy as of nature and of right, and one which always wanted to write great tragedy but was always barred by its own analytical wit and its own hysteria (1950: 32).

Poets like Herrick (1591-1674) and Andrew Marvell (1621-1678) are literary anachronisms who wrote in-between Shakespeare and Dryden, but tended towards the older worldview, and have consequently occupied a position on the fringes of the English canon.

relationships with others, and not as an individualistic, self-directed being, belonging to a world in which one adopts an independent and instrumental stance towards others.

Herrick's communitarian, other-directed outlook has a counterpart in the African philosophy of *ubuntu*, which emphasises the interdependence of individuals above their independence, and is expressed in the isiZulu maxim, "*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*", meaning "a person is a person through other persons". Desmond Tutu, one of South Africa's best-known proponents of *ubuntu*, describes it thus:

It speaks of the very essence of being human. When we want to give high praise to someone we say, "*Yu, u nobuntu*"; "Hey, so-and-so has *ubuntu*." Then you are generous, then you are hospitable, you are friendly and caring and compassionate. You share what you have.
(1999: 31)

Furthermore, as Mabogo More explains, "in this communal orientation, the self is dependent on other selves and is defined through its relationship to other selves" (2006: 157).

Herrick's 'social mode' includes poems which praise certain people for being generous, hospitable, friendly, caring and compassionate – in other words, poems which identify people who have *ubuntu*. An example is Herrick's major contribution to the country-house poem genre, entitled "*A Panegerick to Sir Lewis Pemberton*" (H-377 / 146). According to William McClung, one of the casualties of the change in the national character in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was the decline of hospitality (1977: 19). Herrick harks back to the hospitality and generosity of what he celebrates as a better, nobler age when he praises Pemberton as follows:

Thou hast learnt thy Train,
With heart and hand to entertain:
And by the Armes-full (with a Brest unhid)
As the old Race of mankind did,
When eithers heart, and eithers hand did strive
To be the nearer Relative:
Thou do'st redeeme those times; and what was lost
Of antient honesty, may boast
It keeps a growth in thee; and so will runne
A course in thy Fames-pledge, thy Sonne. (35-44)

The situation in these lines is expressive of *ubuntu*, specifically the image of hands and hearts coming together in the act of sharing. Pemberton has *ubuntu*, not least in the inclusiveness of his hospitality:

But all, who at thy table seated are,
 Find equall freedome, equall fare;
 And Thou, like to that *Hospitable God*,
Jove, joy'st when guests make their abode
 To eate thy Bullocks thighs, thy Veales, thy fat
 Weathers, and never grudged at. (59-60).

Pemberton's generosity is open to all; a recognition that the old feudal-style households were sites of communal – not individual – belonging. By praising Pemberton expansively, Herrick not only sets a standard to which Pemberton can aspire, but he is also launching a similarly enthusiastic attack on hosts and households who have forgotten how to offer generous hospitality, and where a spirit of community and conviviality no longer exists. For example, Pemberton's household can be contrasted with that of the man who invites Herrick to sup with him at his house, promising "such lauttious meat,/ The like not *Heliogabalus* did eat" but failing dismally to deliver on his promise ("*The Invitation*", H-783 / 262 / 3-4).⁵⁶ Herrick's host does not have *ubuntu*, and it provokes a fierce response in the poet:

At last, i'th'noone of winter, did appeare
 A ragd-soust⁵⁷-neats-foot with sick vineger:
 And in a burnisht Flagonet stood by
 Beere small as Comfort, dead as Charity.
 At which amaz'd, and pondring on the food,
 How cold it was, and how it child my blood;
 I curst the master; and I damn'd the souce;
 And swore I'de got the ague of the house. (13-20)⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Heliogabalus was a Roman Emperor renowned for his excessive indulgences (Patrick note 2, p. 346)

⁵⁷ Pickled (Patrick note 8, p.346).

⁵⁸ The invitation poem is a minor genre. Herrick subverts the tradition by describing an inhospitable reception. Compare this poem with Ben Jonson's "*Inviting a Friend to Supper*", in which Jonson invites a friend to the ideal supper (Donaldson, *Ben Jonson*, p. 259).

Herrick's anger derives from the insulting treatment he has received. The household in question is both literally and metaphorically sick. By contrast, the Pemberton panegyric provides a vision of how the ideal household should be run. By household, I do not mean the narrow sense in which we conceive of nuclear households today, but a communal unit, such as Pemberton's, to which the local community belongs, and which constitutes a site of identity. As such, Pemberton's household acts as a microcosm for how the ideal society should be run. The decline of generosity, of hospitality, of *ubuntu*, in England generally poses a threat to Herrick's vision of a holistically harmonious society based on communitarian values and leads to the kind of sick society which he sees in the microcosmic setting of the miserable cold house of the unnamed host. The social problems which troubled Herrick and his contemporaries, including corruption and corrupted patronage, conspicuous consumption by the elite, political intrigue and insurrection, culminating in civil war and its accompanying poverty, famine, sickness and death are a macrocosm of the unnamed host's self-centred attitude. We can thus draw a correlation between the sick house and Herrick's observation about contemporary events that "Sick is the Land to'th'heart; and doth endure/ More dangerous faintings by her desp'rate cure" ("*The bad season makes the Poet sad*", H-612 / 214 / 5-6).

We cannot fully understand Herrick's 'social mode' without presupposing his pre-Enlightenment self-understanding, including his communitarian other-directed point-of-view. It follows that a great deal of Herrick self-presentation in *Hesperides* is constituted by his relationships with other people. To begin this discussion of several manifestations of Herrick's 'social mode', his poems to his brothers and his sister, as well as to their spouses and children, demonstrate his understanding of 'family' to be what we would now call an 'extended family', as opposed to the modern 'nuclear family'.⁵⁹ Herrick's earliest-dateable poems include two that he addresses to family members, namely his brother, Thomas, and his sister, Mercy. "*A Country life: To his Brother, Master Thomas Herrick*" (H-106 / 34) was written on the occasion of Thomas's departure from London to

⁵⁹ With *ubuntu*, a correlation can be drawn between Herrick's understanding of the family as an extended entity and African culture today, in which the conception of 'family' is far broader than in most modern Western cultures. Family goes beyond blood-ties, to embrace the entire community. An orphaned child becomes the responsibility of all families in the community. A mother is not just someone's mother, she is *your* mother. An old man is not just an old man, he is *your* grandfather.

live on a farm in about 1610.⁶⁰ “*To my dearest Sister M. Mercie Herrick*” (H-818 / 269) was written some time before Mercy’s marriage to John Wingfield in 1611.⁶¹ Both poems display Herrick’s conscientious celebration of family ties, which can be attributed to the difficult circumstances of his early childhood. His mother Julian abandoned him and his two older brothers, Nicholas and Thomas, to the guardianship of their two paternal uncles in 1593. She left London with her two youngest children, Mercy and William, and rather more of her dead husband’s estate than was granted to her in his will. Whereas Julian subsequently receives just a single mention in *Hesperides*, Herrick addresses poems to his dead father, to each of his siblings, as well as to several of his nieces and nephews.⁶² Together with Julian, Herrick’s guardian and uncle William is also conspicuous by his absence from *Hesperides*, apart from a reference to an orphan who needs legal protection from “that Wolfe-like-man,/ Who is his *Butcher* more than *Guardian*” (H-557 / 201 / 15-16).⁶³ While sibling solidarity in Herrick’s poems to his fellow-adoptee brothers, Nicholas and Thomas, are to be expected, his equally-loving poems to his mother’s preferred siblings, Mercy and William, testify to his magnanimous personality.⁶⁴ Herrick’s poems to his siblings and their families illustrate the seriousness with which

⁶⁰ “*A Country life*” displays the eighteen year old Herrick’s familiarity with a wide range of classical poets, including Horace, Martial and Virgil, as well as with contemporaries such as Shakespeare (*Hamlet*) and Jonson (“*To Sir Robert Wroth*”). For the literary precociousness which comes with a Renaissance humanist grammar school education, see Chapter 3 of this thesis.

⁶¹ Robert would have been nineteen or twenty years old, and serving his ten-year goldsmith’s apprenticeship to his guardian and uncle, William Herrick, in London when he wrote these poems.

⁶² See “*Julia Herrick*” in “*His Tears to Thamasis*” (H-1028 / 315 / 15-16). Apart from the poems to Thomas and Mercy Herrick, see “*To the reverend shade of his religious Father*” (H-82 / 27); “*An Ode ... upon his Brothers death*” (H-185 / 72) & “*To his dying Brother, Master William Herrick*” (H-186 / 73); “*To his Brother Nicolas Herrick*” (H-1100 / 330); “*No Spouse but a Sister*” (H-31 / 13), “*Upon his Sister-in-Law, Mistresse Elizabeth Herrick*” (H-72 / 23) & “*Upon his kinswoman Mistris Elizabeth Herrick*” (H-376 / 145); “*To his Brother in Law Master John Wingfield*” (H-590 / 210) – he married Herrick’s sister Mercy; “*To his Sister in Law, Mistresse Susanna Herrick*” (H-977 / 304) – she married Herrick’s brother Nicholas; “*To his kinswoman Mistresse Bridget Herrick*” (H-562 / 203) – she is probably Nicholas’s daughter; & “*To his kinsman Master Thomas Herrick, who desired to be in his Book*” (H-983 / 305) – he is probably Nicholas’s eldest son.

⁶³ A series of fourteen letters sent to William by Herrick from Cambridge University attest to a strained relationship between the two men. The letters comprise Herrick’s only surviving prose writing. Herrick was living off the interest of his inheritance (£40, or about 9.5% per annum) at university, the administration of which remained in his uncle’s care. The letters, written in fairly standard epistolary style, reveal that Herrick had to cajole his uncle to help settle his debts. William was absent from London on at least one occasion without sending Herrick his allowance. See the letters in Martin (445-453).

⁶⁴ When Julian died in 1629, she left her estate to Mercy and William, while Herrick and his elder brothers received only token rings (*ODNB*).

Herrick fulfilled his familial obligations, while the conspicuous absentees such as Julian and William suggest some of the tensions within Herrick's extended family.⁶⁵

Herrick's attitude towards his fellow poets is another aspect of his "social mode". Here, Helgerson's statement that the Cavaliers "gratefully accepted the literary tradition bequeathed them" (1983: 200) is partly borne out by the five poems which Herrick addresses to Ben Jonson (more poems than to any other poet in the collection). Herrick's gratitude is particularly evident in "*An Ode for him*". The poem's two pyramid-shaped stanzas are poetic monuments erected by Herrick in honour of his literary father:

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

My Ben
 Or come agen:
 Or send to us,
 Thy wits great over-plus;
 But teach us yet
 Wisely to husband it;
 Lest we that Tallent spend:
 And having once brought to an end
 That precious stock; the store
 Of such a wit the world sho'd have no more. (H-911 / 289 / 11-20)

The references to "those *Lyrick* Feasts,/ Made at the *Sun*,/ The *Dog*, the triple *Tunne*" in Herrick's ode is a further indication of Herrick's "social mode" in which the production of poetry is intimately connected to social interactions – mostly between men. Ben Jonson set the trend for the seventeenth century drinking club by gathering his fellow-

⁶⁵ To continue the similarities between Herrick's social stance and *ubuntu*, the family unit in a communitarian society is broader than in an individualistic society. Hence the fact that in traditional African cultures, one's community and one's extended family are interchangeable entities.

poets around him in taverns such as the Mermaid, the Devil, as well as the venues Herrick mentions, in imitation of the ancient Greek symposiastic tradition. According to Timothy Raylor, these gatherings were characterised by “a tension between competition and bonding within the group, the strengthening of social ties through sharing, the assertion of power (individual or group) through displays of wit, wealth, or violence, a philosophy of moderation, and potential subversiveness” (1994: 72).⁶⁶

Herrick acknowledges his debt to Jonson in the ode, but what is striking about Herrick’s poems addressed to other poets in *Hesperides* is that, apart from a handful of epigrams which mock the likes of ‘Poet Prat’ (H-692 / 238) and ‘Nis’ (H-896 / 286), he does not seek to distinguish and differentiate himself from his contemporaries, but encourages them and seeks encouragement from them in turn. For example, Herrick’s chivvies Mildmay Fane (1602-1666) to publish his *Otia Sacra*. In a similar vein, John Denham (1614/5 - 1687) and his “brave, bold and sweet *Maronian* [Virgilian] Muse” are also praised in advance of the publication of his topographical reflective poem “Cooper’s Hill” (H-673 / 234 / 12). Charles Cotton (1630 - 1687) is commended for his ability to show the best poets “What State above, what *Symmetrie* below,/ Lines have, or sho’d have” (H-947 / 297 / 9-10), and so is John Hall (1627-56), a young man whose “Muses bring [him]/ ... lesse to taste, then to drink up their spring (H-956 / 299 / 1-2). Herrick also turns to the likes of Sir Edward Sackville (1591-1652), fourth Earl of Dorset (H-506 / 187), George Parry (d. 1670) an Exeter-based ecclesiastical official (H-1062 / 322), and a Laurence Swetnaham (H-1089 / 328, the surname spelling varies) to read and to assess his own poems critically. A trend emerges from Herrick’s interaction with other poets which shows him as a mentor to younger poets, as Ben Jonson was a mentor to him. At the same time, Herrick also seeks advice from poets closer to his own age. A roughly-

⁶⁶ Seventeenth century drinking club culture was complex, but a basic distinction can be drawn between the clubs and the fraternities. Clubs favoured light-hearted literary production, the circulation of informal verse epistles among its members, moderate behaviour, and they attracted cultured men, courtiers and aspiring professionals. Fraternities were patronised by professional soldiers, and were renowned for their excessive drinking and their members’ composition of hearty drinking ballads (Raylor 74-83).

For background information on seventeenth century drinking clubs, I have also consulted Michelle O’Callaghan, “‘Those *Lyrick* Feasts, made at the *Sun*, the *Dog*, the triple *Tunne*’: Going Clubbing with Ben Jonson,” Unpublished paper. Conference on Community and Conviviality in the Work of Robert Herrick and his Contemporaries. Devon, 2008.

sketched, but nevertheless unmistakable picture of a mutually-supportive community of poets thus emerges in *Hesperides*, in addition to his poems to his family.

By contrast to Herrick's poems about hospitality, family, and his fellow poets, the poems he addresses to his patrons demonstrate that Herrick's communitarian, other-directed stance exists side by side with an individualistic, self-directed attitude in which he adopts an instrumental and self-interested stance towards others. Michael Oakeshott's formulation of the difference between self-enactment and self-disclosure in human conduct provides a useful way of not only distinguishing, but also of reconciling, Herrick's two stances. On the one hand, self-enactment refers to "actions understood in terms of the motives in which they are being performed" (1975: 70).⁶⁷ On the other hand, self-disclosure refers to "the intercourse of agents, each agent being concerned with procuring imagined and wished-for satisfactions (which may not be self-gratifications) and each seeking them in responses of another or of others. Actions, here, are performances in respect of their being responses to contingent situations conducive to the achievement of imagined outcomes" (70). It is crucial to note that human conduct is always self-disclosing because conduct is an intelligent response of an agent who understands himself in relation to other agents, but the proportion of self-enactment in conduct dictates the degree to which an action is motivated by an agent's self-interest. In other words,

while the 'intention' of an action is the action itself understood in terms of the imagined and wished-for outcome the agent aims to procure in choosing and performing it [i.e. self-disclosure], the 'motive' of an action is the action itself considered in terms of the sentiment or sentiments in which it is chosen and performed [i.e. self-enactment] (71-2).

In his patron poems, Herrick is more fully self-disclosing, in that his poems are addressed to other agents (his patrons) with the expectation that they will respond by rewarding him (with patronage). In his poems to family and to his fellow poets, by comparison, Herrick

⁶⁷ Oakeshott's use of the word "motives" with reference to self-enactment is somewhat confusing, since self-disclosure is also contingent on wished-for outcomes. What Oakeshott means by "motives" is perhaps better expressed by the word "sentiments", which Oakeshott uses interchangeably with "motives" in his discussion about self-enactment.

is more fully self-enacting, in that the poems are not instrumental or outcome-oriented, but stem from Herrick's self-understanding as a communitarian, other-directed human being. To put it another way, Herrick's patron poems stem more from *what he wants* (self-disclosure) than they stem from *who he is* (self-enactment). However, it must be added that who Herrick is (a social subordinate to his patrons) also influences his conduct. By the same token, Herrick's poems to his family and fellow poets may stem from *who he is* (a dedicated family man, or a conscientious member of a literary community) but they also contain traces of *what he wants* (to be loved by his family in return, or to be encouraged by his fellow poets in his own literary endeavours). Thus, self-disclosure and self-enactment cannot be disentangled from one another. Instead, they co-exist in varying proportions to one another, according to which an agent's action may be more self-disclosing, or more self-enacting, than another of their actions.

Herrick's self-disclosing poems to patrons provide a foil for the less acquisitive self-enacting poems to family and fellow poets which reveal his communitarian self-understanding more fully. He appears to have had at least five patrons during his career as a poet. The first, Endymion Porter (1587-1649), served Buckingham as his master of horse and secretary of Spanish correspondence from 1617 onwards, and soon became an influential member of the royal favourite's entourage, hence his reputation for being "a gateway to all favours" (*ODNB*). He then served Prince (later King) Charles as groom of the bedchamber from 1623 onwards, a position which could only have enhanced his reputation as a portal to the highest powers in the land. Of all Herrick's patron poems included in *Hesperides*, the five he addresses to Porter are the most flattering, which is not surprising in light of the influential position Porter occupied at court. For example, in "To the Patron of Poets, M. End: Porter", Herrick writes, "all Garlands are thy due;/ The Laurell, Mirtle, Oke, and Ivie too" (H-117 / 41 / 9-10) and in "An Ode to Master Endymion Porter, upon his [Herrick's] Brothers death", Porter is Herrick's "chiefe Preserver" (H-185 / 72).⁶⁸

By contrast to Herrick's poems to Porter, those to Clipsby Crew (1599-1648) are less obsequious and more frank in their demands for material succour. For example, he complains to Crew that "SINCE to th'Country first I came,/ I have lost my former flame"

⁶⁸ See also H-492 / 183, H-662 / 229, H-1071 / 324.

and that “In regard I want that Wine,/ Which should conjure up a line” (H-489 / 182 / 1-2, 7-8). In another poem, Herrick is even blunter:

GIVE me wine, and give me meate,
To create in me a heate,
That my pulses high may beat
...
4. Then if any Peece proves new,
And rare, Ile say (my dearest *Crew*)
It was full inspir'd by you. (H-620 / 217 / 1-3, 10-12)

Herrick's comparatively unawed attitude towards Crew can be attributed to the fact that the two men were contemporaries at St. John's College, Cambridge, where they were both fellow-commoners, even though Crew was technically Herrick's social superior (his father, Sir Ranulphe Crew, was a speaker of the 1614 parliament and a wealthy Cheshire landowner).⁶⁹ Herrick also seems to have quarrelled with Crew, although we do not know whether this was the end of their relationship. Despite Herrick's seeming magnanimity in “*A Hymne to Sir Clipseby Crew*”, his promise in the third stanza that Crew's fault will be forgotten is somewhat devious, considering the poem's eventual inclusion in *Hesperides*:

May your fault dye,
And have no name
In Bookes of fame;
Or let it lye
Forgotten now, as I. (H-426 / 161 / 11-15)

⁶⁹ According to T.G.S. Cain, a fellow-commoner was entitled to dine with the fellows and share other privileges in return for higher fees and a gift of silver plate (entry on Herrick in *ODNB*). Herrick, fresh from his unglamorous apprenticeship, was intent on establishing himself as a gentleman, despite the fact that the costs he incurred at one of Cambridge's most expensive colleges were beyond his means. Nevertheless, he persisted at St. John's for three years before revoking his fellow-commoner status and moving to the smaller, cheaper Trinity Hall, in order to complete his BA, and then his MA – a degree which finally conferred him with his much-sought-after gentlemanly status. Some *Hesperides* poems reflect Herrick's concern about his social status, which has been the subject of studies by Mary Thomas Crane and Michael C. Schoenfeldt that both appear in the *George Herbert Journal* (1990/1: 21-50 and 127-154).

This poem shows that seventeenth century poets were not passive, fawning recipients of their patrons' favour, and that in certain instances the poet could assert himself in telling and long-lasting ways.⁷⁰

Herrick's third patron, Mildmay Fane (1602-1666), the second Earle of Westmorland, was another contemporary of Herrick's at Cambridge (albeit he arrived a year or two after Herrick, and resided in Emmanuel). Fane published a collection of religious and emblematic poems entitled *Otia Sacra* ["Sacred Meditations"], in the same year as *Hesperides*, and received encouragement to do so from Herrick himself (H-459 / 172).⁷¹ Unlike Porter and Crew, who both died during the latter 1640s, Fane was able to support Herrick financially throughout the lean years of the Interregnum.⁷² But whereas Porter and Crew were staunch royalists, Fane appears to have hedged his allegiances at the start of the Civil War. He was subsequently imprisoned by Parliament, and released only after he pledged his loyalty to the Commonwealth, whereupon he signed the solemn league and covenant in 1644 (*ODNB*).⁷³ Despite their seeming political differences, Herrick appears to have identified Fane as his most dependable patron, hence his plea to Fane to "Nurse up, great Lord, this my posterity" (H-112 / 40 / 2). Furthermore, in "*To his Verses*" Herrick identifies Fane ("Noble *Westmorland*"), together with Henry Pierrepont ("gallant *Newark*"), as two people "of the large heart and long hand" that will be "fost'ring fathers" to his poems (H-626 / 218 / 9-13).⁷⁴ Although Fane was as useful a

⁷⁰ Other poems to Crew include an epithalamium (dateable to 1625; H-283 / 112), an ode/invitation (H-544 / 198) and two poems to Crew's lady – a consolation on the death of her child (H-514 / 189), and an epitaph on her death (dateable to 1639; H-978 / 304). Malcolm Smuts points out that poems sent to courtly ladies often masked the poets' pleas to their husbands for patronage (1987: 189).

⁷¹ *Otia Sacra* includes 137 poems. Recently, T.G. S. Cain discovered more than 500 additional Fane poems in three manuscripts. Fane's discerning selection of poems in *Otia Sacra* therefore provides an interesting contrast to *Hesperides*, in which Herrick opted to include as many of his poems as he could find at the time. For more on Fane's poetry see T.G.S. Cain, *The Poetry of Mildmay Fane, Second Earl of Westmorland: Poems from the Fulbeck, Harvard and Westmorland Manuscripts*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001).

⁷² See T.G.S. Cain, "Herrick's 'Christmas Carol': A New Poem, and its Implications for Patronage," *English Literary Renaissance*, 29 (1999), 147-53. Herrick received £5 from Fane in November 1649, which may have occasioned the "Christmas Carol" in return, and then £2 annually until 1666.

⁷³ Herrick refused to sign the covenant two years later, hence his eviction from Dean Prior and the sequestration of his living. It is debatable whether Fane's parliamentary loyalties were genuine, or necessitated by the expedient needs of retaining his property and wealth. In any case, Fane's decision to protect his assets benefited Herrick, who could therefore probably overlook Fane's status as a turncoat.

⁷⁴ Henry Pierrepont, marquess of Dorchester (1607-1680), was an ardent Royalist. P.R. Seddon describes him as an "enthusiastic bibliophile", whose catalogued library contained 2101 titles, a third of which were

patron in Herrick's later years as Porter was during the 1620s, the Fane poems, like the Crew poems, are less obsequious than the Porter poems. We can attribute this attitude to the fact that Herrick enjoyed the favour of two of England's most powerful figures – Buckingham and the King – and that Herrick's secure and comfortable living at Dean Prior means he was not obliged to seek much favour from other courtly patrons.

George Villiers (1592-1628), the first Duke of Buckingham, was the royal favourite of both King James I and Charles I. Buckingham was also one of the most prominent patrons of the arts in London (Smuts 1987: 59). It seems likely that Herrick owed his appointment as Buckingham's chaplain to his abilities as a poet, as much as he owed it to his capacity for ministering to Buckingham's spiritual needs.⁷⁵ Buckingham was an immensely unpopular figure, despised and envied in equal measure for his influence on the Crown, and he was eventually assassinated in 1628.⁷⁶ Yet Herrick remembered to include a dedicatory poem to Buckingham when he came to publish *Hesperides* two decades later (H-245 / 99). He also addresses a poem to Buckingham's niece, Anne, whom Herrick mistakenly calls Mary (H-341 / 137). Their inclusion in Herrick's work may be partly an act of Royalist defiance, partly an act of self-presentation through the inclusion of autobiographical detail, but also a reminder of Herrick's former connections with the most powerful courtier in England at a time when his own fortunes were at their lowest ebb.

Fifth and finally, we must count someone of no less stature than King Charles himself as one of Herrick's patrons. We can surmise that Charles knew Herrick because a number of the religious lyrics in *Noble Numbers* were originally set to music by one of the King's most prominent court composers, Henry Lawes, and performed in the King's presence. In addition, *Hesperides* contains "A Pastorall upon the Birth of Prince Charles, Presented to the King, and Set by Master Nicholas Lanier" (H-213A / 85).⁷⁷ It is likely that when

comprised of books about law and medicine (*ODNB*). He also established a botanical garden containing some 2600 species, and owned a chemical laboratory (*ODNB*). He is mentioned only once in *Hesperides*.

⁷⁵ The two men were the same age, which might also have been an additional factor in Buckingham's decision to appoint Herrick his chaplain, since they could relate to one another.

⁷⁶ The House of Commons tried to impeach Buckingham unsuccessfully in 1626, arguing that he was "the chief cause of these evils and mischiefs which this kingdom of England now grievously suffereth" (in Lockyer 1981: 321).

⁷⁷ Prince Charles was born on 29 May 1630. Lanier (1588-1666), meanwhile, was Master of the King's Music from 1625 onwards. Like Endymion Porter, he also played an important role as an art dealer in King Charles's attempts to enlarge the royal art collection (*ODNB*).

Charles granted Herrick the living of Dean Prior in 1629 following the assassination of Buckingham the year before, Charles did so partly in honour of his (Charles's) friend, and partly to reward Herrick for his contributions to court culture. *Hesperides* expresses Herrick's gratefulness to his most important patron in turn, with the Royalist symbol of the crown on its title page, as well as its dedicatory poem to Charles's son (who became Charles II), and its five poems addressed to the King and headed with large, bold, capital letters.⁷⁸

In conclusion, the variety of men and women to whom Herrick's social poems are addressed, including their diverse social standing and the diverse generic modes Herrick uses to address them, presents Herrick as a versatile man who can commune with both kings and commoners alike. Collecting these poems in a book, where the poems can jostle for attention together, serves to highlight the predominance of Herrick's communalistic, other-directed orientation, although it does not negate his individualistic, self-directed orientation which he demonstrates from time to time. Above all, however, the diversity of Herrick's social life, as well as the indications that he enjoyed a large number of mutually-rewarding relationships with others, manifests his self-enactment of that prized well-roundedness which marks out a fulfilled human being in what we now call the Renaissance humanist tradition.

So far in this chapter, I have discussed Herrick's poetic self-presentation through the generic classifications of individual poems. I will now turn my focus to Herrick's self-presentation through the ways in which his generic choices help him to organise his individual poems together into a collection.

Masque

⁷⁸ However, as Coiro has observed, Herrick's praise of Charles is qualified by pithy epigrams of advice which "echo against the poems of royal praise and complicate them with whispered cautions" (1988: 194).

The masque was one of the major courtly entertainments during the reign of James I and Charles I. According to M. H. Abrams, the masque was a poetic drama that combined music, song, dance, splendid costuming and stage spectacle, all held together by a vague plot that was usually of a mythological or an allegorical character (1988: 109). The masque was symbolically significant because its three-part structure – masque, anti-masque, masque – enacted an irruption of implied social order by chaotic forces, and the reconstitution of order thanks to the presence of the king, or the values embodied by his rule. According to Malcolm Smuts, “The essence of the form lay in an attempt to make moral qualities audible or visible through stylized imitation and behaviour” (1987: 163). As such, the masque often contained veiled commentary on events in contemporary society, and was a subtle means of advising the king without undermining his authority.

There are a number of similarities between the masque and *Hesperides*, beginning with *Hesperides*'s fusion of many genres which resembles the masque's diversity of dramatic elements. The vague presence of a narrative plot in *Hesperides* is also reminiscent of the masque's use of a similarly indistinct plot.⁷⁹ Furthermore, just as the masque was performed in the presence of the king as a way of commenting on his rule, *Hesperides* belongs to the epigram book tradition which also traditionally addresses itself to the king (Coiro 1988: 111-12). Both the masque and the epigram book developed strategies of criticising the king's rule without provoking his ire. For example, the masque on the one hand evokes myth and allegory rather than realist representation, and it consistently returns to an affirmation of the king's ability to restore virtuous order. On the other hand, the epigram book develops a number of strategies to avoid censure, including the cultivation of a harmless, bumbling persona (Coiro 92); a “confused method” of arrangement which allows its author to claim innocence or coincidence if he is called to account for any criticism (93); and the interweaving of poems of praise with poems of advice to form “a subtle and mutable discourse” (185).

Yet another similarity between *Hesperides* and the masque is the tension in Herrick's book between soothing lyric and raucous epigram, which is comparable to the tension between the orderly masque and the disorderly antimasque. Unlike in the masque,

⁷⁹ See Kimmey (1970) and Coiro's (1988) arguments in Chapter 1 above, both of whom argue that there is a narrative structure to *Hesperides*, even if – on closer inspection – it appears to be somewhat dislocated.

however, which ends in an orderly resolution, the epigrammatic anti-masque element of *Hesperides* comes to dominate the end of the work. Coiro detects a gradual shift in *Hesperides* from lengthier forms, including the lyric, to terser epigrammatic forms. Her observation is corroborated by John Creaser, who observes that the first 350 poems in the 1648 edition fill 160 pages of print, whereas the last 350 poems fill ninety-one pages (2009: 182). Coiro argues that the first half of *Hesperides* looks fondly backwards to a time when Charles's political and cultural powers were at their height, while the second half looks forwards at the unfamiliar, disordered and frightening prospect of an English Commonwealth.

[*Hesperides* is] a masque turned upside-down, with the antimasque voices of mockery, disorder, and warning raised very strongly at the end and never returned to their marginalized position. (24)

Hesperides' publication in 1648, on the cusp between the end of the monarchy and the beginning of the Commonwealth, lends its masque-like structure an additional poignancy.

The placement of two poems in particular bears witness to a sense in which the mood in *Hesperides* shifts from optimism to despair. "Upon Julias Recovery" (H-9 / 7) and "The Hagg" (H-1122 / 333) have been placed in parallel positions nine poems after the beginning of the book and nine poems before the end. The two poems are a study in contrasts. To begin with "Upon Julias Recovery", the poem is optimistic in tone and laden with proto-Royalist symbolism:

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

The drooping roses, now recovering, are analogous to the symbolic English rose (1-2); the “newer Purple” of each “declining *Violet*” has associations with imperial, royal colours (3-4); the primrose derives its name from the Latin, *prima rosa*, suggesting England’s foremost ‘rose’, the king (5-6); the “flowers ally’d in blood,/ Or sworn to that sweet Sister-hood” are reminiscent of a political or military alliance, possibly the pro-Royalist forces (7-8); the “*Clarret*, and *Creame* commingled” on Julia’s cheeks are the same colours as those comprising England’s flag, the Cross of St. George (9-10); red “*Corrall*” was a rare and precious commodity whose colour matches the red of the roses, the blood and the claret. Coral was worn as an amulet to indicate the wearer’s health, and also to ward off evil, much as the King’s touch was believed to cure scrofula.⁸⁰ The poem’s optimistic mood is heightened by its profusion of colours – red roses, red coral, purple violets, yellow primroses, and Herrick’s favourite colour-combination, the “*Clarett*, and *Cream* commingled” of Julia’s cheeks. *Hesperides* thus begins with a poem which, very like the masque, suggests in a richly evocative series of symbols that the King’s presence represents order, stability and national wellbeing.

The beautiful but frail Julia is the polar opposite of the foul but physically robust hag. The tone of this poem is overpoweringly pessimistic:

The Hagg

THE staffe is now greas’d,
And very well pleas’d,
She cockes out her Arse at the parting,
To an old Ram Goat
That rattles i’t’h’throat,
Halfe choakt with the stink of her farting.

In a dirty Haire-lace
She leads on a brace
Of black-bore-cats to attend her;
Who scratch at the Moone,
And threaten at noone
Of night from Heaven for to rend her.

⁸⁰ *Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery* (111). For a poem about the King’s mythical ability to cure scrofula, see “TO THE KING, To cure the Evill” (H-161 / 61).

A hunting she goes;
 A crackt horne she blowes;
 At which the hounds fall a bounding;
 While th'Moone in her sphere
 Peepes trembling for feare,
 And night's afraid of the sounding.

Compared with the many bright, cheerful colours of the Julia poem, the two colours of this poem are the pale peeping light of the terrified moon, its the pitch-black gloom associated with midnight (“noone/ Of night”) and the black fur of the snarling, scratching bore-cats. Instead of flowers, the hag poem is studded with objects described as “dirty” (7) and “crackt” (14). The hag is unpleasant, she has evil attendants, and she is totally in control, leaving a few timid souls, symbolised by the moon, to peep fearfully at the disharmonious scene from afar. As far as I can tell, Royalist symbols are entirely absent from this poem. Thus “*The Hagg*” represents a kind of anti-masque in which disorder reigns supreme. But there will be no return to the triumphant order of the masque as *Hesperides* draws to a close. By the time Herrick’s work was published in 1648, the masque was an outdated relic of the monarchy’s self-perpetuating ideology that had been irredeemably shattered by the events of the civil war.

At the same time, however, the absence of a return to the masque at the end of *Hesperides* invites thoughts of a resolution of sorts, although Herrick does not explicitly state such an outcome. The reader might recall the book’s dedicatory poem, addressed to Prince Charles, the King’s son and heir. In 1648 King Charles had been defeated and placed under house arrest while Prince Charles had escaped to France to raise another army. In one sense, Herrick implies that his *Hesperides* – the plethora of glittering little poems “sent/T’ensangle this expansive firmament” (H-516 / 191) – were inspired by Prince Charles. In another sense, the link between Prince Charles and astronomy, which is in turn associated with fortune and the supernatural, hints at a partly superstitious, partly religious belief that the “Most Hopefull PRINCE” is destined to rescue the monarchy which lay in tatters in 1648:

TO THE MOST
 ILLUSTRIOUS,
 AND

Most Hopefull PRINCE,
 C H A R L E S,
 Prince of *Wales*

WELL may my Book come forth like Publique Day,
 When such a *Light* as *You* are leads the way:
 Who are my Works *Creator*, and alone
 The *Flame* of it, and the *Expansion*.
 And look how all those heavenly Lamps acquire
 Light from the Sun, that *inexhausted Fire*:
 So all my *Morne*, and *Evening Stars* from you
 Have their *Existence* and their *Influence* too.
 Full is my Book of Glories; but all These
 By You become *Immortal Substances*.

Biblical words and phrases such as “a *Light* [which]...leads the way”, “*Creator*”, “*Flame*”, “*Expansion*”, “heavenly Lamps”, “Sun” (with its similarity to “Son”), “*inexhausted Fire*”, “Book of Glories” and “*Immortal Substances*” reinforces the sense of a divine influence at work. To develop this religious sentiment further, it should also be observed that *Noble Numbers* follows *Hesperides*, and contains a carol, an anthem and three songs that were performed before the King.⁸¹ The presence of these poems after the gloomy denouement of *Hesperides* reinforces the sense that the combined collection of poems is not ultimately despairing, and that Herrick is hoping for the full reinstatement of King Charles at some point in the future.

Romance

The romance, which developed in France in the twelfth century, contains epic and heroic features which, as I have argued above, are both genres to which Herrick aspires. However, the essential difference between epic and romance is that the former is characterised by “unity, verisimilitude, [and] epic seriousness” whereas the latter is episodic and fantastical, although not necessarily less serious than epic (Patterson 1984: 161). For Herrick, the episodic nature of the romance would have been better suited to lending form to the loose jumble of poems which he had at his disposal, rather than the

⁸¹ See N-17 / 342, N-96 / 364, N-97 / 365, N-98 / 366 and N-102 / 367.

epic which requires a unified, organic plot whose causal progression ensures that if any part were removed, replaced, or swapped, the whole would be disturbed (Parker 1971/2: 70-6).

There are two other key characteristics of romance which match Herrick's purposes in *Hesperides*. Firstly, the romance is notable for its evocation of the supernatural. Whereas the supernatural in epic is concerned with the gods, in romance the supernatural is concerned with magic, spells and enchantments (Abrams 25). *Hesperides* contains a series of poems on the fairy king, Oberon, and his queen, Mab (H-223 / 90; H-293 / 119; H-443 / 165), as well as numerous poems on folk superstitions (for example, the series on various "Charmes" H-888 / 284 to H-891 / 284). In these ways, *Hesperides* is sufficiently suggestive of the romance genre to recall some of the themes of Herrick's literary forebears, Shakespeare and Spenser, as well as to position his work in a five hundred year-old European literary tradition.

The second characteristic of the romance is that it "delights in wonders and marvels" (Abrams 25). A notable feature of *Hesperides* is what Marjorie Swann has called its "kaleidoscopic variety" of subject matter (2001: 182). In her book about the culture of collecting in early modern England, Swann argues that the poems in *Hesperides* are arranged "like the objects of a curiosity cabinet which have been displayed to maximise their quality of 'wonder'" (182). For the reader, part of the enjoyment of reading *Hesperides*, like with reading a romance, derives from being exposed to the wonders and marvels which it relates. As Neil Freistat has observed, writing or reading such a multi-faceted poetry collection like *Hesperides* requires "an openness before experience" which is a similar requirement of readers of the romance genre (1986: 6).

Silva

In *Kinds of Literature*, Fowler specifically mentions Herrick as someone whose poetic reputation has fallen foul of shifting generic preferences since the mid-seventeenth century (1982: 229). I have already noted how Herrick's deployment of epigrams to their fullest capacity in *Hesperides*, including his insistence on including all five categories of them in his book, does not agree with the modern preference for well-polished lyrics. But

even our misapprehension of his status as an epigrammatist pales in comparison with the near-total puzzlement at the generic principle of the *silva* collection with which Herrick both orders and disorders *Hesperides*.

The point about a *silva* collection has always been its requirement that the reader should focus on the entire book as the object of interpretation. Calling for a re-evaluation of the book-as-poem, Neil Freistat coins the phrase “contexture” to account for “the contextuality provided for each poem by the larger frame within which it is placed, the intertextuality among poems so placed, and the resultant texture of resonance and meanings” (1986: 3). Contexture may imply a conscious ordering – or a conscious disordering – of poems within the book. According to Frans de Bruyn, the *silva* is essentially “a collection genre, a miscellaneous poetic form of classical origin” (2001: 347). Alastair Fowler describes it as “a collection type characterized by apparent spontaneity and random variety” (1980: 244). The *silva* can be either a collection of poetry, or of prose, or both. Its earliest known practitioner was Publius Statius (c. 45 - c. 96 AD), who collected thirty two occasional poems together and called the collection *Sylvae*. From Statius onwards, the characteristics of the genre have been endlessly contested, debated, and reinterpreted; the reason being that the characteristics of *silva* are so varied that a poet or a writer can choose to emphasise certain of its characteristics, to downplay others, or to combine endless variations of the genre together to create a new version.

Firstly, the *silva* means “wood” or “forest”. Metaphorically, then, the *silva* could be interpreted in two ways:

A writer or speaker might emphasize the connotations of ‘natural, unchecked growth, or wildwood,’ implying, in critical terms, the absence of an ‘artful pattern to the individual pieces or to the collection as a whole.’ Alternatively, if one takes *silva* as a ‘quasi-technical term drawn from gardening,’ emphasis falls on the opposing connotation of ‘artificial order’. ‘We should think of formal parks, with artful arrangements of trees,’ or of ordered trees in the form of orchards and groves. (de Bruyn 358)⁸²

⁸² The quotations in de Bruyn are derived in turn from David F. Bright, *Elaborate Disarray: The Nature of Statius’s Sylvae*, (Meisenheim am Glan: Verlag Anton Haim, 1980), pp. 22-23.

Secondly, the *silva* varies according to the degree to which its author adopts a spontaneous or a studied approach. In the prose introduction to *Sylvae*, Statius boasted that:

These pieces of mine, which were produced in the heat of the moment and by a kind of joyful glow of improvisation ... none of them took longer than two days to write, while some of them were turned out in a single day. (trans. in de Bruyn 357)

While we cannot be sure whether or not Statius is adopting an affected *sprezzatura*, his approach to writing poetry spontaneously and with minimum toil was challenged by Quintilian (c.35 – c. 100 AD), who argued in the *Institutio Oratoria* that poetry should be written with care and precision from the outset:

There is a fault ... into which those fall who insist on first making a rapid draft of their subject with the utmost speed of which their pen is capable, and write in the heat and impulse of the moment. They call this their rough copy [*hanc silvam vocant*]. They then revise what they have written, and arrange their hasty outpourings. But while the words and the rhythm may be corrected, the matter is still marked by the superficiality resulting from the speed with which it was thrown together. The more correct method is, therefore, to exercise care from the very beginning, and to form the work from the outset in such a manner that it merely requires to be chiselled into shape, not fashioned anew. (trans. in de Bruyn 360)

The tension in *silva* between a spontaneous and a studied approach, between plainness and elaborateness, between process and product, between open-ended and closed forms, continued to be contested in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. For example, Sir Francis Bacon and Alexander Pope proposed two competing ways in which written knowledge should be presented. While Bacon argued in favour of the ancients who used to “throw the knowledge which they gathered from the contemplation of things ... into short and scattered sentences, not linked together by an artificial method; and did not pretend or profess to embrace the entire art” (*Novum Organum* in de Bruyn 353), Pope argued instead for the completeness, coherence and regularity of literary form:

In Wit, as Nature, what affects our Hearts
 Is not th' Exactness of peculiar Parts;
 'Tis not a *Lip*, or *Eye*, we Beauty call,
 But the joint Force and full *Result of all*. (*The Dunciad* in de Bruyn 359)

The *silva* can also accommodate Pope's articulation of a carefully-constructed form, because of the connotations of the genre's Greek name, *hylē*, which means either "raw material" or "material for construction". While the "raw material" metaphor is reminiscent of the haphazard stockpiling of building materials, and would have a similar effect to the "wildwood", the "material for construction" metaphor allows for the construction of a carefully-built, perfectly-proportioned collection of poems which would bear little or no resemblance to the teeming disorder of the "wildwood". In conclusion, the competing preferences of Statius and Quintilian, as well as the differences between Bacon and Pope, stem from the fact that the *silva* allows for many different variations of miscellany, according to which characteristics of the genre a writer chooses to combine together.

The multiple possibilities of *silva* can be best demonstrated in the works of Ben Jonson who created three very different collections of miscellaneous material. *The Forrest* (1616) is the most conventionally Statian of the trio, although Fowler has argued that its symmetrical two-part structure, as well as its progression from poems about human love to poems about divine love, render it a "highly polished" sequence (1982: 170-7). The *Under-wood* (published posthumously in 1640) is more profuse and miscellaneous than *The Forrest*. Finally, *Timber: or, Discoveries* (1640) is a prose collection of apothegms and fragments, and of Jonson's three *sylvae* it most closely adheres to the *hylē* metaphor of scattered raw materials. Other diverse examples of *silvae* which Herrick might have turned to for precedents include Pierre de Ronsard's *Bocages* (1554), Phineas Fletcher's *Silva Poetica* (1633), Abraham Cowley's *Sylva, or, divers Copies* (1646) and George Herbert's *Lucus* (1648). For Herrick, then, an almost limitless array of options and combinations was open to him when he sat down to collect and arrange his poems. Of these contemporary *sylvae*, Coiro believes that *Hesperides* most closely resembles *Underwood*, arguing that Jonson's work "provided Herrick with a model for a complex and unified volume, a way of gathering together the work of a

lifetime” (1988: 108). However, the 1440 poems which Herrick gathers in *Hesperides* dwarf the ninety one in *Underwood*. In fact, Herrick outstrips every other poet of his generation in the keenness with which he felt impelled to publish his entire life’s work (or as much of it as he could find at the time) in a single collection.

Herrick’s decision to include as much of his life’s work as possible in *Hesperides* renders it vast, repetitious and contradictory, and thereby orientates it towards the tangled, disordered and intertwined wildwood metaphor. Some modern critics simply do not like such a form. For example, in the most recent critical study done on Herrick, John Creaser characterises *Hesperides* as “a loose baggy monster” which, despite its fleeting signs of organisation, “benefits from selection and whose verse can be re-shuffled with only occasional loss” (2009: 171-85). Others, like Gordon Braden, are content to describe, but not condemn, *Hesperides* as “a collection of generally interchangeable poems, largely independent of each another while being, as their titles sometimes confess, curiously similar” (1978: 181). Still others, like Coiro, are not prepared to accept that *Hesperides* does not conform to “some cohesive pattern” and that, in fact, the work has a “continuous conscious *purpose*” (1988: 3-4). The truth is that *Hesperides* is both ordered and disordered, and shares characteristics with each of the three *sylvan* poetic metaphors: wildwood, orchard-grove, and man-made construction.

Hesperides is an expansive wildwood in parts, where poems have been jumbled together in no discernible order or pattern except perhaps in the consistency of their disorder. Yet even when the arrangement of poems seems to be at its most careless, Herrick’s characteristically minute attention to detail within the poems themselves counterbalances the diffusive nature of their arrangement, which implies that Herrick is a careful and deliberate artist, as much as he is a carefree and spontaneous one.⁸³ Furthermore, the potential of the *silva* to contain paradoxical opposites is reflected in the fact that when the arrangement of the poems appears to be at its most wild and artless, such an effect can be the outcome of a quite deliberate artfulness on the part of its author,

⁸³ Such a tension is reflected, but not resolved, in two articles by John Creaser. The first, entitled “‘*Times trans-shifting*’: Chronology and the Misshaping of Herrick”, includes his observation that *Hesperides* is a “loose baggy monster” that is marked by “a wilful disarray in order” (2009: 171). The second, entitled “Herrick at Play”, remarks that many of Herrick’s short pieces are “exquisitely wrought”, that such poems demonstrate “a finesse of perception”, and that “Herrick is a connoisseur of subtle discriminations” (2006: 327, 328, 334).

and the outcome can be aesthetically pleasing. Herrick expresses this idea at one remove in “*Art above Nature, to Julia*”:

WHEN I behold a Forrest spread
 With silken trees upon thy head;
 And when I see that other Dresse
 Of flowers set in comelinesse:
 When I behold another grace
 In the ascent of curious Lace,
 Which like a Pinnacle doth shew
 The top, and the top-gallant too.
 Then, when I see thy Tresses bound
 Into an Ovall, square, or round;
 And knit in knots far more than I
 Can tell by tongue; or true-love tie:
 Next, when those Lawnie Filmes I see
 Play with a wild civility:
 And all those airie silks to flow
 Alluring me, and tempting so:
 I must confesse, mine eye and heart
 Dotes less on Nature, then on Art. (H-560 / 202)

The tresses “knit in knots far more than I/ Can tell by tongue” are particularly expressive of the *silva*’s artful artlessness. There is a sense in which Herrick has knit, or arranged, *Hesperides* into a series of indiscernible knots. Although the reader is unable to untangle the knots, the fact remains that their creator tied them carefully and deliberately in such a way as to be indiscernible. The readers’ inability to untie the knots is not an indictment of the authors’ decision to tie them in the first place. Meanwhile, the natural imagery of the forest (1) and the flowers (4) can both be read as metaphors for the collection genres of *silva* and *florilegium*. Although the *silva* tends to be associated with a larger, more indiscriminate collection of poems by contrast to the *florilegia*, meaning “a collection or selection of flowers” (*OED*) and implying a selective gathering of poems, both are collection genres and both can therefore be arranged according to the principle of “wild civility” (14) which Herrick favours. The phrase is repeated in “*Delight in Disorder*”, although Herrick appears to contradict himself by inverting his preference for art over nature:

A SWEET disorder in the dresse
 Kindles in cloathes a wantonnesse:
 A Lawne about the shoulders thrown
 Into a fine distraction:
 An erring Lace, which here and there
 Enthralls the Crimson Stomacher:
 A Cuffe neglectfull, and thereby
 Ribbands to flow confusedly:
 A winning wave (deserving Note)
 In the tempestuous petticoate:
 A careless shooe-string, in whose tye
 I see a wilde civility:
 Doe more bewitch me, then when Art
 Is too precise in every part. (H-83 / 28)

Despite the contradiction, what Herrick is indicating is that order and disorder are two sides of the same coin, and that the “wild[e] civility” of *Hesperides* is designed artificially so as to be “alluring ... tempting” and “bewitch[ing]” to the reader.⁸⁴

Apart from its expanses of wildwood, *Hesperides* also includes sequentially-arranged poems which represent the *silva* metaphor of the orderly and domesticated placement of trees within groves or orchards. The more extensive examples of these patterns include a *florilegium* sequence (H-189 / 74 to H-193 / 75); a royal family sequence (H-264 / 107 to 266 / 108); a folkloristic charms and superstitions sequence (H-888 / 284 to H-891 / 284), which is immediately juxtaposed with the Christian Candlemas sequence (H-892 / 285 to H-894 / 285);⁸⁵ and a second charms sequence (H-1063 / 322 to H-1065 / 323).

Hesperides also contains pairs of either twinned or opposite poems which have either been placed together, as in “*The suspition of his over-much familiarity with a Gentlewoman*” (H-136 / 48) and “*Single life most secure*” (H-137 / 49), or apart, as in “*His fare-well to Sack*” (H-128 / 45) and “*The Welcome to Sack*” (H-197 / 77).

⁸⁴ In fact, Walt Whitman famously expressed the idea of the *silva* (although he may not have known it as such) in *Leaves of Grass*:

Do I contradict myself?
 Very well then ... I contradict myself;
 I am large ... I contain multitudes. (Michael Moon (ed.), New York: Norton, 2002), p.709.

⁸⁵ Candlemas celebrates the Presentation of Christ to the Temple by the Virgin Mary (Patrick note 1, p.375).

However, as John Dixon Hunt has noted, groves may also be “trees arranged in some formal pattern, including a pattern that appeared to deny any order” (1986: 42).⁸⁶ So, while the reader might discern some patterns in *Hesperides*, he might miss others altogether. Like the grove that has been deliberately ordered by its creator so as to deny any sense of order to the onlooker, Herrick mentions that, before he had to leave somewhere (probably Devon), never to return, he “had a Book which none/ Co’d reade the Intext but my selfe alone” (“*To his Closet-Gods*”, H-652 / 227 / 5-6). By “Intext”, Herrick means “the text or matter of a book” (*OED*).⁸⁷ It is possible that such a book could have been an early version of *Hesperides*, in which Herrick was working out the concept, including the arrangement, of his *magnum opus*.

Finally, there are parts of *Hesperides* that do not conform to natural metaphors at all, and which resemble carefully-wrought man-made structures that have been built from the choicest *hylē*. The most obvious examples are the eight-poem sequences of self-reflexive poems which both begin and end *Hesperides*. The numerological significance of the number eight would have been immediately recognisable to Renaissance readers. Eight is a so-called ‘beautiful’ number, or *perfectus octonarius*, because it is a perfect cube (Curtius 1990: 503-4).⁸⁸ The principle of ‘squareness’, of solidity, and thereby of perfection, is embodied in the eight poems at the beginning of *Hesperides* and the eight at the end.⁸⁹ The sense of two artificial portals, or thresholds, on either side of *Hesperides* is enhanced by the frontispiece picture of Herrick’s bust resting upon a solid, squat block, which seems to mark an entry-point to a landscape of grassy hills, trees, shrubs, flowers and streams beyond. In a similar way, the hieroglyphic “*Pillar of Fame*” marks the exit point to *Hesperides* and is similarly stoutly-shaped.⁹⁰ Other examples of man-made

⁸⁶ *Garden and grove: the Italian Renaissance garden in the English imagination, 1600-1750* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986).

⁸⁷ According to the *OED*, the word is now obsolete.

⁸⁸ $2 \times 2 \times 2$, or 2^3 , equals 8.

⁸⁹ Cubes also embody a sense of solidity and reliability, a characteristic that held ancient associations with both moral and aesthetic values. In a poem addressed to his elder brother, Herrick recalls Aristotle’s principle of *hominem quadratum*: “*A wise man every way lies square*” (H-106 / 34). For a brief discussion of squareness as a moral ideal, see Richard S. Peterson, *Imitation and Praise in the Poems of Ben Jonson*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), p.153.

⁹⁰ Strictly speaking, “*The Pillar of Fame*” is not the last poem in *Hesperides*. It is succeeded by an untitled epitaph: “*To his Book’s end this last line he’d have plac’t, / Jocond his Muse was, but his Life was chast.*” One could legitimately argue, however, that this epitaph is a part of “*The Pillar*”, upon which it is supposed to be engraved, in much the same way as a poem is engraved on the monument depicted in the frontispiece.

structures within the sylvan wildwood, groves and orchards of *Hesperides* include a “white Temple of my Heroes” (H-496 / 185 / 1) and a “City here of Heroes [which] I have made” (H-365 / 143 / 9). However, these references to complex, integrated, artificial structures exist as allusions to Herrick’s intention to create order out of disorder, more than they realise an architectural metaphor in the same way as, say, George Herbert’s arrangement of poems in *The Temple*. Therefore the ‘threshold poems’ provide the collection with the most overtly patterned arrangement in *Hesperides*, an arrangement which emphasises the contrast between the teeming and disorganised ‘garden’ of poetry and its bracketing between two clearly-defined, well-ordered and artificial ‘blocks’ of poems.⁹¹ Indeed, by placing markers which represent the most artificial extreme of the *silva/hylē* metaphor at the collection’s starting and ending points, Herrick is hinting at the underlying paradox of the *silva* collection – that even within its wildest thickets, the *silva* is always an artificial form.

In its multiple variations, then, the *silva* is an attractive metaphor for a poetry collection that purports to represent a topographical space, be it an architectural structure, a garden, a grove, an entire forest or, in Herrick’s ambitious case, a combination of all these elements. In terms of Herrick’s self-presentation, his masterstroke is to take a hotchpotch of his life’s work, much of which comprises brief epigrammatic and lyric forms, and to re-work, arrange and name it so that it is transformed into an audaciously broad, multitudinous, and invigorating work of art.

Herrick’s choice of *Hesperides* as both his title and his sylvan setting is enriched by the multiple layers of meaning associated with the Hesperides. Firstly, the Hesperides represent a mythological space – they were garden islands in the far west of the world

⁹¹ The association between the number eight and justice (Fowler 1970: 53) may also be thematically significant at a time when King Charles was facing charges of treason at the hands of men who were themselves guilty of treason – at least in the eyes of a Royalist sympathiser like Herrick. However, one ought to tread carefully when attempting to identify and interpret numerological patterns within poems and poetry collections because one can fall into the trap of attributing a patterning device to a work where none was intended by its author.

According to Fowler, the number eight also symbolises unity because of its associations with Hymen and Juno, the Greek god and Roman goddess of marriage respectively, although Fowler does not elaborate how or why such an association should arise (53). Certainly, the marriage analogy would appear to have little application to *Hesperides*, especially since Herrick never married and his persona is similarly determined to “never take a wife/ To crucifie my life” (“*No Spouse but a Sister*”, H-31 / 13 / 3-4). The general principle of unity, but not its specific application to marriage, can nevertheless be applied to *Hesperides* because of the symmetrical, ordered placement of eight poems at either end of an otherwise disparate and seemingly disorganised work.

which contained an immortality-giving, golden-apple-bearing tree that was tended by nymphs and guarded by a dragon. Hercules's Eleventh Labour was to retrieve the golden apples from the Hesperides. Secondly, the Hesperides represent a socio-political space. According to Coiro,

Most commentary on Herrick's title has seen *Hesperides* as an enclosed garden, but it is a significant aspect of the myth that the Hesperides are not a walled garden, but two islands separated by a narrow body of water and surrounded by a protective ocean. (1985: 313-4 or 1988: 6)

Queen Elizabeth and King James were particularly keen to cultivate a potent myth of national exceptionalism with Britain as the Fortunate Isles (Coiro 1985: 315).⁹² Thirdly, the Hesperides represents a biblical space, since the paradisiacal garden is connected to the iconography of the Garden of Eden. Fourthly, the Hesperides represents a celestial space, with Hesperus as the evening star and the Hesperides as a constellation of stars. The celestialism of the Hesperidean metaphor in turn evokes associations with the heavens and the supernatural sphere. Each of these layers of Hesperidean meaning – the classical-mythological, the socio-political, the biblical or spiritual – are in turn represented by the subject matter and the generic forms of poems within the *silva* collection itself so that the vastness, the richness, and the diversity of the collection represents, performs and embodies not only an entire world, but an entire universe.

The indiscriminate nature of Herrick's *silva* also tells us something important about his pre-Cartesian, early modern impulse to bring himself to his work entirely and unconditionally. It is the same impulse that led Oliver Cromwell to reportedly demand of his portrait artist, "Mr Lely, I desire you would use all your skill to paint your picture truly like me, and not flatter me at all; but remark all these roughness, pimples, warts, and everything as you see me"; and that led Ben Jonson to refer to his "mountain belly, and ... rocky face" in "*My Picture Left in Scotland*".⁹³ By contrast, what Charles Taylor calls

⁹² The association between Herrick's book and a mythical Britain also signals the epic genre which, as Abrams defines it, is ample in scale, and can have a nation as its theme (1993: 53-4).

⁹³ The authenticity of the Cromwell quotation has been called into question because it was only recorded by Horace Walpole over 100 years after the event (Guy Martin, "Warts and all" in *The Phrase Finder*

the “inwardness” of our modern notion of the self – in other words, the understanding that “our thoughts, ideas, or feelings as being ‘within’ us, while the objects in the world which these states bear on are ‘without’” (1989: 111) – combined with the disengaged and rational stance of the self towards itself (the self as a self in both the first- and the third-person), means that the post-Cartesian individual is more susceptible to the belief that one can (and perhaps should) self-consciously, intentionally and instrumentally conceal and reveal ourselves to others as we see fit.

Of course, Herrick understands that his generous and unconditional self-presentation might be misunderstood, and that his reader might not read his work in the same generous and unconditional spirit which he in turn requires of them. Under these circumstances, however, Herrick is clear: he would rather such a reader did not read his book. Hence the two poems near the beginning of *Hesperides* which give clear instructions to both his reader and to his book:

To the soure Reader

IF thou dislik'st the Piece thou light'st on first;
Thinke that of All, that I have writ, the worst:
But if thou read'st my Booke unto the end,
And still do'st this, and that verse, reprehend:
O Perverse man! If All disgustfull be,
The Extreame Scabbe take thee, and thine, for me. (H-6 / 7)

To his Booke

COME thou not neere those men, who are like *Bread*
O're-leven'd; or like *Cheese* o're renetted. (H-7 / 7)

Leaven is “a substance which is added to dough to produce fermentation” (*OED*), while rennet is “anything used to curdle milk” (*ibid.*). Over-leavened bread and over-renneted cheese are both sour, hence the latter poem is a reiteration of its predecessor. A sour reader is mean-spirited, critical, and difficult-to-please. If he dislikes the first poem he reads, then he is invited to condemn the work as a whole and read no further. However, if

<<http://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/warts-and-all.html>> [accessed 26 November 2009]. Cromwell's opposition to all forms of personal vanity remains plausible, however.

For Ben Jonson's quotation, see Donaldson, *Ben Jonson*, p. 324.

he decides to read the entire work and, after that, he has still not willingly submitted to the necessary requirements of open-mindedness and generosity, then he has committed an offence and deserves whatever extreme punishments he gets.⁹⁴ Elsewhere in *Hesperides*, Herrick states that “these, and Nobler numbers can/ Ne’r please the *supercillious* man” (“*To his Booke*”, H-868 / 279).⁹⁵ By contrast, the type of reader Herrick requires is outlined in “*To the generous Reader*”:

SEE, and not see; and if thou chance t’espie
 Some Aberrations in my poetry;
 Wink at small faults, the greater, ne’rthelessse
 Hide, and with them, their Father’s nakedness.
 Let’s doe our best, our Watch and Ward to keep:
Homer himself, in a long work, may sleep. (H-95 / 32)

Herrick acknowledges his own “nakedness”, a nakedness that is the result of his open and generous self-presentation. The reader will no doubt find faults in *Hesperides*, but a generous one will overlook them in order to appreciate the work as a whole.⁹⁶ After all, even Homer nods; or, in other words, even the most distinguished poets make mistakes.⁹⁷

I have now reached the point where I have outlined Herrick’s chosen genres and what they tell us about him as a poet. It is time to turn my focus towards the ways in which Herrick guides his reader through *Hesperides*, using generic signals, literary conventions and a persona who is a poet grappling with the challenges of creating such a large work.

It is significant that the 1648 edition of *Hesperides* does not number its constituent poems, unlike critical Herrick editions published in more recent times. Because of a lack

⁹⁴ It is possible that Herrick has Ben Jonson in mind, whose first poem in the *Epigrammes* contains a similar exhortation *To the Reader*: “Pray thee take care, that tak’st my book in hand,/ To read it well; that is, to understand.” (Donaldson, *Ben Jonson*, p. 222)

⁹⁵ Supercillious: “Haughtily contemptuous in character and demeanour; having or marked by an air of contemptuous superiority of disdain”; “exacting or severe in judgement, censorious” (*OED*).

⁹⁶ These poems are rhetorical *adhortatio*: a “[f]orm of speech by which the narrator exhorteth and persuadeth his hearers to do something ... not only the form of a commandment or of a promise ... but also gives reasons” (Peacham in Lee A. Sonnino, *A Handbook to Sixteenth Century Rhetoric* (London: Routledge, 1968) p. 20)

⁹⁷ Herrick echoes a line from Horace’s *Ars Poetica* (359).

of numbering in the original, the unquantifiable size of *Hesperides* heightens the reader's sense of being utterly lost within a vast poetic landscape. The idea of the *silva* collection as a topographical space through which the reader is invited to wander time and time again is very suggestive. The conflation of "wander" to "wonder" is central to what is required of the reader in the *silva* tradition. Part of the wonder of the *silva* is that its systems of arrangement are never fully discernible to the reader. The point is that we should wander and wonder through the wood again and again, enjoying it rather than attempting the impossible task of mapping it out, tree by tree. As I wish to show in the remainder of this chapter, however, Herrick does not leave his reader to wander alone through *Hesperides* and that, in fact, his self-presentation as a poet helps to guide us through the collection.

Firstly, the Hesperidean Herrick foregrounds his presence from time to time in scattered poems that contemplate his ongoing relationships with his poems, his book, and his muse as if he is reminding the reader of his presence. The recurrence of these self-reflexive poems throughout *Hesperides* helps to sustain the sense that the reader is not alone in the vast landscape of poetry.

Secondly, Herrick's poetic persona takes brief rests at equally-spaced intervals throughout the work to recuperate from his labours. These rests occur quarter-, half- and three-quarters of the way through *Hesperides* with an interval of roughly three hundred poems in-between each 'rest', thereby creating an ordered pattern to the collection according to the poet's working and resting cycles. When Herrick's persona rests, it may be advisable for the reader to do the same. Nobody can read over a thousand poems and appreciate them in a single sitting. The first rest, in a poem fittingly entitled "*On himselfe*", depicts Herrick as a weary pilgrim come to the end of a long day's journey:

HERE down my wearyed limbs Ile lay;
 My Pilgrims staffe, my weed of gray;
 My Palmers hat; my Scallops shell;
 My Crosse; my Cord; and all farewell.
 For having now my journey done,
 (Just at the setting of the Sun)
 Here I have found a Chamber fit,
 (God and good friends be thank't for it)
 Where if I can a lodger be

A little while from Trampers free;
 At my up-rising next, I shall,
 If not requite, yet thank ye all.
 Meane while, the Holy-Rood hence fright
 The fouler Fiend, and Evill Spright,
 From scaring you or yours this night. (H-306 / 123)

After two short epigrams, Herrick rouses himself with the motivational reminder that “IF well thou hast begun, goe on fore-right;/ *It is the End that Crownes us, not the Fight.*” (“*The end*”, H-309 / 123). Herrick takes a second rest near the halfway point of *Hesperides*:

Paines without profit

A LONG-LIFES-DAY I’ve taken paines
 For very little, or no gaines:
 The Ev’ning’s come; here now Ile stop,
 And work no more; but shut up Shop. (H-602 / 212)

He rouses himself again in the next poem with an exhortation to his book (which applies equally to himself as a poet) to “BE bold my Booke, nor be abasht, or feare/ The cutting Thumb-naile, or the Brow severe” of any unsympathetic readers (H-603 / 212 / 1-2). Herrick also prepares himself (and the reader) for the next section of poetry in this book with the self-assuring claim that “all here is good,/ If but well read; or ill read, understood”; the last four words being a proviso reminding his readers of the minimum standards they are supposed to adhere to when reading *Hesperides* – that is, to try and understand Herrick even if one judges his poetry to be “ill” (3-4). To further his cause, Herrick’s persona prays to Ben Jonson, his literary father, “to aide me” and “make the way smooth for me” in the next poem in this sequence (H-604 / 212 / 4-5). Herrick then takes his third rest three-quarters of the way through *Hesperides*:

Rest Refreshes

LAY by the good a while; a resting field
 Will, after ease, a richer harvest yeild:
 Trees this year beare; next, they their wealth with-hold:
Continuall reaping makes a land wax old. (H-922 / 292)

The “field” and “Trees” mentioned in this poem are features of a typical sylvan landscape. Herrick, the poet-creator of this vast *silva*, cannot afford the sort of “Continuall reaping” that depletes his stock of creative energy. He needs to rest and begin again refreshed, which he does again after two brief epigrams with the statement that “*HARD are the two first staires unto a Crown;/ Which got, the third, bids him a King come downe*” (“*Beginning, difficult*”, H-925 / 292). “*Beginning, difficult*” would be a strange and pointless poem otherwise, except that it holds the clue that Herrick has completed three segments, or steps, and is now commencing the fourth and final segment which will culminate in him receiving “Upon [his] curls the *Mirtle Coronet*” (“*On Himselfe*”, H-1128 / 335).

Between “*Beginning, difficult*” and the fourth and final rest at the end of *Hesperides*, Herrick places a poem entitled “*Rest*”. However, he does not take a rest at this point, but urges himself to press on:

ON with thy worke, though thou beest hardly prest;
Labour is held up, by the hope of rest. (H-1009 / 311)

When he does finally reach the end of *Hesperides*, his rest is again only temporary, as the slightly less than 300-poem segment of *His Noble Numbers* still follows. Herrick makes the hiatus clear in two companion poems near the end of *Hesperides*:

The end of his worke

PART of the worke remaines; one part is past;
And here my ship rides having Anchor cast. (H-1126 / 334)

To Crowne it

MY wearied Barke, O Let it now be Crown'd!
The Haven reacht to which I first was bound. (H-1127 / 334)

Herrick has reached the port or harbour that lies somewhere between the ‘bigger island’ of the first part of his work, and the ‘smaller island’ of the second part of his work. *Noble*

Numbers is the same size as one-quarter of *Hesperides*, or the roughly three hundred-poem divisions which Herrick has signalled through his ‘rests’ up until this point.⁹⁸ With the addition of *Noble Numbers*, then, *Hesperides* becomes a five-part book – at least in so far as the poet-persona opts to divide it up into manageable portions of work for both himself and the reader to navigate through.

Herrick is subtly indicating that although the two works are separate from one another, they are also related. A failure on the part of readers to relate *Hesperides* and *Noble Numbers* to one another is one reason why Herrick’s religious verse has generally been considered by critics to be inferior to his secular poems and glossed over or ignored as a consequence. Nevertheless, John Kimmey has argued that *Hesperides* and *Noble Numbers* are cross-referential “companion works”, similar to John Donne’s *Anniversaries* (1612), or Sir Thomas Browne’s *Urn Burial* and *The Garden of Cyrus* (1658) (1970: 236). For reasons of continuity, then, it is important for Herrick to look ahead to *Noble Numbers* at *Hesperides*’ exit point, and for *Noble Numbers* to be approximately the same size as the other sections in the work that have been defined by Herrick taking evenly-spaced ‘rests’.

My observation that Herrick’s poet-persona needs to take regular rests as a way of sustaining his creative enterprise is echoed by Avon Jack Murphy, who has argued that Herrick’s Hesperidean persona is a realistically-sketched portrait of a poet who “reveal[s] a progress from unsure first steps, to fatigue, and finally to the edge of quiet triumph” (1978: 53). In the discussion which follows, I do not intend to reiterate Murphy, but by adding new observations to his, I arrive at a similar conclusion.

In the first eight poems in *Hesperides*, Herrick’s eagerness to ensure that his book should be read by the right people in the right way is expressed in a voice that wavers between the extremes of self-doubt, as when he pleads with his Muse to “Stay then at home, and doe not goe/ Or flie abroad to seeke for woe” (H-2 / 5 / 19-20), and strident bluster, as when he calls down curses of “swelling *Piles*” (H-5 / 6 / 2) and “The Extreame Scabbe” (H-6 / 7 / 6) on some of his readers. The first half of his book, in particular the section between his first rest and his second, reveals Herrick’s poetic persona to be undergoing moments of severe personal – and, by extension, creative – crisis. The earliest

⁹⁸ *His Noble Numbers* includes 272 poems, or an additional 24% of *Hesperides*’s 1130 poems.

crisis point is a series of three poems soon after he has taken his first rest. The series begins with “*On himselfe*”:

ASKE me, why I do not sing
 To the tension of the string,
 As I did, not long ago,
 When my numbers full did flow?
 Griefe (ay me!) hath struck my Lute,
 And my tongue at one time mute. (H-332 / 131)

In the next poem, “*To Larr*” (H-333 / 131), Herrick speaks of being “driven hence” (1) from his home with its “Country fire” (8), leaving his Larr (or household gods) behind. The upheaval caused by banishment – perhaps autobiographically linked to events in Herrick’s parish during the last years of the Civil War – has temporarily put a stop to his desire to write poetry. Then the third poem in the sequence maintains the theme of the poet’s loss of inspiration caused by the disturbances of external events:

The departure of the good Daemon

WHAT can I do in Poetry,
 Now the good Spirit’s gone from me?
 Why nothing now, but lonely sit,
 And over-read what I have writ. (H-334 / 132)

Herrick’s “*good Daemon*” returns soon afterwards, proof of which is one of his longest and most intricately classical poems, entitled “*His age, dedicated to his peculiar friend, Master John Wickes, under the name of Posthumous*” (H-336 / 132 / 152 lines). Some thirty poems after “*His age*”, Herrick breaks down again, however, and cites circumstances beyond his control as the cause of his distress:

His Lachrimae or Mirth, turn’d to mourning

CALL me no more,
 As heretofore,
 The musick of a Feast;
 Since now (alas)
 The mirth, that was

In me, is dead or ceast.

Before I went
To banishment
Into the loathed West;
I co'd rehearse
A Lyrick verse,
And speak it with the best.

But time (Ai me)
Has laid, I see
My Organ fast asleep;
And turn'd my voice
Into the noise
Of those that sit and weep. (H-371 / 144)

Then, approximately thirty poems before Herrick takes his second rest, we are told in "*The Poet hath lost his pipe*" (H-573 / 205) that "I CANNOT pipe as I was wont to do,/ Broke is my Reed, hoarse is my singing too" (1-2). The ebb and flow of poetic inspiration succeed one another less frequently in the following sections. There is a sense in which Herrick seems to be coming to terms with these cycles; not resisting them, but accepting them philosophically, as when he writes:

Not every day fit for Verse

'TIS not ev'ry day, that I
Fitted am to prophesie:
No, but when the Spirit fills
The fantastic Pannicles:
Full of fier; then I write
As the Godhead doth indite.
Thus inrag'd, my lines are hurl'd,
Like the *Sybells*, through the world.
Look how next the holy fier
Either slakes, or doth retire;
So the Fancie cooles, till when
That brave Spirit comes agen. (H-714 / 242)

A few poems later, Herrick reveals one of the ways in which it is possible to maximise the number of days that are indeed “*fit for Verse*”, which is to practice one’s craft as much as possible:

By use comes easinesse

OFT bend the Bow, and thou with ease shalt do,
What others can’t with all their strength put to. (H-722 / 245)

Having come to terms with the fickleness of his muse, the fourth and final section of the book is characterised less by the poet’s self-doubt than by his determination to get the job done. Self-reflexive epigrams, dispersed at intervals, contain numerous exhortatory imperatives as Herrick drives himself onwards to his book’s conclusion:

The End

CONQUER we shall, but we must first contend;
'Tis not the Fight that crowns us, but the end. (H-933 / 293)

Parcell-gil't-Poetry

LET’S strive to be the best; the Gods, we know it,
Pillars and men, hate an indifferent Poet. (H-1000 / 309)

Rest

ON with thy worke, though thou beest hardly prest;
Labour is held up, by the hope of rest. (H-1009 / 311)

Wit punisht, prospers most

DREAD not the shackles: on with thine intent;
Good wits get more fame by their punishment. (H-1034 / 317)

By this stage, the end of *Hesperides* is slightly more than 100 poems away and, relative to the number of poems the poet-persona has written and arranged, the realisation of his project is close indeed.

In the same way that Herrick's persona gropes gradually towards confidence in his own art, he also becomes better at locating his bearings within the sylvan landscape of his own creation. His most common early mistake is to signal the culmination of his book prematurely. In the first instance, only one-tenth of the way through *Hesperides*, he writes:

ONLY a little more
 I have to write,
 Then Ile give o're,
 And bid the world Good-night. (*"His Poetrie his Pillar"*, H-211 / 85 / 1-4)

Then, only sixty poems past the book's half-way point, he seems to think that "now the time drawes neere,/ That with my Lines, my Life must full-stop here" (*"His charge to Julia at his death"*, H-627 / 219 / 1-2) whereas they only terminate after another six hundred poems. The persona also contradicts himself. A short time later, in a formal retraction of the opening poem of *Hesperides*, Herrick makes a series of promises which he subsequently fails to keep:

On himselfe

ILE sing no more, nor will I longer write
 Of that sweet Lady, or that gallant Knight:
 Ile sing no more of Frosts, Snowes, Dews and Showers;
 No more of Groves, Meades, Springs, and wreaths of Flowers:
 Ile write no more, no will I tell or sing
 Of *Cupid*, and his wittie coozning:
 Ile write no more of death, or shall the grave
 No more my Dirges and my Trentalls have. (H-658 / 228)

Despite these promises, numerous roses, a shower of tears, some garlands, a dancing Cupid, lilies, Julia's dew-like sweat, a dew-bedabbled Lucia, and an apron-full of flowers all appear within the next one hundred poems. So do love poems of such "wittie coozning" that Cupid would be proud to be associated with them: these include poems addressed to Electra (twice), Anthea, Lucia (twice), Sappho (twice), Silvia and to Julia (six times). What is more, less than thirty poems interpose between "*On himselfe*" and one addressed to "that gallant Knight", King Charles (H-685; 236.7). In fact, while

Hesperides does contain a gradually diminishing concentration of lyrics and panegyrics from this point onwards, they do not cease entirely. Herrick's persona's disorientation within the work is not an encouraging sign for those who would argue that *Hesperides* has been carefully arranged according to an overarching purpose. However, the misguided statements, the unkept promises and the self-contradictions all contribute towards presenting the persona as fallible, and, therefore, as all the more skilfully sketched by Herrick as a realistically human persona.

In the long run, however, the Hesperidean Herrick's sense of self-orientation does seem to improve as he becomes more at ease in the poetic landscape of his own creation. For example, in "To Doctor Alabaster" he writes, "NOR art thou lesse esteem'd, that I have plac'd/ (Amongst mine honoured) Thee (almost) the last" (H-763 / 256). His sense of direction within the *sylvan* wood seems to have been sharpened further with his declaration in "On his Booke" that "THE bound (almost) now of my book I see,/ But yet no end of those therein or me" (H-1019 / 313 / 1-2). Like a man lost until he spots a distinctive landmark, Herrick's sense of direction becomes even more pointed in a poem addressed "To the most accomplisht Gentleman Master Michael Oulsworth":

That Fame, and Fames rear'd Pillar, thou shalt see
In the next sheet *Brave Man* to follow thee.
Fix on That Columnne then, and never fall;
Held up by Fames *eternall Pedestall*. (H-1092 / 329 / 5-8)

"Fames rear'd Pillar" is a proleptic reference to the shaped poem, "The Pillar of Fame", which appears at the end of *Hesperides* – now less than forty poems away. The end of the wood is in sight, and Herrick's persona seems to gain heart and, with it, experiences a marked improvement in the alignment of his bearings.⁹⁹

The last eight poems in *Hesperides* demonstrate the fulfilment of Herrick's carefully-crafted poetic self-development. The poet-persona's quiet self-assuredness in the first poem of this sub-sequence, entitled "The mount of the Muses", sets the tone for the denouement of his work:

⁹⁹ Ironically, as Stephen Dobranski points out, "The Pillar of Fame" does not actually appear on the next sheet of the 1648 edition, but on the same side of the same sheet (2005: 159). Despite Herrick's best attempts at ordering his poems, he could not guarantee that the printer would be able to comply with his demands.

AFTER thy labour take thine ease,
 Here with the sweet *Pierides*.
 But if so be that men will not
 Give thee the Laurell Crowne for lot;
 Be yet assur'd, thou shalt have one
 Not subject to corruption. (H-1123 / 334 / 3-6)

The poet-persona believes he has earned the right to dwell with the Pierides, or the Muses, on Mount Helicon, regardless of whether public opinion elevates him there or not.¹⁰⁰ His indifference to public opinion is a far cry from the first eight poems in the collection, when he cajoled and threatened his readers in equal measure so that they could be receptive to his poetry.

Herrick's concern with the reception of *Hesperides* is not wholly absent from the last eight poems, however, as the next poem in the sequence attests:

To his Booke

GOE thou forth my booke, though late;
 Yet be timely fortunate.
 It may chance good-luck may send
 Thee a kinsman, or a friend,
 That may harbour thee, when I,
 With my fates neglected lye.
 If thou know'st not where to dwell,
 See, the fier's by: *Farewell*. (H-1125 / 334)

In contrast to the four poems addressed to his book in *Hesperides*' introductory threshold sequence, the tone of this poem is markedly restrained. For example, in Herrick's first poem "To his Booke" in *Hesperides*, the poet-persona's attitude had been somewhat brusque: "I...bad thee goe./ Regardlesse whether well thou sped'st, or no" (H-3 / 6 / 5-6). Now, however, Herrick simply hopes for "a kinsman, or a friend" (4) among his principal readers, failing which, he would rather his book be burned than be faced with an

¹⁰⁰ The idea that the Muses were bestowers of immortality came into being during late pagan Antiquity with the Pythagorean speculation that the song produced by the Muses was responsible for maintaining the harmony of the spheres (Curtius 234).

unsympathetic audience.¹⁰¹ That he should wish for his book to be burned seems surprising, especially because *Hesperides* has been such an arduous undertaking. Yet the quiet tone with which Herrick delivers the lines “If thou know’st not where to dwell,/ See, the fier’s by: *Farewell*” (7-8) signals the poet’s self-assurance in ways that the brusqueness and bluster of the first threshold could never do.¹⁰²

Herrick’s persona’s poetic self-awareness has developed to the extent that he now has a reasonably clear idea how he and his book might be received, whereas this was not evident in the first threshold. It should, however, be pointed out that the poems in *Hesperides* have been artfully arranged to suggest Herrick’s development as a poet, but this may or may not be a reflection of Herrick’s reality. Be this as it may, Herrick’s pessimistic assessment of his book’s reception in “*To his Booke*” (H-1125 / 334) is more telling than an optimistic assessment would be, especially because it is based on the fact that by 1648 a pro-Royalist work was extremely “late” (1) and therefore likely to rely for a sympathetic reception more on luck – on its being “timely fortunate” (2) – than on merit. He also states that it is a question of “when” (5), and not if, his fates will “neglected lye” (6). In retrospect, Herrick’s self-evaluation appears to have been accurate. *Hesperides* was only moderately well-received at the time it was published. L.C. Martin offers the following explanation for Herrick’s lukewarm reception:

Herrick was 57 when his poems were published and many of them belonged to an earlier taste as well as to an earlier time. Their directness and apparent ease would be generally less attractive in 1648 than the ingenuities and ‘strong lines’ of the metaphysical poets, whom Herrick had not greatly cared to imitate. And when the mid-century modes faded out or were absorbed in the Augustan order, the change brought him no advantage. It was too late to accept his poetry without question and too soon to realize that some of it was timeless. (1956: xviii)¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ “Go little book” is a *topos*. See the epilogues to both Geoffrey Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyda*, and Edmund Spenser’s *The Shepheardes Calender*.

¹⁰² The desire to burn one’s book has become another *topos*. Virgil was reportedly so dissatisfied with *The Aeneid* that he asked his friends to burn it; Philip Sidney made the same request with regard to his manuscripts. See John Gouws (Ed.), *The Prose Works of Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), p.11, lines 18-20, and the relevant footnote on p.186.

¹⁰³ J. Max Patrick (1978: 221-34) has challenged Martin’s view that “Herrick’s contemporary reputation never stood higher than in the 1620’s, before he went to Devonshire” (xvii) and that, by implication, his poetry was neglected from the 1640’s onwards. But Patrick takes issue with the letter and not the spirit of Martin’s claim, conceding that “Though ‘neglected’ is too strong a term for the reception of Herrick’s

Herrick's reputation lay neglected for the better part of the next century before being slowly resurrected by critical interest.¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, Herrick's astute distinction between his book's worth and its reception by its contemporaries is borne out by the growth of his reputation during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.¹⁰⁵ But Herrick's evaluation of his book's worth is intended to be more than just an expression of self-consolation. It is the telling stance of a man who knows his poetry is good, regardless of its reception during his own lifetime. Thus, in "*Pride allowable in Poets*", placed earlier in *Hesperides*, he writes, "AS thou deserv'st, be proud; then gladly let/ The Muse give thee the Delphic Coronet" (H-529 / 194), and his growing sense of pride and self-assurance is indeed rewarded with "the *Mirtle Coronet*" at the end of the book ("*On Himselfe*", H-1128 / 335 / 2).

The metaphor of Herrick's ship casting anchor at the end of *Hesperides* places Herrick's work within a firmly established and richly metaphorical literary tradition with precedents stretching back through Spenser, Chaucer, Petrarch, Dante, Quintilian, Ovid and Virgil (Hamilton (ed.) 1992: 655-6). According to Curtius, "the Roman poets are wont to compare the composition of a work to a nautical voyage" in which "[t]he end of the whole work is entering port, with or without casting anchor (1990: 128-9). Renaissance poets were deeply conscious of their status as the latest members of a lengthy and prestigious creative lineage stretching back to the classical authors. They used this heritage to the immense metaphorical enrichment of their imagery. Thus, the seafaring imagery which Herrick evokes at the end of *Hesperides* holds multiple meanings. Firstly, it symbolises mutability and vulnerability, which parallels the poet's sense of self-doubt about his heroic undertaking in the face of an increasingly arduous poetic voyage. Secondly, the promise of harbour, or of respite, echoes the poet's ambivalent impulse to either engage in the world or to withdraw from it. Thirdly, the ship

poetry by his contemporaries, his greatness was inadequately recognized while he lived and for more than two hundred years after his death" (231).

¹⁰⁴ For Herrick's nineteenth-century re-integration into the canon, see Crys Armbruyt, "Robert Herrick and Nineteenth-Century Periodical Publication: *The Gentlemen's Magazine* and *The National: A Library for the People*", *GHJ*, 14.1&2 (1990-1), 113-126.

¹⁰⁵ See two of his epigrams: "I MAKE no haste to have my Numbers read/ *Seldome comes Glorie till a man be dead*" ("*Glorie*", H-623 / 218), and "LET others to the Printing Presse run fast,/ Since after death comes glory, *Ile not haste*" ("*Posting to Printing*", H-1022 / 314).

is an emblem of uncertain prosperity, and therefore reminds us of the reservations Herrick expresses about his book being “late”, and his hope that it can “yet be timely fortunate” (“*To his Booke*”, H-1125 / 334 / 1-2). Finally, the ship is a metaphor connecting the poet’s main characters’ quests with the poet’s own quest for poetic glory. In the case of *Hesperides*, Herrick is both his book’s main character and its author, and his elevation to the ranks of great questing poet-seafarers such as Spenser, Chaucer, Petrarch, Dante, Quintilian, Ovid and Virgil marks a triumphant realisation of what he set out to do, tentatively and uncertainly, at the beginning of *Hesperides*.¹⁰⁶

The way in which Herrick has shaped *Hesperides* to suggest that his persona is “groping towards confidence in his own artistry and control, an assurance in the immortalizing power of poetry, and a mature realization of what *Hesperides* can and does become” (Murphy 58) is, of course, both a real and an artificial act of self-presentation. It is real in the sense that Herrick most likely experienced the same emotional and intellectual development as he prepared to publish his work, not just in the months and weeks leading to 1648, but over the course of some 20 years that he had planned a volume.¹⁰⁷ At the same time, Herrick’s self-presentation as a slowly maturing poet is artificial, in the sense that his maturity has already been developed through writing and re-writing his poems, and through thinking about how to organise them in his book. All he then has to do is to arrange the poems retrospectively so as to suggest the slow maturation of his own self-confidence and increasingly clear-headed self-assessment. Crucially, his self-confidence at the end of *Hesperides* invites the reader to concur with the poet’s assertion that his poetry is good, and that Herrick has earned his place upon the shoulders of the literary giants who preceded him.

¹⁰⁶ In the next chapter, I will expand this idea that Herrick’s understands himself as an inheritor of the classical literary tradition.

¹⁰⁷ The earliest dateable indicator of Herrick’s intention to create a work can be found in a poem addressed to the Duke of Buckingham, who was assassinated in 1628: “NEVER my Book’s perfection did appeare,/ Til I had got the name of VILLARS here” (H-245 / 99 / 1-2).

CHAPTER THREE: Herrick's classical self-presentation

The Hesperides were blissful garden isles in the far west of the world which contained a single tree (or a grove) of immortality-giving golden apples. The apples were guarded by a dragon and it fell to Herakles/Hercules as his eleventh and penultimate task to steal them from the garden. The other inhabitants of the isles were nymphs, known as the Hesperids, who (depending on the version of the myth) may, or may not, have tried to seduce, or been seduced by, the epic hero. The Hesperides were a classical locus, but they later evoked strong biblical associations with the Garden of Eden, and secular associations with the British Isles (Coiro 1985: 313-4 or 1988: 6). This melding of classical, Christian and secular association was a hallmark of Renaissance humanism. As Douglas Bush explains:

In that world everything was related by analogy and correspondence to everything else, because there was one all-embracing body of natural and supernatural truth which could both assess and assimilate pagan fiction. (1968: 31)

Bush advances a number of reasons for this Renaissance worldview. Firstly, Latin had always been the official language of the universal church, and its scholars and thinkers were steeped in classical thought. Secondly, nearly everyone else who could read and write had also been schooled in the classics. Thirdly, people still lived in close proximity to the cycles and vagaries of nature, so they were familiar with native folklore, and held a religious or “magical” view of a universe which was full of supernatural beings (although classical pantheism had been replaced by notions of a vast angelic host and an omnipresent God, while native folklore retained its supernatural elements). Fourthly, mythological figures appealed to people’s sensibilities not only as ideals for moral and non-moral qualities, but also as garbled versions of familiar figures in both the Bible and native folklore. Above all, pagan mythology functioned as “a kind of evocative shorthand” which poets and writers could use to concretise and invigorate abstract

thought.¹⁰⁸ I will begin this chapter by sketching the outlines of Renaissance humanism in order to place Herrick in the context in which he was a late but enthusiastic participant.

The bedrock of Renaissance humanism was the grammar school, where young boys from the age of six or seven onwards were drilled with a limited but intense education in the classics. Moving from fundamental grammar to translating and amplifying *sententiae*, and from thence to the writing of epistles, themes and orations, the grammar school pupil would eventually be exposed to complete works by the major Roman poets themselves, rather than extracted passages. By the end of grammar school, teenage boys were expected to be equally proficient in translating Latin (and, to a lesser extent, Greek) into the vernacular, and vice-versa.¹⁰⁹ They were also expected to reproduce not only the meaning of the original but its rhetorical style as well. According to Jonathan Bate, “Shakespeare and his contemporaries had Latin words and structures ingrained upon their memories in such a way that classical influences would inevitably shape their verbal forms in later life” (1994: 19).¹¹⁰

As Bush has pointed out, however, the Renaissance classical heritage was “only imperfectly Latin” (1963: 45). For one thing, knowledge of classical authors – though wide – was only partial, and authors were rarely viewed as distinct personalities (20-22). For another, the works of classical authors, in particular the minor ones, were frequently available only as fragments in mythological handbooks, miscellanies, *florilegia* and commonplace books. As far as the major classical authors were concerned, Virgil and Ovid emerged from the Middle Ages as the mainstays of the grammar school curriculum. The former was valued for providing “an encyclopaedia of knowledge, a complete guide to life” (Bush 1963: 6), the latter for his love poetry (9-11) as well as for creating a

¹⁰⁸ These ideas are drawn from Bush’s chapter on the Renaissance in his three-part book, *Pagan Myth and Christian Tradition in English Poetry: Three Phases* (Philadelphia: Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society (vol. 72), Free Library of Philadelphia) pp. 1-31. See especially pp. 2-5, 15-16, 20 & 31.

¹⁰⁹ Greek studies in England during the Renaissance came a distant second to Latin, and were confined mainly to meeting basic educational requirements such as a grounding in Platonic and Aristotelean philosophy, as well as to providing a key to understanding the New Testament (Bush 1963: 43).

¹¹⁰ Although Bate’s summary of the sixteenth century grammar school curriculum is focussed on the education Shakespeare is likely to have received at the King’s New School in Stratford-upon-Avon from 1571 onwards, he writes that “[l]ittle changed in the grammar-school curriculum between the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries” (19). Herrick’s grammar-school years are likely to be 1597-1607, after which he was apprenticed as a goldsmith to his uncle.

comprehensive sourcebook for classical mythology, the *Metamorphoses* (28).¹¹¹ Besides Virgil and Ovid, the early English Renaissance was also characterised by a preoccupation with ethical notions derived from classical literature, and this English partiality for condensed moral maxims elevated the likes of Plutarch to prominent positions in the curriculum (28). Horace was “discovered” only later, in the first decades of the seventeenth century (Martindale, J. 1993: 72).

It is important to remember that the classical tradition existed in tension with the devout Christianity of the age. Some Christians, particularly fundamentalists like the Puritans, believed that the paganism and dubious morality of parts of the classical corpus had a corrupting influence, and that “the Bible was the only and sufficient guide in ecclesiastical government, ritual and doctrine, and in personal conduct” (Bush 1963: 43). Other Christians were more comfortable with the co-existence of Christianity and the classics, and were content to reconcile them with one another by reading the classics allegorically or typologically so that classical sources foreshadowed or sometimes even prophesied important Christian events or beliefs.

The classical tradition was also regarded with some cynicism in certain quarters because the line could sometimes be blurred between the creative imitation and emulation of the ancients and the monotonous rehashing or slovenly plagiarism of their work. For example, Ben Jonson was taunted by Thomas Dekker in 1604 for indulging in a “false flourish” of “the borrowed weapons of all the old Maisters of the noble Science of Poesie” which “shew how nimble we can carve up the whole messe of the Poets” and “how many paire of Latin sheets, we have shaken & cut into shreds” (in Peterson 1981: xiii). Peterson argues that, on the contrary, Jonson is responsible for creating a distinctive brand of *imitatio* (to be developed in turn by his so-called Sons, including Herrick) based on a “process of judicious gathering in, assimilation, and transformation or turning whereby a good writer, and by extension a good man, shapes an original and coherent work of art or a virtuous life” (xiv). For Jonson and his more conscientious contemporaries, *imitatio* was therefore a moral undertaking, which is a very different

¹¹¹ Ovid’s licentiousness was problematic, however, and his *Ars Amatoria* (“The Art of Love”) in particular would not have been studied in schools. Nevertheless, the allegorising and moralising of Ovid’s poetry did enable it to retain its currency in an age when Christianity dominated education and the arts (Bate 25).

self-understanding than *imitatio* as seen from the vantage point of those who would regard the practice as cribbing.

In this chapter, I intend to demonstrate that Herrick's use of the Renaissance classical tradition communicates to his reader how he understands himself, and how he wants to be understood. In the previous chapter, I demonstrated that the gradual simplification of genre theory over time has meant that the twenty-first century reader needs to work hard to uncover what certain genres meant for Herrick and his self-presentation as a poet during the seventeenth century. Similarly, our attempts to understand Herrick's classical self-presentation have also been hampered by the decline of the classical tradition, especially its shrinking presence in school and university curricula. Indeed, very little critical work has focussed directly on Herrick's classicism since Braden contributed a case study on Herrick and classical lyric poetry, *The Classics and English Renaissance Poetry* (1978).¹¹² It is across an increasingly widening gap between modern readers' insufficient knowledge of the classics and Herrick's contemporary readers' thoroughgoing familiarity with the classical tradition that this chapter seeks to recoup something of his self-presentation in 1648 as the latest member of a distinguished literary club stretching back to the poets of Roman and Greek antiquity.

A brief survey of Herrick's classical sources reveals the breadth of his reading. According to my aggregation of the classical authors cited in the commentary of L.C. Martin's 1956 Clarendon edition of *Herrick's Poetical Works*, Herrick's most frequently-cited classical source is Ovid (99 references), followed by Martial and Horace (both 71) and then Seneca (69). Among a 'second-tier' of classical sources are Tacitus (30), Virgil (21), Anacreon (20), Catullus and Tibullus (19 each). *Hesperides* also contains more than ten references each to Cicero, the *Greek Anthology*, Juvenal, Plautus, Plutarch and

¹¹² Since Braden, there have been a nine-page discussion of Herrick's Horatianism by Joanna Martindale in a chapter entitled "The Best Master of Virtue and Wisdom: The Horace of Ben Jonson and His Heirs" in *Horace Made New: Horatian Influence on British Writing from the Renaissance to the Twentieth Century*, ed. Charles Martindale & David Hopkins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 76-85; and two articles by Syrith Pugh on Herrick's Ovidianism entitled "Ovidian Exile in the *Hesperides*: Herrick's Politics of Intertextuality", *Review of English Studies* 57.232 (2006), p.733-56; and "'Cleanly-Wantonnesse' and Puritan Legislation: the Politics of Herrick's Amatory Ovidianism", *The Seventeenth Century* 21 (2006), p.249-269.

Propertius; and less than ten references each to Aesop, Aristotle, Ausonius, Calpurnius, Claudian, Eubulus, Cornelius Gallus, Heraclitus, Homer, Lucan, Lucretius, Menander, Cornelius Nepos, Persius, Arbiter Petronius, Philostratus, Pliny, Pollio, Sallust, Suetonius, Publilius Syrus, Terence, Theocritus and Trebellius.¹¹³ While the strong presence of the likes of Ovid, Martial and Horace is to be expected, Seneca's position near the top of the list and Catullus's place lower down are more surprising. Seneca, the most influential Stoic author during the Renaissance, has rarely been mentioned in Herrick criticism until now, as critics have tended to focus on the Epicurean aspects of Herrick's poetry.¹¹⁴ Catullus, on the other hand, was widely regarded by nineteenth and early twentieth century critics to be Herrick's most prominent classical influence. For example, in 1870 James Russell Lowell referred to Herrick as the "most Catullian of poets since Catullus" (in Braden 1978: 177). The label only began to be called into question once critics began to look seriously at *Hesperides* as a whole, rather than at its most frequently anthologised poems which tended to give preferential treatment to Herrick's lyric poetry.

A list of Herrick's classical sources only reveals a small part of what Herrick is trying to tell us about himself. To understand more, we need to turn to the use to which Herrick puts his classical sources. Braden has argued that:

Herrick's response [to the classics] is primarily to moments of verbal grace rather than to structures of meaning, and his attention to the phrases of his originals is not effectively matched by an attention to the individual poems as wholes. There are, considering the bulk of the whole and the general ambience of classical quotation, notably few translations and imitations of complete poems in the *Hesperides*. The exceptions are important and helpful ... but the principle remains that while Herrick seems very interested in classical poetry, he is not comparably interested in classical poems. (176)

¹¹³ Martin's edition is the culmination of a century's-worth of work of classical quotation-spotting by Herrick critics. Although its commentary is not exhaustive, the edition still provides the most detailed survey over forty years later of Herrick's classical quotations. It remains to be seen if a new Clarendon edition, planned for publication in 2010 or 2011, will expand on Martin's commentary to any great degree.

¹¹⁴ An exception is John L. Kimmey, who observes that after Ovid, Seneca is the next strongest influence in the last 130 poems in *Hesperides* (1971: 255). However, Kimmey only sees fit to mention this point in a brief footnote.

We can test Braden's claims for Herrick's prevailing and distinctive mode of classical spot quotation by examining a cross-section of Herrick's most frequently-cited classical quotations. Horace's *Carmina* ("Odes") contributes the largest number of classical quotations to the *Hesperides* overall (sixty in total). Twenty-five of these quotations in *Hesperides* are one-line references in the *Carmina* (42%), twenty are two-line references (33%), ten are between three- and five-line references (17%), and only five are based on entire poems (8%). The *Ars Amatoria* ("The Art of Love") is Herrick's most frequently-cited Ovidian work, with twenty-eight quotations in total. Fourteen of these quotations are one-line references in the *Ars* (50%), a further twelve are two-line references (43%), and only two are five-line references (7%). Martial's first book of epigrams is his most frequently-cited work in the *Hesperides*, with twenty-three quotations in total; thirteen of which are one- or two-line references in the classical original (57%), two are three-line references (13%) and seven are entire poems (30%). The unusually high proportion of entire poems which Herrick imitates from Martial can be attributed to Martial's status as an epigrammist. The epigram is a typically brief genre, so an entire Martial poem does not necessarily mean a poem that is any longer than four lines. In this demonstrative cross-section, we can see that spot quotations (one- or two-line references) far outnumber longer ones. The majority of Herrick's classical quotations are brief, often no more than a phrase or sentence that amounts to one or two lines of text from the classical original.

Although Svirthe Pugh has objected to Braden's observation on the grounds that Braden "strictly delimits the meaningfulness of his [Herrick's] imitative practices" (2006a: 737), I would argue that Braden is not undermining Herrick's meaningfulness at all. Instead, he is pointing out that Herrick's preference for "moments of verbal grace" is an outcome of "the prevailing and distinctive Renaissance mode of classical study, [which was] to read with pen in hand and notebook open, ready for entries" (177).¹¹⁵ A poet like Herrick would then turn his attention towards trying to work these phrases into his own work as seamlessly as possible, thereby playing a game of literary hide-and-seek

¹¹⁵ Another example of this practice arises in Shakespeare when Hamlet produces a notebook following his encounter with the ghost of his dead father, saying "My tables, / My tables—meet it is I write it down", before noting his father's parting words, 'Adieu, adieu, remember me' (I.5.107-13). For more on the distinctive "notebook method" of humanist reading and writing, see Marjorie Swann, *Curiosities and Texts: The Culture of Collecting in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), p. 152-6.

with readers on the look-out for innovative displays of classical *imitatio*.¹¹⁶ As Jonathan Bate has observed, “it is only by an effort of historical reconstruction that we can learn to share the educated Elizabethan’s *frisson* of pleasure in the recognition of a familiar sentiment, an elegantly turned phrase, a delicate rhetorical manoeuvre, a full-scale imitation” (1994: 23). While Herrick’s use of his classical sources may therefore seem frivolous, he is actually participating in an enterprise that Renaissance poets took very seriously, which was to display their wide range of reading and their clever integration of classical sources into their poetry so as to both edify and entertain their readers, whilst also promoting themselves.

Herrick’s embedding of classical spot-quotations within *Hesperides* has pleasant consequences for his art. The effect can be likened to that of a sprinkling of gold dust across the entire collection. One can cite numerous examples where Herrick has borrowed a word, a phrase, or an idea from a classical source and placed it in a poem seemingly for its own sake, without any obvious intention to do anything more than relish the way it sounds or to admire the idea it expresses. For example, “*His tears to Thamasis*” begins: “I SEND, I send here my supremest kiss/ To thee my *silver-footed Thamasis*” (H-1028 / 315). The phrase “supremest kiss” can be found in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* as “oscula...suprema” (VI.278), and is also echoed in Propertius’s “suprema labellis” (II.13.29).¹¹⁷ The phrase’s valedictory resonance is so pleasing to Herrick that he repeats it elsewhere, in “*To Perilla*” (H-14 / 9 / 6), “*His embalming to Julia*” (H-327 / 129 / 2), and with a variation in “*Upon a Maide*” (H-838 / 274 / 6). Examples of other resonant phrases from Ovid include “the golden Pomp is come” (H-201 / 80 / 5) from “aurea pompa venit” (*Amores* 3.2.44), “SWEET disorder” (H-83 / 28 / 1) from “neglecta decens” (*Amores* I.14.21), and Neptune as “*Rector of the Seas*” (H-325 / 129 / 2) from “rector maris” (*Metamorphoses* I.331). Choice phrases from Horace include “Unshorn *Apollo*” (H-871 / 280 / 2) and “the god unshorne” (H-178 / 67 / 2) from *Carmina* [“Odes”] I.21.2, “the old Race of mankind” (H-377 / 147 / 38) from “prisca gens mortalium” (*Epodes* 2.2), “Stars consenting with thy Fate (H-106 / 35 / 33) from

¹¹⁶ See Braden’s “Introduction”, in particular pp. xii-xiv, in which he refers to “the sheer urge to flaunt” and the “impulse to display” of the typical Renaissance poet.

¹¹⁷ All Latin translations in this chapter are derived from *Loeb*, unless stated otherwise.

“consentit astrum” (*Carmina* II.17.22), and “The Extreame Scabbe take thee” (H-6 / 7 / 6) from “occupet extremium scabies” (*Ars Poetica* 417). Martial supplies the “worn Threshold” (H-377 / 146 / 5) and the “worne Doore” (N-123 / 374 / 19) from “limina mille teras” (x.10.2), “immortal wine” (H-377 / 147 / 71) from “immortale Falernum” (ix.93.1), the “easie” Gods (H-132 / 47 / 13) from “faciles... dei” (I.103.4), “Jove *the Thunderer*” (H-484 / 181 / 16) from “Tonanti” (X.19.9) and “eternal fires” (H-544 / 198 / 3) or “everlasting fire” (H-938 / 294 / 4) from “focus perennis” (X.47.4). In this way, he is adhering to his literary father Ben Jonson’s recommendations in *Timber: Or, Discoveries* about what characteristics determine a poet’s worth:

The third requisite in our *Poet*, or *Maker*, is *Imitation*, to bee able to convert the substance, or Riches of an other *Poet*, to his own use ... Not, as a Creature, that swallows, what it takes in, crude, raw, or undigested; but, that feedes with an Appetite, and hath a Stomacke to concoct, divide, and turne all into nourishment. (line 2466 ff.)

There is a sense in which Herrick shuns longer quotations because he is presenting himself not as a toiling translator or a slavish imitator, but as a stylish and discerning connoisseur of the classical tradition.

The winsome nature of much of Herrick’s classical imitation obscures the fact that as a Renaissance humanist, Herrick would have thought long and hard about what it means to be a good man and how to lead a good life, using the classics as both a prop and as a guide. As Isabel Rivers points out,

a humanist was a classical scholar with two complementary aims: to recover the moral values of classical life, and to imitate the language and style of the classics as a means to that end. He hoped to unite wisdom (*sapientia*) and eloquence (*eloquentia*). (1994: 125)

To which I would add that Renaissance poets were keen to impart these moral values to their reader. They drew on Lucretius’s idea of poetry as honey on the rim of a cup of medicine to disguise the astringent taste of their moral didacticism with the sweetness of

rhyme, metre and fable (Rivers 153).¹¹⁸ The mistake some modern critics make with Herrick is to associate his classicism with the honey alone, and therefore to dismiss him as frivolous. For example, Paul Jenkins has argued that Herrick prefers the classics as an aesthetic, as opposed to a moral, ideal:

Although Herrick relies on the Renaissance humanist tradition of classical wisdom and lore more fully perhaps than any of his contemporaries, he does so for the most unclassical of reasons. Ben Jonson's preoccupation with the idea that "A good life is a maine Argument" has no parallel in Herrick. In those rare moments when Herrick does argue the good life, he translates ethical maxims into aesthetic pronouncements, treating matters of behaviour as if they were questions of appetite. (1972: 62)

Although Jenkins' analysis of Herrick might be seen as Jenkins having imbibed Herrick's moral medicine without noticing, Herrick's classicism is misrepresented by Jenkins here. Herrick's liking for resonant words and phrases from the classics conceals his serious dialectical engagement with the ethics of two neo-classical philosophies that were popular during the Renaissance: Epicureanism and Stoicism.

Before we can proceed to discuss how Herrick engages with classical ethics, it is necessary briefly to explain the central tenets of Epicureanism and Stoicism in turn. Epicureanism originated from the teachings of Epicurus (341 - 270 B.C.). By the first century B.C., Epicureanism had spread to Italy, facilitated by the growth of the Roman Empire around the Mediterranean from the third century B.C. onwards. Writers such as Lucretius and teachers such as Philodemus influenced poets such as Catullus, Horace, Tibullus, Propertius and Martial.¹¹⁹ Epicurean elements in their poetry were passed on – eventually – to the Renaissance (Jones 1992: 68). Thus, quotations from the *Anacreontea* (the so-called "poems of Anacreon") as well as from Ovid's *Amores* and *Ars*, and from

¹¹⁸ For Lucretius's image, see his *De rerum natura* ["The nature of the universe"] I.935-50.

¹¹⁹ Lucretius's *De rerum natura* is a comprehensive Epicurean treatise. One cannot overstate the importance of Lucretius's work to Renaissance humanists' retrieval of Epicurean philosophy, since Epicurus's thoughts exist mostly in fragments and maxims whereas *De rerum natura* survives in its complete form. It was 'rediscovered' in 1417 (Wilson 2008: 16-17). According to Martin's footnotes, only one Lucretian quotation has been identified in *Hesperides* – a reference to giving up one's lamp at retirement or death – in "On himselfe" (H-1091 / 328 / 7). It is therefore reasonable to assume that much of Herrick's Epicureanism derives from the Latin poets.

the lyric poetry of Catullus, Martial and Horace constitute the bulk of Herrick's Epicurean pronouncements.

For Epicurus, the individual's own sensations, or sense impressions, are the most reliable criteria of truth. Pleasure is equated with good, since one's senses respond positively to pleasure. The complexity of the Epicurean pleasure doctrine was sometimes misunderstood or wilfully ignored, as Jones points out with reference to the Romans:

Whereas for many attachment to Epicureanism represented a serious philosophical commitment, for others it amounted to no more than a convenient cloak for a life of energetic pleasures in the parks and villas of Baiae or Puteoli. (66)

Not for the last time in Western culture, the unguarded flank of Epicurean ethics was its susceptibility to libertine interpretations. The Epicurean emphasis on sensation and pleasure has always been used to discredit Epicureanism, because of the perception that Epicureanism promotes bodily excesses such as drunkenness, gluttony and voluptuousness. However, Epicurus placed the highest value on pleasures which do no more than contribute to one's freedom from disturbance and absence of pain (Jones 46-7). Other pleasures are superfluous, and may in fact be detrimental. As Catherine Wilson explains:

Because death is the end for each sentient being, we should enjoy ourselves to the extent that our enjoyment of present pleasures does not diminish the quantity of pleasure we can enjoy in the future, to the extent that our present enjoyments do not destroy health, bring down the wrath or contempt of others upon us, or subject us to the torments of guilt and regret. (2008: 5)

The implications of Epicurus' philosophy are that Epicureans are permitted to enjoy eating, drinking and sexual activity, but always in moderation lest an excess of food, drink or sex causes one later discomfort. For this reason, moderation is perhaps the abiding ethical principle of the true Epicurean.

The Epicurean insistence on avoiding pain or anxiety means that they shun the active life and the public sphere of politics and trade, preferring a life of retirement and

contemplation, with the company of a few close friends to provide security and contentment (Jones 51).¹²⁰ The existence of the gods provides another potential source of discomfort to an Epicurean. Not only do the gods defy sense-perception, but religion also contributes to the doubt, anxiety and unhappiness of man. Epicurus did not deny the gods' existence entirely, but instead believed that the gods are exemplary Epicureans because they are indifferent to the troubles of the human world. The gods' indifference is something to be admired and praised, not dreaded and feared (53-5).¹²¹ The prospect of death is yet another source of anxiety which Epicureans circumvent by believing that the soul is mortal, and dissipates upon death. Death is therefore nothing more than the cessation of all feeling. As Epicurus writes, "death, the most horrifying of evils, is nothing to us, since, for the time that we are alive, it is not present, and, whenever it comes, it does not exist" (translated in Jones 61). To summarise, the Epicurean seeks comfort and pleasure (but only in moderation according to his basic needs), a life of retirement from the public sphere, and a peace-of-mind which is undisturbed by fears of the uncontrollable such as the gods or death.

The indifferent Epicurean attitude towards the gods and death renders it largely incompatible with a Christian worldview. Firstly, Epicureanism appears to deny the existence of God, although this is a misconception arising from Epicurus's conviction that the gods are indifferent to humans. He did not state that the gods do not exist altogether. Secondly, Epicureans believe that the universe was formed through the random configuration of atoms, and not by God. Thirdly, Epicureans believe in a corporeal soul which dissipates upon death, rather than continuing to exist eternally as a supernatural entity. Thus, Epicureanism denies the possibility of an afterlife. As a result of these major incompatibilities between Epicureanism and Christianity, to call someone an Epicurean during the Middle Ages and the early Renaissance was a grave insult.¹²² By the mid-seventeenth century, however, Epicureanism had gained some respectability due to the fact that Epicureanism and Christianity share other important values. These

¹²⁰ See also Wilson (2008: 10).

¹²¹ Wilson (6-9). In "*To Myrrha hard-hearted*" Herrick describes the gods in Epicurean terms: "The Gods are easie, and condemne/ All such as are not soft like them" (H-132 / 47).

¹²² Epicurus is sometimes depicted next to Nero, Herod and Judas in book illustrations from the late Middle Ages (Jones 140). Epicureans are also mentioned unfavourably in both Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (Prologue 331-8) and in Dante's *La Commedia Divina* (Canto X, 13-14). In notoriously parochial England during the sixteenth century, the term 'Epicure' and 'Italian' were used interchangeably (Jones 153).

included their mutual rejection of all forms of superstition, their insistence on human free will, their refusal to exalt the public life and duty to the state above all else, and the high regard in which they hold their founding fathers.¹²³ Despite these similarities, the whiff of libertinism that has always attached itself to Epicureanism proved difficult to shake off and it remained subordinate to Stoicism as the neo-classical ethical philosophy of choice until the latter decades of the seventeenth century.¹²⁴

Stoicism emerged at about the same time as Epicureanism, and soon became a rival Hellenistic philosophy. Unlike Epicureanism, Stoicism was not associated with any one founder. According to Isabel Rivers, “The name derives from the Stoa, the colonnade at Athens where Zeno, the first Stoic philosopher, taught” (1994: 44). From the mid-first century B.C. onwards, Stoicism began to gain popularity among the Romans due to the influence of Cicero’s pro-Stoic and anti-Epicurean treatises, as well as the changed social and political atmosphere following the fall of the Republic, which included Augustus’s programme of religious and moral reform. In denouncing Epicureanism, it was evident to a Stoic philosopher like Cicero that,

men acted for reasons other than the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain, renouncing comfort and convenience for the sake of duty, loyalty, and country, and that they found satisfaction in doing so. Epicurus’ claim that men are just because justice ensures peace of mind and injustice brings disquietude was antithetical to his [Cicero’s] conviction that goodness, like knowledge, ought to be and could be pursued for its own sake. (Wilson 12)

Unlike Epicureans who “insist[ed] that pleasure and freedom from psychological and physical pain were identical with the condition of human happiness”, Stoics believed that “the employment of reason and the exercise of virtue were both necessary and sufficient for the enjoyment of that condition” (Wilson 253). Thus, Stoicism maintains that the only road to happiness is by leading a life of virtue. But whereas an Epicurean depends on his

¹²³ Thus, when Luther accused Erasmus of being an Epicurean with the intention to discredit and embarrass him during the 1520s, Erasmus replied with a disarming acceptance of the label and the observation that both Christianity and Epicureanism involve the pursuit of higher pleasures (Jones 163-5).

¹²⁴ The word “libertine” was originally coined by John Calvin to denigrate opponents of his religious policies. During the seventeenth century it could either refer to free thinkers who did not conform to received wisdom or authority on religion; or to a licentious, dissolute or sexually amoral person (*OED*).

senses to ascertain what makes him happy, the Stoic is ruled by his reason. Reason enables the Stoic to distinguish between good and evil, to master his passions and to live in a state of indifference to external events. This indifference is essential to his own happiness because, through it, the Stoic can cultivate self-sufficiency and independence. Hence a Stoic might enjoy the company of friends and family, but will maintain that his wellbeing is sustained by his independence from them. Epicureans, on the other hand, place great stock on friendship as a necessary constituent of their wellbeing. The Stoic is also more likely to pursue material prosperity and public recognition than the Epicurean (who is happiest living in retired seclusion), but the Stoic always draws a distinction between enjoyment of, and enslavement to, wealth and status. Only when one's duty to public life clashes with one's commitment to the virtuous life, is the Stoic entitled to retire or – in extreme cases – to commit suicide (Braden 1985: 24 and Rivers 1994: 45). Unlike Epicureans who shun public duty and choose retirement from the outset, Stoic retirement is premised on the assumption that one's primary commitment is "to the self's superiority to all public ambitions and intimidations" (Braden 18). Stoics therefore only undertake to retire from public duty if their obligation to an active life can no longer be sustained without compromising their integrity.

Although neo-Stoicism is more readily compatible with Christian thought than neo-Epicureanism – not least in its commitment to sustaining one's virtue through duty and self-sacrifice – there is always a danger that the Stoic pursuit of virtue becomes an end in itself, without any external reference to God (Braden 73-4). In this respect, Stoic self-sufficiency hovers dangerously close to a denial of God, whereas the Epicurean's willingness to embrace friendship and communion is in keeping with the more communitarian forms of worship practiced by High Church Anglicans and Catholics. For the most part, however, Renaissance humanists (who were necessarily also Christians) felt more at ease with Stoicism than with Epicureanism as an ethical guide to life, because of the uncompromising way in which Stoicism favoured virtue, loyalty, and duty.

In her influential book about the metamorphosis of the *beatus ille* ("happy man") tradition during the seventeenth century, Maren-Sofie Røstvig argues that poets looked to classical literature for guidance on the age-old question of what constitutes human happiness (1962: 7). The *beatus ille* tradition is "a single such prescription for the

achievement of happiness” (7), but the ways in which it was developed by poets such as Jonson, Herrick, Milton, Marvell and Cowley reveals how they frequently and fluently blended elements of Epicureanism and Stoicism together. Drawing from a range of classical sources, they could combine numerous variations in order to suggest an Epicurean or a Stoical version of the ideal happy man.¹²⁵ The principal sources of the tradition were Horace’s second epode (the first line of which gives the *beatus ille* tradition its name) and Virgil’s second Georgic (ll. 458-540). Poets also derived *beatus ille* motifs from other rural Horatian odes and epistles, as well as from a handful of Martial’s epigrams.¹²⁶ As Røstvig explains, “By emphasising one motif at the expense of the other, or by adding new motifs to the classical core, the individual poet could fashion the tradition according to his own needs and interests” (44). *Hesperides* contains four poems which can be placed within the *beatus ille* tradition. In each poem, Epicureanism dominates, but not to the exclusion of Stoicism.

“*A Country Life: To his Brother, Master Thomas Herrick*” (H-106 / 34) is one of the earliest contributions to the tradition in England.¹²⁷ The poem begins by expressing the shared Epicurean and Stoical understanding that retirement from the public sphere enables one to live a happy life (although Stoics would view retirement as a last resort):

THRICE, and above, blest (my soules halfe) art thou,
 In thy both Last, and Better Vow:
 Could’st leave the City, for exchange, to see
 The Countries sweet simplicity:
 And it to know, and practice; with intent
 To grow the sooner innocent:
 By studying to know vertue; and to aime
 More at her nature, then her name:
 The last is but the least; the first doth tell
 Wayes lesse to live, then to live well (1-10)

¹²⁵ Before Ben Jonson reactivated the tradition in England, Renaissance imitations of classical *beatus ille* poems were either loose paraphrases of the originals, or written in unsuitable forms such as the song, the sonnet or the pastoral, whereas the *beatus ille* poem is in fact a specific genre written in a distinct metre. Furthermore, in contrast to the idealised rural setting of the pastoral, the *beatus ille* poem is realistic – “the one describes a real Sabine farm, the other an Arcadian never-never-land” (Røstvig 47).

¹²⁶ For Horace, see *Carmina* III.1 and III.16 as well as *Epistles* I.10 and I.18. For Martial, see II.90, IV.90, V.21, V.59 and X.47.

¹²⁷ A fact that is not acknowledged by Røstvig. According to Martin (note 34.3, p. 504), “The whole poem is indebted to Ben Jonson’s address ‘To Sir Robert Wroth’ (*Forest*, iii); and directly or secondarily to Hor. *Epod.* ii; Martial, i.49 and iii.58; and Virgil, *Georg.* ii.493-540”.

The public, heroic tone of the poem is more Stoic than Epicurean, and the Senecan injunction to live well is particularly Stoic in outlook.¹²⁸ Elsewhere in the poem, Herrick praises his brother's Stoically unruffled consistency as follows:

But thou liv'st fearlesse; and thy face ne'r shewes
 Fortune when she comes, or goes.
 But with thy equall thoughts, prepar'd dost stand,
 To take her by the either hand:
 Nor car'st which comes the first, the foule or faire;
A wise man ev'ry way lies square. (93-8)

Much of the remainder of the poem, however, is Epicurean, including the moderation of one's appetites (29-30); the desire to live securely and untroubled by events elsewhere in the world (83-8); and an indifference to death which might otherwise be seen as either arrogant, or blasphemous, or both, except that Herrick understands this indifference in its Epicurean context as being the attitude of someone who has nothing to fear because he has lived life well (141-6). The only hint of notorious Epicurean sensuousness in the poem occurs not in real life, but in Thomas's dreams, where "fantasie discloses/ Millions of *Lillies* mixt with *Roses*" (47-8) and another "thousand such enchanting dreams, that meet/ To make sleep not so sound, as sweet" (53-4). Thus, when we weigh the Stoicism against the Epicureanism in this poem it is clear that the scales are tipped in favour of the latter.

Although "A *Country Life*" favours Epicurean ideas over Stoic ones, there are two factors that destabilise its Epicureanism. Firstly, the original Horatian epode culminates in an unexpected and disquieting manner. There is a sense in which Horace is questioning the possibility that Epicureanism can be a practical and realistic way of life. One discovers that the previous sixty-six lines of Horace's epode which praise an Epicurean lifestyle have in fact been spoken by Alfius, a usurer, who, "on the very point of beginning the farmer's life, [he] called in all his funds upon the Ides—and on the Kalends seeks to put them out again!" (*Loeb*).¹²⁹ Such ironic self-awareness seems to be lacking in "A *Country Life*", where a young Herrick lectures his elder brother about the happy life

¹²⁸ See Seneca, *Epistulae Morales* LXX.4.

¹²⁹ "Haec ubi locutus faenerator Alfius,/ iam iam futurus rusticus,/ omnem redegit Idibus pecuniam,/ quaerit Kalendis ponere." (68-70)

without any evident sense of the irony of his own relative inexperience. However, Horace's second epode was one of his most famous poems, and a young classically-schooled man like Herrick is likely to have been familiar with the entire poem, including Alfius's actions at the end. Secondly, Thomas Herrick's farming venture was a failure (Moorman 1910: 31), and yet Herrick includes the poem some thirty-seven years later in *Hesperides*, in full knowledge that his idealised depiction of his brother's country lifestyle was unrealistic.

Herrick's second *beatus ille* poem, "*The Country life, to the honoured Master Endimion Porter, Groome of the Bed-Chamber to His Majesty*" (H-662 / 229) was written during the 1620s when Porter held his prestigious position in Prince Charles's (later King Charles's) household. Its Epicurean sentiment is even more thoroughgoing than "*A Country Life: To his Brother*". Somewhat ironically for someone who participated in two important diplomatic missions to Spain in the early 1620s, Porter is praised for his Epicurean disinterestedness in foreign travels and for his lack of social ambition. For example, Herrick declares, "Thou never Plow'st the Oceans foame" (5), and adds that, "thy Ambition's Master-piece/ Flies no thought higher than a fleece:/ Or how to pay thy Hinds" (11-12). Porter is also shown to be content with his small lot:

[Thou] walk'st about thine own dear bounds,
Not envying others larger grounds:
For well thou know'st, *tis not th'extent*
Of Land makes life, but sweet content. (15-18)

What is more, Porter's daily work is leisured, and comprises nothing more arduous than waking up "When now the Cock (the Plow-mans Horne)/ Calls forth the lilly-wristed Morne" (20), inspecting his corn-fields (21), singing encouragement to his "Hind" and "Team" (25-28) and observing his head of cattle and sheep grazing (33-45). His day's labour seemingly done, Porter can now relax and enjoy "Sports ... Pageantry, and Playes/ ... Eves, and Holydayes" (46-7) which extend for most of the year.¹³⁰ The poem ends with a reminiscence of Horace's *beatus ille* epode and Virgil's second *Georgic*:

¹³⁰ These "Holydayes" include May Day (53), Whitsun (54), "Harvest home" (56), "Twelfe-tide" (58) and Christmas (69).

O happy life! If that their good
 The Husbandmen but understood!¹³¹
 Who all the day themselves doe please,
 And Younglings, with such sports as these.
 And, lying down, have nought t'affright
 Sweet sleep, that makes more short the night. (70-5)

The peace of mind which comes with an Epicurean outlook is the last idea presented in the poem. However, the Epicureanism of this poem is undercut in subtle ways. We have already noted that Porter's many responsibilities at court make it unlikely that he can lead a retired and leisurely Epicurean lifestyle. What is more, the poem ends with the phrase "*Caetera desunt ----*" ("the rest is lacking") which seems to compromise the note of serene contentment in the concluding sestet.

In both the "*Country Life*" poems to Porter and to Thomas Herrick, one gets the sense that Herrick is motivated by a desire to display his rhetorical mastery of the *beatus ille* tradition to his seniors or social superiors, although this is not to say that Herrick's Epicurean-Stoic blend in these poems is not reflective of his neo-classical ethical beliefs. However, we need to look to poems where Herrick depicts himself as sharing the happy life with others, or depicting his own life in the country, in order to peel away his public, heroic mode of address and thereby to access a more characteristically private, lyrical Herrickean self-presentation.

The other two *beatus ille* poems are both addressed to Herrick's friend and fellow-Devonshire parson, John Weekes. Perhaps because these poems are addressed to a friend and social equal, we sense that Herrick is not as self-consciously rhetorical as in the "*Country Life*" poems. In "*A Paranaeticall, or Advisive Verse, to his friend, Master John Wicks*" (H-670 / 233), Epicurean philosophy again predominates, especially in the encouragement Herrick gives to Weekes to live a life of leisured ease in the country:

... 'tis a life, to have thine oyle,
 Without extortion, from thy soyle:
 Thy faithfull fields to yeeld thee Graine,
 Although with some, yet little paine:
 To have thy mind, and nuptiall bed,
 With feares, and cares uncumbered (7-12)

¹³¹ Virgil, *Georg.* II.458.

Herrick blends the Epicurean sentiment with Stoic undertones when he quotes Seneca:

*Whose life with care is overcast,
That man's not said to live, but last:
Nor is't a life, seven yeares to tell,
But for to live that half seven well (32-5)¹³²*

Unlike the two *beatus ille* poems discussed above, however, “*A Paranaeticall*” includes a *carpe diem* argument.¹³³ Despite its attribution to Horace, the philosophy is widespread throughout classical and later literature. In its injunction to enjoy today and to forget tomorrow’s worries, *carpe diem* is Epicurean in orientation:¹³⁴

Time steals away like to a stream,
And we glide hence away with them.
*No sound recalls the houres once fled,
Or roses, being withered:*
Nor us (my Friend) when we are lost,
Like to a Deaw, or melted Frost.
Then live we mirthfull, while we should,
And turn the iron Age to Gold.
Let's feast, and frolick, sing, and play,
And thus lesse last, then live our Day. (22-31)

We should note, however, that Herrick is careful not to sanction libertinism, arguing that even “*Jove decrees/ Some mirth, t’adulce mans miseries*” (5-6). It is also instructive to note that Herrick has been addressing Weekes in the intimate rhetorical second-person singular form (“thou”, “thine”) until this point in the poem, and subsequently includes himself and Weekes together in the similarly intimate first-person plural (“we”). The

¹³² See Seneca *De Brevitate Vitae* vii.10 and *Epistulae Morales* lxxvii.20.

¹³³ The phrase *carpe diem* is found in Horace’s *Carmina* – “*carpe diem, quam minimum credula postero*” (“Reap the harvest of to-day, putting as little trust as may be in the morrow!”) (I.11.8).

¹³⁴ Although an Epicurean would no doubt add the disclaimer: enjoy today in moderation lest you render tomorrow unpleasant. According to Martin (note 69, p. 514), Herrick’s use of *carpe diem* is “indebted not only to Latin poetry but to the Bible (where the thought of ‘carpe diem’ is introduced in order to be deprecated)”; see, for example, *Wisdom of Solomon* ii.1-8, *Proverbs* vii.18, *Isaiah* xxii.13, *Matthew* vi.28-34 and *1 Corinthians* xv.32.

the vaguely defined menace of *merimna*, anxiety” (Braden 1978: 207).¹⁴¹ Thus, in “*To his Age*”, much of the second half of the poem builds up an Anacreontic persona, who drinks and reads his own poems in Weekes’ company until he is temporarily re-energised. In the hands of Herrick’s Anacreontic persona, *carpe diem*, Epicureanism and old age meet.

Apart from “*His Age*”, there are several other poems in *Hesperides* in which Herrick depicts himself as an Epicurean. “*His content in the Country*” is a fine example of Herrick’s tendency to combine autobiographical details with classical motifs in his Epicurean self-presentation:

HERE, here I live with what my Board,
 Can with the smallest cost afford.
 Though ne’r so mean the Viands be,
 They well content my *Prew* and me.
 Or Pea, or Bean, or Wort, or Beet,
 What ever comes, content makes sweet:
 Here we rejoyce, because no Rent
 We pay for our poore Tenement:
 Wherein we rest, and never feare
 The Landlord, or the Usurer.
 The Quarter-day do’s ne’r affright
 Our Peacefull slumbers in the night.
 We eat our own, and batten more,
 Because we feed on no mans score:
 But pitie those, whose flanks grow great,
 Swel’d with the Lard of others meat.
 We blesse our Fortunes, when we see
 Our own beloved privacie:
 And like our living, where w’are known
 To very few, or else to none. (H-552 / 200)

His “living” is the glebe of Dean Prior parish, where he lived together with his maid Prudence Baldwin (“*Prew*”) for some sixteen years, while the vegetarian diet, sound sleep, self-sufficiency and avoidance of rack-renting can all be found in Horace (Martindale, J. 1993: 83).¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ Anacreon was a Greek lyric poet from the sixth century BC. The so-called “poems of Anacreon” were a manuscript miscellany of Anacreontic imitations by a handful of ancient Greek poets written over a time span of about two centuries. They were rediscovered by Henri Estienne in 1554; see Braden (1978: 196).

¹⁴² Vegetarian diet: *Carmina* I.31.15-16, *Epodes* II.45-60, *Satires* I.6.111-8, II.6.63-76, 83-9. Sleep: *Carm.* II.16.15-16, III.1 17-24. Rack-renting: *Carm.* II.18.23-8.

In all his self-referential Epicurean poems, Herrick turns smallness and self-sufficiency into aesthetic and ethical desirables. For example, the “little Pipkin with a bit/ Of Mutton, or of Veale in it” in “*Content, not Cates*” (H-312 / 124 / 5-6) is echoed in “*A Ternarie of littles, upon a pipkin of Jellie sent to a Lady*” (H-733 / 249) where the smallness of the vessel makes the smallness of its contents comely:

A little meat best fits a little bellie,
As sweetly Lady, give me leave to tell ye,
This little Pipkin fits this little Jellie. (16-18)

In “*A Thanksgiving to God, for his House*” the modesty of Herrick’s lifestyle is enriched immeasurably by small blessings from God’s “plenty-dropping hand” (N-47 / 349 / 41), while in “*Littleness no cause of Leanness*” Herrick again associates God’s small blessings with true prosperity:

ONE feeds on Lard, and yet is leane;
And I but feasting with a Beane,
Grow fat and smooth: The reason is,
Jove prospers my meat, more then his. (H-461 / 173)

In fact, Epicurean “littleness” goes not only to the core of Herrick’s self-presentation as a rural-dwelling parish priest; it also goes to the core of how he understands himself as a poet. What Joanna Martindale calls “the pose of the small man” (83) is adopted by both Ovid and Horace to explain their preference for private, lyric poetry over public, heroic verse. For example, Horace characterises himself in the *Carmina* as “*operosa parvus/ carmina fingo*” (“small, I confect laborious songs”) (IV.2.31-2) and declares that, despite the humble standing of the lyric genre, it can nevertheless be used to attain greatness:

quodsi me lyricis vatibus inseris,
sublime feriam sidera vertice.

(But if you rank me among the lyric bards, I shall touch the stars
with my exalted head.)

(I.1.35-6)

For his part, Ovid compares himself to a small boat, whose size is commensurate with his preferred poetic genre:

non ideo debet pelago se credere, si qua
 audit in exiguo ludere cumba lacu.
 forsā—et hoc dubito—numeris levioribus aptus
 sim satis, in parvos sufficiamque modos:
 at si me iubeas domitos Iovis igne Gigantes
 dicere, conantem debilitabit onus.

(A skiff ought not to trust itself to the sea just because it ventures to disport itself in a little pool. Perhaps (but even this I doubt) I am well enough suited to lighter verse, capable of humble measures; but if thou shouldst bid me sing of the Giants conquered by Jove's lightning, the burden will weaken me in the attempt.)

(*Tristia* II.329-334)

Like Ovid, Herrick characterises his poetic vessel as a bark, or barque, which “in earlier times, [was] a general term for all sailing vessels of small size” (*OED*).¹⁴³ As his classical predecessors understood before him, Herrick is aware that a poet of small genres like himself occupies one of the lower rungs on the generic hierarchy.¹⁴⁴ The moral justification Epicureanism provides for having modest ambitions is constitutive of an important part of Herrick's poetic self-presentation, which he fits to his abilities as a poet, as in “*A Ternarie*” when he states: “A little streame best fits a little Boate;/ .../ As my small Pipe best fits my little note” (13-15). Herrick's Epicureanism is one way of coming to terms with, but also thriving within, his limitations.¹⁴⁵

To return to Maren-Sofie Røstvig, with whom I began this discussion, she traces a gradual shift from Stoicism to Epicureanism in the *beatus ille* tradition over the course of the seventeenth century. She argues that Herrick is “the most conspicuous exception” to this trend (1962: 117). During the first half of the century, when so much *beatus ille* poetry was marked by classical and religious asceticism, Røstvig argues that,

¹⁴³ See “*The Plaudite, or end of life*” (H-225 / 84 / 5), “*His Age, dedicated to his peculiar friend, Master John Wickes, under the name of Posthumus*” (H-336 / 134 / 60) and “*To Crowne it*” (H-1127 / 334 / 1).

¹⁴⁴ According to Alastair Fowler, love poems and short poems such as epigrams were placed lowest in the hierarchy of genres during the Renaissance. Not much had changed in this regard since ancient times, except that tragedy and epic had exchanged places in the hierarchy by the seventeenth century (1982: 216-7). For more on Herrick's self-presentation through his use of genre, see Chapter 2 of this thesis.

¹⁴⁵ See Braden's discussion on Herrick's Horatian lyricism (1978: 232-254).

Herrick's poetic praise of country life is uniquely cheerful in its mood. Like Milton, Herrick did not content himself with philosophical arguments about happiness; he preferred to describe delightful scenes of rustic merriment. (113)

For Røstvig, Herrick's "Epicurean sensuousness" was a forerunner to post-Restoration Epicurean sentiment (117). What Røstvig's study does not take into account is that Herrick's Hesperidean persona begins *Hesperides* as an Epicurean and ends it as a Stoic. This movement is an inversion of the development of the *beatus ille* tradition in English poetry during Herrick's lifetime.

An observation by Ann Coiro ties in with an almost imperceptibly gradual shift from an Epicurean emphasis to a Stoic emphasis in *Hesperides*, a shift that contributes to a sense that Herrick's self-presentation is a realistic reflection of a person's changing attitudes and beliefs as time passes and their circumstances change. She suggests that:

[A]s the sententious epigrams gradually replace the ceremonial lyrics in *Hesperides*, Herrick seems to be portraying a shift in his own mind, a shift in symbolic place, from Devon to London; and a shift in purpose, from a singer of country festivals and pretty girls to a serious but futile role as a voice of sense in a senseless time. (1988: 210)¹⁴⁶

The most plausible reason for such a shift in *Hesperides* is self-presentational. Since one of the most sustained shaping devices of *Hesperides* is the poet's own biographical experience, we can argue that as the work progresses Herrick recognises with increasing urgency the need to act, rather than to retire, in the face of Royalist defeat. There are three ways in which we can trace a shift from Epicureanism to Stoicism across *Hesperides*. I will discuss each way in turn, starting with the distribution of classical quotations in the collection, then proceeding to his shifting classical self-presentation in the "On himselfe" poems, and finally to comparisons between two pairs of twinned poems placed at either end of *Hesperides*.

¹⁴⁶ See also John L. Kimmey, "Order and form in Herrick's *Hesperides*," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 70 (1971): 257.

In order to trace the shifting frequencies of Herrick's classical sources across the collection, I traced the frequency of poems which included one or more classical quotations from each of Herrick's eight most frequently quoted classical poets in Martin's commentary. I then divided *Hesperides* into artificial sections of 100 poems each, as follows:

Table 1: Distribution of major classical sources across *Hesperides*

	1-100	101-200	201-300	301-400	401-500	501-600	601-700	701-800	801-900	901-1000	1001-1100	1100-1132	Total
Anacreon	4	5	1	2	0	3	0	0	1	2	2	0	20
Catullus	2	4	6	0	1	2	0	2	2	0	0	0	19
Horace	7	11	7	10	5	4	9	5	3	4	4	2	71
Martial	5	10	9	5	9	6	9	4	5	6	1	2	71
Ovid	10	10	13	5	6	9	12	4	10	10	2	8	99
Seneca	5	4	4	4	8	6	10	9	4	6	9	1	70
Tacitus	0	0	4	1	1	1	2	7	3	6	5	0	30

The table reveals how most of Herrick's major classical sources decline in frequency as *Hesperides* progresses. For example, Anacreon and Catullus both dwindle after the first 300 poems, while Martial and Horace both dwindle after 800 poems. Ovid dwindles, too, but three evenly-spaced peaks in the frequency of his quotations would suggest that Herrick attempts to sustain an Ovidian strain throughout the collection. The major surprise is Seneca's strong showing towards the end of the work. Seneca was the most influential Stoic writer during the seventeenth century, mainly because, of all the Roman Stoics, his works were the only ones to have survived complete, and in Latin (Rivers 1992: 44).

The majority of *Hesperides*' Senecan quotations are didactic, and combine socio-political observations on the troubled times with pronouncements Stoic philosophical pronouncements. Examples abound, including "Meane things overcome mighty" (H-702 / 240), "Death ends all woe" (H-766 / 257), "Suffer that thou canst not shift" (H-820 / 270), "Satisfaction for sufferings" (H-849 / 276), "The will makes the mark, or consent makes the Cure" (H-1048 / 319), "On Fortune" (H-1061 / 322) and "Good men afflicted

most” (N-107 / 370).¹⁴⁷ Towards the end of *Hesperides*, Herrick also adopts the role of a cautious counsellor King Charles, in the same way as Seneca was a counsellor to the Emperor Nero. Herrick’s caution can be seen in a poem entitled “*Caution in Councell*”, in which he states: “KNOW when to speake; for many times it brings/ Danger to give the best advice to Kings.” (H-1037 / 318). Many poems of advice, such as “*Regression spoiles Resolution*” (H-747 / 252), “*Clemency in Kings*” (H-775 / 260), “*Cruelty*” (H-929 / 292), “*Patience in Princes*” (H-998 / 309), “*Feare gets force*” (H-999 / 309), “*Rapine brings Ruine*” (H-1023 / 314), “*Upon Kings*” (H-1097 / 330) and “*A King and no King*” (H-1103 / 331), encourage the King to be decisive, merciful, patient, exemplary, courageous and just.¹⁴⁸ Herrick’s persona is no longer the modest and retiring Epicurean country-dweller, “known/ To very few, or else to none” (“*His content in the Country*”, H-552 / 200). In these later poems, interspersed between poems that mention moments of personal or national crisis, Herrick’s Hesperidean *persona* has added his voice to those of the King’s advisors at Court. This marks a shift towards a Stoic understanding of the importance of public duty, in which the state of the nation is more important than the state of the individual’s peace of mind.

It should also be noted that quotations from Tacitus make a similarly strong showing in the final third of the collection. Of the thirty Tacitean quotations cited in Martin’s commentary, twenty-one occur after H-700 / 240, making Tacitus the third most prominent classical author after Ovid and Seneca to feature in the final-third of the book. Although Tacitus is not a source of classical Stoicism, his *Agricolae*, *Histories* and *Annals* provide an account of imperial history from 14-96 A.D., from which Herrick draws parallels with his contemporary socio-political situation.¹⁴⁹ Together with the Senecan references, Herrick’s imitations of Tacitus contribute towards a sense of Herrick’s diminishing interest in private pleasures, and a growing awareness of the significance of events occurring in the public sphere, to which his Stoicism is a response.

¹⁴⁷ See *Epistulae Morales* IV.8; *Consolatio ad Marciam* XIX.5; *Epist.* CVII.9; *Hercules Furens* 656-7; *Hippolyta* 249; *Medea* 176; and *De Providentia* III.4 respectively.

¹⁴⁸ See *Epist.* XX.6; *De Clementia* I.1.3; *De Clem.* I.8 & 24 ; *De Clem.* I.22.1; *Medea* 163; *Med.* 196 & *Troades* 258; *Thyestes* 388 & *Oedipus* 703-4; *Thy.* 214-5 and *Oed.* 703-4 respectively.

¹⁴⁹ For example, “*Cruelties*” (H-679 / 236) is echoed in *Agricolae* 45; “*Blame the reward of Princes*” (H-774 / 260) in *Agricolae* 27 and *Annals* III.53; “*Revenge*” (H-923 / 292) in *Histories* IV.3; “*A Prognostick*” (H-718 / 244) in *Annals* III.27; “*Princes and Favourites*” (H-758 / 255) in *Annals* III.30; and “*Great Maladies, long Medicines*” (H-1012 / 312) in *Annals* III.54.

A second way of showing that Herrick becomes less Epicurean and more Stoical as *Hesperides* progresses is to trace his classical imitations in the twenty-six poems entitled “*On himselfe*”. Herrick imitates “Anacreon” twice within the first three “*On himselfe*” poems, then not again in any of the subsequent twenty-three poems. Thus, his classical self-presentation within the first 200 poems of *Hesperides* is largely that of the genial old libertine:

On himselfe

YOUNG I was, but now am old,
 But I am not yet grown cold;
 I can play, and I can twine
 ’Bout a Virgin like a Vine:
 In her lap too I can lye
 Melting, and in fancie die:
 And return to life, if she
 Claps my cheek, or kisseth me;
 Thus, and thus it now appears
 That our love out-lasts our yeeres. (H-43 / 17)¹⁵⁰

On himselfe

I FEARE no Earthly Powers;
 But care for crowns of flowers:
 And love to have my Beard
 With Wine and Oile besmear’d.
 This day Ile drown my sorrow;
 Who knows to live to morrow? (H-170 / 65)¹⁵¹

Herrick’s persona’s merry insouciance and indifference to the outside world is an Epicurean stance. However, as the series of “*On himselfe*” poems progresses, there is a sense in which his Anacreontic-Epicurean attitude is at first disrupted by the pressure of external events, and finally rendered unsustainable. For example, at the seventh “*On himselfe*” poem, Herrick hints that his inability to “sing/ To the tension of the string,/ As I did, not long ago” has been caused by an unspecified grief (H-332 / 131 / 1-3). The next poem, entitled “*To Larr*”, expands on his grief in “*On himselfe*” somewhat, suggesting

¹⁵⁰ Based on *Anacreontea* 34. See also *Anac.* 7 and 40.

¹⁵¹ Based on *Anac.* 8.

that it may have been caused by being “driven hence” (1) from his “Country fire” (8) – an occurrence that immediately brings the “real” Herrick’s eviction from Dean Prior to mind. Then, at the eleventh “*On himselfe*” poem, Herrick declares:

COME, leave this loathed Country-life, and then
 Grow up to be a Roman *Citizen*.
 Those mites of Time, which yet remain unspent,
 Waste thou in that most Civill Government. (H-456 / 171 / 1-4).

His desire to return to the city, to live like a Roman citizen, and even to re-engage in public life, is strongly Stoic. So, too, is his later declaration in the sixteenth “*On himselfe*” poem that he will discard his poetic themes of amorous Epicurean country pleasures:

Ile sing no more of Frosts, Snowes, Dews and Showers;
 No more of Groves, Meades, Springs, and wreaths of Flowers:
 Ile write no more, nor will I tell or sing
 Of *Cupid*, and his wittie coozning (H-658 / 228 / 3-6).

Herrick is distancing himself from the first poem in *Hesperides*, but he does not say what he will sing or write about instead. As I have shown already, however, it is from about the 600th poem onwards that Herrick’s didactic epigrammatic pronouncements on duty and virtue (based mostly on quotations from Seneca and Tacitus) begin to feature more prominently. Later, when Herrick undergoes a moment of severe personal crisis in which he wishes for death, there is a sense in which his new-found Stoicism is what enables him to draw on his reserves of inner fortitude and to face the crisis at hand. The crisis occurs at the nineteenth and twentieth “*On himselfe*” poems. Placed just three poems apart, their proximity heightens the impression we get of the speaker’s misery:

WEEPE for the dead, for they have lost this light:
 And weepe for me, lost in an endlesse night.
 Or mourne, or make a Marble Verse for me,
 Who writ for many. *Benedicite*. (H-952 / 298)

LOST to the world; lost to my selfe; alone
 Here now I rest under this Marble stone:
 In depth of silence, heard, and seene of none. (H-954 / 298)

By the twenty-second “*On himselfe*” poem, Herrick has regained his even-temperedness as he reflects on his forty-nine years of life experience:

A Wearied Pilgrim, I have wandred here
 Twice five and twenty (bate me but one yeer)
 Long I have lasted in this world; (tis true)
 But yet those yeers that I have liv'd, but few. (H-1088 / 328 / 1-4)

One might expect this to be an expression of belated Epicurean regret at not having made the most of life’s pleasures, except that it is Stoic virtue, not Epicurean pleasure, which Herrick believes he has neglected:

*He lives, who lives to virtue: men who cast
 Their ends for Pleasure, do not live, but last.* (9-10)

In fact, Herrick is quoting here from Seneca’s moral treatise, *De Brevitate Vitae* [“*On the shortness of life*”] (127.20), which heightens the sense we get that Herrick self-presentation has become increasingly Stoic as *Hesperides* draws to a close.

To get a sense of just how far Herrick’s classical self-presentation has shifted during the course of *Hesperides*, we can compare the pilgrim persona of the twenty-second “*On himselfe*” poem above with the vine-like Anacreontic lover persona with whom Herrick began his self-presentation in the very first “*On himselfe*” poem (see H-43 / 17).

Although Herrick’s presentation of himself as a pilgrim is not a classical image, it is a way of suggesting that his Hesperidean persona undertakes a long and arduous journey to a far-off destination. Whereas the ageing Anacreontic lover tries to stave off death by enjoying himself in the laps of a series of virgins, the pilgrim persona regrets the fact that he has only discovered the value of the single most important Stoic ideal – namely, virtue – at such a late stage in his life. In Chapter 2, I outlined several other ways in which the Hesperidean Herrick journeys through *Hesperides*. Firstly, there is the vast sylvan topography of the Hesperides through which his persona must find his way. Secondly, there is the classical metaphor of the composition of a poetic work being like a nautical

voyage at the end of which the poet enters a port to rest. Thirdly, the correlation between poetic composition and a journey is developed by Herrick to suggest his own attainment of poetic prestige. The impression we get that the Hesperidean Herrick is conducting a journey is enhanced by the sense that the work has been shaped to suggest the passage of time. Alastair Fowler has noted that *Hesperides* has a “calendrical order” which fulfils Herrick’s promise in “*The Argument of his Book*” to “sing of *Times trans-shifting*” (H-1 / 5 / 9) (1980: 249). Indeed, Herrick refers to *Hesperides* on three occasions as “the Poets Endlesse-Kalendar” (H-444 / 168 / 6), “your Greenie-Kalendar” (H-449 / 169 / 14) and “my eternall Calender” (H- 545 / 199 / 10). *Hesperides*’ calendrical character also derives from its georgics, and its many poems about annual festivals (both pagan and Christian), and its commemorations of births, marriages and funerals. Meanwhile, Herrick’s concern with the passage of time is reflected in his epigrams about decaying bodies and his meditations on nature’s cycles. The complex shifts and changes in Herrick’s Hesperidean persona are enhanced by being set against this general sense of time passing in the collection as a whole. Thus, the journey need not necessarily be undertaken to reach a physical destination. It can also be undertaken to reach a professional destination, as Herrick’s persona does as a poet seeking to realise their potential fully, or to reach a moral destination, as Herrick’s persona does as an ethical being seeking wisdom. In the case of the Hesperidean Herrick’s arrival at a Stoic self-understanding, there is a sense in which it occurs more by accident thanks to the intrusion of vaguely hinted-at external occurrences, than by the persona intending to become a Stoic from the outset.

Yet another instance of the shift from Epicureanism to Stoicism can be seen in the contrast between two poems which bracket *Hesperides* and which both are both addressed to Herrick’s brothers. These poems parallel the “self” poems, because we sense that Herrick projects his alter-ego onto his siblings.¹⁵² On the one hand, Herrick praises his brother Thomas for choosing an Epicurean life of quiet and untroubled rural retirement:

Nor are thy daily and devout affaires
 Attended with those desp’rate cares,
 Th’industrious Merchant has; who for to find

¹⁵² For example, Herrick considers his brother Thomas to be his “soules half” (H-106 / 34 / 1).

Gold, runneth to the Western Inde,
 And back again, (tortur'd with fears) doth fly,
 Untaught, to suffer Poverty.
 But thou at home, blest with securest ease,
 Sitts't and beleev'st that there be seas,
 And watrie dangers; while thy whiter hap,
 But sees these things within thy Map.

(“*A Country life: To his Brother,
 M. Tho: Herrick*”, H-106 / 34 / 69-72)

In total contrast, Herrick praises Nicholas, his merchant brother trading in the Levant, for doing exactly what Herrick praises Thomas for *not* doing in “*A Country life*”:

WHAT others have with cheapnesse seene, and ease,
 In Varnisht maps; by'th'help of Compasses:
 Or reade in Volumes, and those Bookes (with all
 Their large narrations, Incanonicall)
 Thou hast beheld those seas, and Countries farre;
 And tel'st to us, what once they were, and are.

(“*To his Brother Nicolas
 Herrick*”, H-1100 / 330 / 1-2).

At a time when grubby commercialism was associated by Royalist propagandists with their Puritan opponents (Røstvig 121), it is significant that Herrick's last act of praise in *Hesperides* is for his tradesman-brother who has not chosen a life of easy Epicurean retirement. A Stoic, not an Epicurean, would choose the path Nicolas has done.

Herrick's self-presentation as both a Stoic and a pilgrim, together with his praise of Nicholas's mercantilism, is interesting in the light of representations from the 1630s and 1640s of the Royalist-Laudian-Cavalier figure on the one hand, and the Republican-Puritan-Roundhead figure on the other. As Røstvig points out, it was the Puritans who assigned themselves the symbol of the Christian pilgrim for themselves, despite the pilgrim also being a Catholic symbol:

The Puritan concept of a happy life was that of the good pilgrim who is always on the road from this world to the next, engaged in a never-

ending battle with Satan and the unregenerate Adam in his own flesh. (48)

The Puritan pilgrim was the antithesis of the Royalist symbol of “the classical figure of the Horatian husbandman, happy in his retirement from the world of soldiers, merchants, lawyers and fickle princes” (49). To the Puritan, peaceful retirement was tantamount to a sinful capitulation in the ongoing battle between Christ and the Devil. Against the Epicurean cultivation of peace and contentment favoured in Royalist iconography, then, the Puritan preferred the more Stoical stance of defending their virtue by eternal vigilance and ceaseless spiritual strife (48-9). Be this as it may, a distinction ought to be drawn between iconography and reality: it would be ludicrous to aver that all Royalists favoured Epicureanism and all Puritans favoured Stoicism. Hence, we should not assume that Herrick is contemplating a renunciation of his Royalist sympathies as *Hesperides* draws to a close. Instead, I would suggest that Herrick’s persona has come to a belated realisation that the Stoicism incidentally associated with the iconography of the Puritan party (and not the Epicureanism associated with the Royalists) is the more effective philosophy in times of crisis. Indeed, whereas the Royalist compulsion in defeat was to retire *to* the country and write poems in praise of retirement, Herrick’s was to leave the country *for* London to publish his work – his life’s one great intervention in public affairs.

I began this chapter by showing that Herrick’s many classical quotations from a broad range of sources enable him to show off his learning; next, I argued that he uses the classics to heighten the aesthetic appeal of his book for his intended audience, whom he expects to be classically-schooled. I have also suggested that Herrick grapples with the ethics of classical philosophy in order to understand how best to live a good life in bad times. What I have not yet discussed is Herrick’s representation of himself *as* a Roman. To readers in the twenty-first century, Herrick’s frequent alignment of his autobiographical experiences with Roman life might seem curious, given the perceived incompatibilities between the experience of a seventeenth century country vicar and the

pagan lifestyle of ancient Rome. But Herrick's creation of a semi-autobiographical, semi-fictional Roman persona is a way of presenting himself to us as a fully-fledged and authentic inheritor of the classical literary tradition. Herrick demonstrates his classical credentials, ones which his intended readership would recognise, not simply as arbitrary decorations, but as manifest forms of self-enactment by an agent who not only writes like the best of Romans, but thinks, comports and conducts himself like them, and who consequently deserves to claim that "I am a free-born *Roman*; suffer then,/ That I amongst you live a Citizen" ("*His returne to London*", H-713 / 242 / 11).

As we might expect of Herrick, his classical self-presentation is complex and polyvalent. Three major strands can be identified, however. Firstly, Herrick appropriates specific characteristics – sometimes biographical, sometimes poetic – from several classical poets, combining them into a new whole. There is a sense in which Herrick is presenting himself as the poetic son of many classical fathers, each of whom are represented in some way or another in his own persona, but who cannot be reduced in any way to an easy one-to-one equivalence with the Hesperidean Herrick. The three classical fathers I discuss in turn are Martial, Horace and Ovid. Secondly, Herrick presents himself as conducting himself like a Roman in a general sense, which both can and cannot be linked to the conduct of his classical poetic forebears, but is not reliant on any one poet in particular. Thirdly, Herrick's classical self-presentation extends into the realm of Roman mythology, where he appropriates the figure of Hercules in order to suggest something about his ability as a poet to control and order his work, bringing the contradictions of both his autobiographical self and his Hesperidean persona together and reconciling them to one another. For the purposes of an ordered exposition in the discussion which follows, these three strands of Herrick's classical self-presentation must be treated separately, but in *Hesperides* they are mutually-constitutive and inseparable from one another.

The first representation of Herrick which the reader encounters in *Hesperides* is the frontispiece portrait. The portrait demonstrates in a microcosm how Herrick's classical self-presentation plays out in the macrocosm of *Hesperides*. Firstly, the bust is partly a carefully-composed synthesis of characteristics associated with specific classical poets. For example, we can identify Herrick's affinity to Ovid from the figure's prominent nose (Ovid's full name, Publius Ovidius Naso, has provided an irresistible pun to poets down

the ages because ‘naso’ means ‘nose’ in Latin).¹⁵³ But the stout figure also signals an affinity between Herrick and Horace, who famously described his short physical stature (“corporis exigui”) among other autobiographical details in the epilogue to his first collection of *Epistles* (I.20.19-28). Secondly, the bust is not only representative of specific classical poets who have influenced Herrick, but the generalised Romanness of its sideways pose and toga-clad shoulders manifests Herrick’s sense of himself as a Roman in a general sense, independent of any one-to-one equivalences with specific Roman poets or historical figures. Thirdly, from the frontispiece figure’s broad shoulders suggesting his physical strength, as well as from his placement against a backdrop containing several references to classical mythology, the frontispiece figure is probably meant to suggest at least a partial representation of Hercules.¹⁵⁴ All three major strands of Herrick’s classical self-presentation which I now intend to discuss have been seamlessly combined by Herrick’s frontispiece engraver and the image placed before Herrick’s self-presentation in the poems.

When the poems do begin, we quickly gain a sense that Martial is one of Herrick’s principal classical poetic predecessors. Herrick foregrounds the fact that he has returned to London from the country to publish *Hesperides*, and is troubled by the same sense of inadequacy as his classical predecessor, a native of rural Spain, when he prepared to publish his introductory book of epigrams for the sophisticated inhabitants of Rome. Thus, both poets present themselves as being wary of their book’s reception by a city audience, only to be overruled by their impatient muse (in Herrick’s case) or wanton book (in Martial’s case):

To his Muse

WHITHER *Mad maiden* wilt thou roame?

¹⁵³ The nose also has another connotation. In both Renaissance and classical literature, it is frequently endowed with phallic innuendo – for example, in the banter between Cleopatra’s attendants (*Antony and Cleopatra* I.2.48-54), or between the musician and one of Othello’s clownish servants (*Othello* III.1.1-19), or in Catullus (13 and 112), or Martial (XII.88 and XIII.2). Herrick may have seized upon the innuendo to boast about his capacity, or virility, in writing the 1,100 or so poems which follow. The scatology of the nose-penis analogy is also consistent with Herrick’s somewhat crude self-presentation in a number of very early liminal poems in *Hesperides*, such as when he invokes Juvenal’s “*swelling Piles*” [“*tumidae ... mariscaae*” from *Satires* II.13] and Horace’s “*Extream Scabbe*” [“*extremium scabies*” from *Ars Poetica* 417] on unsympathetic readers in successive poems (H-4 / 6 / 2 and H-5 / 7 / 6).

¹⁵⁴ See William L. Trogden in Coiro (1988: note 34, p. 222).

Farre safer 'twere to stay at home:
 Where thou mayst sit, and piping please
 The poore and private *Cottages*.
 Since *Coats*, and *Hamlets*, best agree
 With this thy meaner Minstralsie.

...

Stay then at home, and doe not goe
 Or flie abroad to seek for woe.
 Contempts in Courts and Cities dwell;
 No Critick haunts the Poore mans Cell:
 Where thou mayst hear thine own Lines read
 By no one tongue there, censured. (H-2 / 5 / 1-6 and 19-24)

Argiletanas mavis habitare tabernas,
 cum tibi, parve liber, scrinia nostra vacant?
 nescis, heu, nescis dominae fastidia Romae:
 crede mihi, nimium Martia turba sapit.

...

sed tu ne totiens domini patiare lituras
 neve notet lusus tristis harundo tuos,
 aetherias, lascive, cupis volitare per auras.
 i, fuge! sed poteris tutior esse domi. (ll.1-4, 9-12)

(Would you rather dwell in the shops of the Potters' Field although, small volume, my book-case stands empty for you? You don't know, alas, you don't know the superciliousness of Mistress Rome; believe me, the crowd of Mars is too clever for you ... But you, to avoid your master's constant erasures, and the scoring of your playfulness by his critical pen, are eager, wanton one, to flit through the airs of heaven. Go! fly! yet you might have been safer at home.)

(*Epigrammata* I.3.1-4 and 9-12)

Herrick has reworked Martial's poem, shifting phrases from the end of Martial's epigram to the beginning of his and vice-versa, but their basic situation remains the same. Herrick and Martial are both deploying the rhetorical 'affected modesty' *topos* here. As E. R. Curtius explains:

It behooved the orator to put his hearers in a favourable, attentive, and tractable state of mind. How to do this? First, through a modest presence. But one has to draw attention to this modesty oneself. Thus it becomes affected. (1990: 83)

By using the same *topos* as Martial, in the same position at the beginning of his book, and under similar biographical circumstances, Herrick is signalling that Martial's twelve subsequent books of epigrams and lyrics are one of the main inspirations for *Hesperides*.

And so it proves: Martial's characteristic way of beginning each of his twelve epigram collections with a handful of wryly self-reflexive poems is adopted by Herrick in the opening sequence of *Hesperides*.¹⁵⁵ According to Gordon Braden, Martial's corpus is also curiously similar in size and arrangement to Herrick's (1978: 180). Herrick and Martial both divide their poetry collections into two parts, beginning with a bigger group of poems with a wide appeal (*Hesperides* and the *Epigrammata*), and ending with a smaller group of more specialised subject matter (*His Noble Numbers* on the one hand, and the *Xenia* and *Apophreta* on the other). The sizes of these parts are also roughly proportional to one another. *Hesperides* is 1130 poems long, the *Epigrammata* 1187 poems long; *Noble Numbers* is an additional 272 poems, the *Xenia* and *Apophreta* combined are 350 poems long (180). Their poems are also arranged according to similar principles of ordered disorder:

The entries, at least in the larger groups, seem to be shuffled according to local criteria of variety and contrast, with occasional thematic clusters; but the impression on reading them [both] straight through is likely to be one of simple accumulation. (180-1)

But whereas Martial counteracts the sense of formlessness in his work by dividing it up into books of roughly 100 poems each, Herrick's structural markers are not immediately obvious.¹⁵⁶ Braden suggests that the artificiality and regularity of Martial's book divisions is indicative of the urban context in which his poems are set (185).¹⁵⁷ By contrast, the teeming variety of Herrick's *silva* collection reflects its setting in the garden

¹⁵⁵ Four of the eight poems in *Hesperides*' opening sequence are based on Martial. Compare "To his Muse" (H-2 / 5) and "To his Booke" (H-3 / 6) with *Epigrammata* I.3; "Another" (H-4 / 6) with *Epig.* XI. xvi. 9-10; and "When he would have his verses read" (H-8 / 7) with *Epig.* IV.82.5-6, *Epig.* XIII.2.9-10 and *Epig.* X.19.18-21; consider also *Epig.* XI.17.

¹⁵⁶ The fact that *Hesperides*' structural markers are not obvious does not mean they do not exist. See my discussion of Herrick's cycles of poetic composition in Chapter 2, p.67-70 of this thesis

¹⁵⁷ Martial's poems are "an account of life in a mass," Braden argues, and his "epigrammatic technique of efficient, reductive insult is itself a very practical urban skill, a way of coping quickly with the endless number of people whose lives jostle and impinge upon yours" (185).

isles of the Hesperides. Finally, as I have previously discussed in Chapter 2, Herrick feels compelled to emulate all of Martial's epigrammatic categories, including his foul epigrams. Herrick's decision to do so has been condemned by his prudish Victorian editors such as Henry Morley (1884) and Alfred Pollard (1891), and damned with faint praise by twentieth century critics such as Braden (1987: 180) and Alastair Fowler (1980: 245). But Coiro's observation that "approximately a third of the epigrams in each of Martial's centuries are 'sweet'—epitaphs, love poems, epigrams of praise" (1988: 52) serves as a reminder that Herrick was intent on emulating not only Martial's epigrams but his lyrics as well.¹⁵⁸ In the eyes of his contemporary reader, Herrick's status as Martial's heir is dependent upon his emulation of the entire range of Martial's poetry.

To turn now to another of Herrick's literary fathers, Herrick's self-identification with Horace pulses through *Hesperides* with a powerful, if understated, consistency. In all likelihood, Herrick would have felt an affinity to Horace through their shared biographical circumstances. J. Michie's brief introduction to Horace's life reveals some striking parallels between the two poets (1970: 11-14). Firstly, both men received comprehensive educations, despite their humble origins. Secondly, both played a small part in military campaigns that ended in ignominious defeat – Horace with Brutus' and Cassius' Republican army at Philippi in 42 B.C. and Herrick with Buckingham's expedition to the Île de Rhé in 1627. Thirdly, both received patronage from their nation's leaders (Augustus and Charles I respectively) in the form of country smallholdings, where they both subsequently spent a large part of their lives. These biographical affinities translate themselves into poetic affinities, as well. Firstly, both men wrote poems in praise of the simple pleasures of country living. Secondly, they wrote poems praising Augustus and Charles but their final appraisal of their royal patrons' merits are somewhat hedged with ambiguity. Thirdly, both wrote poems addressed to large numbers of friends and lovers. Fourthly, they wrote 'religious poems' which appear to have been placed at the margins of their respective canons by the poets themselves, and retain their place there to this day thanks to the lukewarm appraisals of their critics. Fifthly, and most importantly, both poets frequently inscribe their names and autobiographical details in

¹⁵⁸ An instance in which Herrick imitates a "sweet" poem from Martial is "An Epitaph upon a sober Matron" (H-116 / 41), which is based on *Epig.* X.63.

their poems, which contribute to a sense the reader gets that both poets are projecting a complex presentation of themselves in their work.

Their many similarities, in life as well as in their art, stems from their shared understanding of poetry being a way of conducting oneself. To quote Braden:

The most important congruence between Herrick and Horace reaches from their work into their lives: two aging bachelors piddling around in their rustication, celebrating moments of pleasurable transiency while being made keenly aware of the menace of civil disruptions to all such havens. The writing of ‘lyric poetry’ brings coherence to such a life, both by treating thematically of its emotional dynamics, and also by providing a career and title appropriate to both the writer’s ambition and his place. (1978: 245)

The lyric is a modest genre, hence a lyric poet must conduct himself modestly. For both men, the adoption of an Epicurean attitude of contentment with their own modest lot allows them to avoid the disappointments and dangers that inevitably accompany lofty aspirations. By conducting himself modestly and by having modest aspirations, a lyric poet sets himself up to succeed, whereas poets with more exalted goals are likelier to overextend themselves and consequently fail. Crucially, modesty does not presuppose that one must err on the side of caution. In his first ode, Horace says that he is not interested in attaining glory by virtue of heroic, war-like deeds. He will do so, he tells Maecenas, through writing lyric poetry: “quodsi me lyricis vatibus inseris,/ sublimi feriam sidera vertice” (“But if thou rank me among the lyric bards, I will touch the stars with my exalted head”) (*Carmina* I.1.35-6).¹⁵⁹

The ideal way of conducting oneself is therefore within the “golden mean” between the two extremes of recklessness and timidity. Thus, as Horace advises Licinus elsewhere in his odes:

RECTIVS vives, Licini, neque altum
semper urgendo neque, dum procellas
cautus horrescis, nimium premendo
litus iniquum.

¹⁵⁹ Herrick echoes Horace in “*The bad season makes the Poet sad*” (H-612 / 214 / 14).

(BETTER wilt thou live, Licinus, by neither always pressing out to sea nor too closely hugging the dangerous shore in cautious fear of storms.) (*Carm.* II.10.1-4)

In both Renaissance and classical literature, the voyage metaphor is often applied to the poet's bid to attain greatness. The scale of a poet's ambition is directly proportional to the size of his vessel. The lyric poet's vessel is typically small and cannot overextend itself, lest it sink. But good lyric poets keep the golden mean by steering a middle course between the deep and treacherous sea of poetic recklessness and the shallow shore of poetic timidity (which can be equally damaging as recklessness, by dashing the poet's potential for greatness). Indeed, there is a sense in which it requires more skill to navigate a lyric vessel within the narrow channel of the golden mean than it is to plough through the deeper water in a bigger, sturdier vessel. Thus, classical lyric poets like Horace revel in their eventual arrival at their destination (sometimes literally a "harbour" at the end of their work) where they are seen to be rewarded with the appropriate recognition (sometimes symbolised by their vessel being crowned with a garland).

Horace's characterisation of his vessel as a two-oared skiff occurs in the penultimate ode in *Carmina* III. In the next poem, he erects a monument to himself in recognition of his greatness and is finally crowned with Delphic bays.¹⁶⁰ Because the creation of a lyric oeuvre is a necessarily incremental and arduous voyage which a poet must undergo in order to accomplish his goal, it is important for him not to announce his greatness until such greatness has been achieved. This is in keeping with the understanding that a lyric poet conducts himself modestly, and only presents himself as a great poet at the opportune moment. In Herrick's case, his "wearied Barke" arrives at the end of *Hesperides* (H-1127 / 334), and only then does he call for "the *Mirtle Coronet*" (H-1128 / 335), before "FAMES pillar" is finally raised in his honour (H-1129 / 335). Herrick adheres to these conventions as a way of showing his reader that he has conducted himself in the same way as Horace and that, as a consequence, his achievement as a lyric poet in *Hesperides* is comparable to that of Horace in his odes (whose title, *Carmina*, or "songs", signals their lyric status). The reader's recognition is vital if Herrick is

¹⁶⁰ This is Horace's famous "EXEGI monumentum aere perennius" ode ("I HAVE finished a monument more lasting than bronze").

successfully to claim that he is a legitimate successor to Horace. Perhaps this is why, at the beginning of *Hesperides*, Herrick asks his reader to “reads’t my Booke unto the end” (H-6 / 6 / 7). Since the conventional symbols of lyric greatness can only legitimately be placed at the end of the work, Herrick is concerned that his reader might give up early and therefore not witness the arrival of his lyric vessel in the harbour, as well his acceptance of the myrtle crown and, most importantly, the erection of an eternal monument in his own name. Hence Herrick’s appropriately Horatian curse, “The Extreame Scabbe take thee”, directed at the sour reader who denies Herrick his due recognition as a lyric bard by not reading the entire collection.¹⁶¹

Finally, we come to Ovid, whom Herrick quotes more frequently than any other classical poet in *Hesperides*.¹⁶² For this reason, it is curious that Braden should choose to omit Ovid from his 1978 discussion of Herrick’s classical lyric poetry, and to focus only on Martial, Anacreon and Horace. Braden’s motivation is that they are the only three classical poets whose poems Herrick imitates with any frequency as wholes (180). But so successfully does Herrick manage to imitate Ovid (as fragmentary as his imitation of Ovid’s poems may be) that the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*’s summary of Ovid’s poetic strengths and weaknesses could be transposed directly into a largely accurate précis of Herrick’s accomplishments:

His message was to the cultured society of the capital; his mission to cheer, give pleasure, and amuse. His success is due to his vivacity and sparkling wit. He is deeply sensitive to beauty, the physical beauty of youth and strength, the beauties of nature, of scenery and the gay tints of flowers, idealized with peculiar richness in terms of glowing colour. Having a fertile and creative imagination, he is unrivalled in the ease and liveliness with which he conceives and describes scenes and incidents. His style is brilliant and lucid ... He was learned, but carried his learning lightly ... His faults, to some of which he was not blind and which were deliberate ... are frivolity and irreverence, lapses into bad taste, want of restraint in describing what decency should have forbidden, and redundancy of language.

¹⁶¹ See Horace’s “occupet extremum scabies” curse in *Ars Poetica* (417), where it is used to make a different argument.

¹⁶² By my tally of Herrick’s classical quotations identified in Martin’s commentary, Ovid is quoted or imitated in ninety-nine poems. Martial (71), Horace (71) and Seneca (69) follow a significant distance behind. See table 1, p.104.

But though shocking he is not prurient; though redundant he is not diffuse. (632)

During the Renaissance, Ovid had a reputation for being one of the most charming and witty classical poets, and for a man of Herrick's refined sociability, Ovid would have been the ideal classical poet to try and emulate (Bate 1994: 2).

But Ovid also provides Herrick with a way of presenting his sense of isolation from the wit, sophistication and stimulation of London during the seventeen years he spent in deep rural Devonshire. By likening his sojourn in Devon to Ovid's banishment in Tomis (now Constanța, on the Romanian shores of the Black Sea), Herrick is able to draw a figurative connection between himself and Ovid in ways that his intended readers would understand.¹⁶³ Ovid does much the same thing as Herrick when he compares his sufferings in Tomis to those of Ulysses in *The Odyssey*, before concluding that the epic hero's privations were not as severe as his own (Pugh 2006a: 746).¹⁶⁴

The connections a poet makes between himself and other poets or poetic characters is figurative, not literal, and his reader is not expected to feel uneasy at the disjuncture between the poet's reality and his fictionalised self-presentation. What he is expected to understand is that Herrick has exaggerated some aspects of Devonshire life, and downplayed others, in order to make a point about what it is like to feel disconnected from a way of life one has known and loved. Thus, Herrick refers to his situation as being akin to banishment on three occasions, even though there is no evidence that Herrick was banished to Devonshire by the King for any misdemeanour, or that he was prevented from returning to London from time to time:

His returne to London

London my home is: though by hard fate sent
Into a long and irksome banishment; (H-713 / 242 / 13-14)

¹⁶³ Ovid's publication of his wittily licentious *Ars Poetica* was followed closely by his banishment to Tomis by Augustus, who was in the middle of trying to reform public morality in Rome. In *Tristia*, written in exile, Ovid refers to "duo crimina, carmen et error" ("two crimes, a poem and a blunder", II.207) as the factors which contributed to him incurring the Emperor's displeasure. The blunder was never disclosed. Ovid was not allowed to return to Rome, and died in Tomis in 17 A.D. after nine years of exile (*OCD*).

¹⁶⁴ See *Tristia* I.5 and *Ex Ponto* IV.10.

*His Lachrimae or Mirth, turn'd
to mourning*

Before I went
To banishment
Into the loathed West;
I co'd rehearse
A Lyrick verse,
And speak it with the best. (H-371 / 144 / 7-12)

To his Paternall Countrey

Banish'd from thee I live; ne'r to return,
Unlesse thou giv'st my small Remaines an Urne. (H-52 / 19 / 3-4).

Furthermore, in a pointedly Romanised self-presentational poem entitled “*To his Household gods*”, Herrick echoes Ovid’s description of Tomis as a wilderness populated by *saevae*, or savages, where the river Hister, and sometimes even the sea, freezes over (Pugh 2006a: 746):

RISE, Household-gods, and let us goe;
But whither, I my selfe not know.
First, let us dwell on rudest seas;
Next, with severest Salvages;
Last, let us make our best abode,
Where humane foot, as yet, ne'r trod:
Search worlds of Ice; and rather there
Dwell, then in lothed *Devonshire*. (H-278 / 111)¹⁶⁵

But Herrick’s situation in Devonshire, as T.G.S. Cain has revealed, was rather more secure and comfortable than Herrick makes out:

Valued at £21 a year in the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* of 1535, Dean Prior would probably have brought Herrick an income in the region of £100 by 1630. It was a good living, just in the top 25% nationally ... This relative prosperity was reflected in Herrick’s home. The vicarage itself, next to the church, was not in fact a ‘poore Tenement’ [as he describes it in “*His content in the Country*”

¹⁶⁵ For a similar description of the rigours of Tomis, see *Tristia* III.10.

(H-552 / 200 / 8)]. A glebe terrier of 1680, six years after his death, described it as a ‘Dwelling house consisting of one Hall one Parlour one Kitchin one Cellar one Brewhouse fower Chambers one Studij, the walls of Stone’. This was a typical parsonage house of the period, retaining the medieval hall (soon to give way to the parlour), with bedrooms (chambers) and study on the first floor. Outside were a barn, a stable, two gardens and an orchard. In addition to the rent he received from the lease of the glebe, Herrick would have received the ‘small tithes’ (cf. ‘*Upon Much-more*’ [H-188 / 73]) to which the vicar was entitled from the produce of all the farms in his parish (other than hay and corn). Together, these would have made him wealthier than the normal farmer of sixty or seventy acres. There were also fees for marriages, burials and churchings in St George the Martyr, just across the lane from the vicarage. (<http://herrick.ncl.ac.uk>)¹⁶⁶

Herrick also bemoans his parishioners’ primitive habits in “*To Dean-bourn, a rude river in Devon, by which he once lived*”:

O men, O manners; Now and ever knowne
 To be a *Rockie Generation!*
 A people currish; churlish as the seas;
 And rude (almost) as rudest Salvages. (H-86 / 29 / 9-12)¹⁶⁷

But in reality, Herrick’s relations with his parishioners seem to have been cordial and he was fondly remembered in the years after his death.¹⁶⁸ The point is not that Herrick is like Ovid, but that he *feels* like Ovid, and this is what gives his semi-autobiographical self-presentation its poignancy and resonance for readers whom Herrick would have expected to be well-schooled in the classics.

Herrick’s attitude towards Ovid, as to all his classical predecessors, is one of respect mingled with expediency. Their status legitimises his own claim to greatness, while he is under no obligation to be like any one of them in particular. This attitude can be seen in the way in which Herrick brings *Hesperides* to a close, with Ovid uppermost in his

¹⁶⁶ A glebe terrier is essentially a stock-take of the Anglican Church’s property in a parish or vicarage.

¹⁶⁷ For Ovid’s characterisation of the Getae in Tomis as “durus” or “rigidus”, see *Tristia* V.1.46 and *Ex Ponto* I.5.12 and III.2.102

¹⁶⁸ On a field trip to Dean Prior in 1809, some 135 years after Herrick had died, Barron Field discovered that certain descendants of the “*Rockie Generation*” of “rudest Salvages” from the 1630s and 40s could still recite “*To Dean-bourn*” from memory, despite its unkind description of their predecessors (Moorman 1910: 98).

classical self-presentation. Ovid tends to close each of his works with a self-reflexive flourish, praising himself and saying farewell to the reader. Herrick imitates four of Ovid's endings, once in each of the following four poems in *Hesperides*' closing sequence. First, "The end of his worke" is based on the end of *Ars Amatoria* I (H-1126 / 334, see *Ars. Am.* I.771-2); then, "To Crowne it" is based on the end of *Remediorum Amoris* (H-1127 / 334, see *Rem. Am.* 811-12); next, "On Himselfe" is based on the end of *Ars Amatoria* II (H-1128 / 335, see *Ars. Am.* II.733-4 and 739-40); and finally, "The Pillar of Fame" is based on the end of *Metamorphoses* (H-1129 / 335, see *Met.* XV.871-9). Elements of all four of Ovid's books can also be found in *Hesperides*. The first book, *Ars Amatoria* I, gives advice to young men about the art of erotic love, while the second book, *Ars Amatoria* II, gives advice to young women.¹⁶⁹ Together, the two books which form Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* ("The Art of Love") constitute a "masterpiece of witty impropriety" (*OCD*, p. 631), a tag that can also be applied to *Hesperides*. The third book, *Remediorum Amoris* ("The Remedies for Love") is a palinode to the advice Ovid gives about entrapping a desired lover in the *Ars*, in which Ovid explains how to extricate oneself from an unwanted lover. For his part, Herrick also writes poems in which he denigrates love and discourages both himself and others from romantic commitments.¹⁷⁰ The fourth book, *Metamorphoses*, provides the major classical model for Herrick's theme of "Times trans-shifting" (H-1 / 5 / 9), while poems which seek to explain various metamorphoses in the natural world are dotted throughout the work.¹⁷¹ Thus, as Herrick brings *Hesperides* to a close, he terminates each of its four constituent Ovidian themes in turn as a fitting tribute to one of his most poetically compatible classical predecessors. But by packing four Ovidian endings into his one, there is a sense in which Herrick is

¹⁶⁹ See, for examples, "To the Virgins, to make much of Time" (H-208 / 84) and "The Changes to Corinna" (H-232 / 96). These poems are either wholly or partly based on *Ars Am.* III.65-6 and II.118 respectively.

¹⁷⁰ See, for examples, "Single life most secure" (H-137 / 49), "Disswasions from Idlennesse" (H-147 / 52), "Upon himself" (H-407 / 155) and "Not to love" (H-253 / 102), which are wholly or partly based on *Ars Am.* II.155, and *Rem. Am.* 139-44, 144 and 344 respectively.

¹⁷¹ "Why Flowers change colour" (H-37 / 15), "How Primroses came green" (H-167 / 64), "How Lillies came white" (H-190 / 74), "How Roses came red" (H-258; 105), "How Violets came blew" (H-260 / 105), "How Pansies or Hearts-ease came first" (H-391 / 152), "How Springs came first" (H-478 / 180) and "How Marigolds came yellow" (H-503 / 187). It is also interesting to note that Herrick undergoes a metamorphosis, from the man whose careful self-presentation has been underpinned by autobiographical details throughout the work, into the pillar itself. For more on this, see the discussion on Herrick and Hercules on p.132-3.

seeking acknowledgement from his reader that his efforts have emulated, and indeed exceeded, Ovid's.

In addition to specific instances where Herrick signals his affinities to and differences from his classical poetic predecessors, some of which I have now outlined, there is a sense in which Herrick's classical self-presentation is also more generally Roman. Herrick is indicating that he is not trying to be any previous Roman poet in particular, but rather that he has appropriated a wide range of classical characteristics in order to render his classical self-presentational complex, polyvalent, and therefore credible to his reader. Herrick's Roman-ness can be seen from the fact that his many mistresses have Roman names, such as Julia, Anthea, Corinna, Perenna, Perilla, Silvia and Lucia.¹⁷² What is more, he addresses poems to Jove, Apollo, Juno, Venus, Bacchus, Mars, Neptune and Vulcan, he worships his private Larr, and he sometimes attends, or even performs, certain other pagan rites. Herrick also Romanises important place names in England. For example, he conflates London with Rome (H-713 / 242), and the River Thames with the classical-sounding Thamasis (H-1028 / 315). Herrick also expresses his concerns about his book's reception in the same terms as Roman poets frequently do. Herrick's worry is that his book will end up serving other functions than that for which it was published:

MAKE haste away, and let one be
 A friendly Patron unto thee:
 Lest rapt from hence, I see thee lye
 Torn for the use of Pasterie:
 Or see thy injur'd Leaves serve well,
 To make loose Gownes for Mackarell:
 Or see the Grocers in a trice,
 Make hoods of thee to serve out Spice. (*To his Booke*, H-844 / 275)

These possible misuses of a poet's book are outlined time and again in the poems of Martial, as well as Catullus, Horace and Persius:

CUIUS vis fieri, libelle, munus?
 festina tibi vindicem parare,

¹⁷² For more on Herrick's mistresses, see John T. Shawcross, "The Names of Herrick's Mistresses in *Hesperides*" in *Tercentenary Essays* (1978: 89-102) and Alastair Fowler's "Warton Lecture" on Herrick (1980: 255-7).

ne nigram cito raptus in culinam
 cordylas madida tegas papyro
 vel turis piperisve sis cucullus.

(For whom, my little book, would you become a present? Haste to get to yourself a protector, lest, hurried off to a sooty kitchen, you wrap tunny-fry in your sodden papyrus, or be a cornet for incense or pepper.)

(*Epigrammata* III.ii.1-5)¹⁷³

All this is part of his creation of a well-rounded classical poetic persona which bolsters his claim to be a literary heir to the great Roman poets, while also asserting that he is not like any one of them in particular.

Herrick sometimes presents himself amongst a throng of classical poets, which contributes to the idea that he is one of their company while being distinguishable from them at the same time. For example, in “*To live merrily, and to trust to Good Verses*”, Herrick participates in a classical symposium, where he drinks ever-larger quantities of wine and toasts to his classical forebears by name, including Homer, Virgil, Ovid, Catullus, Propertius and Tibullus (H-201 / 80). Horace and Martial are not mentioned, but they are represented indirectly in the last two stanzas of the poem which imitate *Carmina* III.30.1-8 and *Epigrammata* X.II.5-12 respectively:

Trust to good Verses then;
 They onely will aspire,
 When Pyramids, as men,
 Are lost, i'th' funerall fire.

And when all Bodies meet
 In *Lethe* to be drown'd;
 Then onely Numbers sweet,
 With endless life are crown'd. (45-52)

This community of poets have all trusted to the everlasting longevity of good verses and can therefore carouse eternally together. By presenting himself among them – as a

¹⁷³ See also *Epigrammata* IV.86.8, as well as Catullus XCV.8; Horace *Epistles* II.1.269-70; and Persius I.41-3.

latecomer, perhaps, but as a legitimate member of their circle – Herrick is asserting his intention to secure immortal fame for himself through his poems.

Later in *Hesperides*, Herrick dreams of arriving at a grove in Elizium (or the Elysian Fields) after his death to be met a whole host of other poets, some of whom are reading their own poems aloud, but significantly, one of them (Anacreon) is already reading some of Herrick’s lines. In their range, these poets whom Herrick finds himself among encompass more than two millennia-worth of poetry, from “divine *Musaeus*”, to “honoured *Homer*”, Linus, Pindar, Anacreon, “stately *Virgil*”, “witty *Ovid*”, “soft *Catullus*”, “sharp-fang’d *Martial*”, “towering *Lucan, Horace, Juvenal,* And Snakie *Perseus*”, to the Stuart playwrights Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, and finally to “Father [Ben] *Johnson*” (“*The Apparition of his Mistresse calling him to Elizium*”, H-575 / 205 / 25-57). The dream dissolves, but a sense remains with the reader of Herrick’s ambition to fulfil the dream’s promise.

In order to symbolise the fulfilment of this promise, Herrick appropriates the classical motif of constructing an eternal pillar of poetry to memorialise oneself. He first hints at his intention to evade the oblivion of death in the Ovidian epigraph on the title page. Positioned under a bold, capitalised “O V I D”, we read: “*Effugient avidos Carmina nostra Rogos*” (“Our songs will escape the greedy pyre”). In fact, it is a slight misquotation. The original quotation in the *Amores* is “*defugiunt avidos carmina sola rogos*” (“’Tis song only which escapes the greedy pyre”, III.iv.28). The change from Ovid’s present tense (“*defugiunt*”) to Herrick’s future tense (“*effugient*”), and from Ovid’s “*sola*” (“only”) to Herrick’s “*nostra*” (“my” or “our”) converts the epigraph from its original context in which Ovid mourns the death of his poet-friend Tibullus, into Herrick’s promise that he will escape the pyre by his song.

Later, a pillar begins literally to take shape within *Hesperides*. But as an emblem that is shaped to represent the meaning of its content, the pillar’s outline hints at an edifice that is still under construction, rather than a finished product:

His Poetrie his Pillar

1. ONELY a little more
I have to write

- Then Ile give o're,
And bid the world Good-night.
2. 'Tis but a flying minute,
That I must stay,
Or linger in it;
And then I must away.
3. O time that cut'st down all!
And scarce leav'st here
Memoriall
Of any men that were.
4. How many lye forgot
In Vaults beneath?
And piece-meale rot
Without a fame in death?
5. Behold this living stone,
I reare for me,
Ne'r to be thrown
Downe, envious Time by thee.
6. Pillars some set up,
(If so they please)
Here is my hope,
And my *Pyramides*. (H-211 / 85)

In one way, this poem is long and thin; its structural instability suggesting that at this point in the work, Herrick's bid for poetic immortality has not yet been secured. In another way, its separate stanzas are shaped like mini-pillars, which indicate that Herrick's achievements are not yet sufficiently lofty to make the claim for greatness. In a third way, the stanzas are like separate building blocks, which still need to be shaped more accurately before being fitted together.

The imperfect shape of "*His Poetrie his Pillar*" can be contrasted with the solid, sturdy and fully-integrated structure of "*The Pillar of Fame*" which Herrick rears at the very end of *Hesperides*:

FAMES pillar here, at last, we set
 Out-during *Marble, Brasse, or Jet*,
 Charm'd and enchanted so,
 As to withstand the blow
 Of overthrow:
 Nor shall the seas,
 Or OUTRAGES
 Of storms orebear
 What we up-rear
 Tho Kingdoms fal,
 This pillar never shall
 Decline or waste at all;
 But stand for ever by his owne
 Firme and well fixt foundation. (H-1129 / 335)

By this stage, as Avon Jack Murphy has pointed out, the Hesperidean Herrick has died and gone, we assume, to the Elizium he dreamed about earlier.¹⁷⁴ The Roman pillar remains, however, as a symbolic eternal memorial and a conventionally recognisable symbol of Herrick's achievement.

The way in which Herrick labours towards the fulfilment of his own immortality is reminiscent of the classical myth of Hercules and the Twelve Labours. Over the extended period of these labours, Hercules incrementally secured fame, then immortality for himself, so that when he died he ascended to the heavens to take his place in the pantheon of ancient gods. In Latin, the word "labour" also connotes "toil" or "exertion" (Blanshard 2005: 112). Herrick uses the myth of Hercules's labours, toils or exertions to suggest something of his own experience of *Hesperides* as having been an arduous undertaking of writing, re-writing, collecting, arranging, perfecting and publishing his life's work. Furthermore, Hercules's labours are what make him distinguishable from ordinary men, in much the same way Herrick's quest for greatness requires that he outdoes the other poets of his own generation. There is even a sense that Herrick's work is roughly proportional to Hercules's twelve labours, and that Herrick has actually outdone Hercules: *Hesperides* contains 1130 poems, which approximates the first eleven labours of Hercules, 100 Herrickean poems to one Herculean labour. What is more, the eleventh

¹⁷⁴ His last spoken words are "...when I am dead" in the last line of the preceding poem, upon which the familiar first-person voice of Herrick's Hesperidean persona gives way to a public, impersonal voice in "*The Pillar*". See Murphy's essay, "The Self-Conscious Critic in *Hesperides*", *Tercentenary Essays* (1978: 60-1).

and penultimate labour of Hercules was to steal the apples of immortality from the far-western garden isles of the Hesperides. Herrick's completion of *Hesperides* is therefore tantamount to his securing the apples of immortality for himself. Then, Hercules's twelfth and final labour was to descend into the Underworld to bring back Cerberus, the fearsome multi-headed dog who guarded its entry and exit point. In a similar vein, Herrick adds another 'labour', *His Noble Numbers*, to the end of *Hesperides*. *His Noble Numbers* is a collection of religious poems in which Herrick grapples with spiritual or otherworldly subject matter, and represents a further outdoing of Hercules in that it increases the number of poems in the collection as a whole to 1,402 in total.

Apart from the overarching title of his work, and the arrangement of its constituent poems to suggest the order of Hercules' culminating labours, his own name – Herrick – sounds like that of the Greek name for the classical hero, Herakles.¹⁷⁵ The ready-made pun is reminiscent of another Herrickean onomastic game in which Herrick links his name to that of his favourite genre, lyric:

THOU shalt not All die; for while Love's fire shines
 Upon his Altar, men shall read thy lines;
 And learn'd Musicians shall to honour Herricks
 Fame, and his Name, both set, and sing his Lyricks. (H-366 / 143)

The three-way association between himself, the lyric, and the heroic figure of Hercules/Herakles is a way for Herrick to present himself as an heroic lyric poet, a role which inverts the traditional association that is made between heroic themes and lofty genres. What is more, Hercules/Herakles accomplished his labours through a combination of strength and intellect, and is a useful way of figuring Herrick the poet who, through a similar combination of sheer willpower on the one hand and poetic skill on the other, is able to bind the incongruous generic forms of lyric poetry and an epic heroic work together. Thus, the association between Herrick and Hercules/Herakles invites us to return to the opening poem in *Hesperides*, where an epic catalogue of subjects is written in a combined lyric and epigrammatic form to suggest

¹⁷⁵ Coiro discusses the Herculean aspect of the Hesperidean myth, and points to the onomastic similarity between Herrick and Hercules/Herakles (1988: 19-21). However, she develops her argument along New Historicist lines, whereas I am interested in the way Hercules/Herakles is a way of figuring Herrick as a poet.

microcosmically what Herrick will accomplish in the macrocosm of the work that follows.

Renaissance poets were attracted to classical mythology because of its ability to evoke multiple, simultaneous allegorical meanings that immeasurably enriched their work. Thus, once the reader makes the initial connection between Herrick and Hercules/Herakles, a series of illuminating parallels follow. Firstly, Hercules was famous in antiquity for the amount of alcohol he could drink (Blanshard 2005: 29). In “*The Welcome to Sack*”, a poem in which Herrick justifies his own drinking habits, he compares himself indirectly to Hercules:

Had not *Joves* son, that brave *Tyrinthian* Swain,
 (Invited to the *Thesbian* banquet) ta’ne
 Full goblets of thy gen’rous blood; his spright
 Ne’r had kept heat for fifty Maids that night. (H-197 / 77 / 65-8)¹⁷⁶

Then, in “*A Hymne to Bacchus*”, Herrick pleads with the god of wine and revelry to relieve him of his love of drink:

BACCHUS, let me drink no more;
 Wild are Seas, that want a shore.
 When our drinking has no stint,
 There is no one pleasure in’t.
 I have drank up for to please
 Thee, that great cup *Hercules*:
 Urge no more; and there shall be
 Daffadills g’en up to Thee. (H-304 / 122)¹⁷⁷

The association Herrick makes between his excesses and Hercules’s are in keeping with the playful, festive Epicurean tone which dominates his early self-presentation in *Hesperides*. Herrick’s gradual shift away from retired, contemplative Epicurean pleasure towards active, engaged Stoic virtue is reminiscent of the famous “choice of Hercules”

¹⁷⁶ The quotation refers to an incident in Hercules’s youth when he is reputed to have seduced all fifty of Thespius’s daughters in one night (Blanshard 2005: 31-2).

¹⁷⁷ During his tenth labour (the seizure of Geryon’s cattle) the Sun placates Hercules, who is irate at its beating down on him too hard, with a giant golden goblet in which to sail to Geryon’s island. Needless to say, the story of Hercules’s enormous goblet was popular at Greek symposiastic gatherings (Blanshard 101). Due to its association with spring, the daffodil symbolises new beginnings.

which confronted the mythological hero as a young man. Confronted by the figure of Virtue on the one hand, and Pleasure on the other, Hercules chose the path of Virtue, a choice that defines the rest of his career as an epic hero (Waith 1962: 48 and Coiro 1985: 328).

The second parallel is between the two figures is their ability – Hercules’s literally and Herrick’s metaphorically – to save people from death. During Hercules’s twelfth labour, the foray into the Underworld to capture Cerberus, he brings Theseus back from Hades too. In a separate incident, Hercules wrestles Death in order to win back Queen Alcestis’s life (Blanshard 2005: 111-12). Herrick uses other skills apart from courage and strength to save his friends; he does so by rendering them immortal in his poems of praise.

A third parallel is Hercules’s reputation as “a moral hero, a champion of virtue, and a dedicated opponent of tyrants” (Coiro 1988: 19). There is a sense in which Herrick’s scathing poems on kingship befit such a hero. For example, the stunning directness of a poem such as “*Bad Princes pill their People*” represents a heroic blow against tyranny:

LIKE those infernall Deities which eat
The best of all the sacrificial meate;
And leave their servants, but the smoak and sweat:
So many *Kings*, and *Primates* too there are,
Who claim the Fat, and Fleshie for their share,
And leave their Subjects but the starved ware. (H-826 / 272)¹⁷⁸

Yet Herrick is also rendered helpless and emasculated by his loyalty to a flawed king, which resulted in his subsequent loss of means and status in the wake of Royalist defeat.

A fourth parallel with Hercules consequently arises: Hercules, the scourge of tyrants, was also “the Renaissance emblem of a warrior emasculated” (Coiro 21). The latter characterisation refers to Hercules’s punishment for one of his many moral transgressions: when he murdered his friend Iphytus in a rage, he spent some time in the service of Queen Omphale. While she wore his lion skin and club, he was forced to don womanish garb and perform chores traditionally assigned to women.¹⁷⁹ Herrick’s sense of

¹⁷⁸ For more scathing poems, see “*Moderation*” (H-780 / 261), “*Kings and Tyrants*” (H-861 / 278), “*Cruelty*” (H-929 / 292), “*Strength to support Sovereignty*” (H-971 / 302), and “*Upon Kings*” (H-1097 / 330).

¹⁷⁹ His labours are a punishment for an earlier, even more gruesome murder of his wife and children.

his own emasculation occasioned by vaguely hinted-at external events is demonstrable in a poem such as “*To his Friend, on the untuneable Times*”:

PLAY I co’d once; but (gentle friend) you see
 My Harp hung up; here on the Willow tree.
 Sing I co’d once; and bravely too enspire
 (With luscious Numbers) my melodious Lyre.
 Draw I co’d once (although not stocks or stones,
Amphion-like) men made of flesh and bones,
 Whether I wo’d; but (ah!) I know not how,
 I feele in me this transmutation now.
 Griefe, (my deare friend) has first my Harp unstrung;
 Wither’d my hand, and palsie-struck my tongue.

None of the similarities between Herrick and Hercules which I have just sketched are made directly by Herrick himself, however. His self-presentation as Hercules/Herakles is entirely by indirect association which, as Eugene Waith argues, is fundamental to the ability of both the poet and the mythological hero to arouse a sense of amazement and wonder in the reader:

If learned readers looked well beneath the surface of the meanings of the old tales and legends, it was partly because they believed the poet should conceal his special insights from the rude gaze of the many . . . A myth, offering many possibilities for concealment, was therefore promising material for a poet and a perfect example of one operation of poetry [to evoke wonder]. It was the right way to convey truth to the right people. (1962: 49)

As I suggested in Chapter 2 with reference to the *silva* tradition, Herrick’s *Hesperides* is a vast topographical space in which his reader can wander, and wonder. The presence of the Herrickean/Herculean hero within the Hesperidean garden thus adds another layer of meaning to what is already a fecund mythological metaphor for Herrick’s poetry collection.

An additional boon of the mythological tradition is that there were often several versions of the same myth. Thus, in another version of Hercules’s twelfth labour, it was not him, but Atlas who retrieved the apples while Hercules temporarily took up Atlas’s

responsibility of bearing the heavens on his shoulders. Atlas returned with the apples and, sensing an opportunity to relieve himself of his heavenly burden forever, he offered to take the apples to Hercules's taskmaster, King Eurystheus, on Hercules's behalf. Hercules sensed trouble, so he asked Atlas to bear the heavens for a few moments while he adjusted his cloak into a cushion for his shoulders. When Atlas shouldered the heavens once more, Hercules reneged on their deal. Having demonstrated both strength and cunning in this episode of the Twelve Labours, Hercules proceeded to his final labour – a foray into the spiritual realm of the Underworld to bring back the fearsome multi-headed guard dog, Cerberus. The Hercules myth lends narrative shape to the transition between *Hesperides* and *Noble Numbers* because Herrick leaves the pillar bearing up *Hesperides*, which are his so-called “humane”, worldly or profane verses, and proceeds to his next “labour”, *His Noble Numbers*, which are his so-called “divine”, heavenly or spiritual verses.

Hercules's ability to outwit Atlas is one of many instances during his Twelve Labours that Hercules relies on his intellect, and not just brute force, to accomplish his feats. For this reason, according to Jeff Shulman, “[t]he labors of Hercules could be moralized as feats of the ethical or intellectual life” (1983: 89). For many classical mythographers, including Plutarch, Servius and Heracleitus, Hercules was “a hero of the mind, rather than the body” (96). Such a characterisation made Hercules more congenial to Renaissance intellectuals, for whom it was a short step from Hercules *philosophicus*, to Hercules *moralizatus*, and from thence to Hercules *Christianus* (96-7). Indeed, as I am about to suggest in the next chapter, Herrick *philosophicus*, Herrick *moralizatus* and Herrick *Christianus* are essential aspects of Herrick's own self-presentation.

CHAPTER FOUR: Herrick's religious self-presentation

So far in this thesis, I have discussed Herrick's self-presentation almost exclusively in relation to *Hesperides*, the so-called "humane" work which is included under the overall title of "Hesperides: or, The Works Both Humane & Divine Of Robert Herrick Esq." on the book's main title page. What remains to be discussed is *His Noble Numbers: OR, His Pious Pieces*, the so-called "divine" section of the work, which includes 272 poems and is placed after *Hesperides*, with its own title page.¹⁸⁰

Noble Numbers has occupied an awkward place in Herrickean literary criticism, not least because critics have tended to view it as entirely separate from *Hesperides* despite its publication under an overarching title. As a result of this separation, very few literary scholars have undertaken fully combined studies of *Hesperides* and *Noble Numbers*.¹⁸¹ The trend has usually been to study either *Hesperides* or *Noble Numbers* on their own, with no more than glancing allusions to the other book, if at all.

Critics who choose to distinguish between *Hesperides* and *Noble Numbers* find some encouragement to do so from Herrick's introductory gestures in *Noble Numbers*. Firstly, Herrick gives *Noble Numbers* a separate title page, which includes an earlier publication date (1647) than that on *Hesperides*'s main title page (1648). Secondly, the Herrick we meet at the beginning of *Noble Numbers* distances himself immediately from the mood, tone, attitude, occasion and intention of the *Hesperides* poems. For example, the introductory poem sets up a number of oppositions between the two works: the poems in *Hesperides* are "foule", "bad", "wanton" and "num'rous" next to the "faire", "good" and "precious" poems in *Noble Numbers*:

His Confession

LOOK how our foule Dayes do exceed our faire;
And as our bad, more than our good Works are:

¹⁸⁰ *His Noble Numbers* will hereafter be referred to as *Noble Numbers*.

¹⁸¹ Of these, see F.W. Moorman's chapter on Herrick's religious poetry in *Robert Herrick: A Biographical and Critical Study* (London and New York: J. Lane, 1910) in which he spends about two-thirds of the chapter discussing other seventeenth century religious poets, other poems in *Hesperides*, other poems attributed to Herrick but not collected in *Hesperides*; in short, anything but the poems in *Noble Numbers*. Compare Moorman's chapter with Rollin's more favourable assessment of *Noble Numbers* in *Robert Herrick*, (New York: Macmillan, 1992), pp. 113-153.

Ev'n so those Lines, penn'd by my wanton Wit,
 Treble the number of these good I've writ.
 Things precious are least num'rous: Men are prone
 To do ten Bad, for one Good Action. (N-1 / 339)

Herrick continues in the same vein in the opening sestet of the subsequent poem by further distancing himself from the poems in *Hesperides*:

His Prayer for Absolution

FOR Those my unbaptized Rhimes,
 Writ in my wild, unhallowed Times;
 For every sentence, clause and word,
 That's not inlaid with Thee, (my Lord)
 Forgive me God, and blot each Line
 Out of my Book, that is not Thine. (N-2 / 339 / 1-6)

Taken together, the separate publication dates, the separate title pages, and the deliberate shift in Herrick's tone at the beginning of *Noble Numbers* has meant that critics have felt justified in studying the two works separately.

However, I wish to argue that Herrick would not have wanted *Hesperides* and *Noble Numbers* to be separated to the extent that a reader encounters the one work without any reference to the other. This study of Herrick's self-presentation approaches Herrick's work from the point of view that his poetry is a manifestation of his conduct as a poet. The reader cannot therefore separate the two works from one another, in order to study one but not the other. Such a position finds support with Sidney Musgrove, who writes:

it is indeed quite as misleading to divide Herrick into two separate persons, a Christian and a pagan, or into two separate poets, a metaphysical and a classicist, as it is to attempt a similar division with Jonson or Donne. Herrick moves from the temple of the Muses to the temple of God easily and naturally, and with so sense of incompatibility between the two. (1950: 29)

Critics' misguided attempts to divide Herrick into two persons has led to a situation in which, more often than not, *Noble Numbers* has been regarded as inferior to *Hesperides*.

For example, Joseph H. Summers writes, “I find most of his religious verse either dull or unconvincing. Although we have no right to judge the sincerity of Herrick’s religious convictions, I think we can say that he was not able to communicate much sense of it within his poems.” (1970: 57). For his part, John Press claims that “the sophistication and subtlety which colour so much of Herrick’s best profane verse are markedly absent from his sacred poems,” adding that “the presence of a few decent, well-ordered poems scarcely compensates for the succession of dull, mechanical pieces which make up the bulk of *His Noble Numbers*” (1971: 33). Meanwhile, Leah Marcus has suggested that “despite its title, the collection seems to lay little claim to nobility ... Compared to the religious poems of a Donne or a Herbert, they appear thin, flat, and barren of intellectual or psychological complexity” (1977: 108). William Oram also believes that there is something lacking in Herrick’s religious verse:

He seems to have been a conventionally pious minister of the Church of England, as *Noble Numbers* dutifully attests. But his imagination tended towards the transient, the sensuous, and the social rather than toward the absolute ... Herrick makes considerable use of the sacred in his work, but it usually undergoes a transformation in the process. It often supplies form but rarely direction in his greatest verse.
(1978: 218)

Most recently, John Creaser has suggested that “a more offhand group of verses [than *Noble Numbers*] has rarely been written by a major poet” (2009: 178).

On the contrary, I want to suggest in this chapter that *Hesperides* and *Noble Numbers* are mutually constitutive works which cannot be separated from one another without impoverishing both. For, as Roger Rollin has suggested, “Herrick is one poet, not two – not a secular poet and a religious poet, a genius and a hack” (1992: 153). Indeed, there is considerable evidence one can bring to bear in support of the argument that *Hesperides* and *Noble Numbers* are both constituent part of a poetic whole. In what follows, I shall outline five different ways in which *Noble Numbers* represents a continuation of *Hesperides*.¹⁸² In so doing, I am seeking to get away from the modern critical instinct to

¹⁸² Further similarities between *Hesperides* and *Noble Numbers* other than the ones I have chosen to outline in the discussion below can be found in John Kimmey, “Robert Herrick’s Persona”, *Studies in Philology* 67 (1970), 234-6.

distinguish and divide Herrick's humane poems from his divine ones. The problem has always been that Herrick's Christianity in *Hesperides* is largely transparent and thereby mostly invisible. Men and women during the seventeenth century took their Christian self-understanding so much for granted that it does not even have to be mentioned. Herrick's Christian self-understanding is in fact central to his self-presentation, and interpenetrates the so-called humane poems of *Hesperides* as much as it does the so-called divine poems of *Noble Numbers*. Herrick's humane poems (which modern critics living in an overwhelmingly secular age tend to favour) would, as far as Herrick is concerned, be subsumed by his religious poems, and are not at variance with his Christian self-understanding. Hence Herrick's statement in the concluding quatrain of "*His Prayer for Absolution*", that

... if, 'mongst all, thou finds't here one [poem]
 Worthy thy Benediction;
 That One of all the rest, shall be
 The Glory of my Work, and Me. (N-2 / 339)

Noble Numbers is Herrick's attempt to crown his achievements in *Hesperides* with an even more glorious project dedicated to God. However, he does not entirely disown "all the rest" of the poems he has written.

Indeed, Herrick's rejection of *Hesperides*'s "unbaptized Rhimes" in the opening poems of *Noble Numbers* is partly conventional. "*His Confession*" (N-1 / 339) and "*His Prayer for Absolution*" (N-2 / 339) does not necessarily mean that he wanted his religious poems to be hermetically sealed off from his secular ones. Citing the example of John Donne, Thomas Corns states that "[w]e find precedent enough in the seventeenth century for the simultaneous publication of supposed impudent or impious speech-acts together with penitential disclaimers" (1992: 115).¹⁸³ While it is necessary for Herrick to mark a transition between *Hesperides* and *Noble Numbers* in order to demonstrate his reverence for God and a shift in his poetic focus, a transition does not necessarily imply that the two works should be viewed as entirely separate. In fact, their publication under a single title,

¹⁸³ For more on the tradition of poets forsaking their profane poems, see Campbell, Lily B. *Divine Poetry and Drama in Sixteenth Century England*, (Berkeley, 1959), p.173.

The Works Both Humane & Divine of Robert Herrick, would appear to reinforce the idea that the two works are a unified volume. Meanwhile, the word ‘His’ in *His Noble Numbers* stamps Herrick’s individual mark of ownership on the work and emphasises that *Noble Numbers* is equally a part of Herrick’s self-presentation as *Hesperides* has been, with its many self-referential poems “*On himselfe*”. Interestingly, however, the self-presentational markers which are so overtly and persistently present in *Hesperides*, such as Herrick’s self-naming and the “*On himselfe*” poems, have been almost entirely effaced from *Noble Numbers*. There is a sense in which Herrick shifts his focus from himself towards God, while at the same time he feels compelled to remind his reader that these are nevertheless his *Noble Numbers*.

A second continuity between *Hesperides* and *Noble Numbers* is typological. I ended the previous chapter by showing that Herrick figures himself as a type of Hercules, with *Hesperides* and *Noble Numbers* being represented in terms of Hercules’s final two labours. Hercules was also regarded in Christian typology as a forebear of both King Solomon and Christ. The several equivalences between Hercules, Solomon and Christ provide Herrick with a way of suggesting a sense of continuation between *Hesperides* and *Noble Numbers*. To begin with Hercules and Solomon, both figures were renowned for their mental ability: Hercules triumphed over scores of mythical monsters and tricksters with a combination of cunning and mental fortitude; Solomon possessed a God-given wisdom which became the source of his immense wealth and power.¹⁸⁴ Then, with reference to Herrick, his intellect has enabled him to create *Hesperides*, which he refers to as a “*white Temple*” (H-496 / 185 / 1), and which resonates in turn with Solomon’s construction of the first Jewish Temple. Meanwhile, the motif of the *hortus inclusus* (“enclosed garden”), which is central to Herrick’s conceptualisation of *Hesperides* and *Noble Numbers* as a *silva* collection, mythologized and allegorised as the Hesperides, can be found in Song of Solomon 4.12, where the motif has been interpreted both allegorically and literally by Biblical scholars, and may or may not refer to an enclosed garden which Solomon created and to which he and his entourage would retire to enjoy

¹⁸⁴ Solomon chose wisdom when asked by God to wish for anything he wanted (II Chronicles 1.7-13). Solomon’s choice is reminiscent of the legendary “choice of Hercules” between virtue and pleasure which I discuss in Ch 3 (p.130-1) above.

its physical delights (Stewart 1966: 33-4).¹⁸⁵ Heather Asals has also observed that Herrick's didactic, epigrammatic poems, which feature especially prominently in *Noble Numbers*, are reminiscent of the Solomonic book of Proverbs (1976: 374-9).¹⁸⁶ Taken together, the multiple figurative equivalences between Herrick, Hercules and Solomon create a fecund sense that classical mythology and Biblical history have been comprehensively combined in *Hesperides* as a whole, without an accompanying sense of their being anachronistic or contradictory.

Then, in terms of the typological equivalences between Hercules and Christ, Hercules's labours were interpreted allegorically as moral accomplishments in such a way as to suggest that Hercules prefigures Jesus. Indeed, the orthodox belief in Christ's dual nature, namely his being half-God and half-man, is readily analogous to Hercules's dual nature, in which his mother Alcmena was mortal, and his father Zeus was divine. Furthermore, Hercules's apotheosis is reminiscent of Christ's own ascent to Heaven (Blanshard 2005: 146-7), while the transition which Herrick undertakes from *Hesperides* to the higher plane of *Noble Numbers* is also an apotheosis of sorts. Herrick's exploitation of these typological similarities, which are effectively transitions between Hercules, Solomon, Jesus and himself, help to suggest, in a figurative manner, something of the similarities and continuations between the otherwise disparate figures of Herrick the man, Herrick the poet, Herrick the Roman and Herrick the Christian, as well as the continuations between *Hesperides* and *Noble Numbers*.

Shared structural features are a third way in which *Noble Numbers* represents a continuation rather than a radical departure from *Hesperides*. Both works begin and end with a discernibly unified series of poems. But unlike the neatly-defined eight-poem thresholds which introduce and conclude *Hesperides*, *Noble Numbers* is bounded by several loose clusters of poems. Despite their formal looseness, the "thresholds" to *Noble Numbers* – like those in *Hesperides* – display a degree of cohesiveness that would appear to be deliberate. Thus, Herrick begins with two liturgical poems, "*His Confession*" and "*His Prayer for Absolution*". Next, he makes fourteen didactic epigrammatic statements

¹⁸⁵ For the biblical account of Solomon building the Temple, see II Chronicles 2-7.

¹⁸⁶ According to Miriam Starkman, "Of the two hundred and seventy-two poems, one hundred and seventeen, or very close to half the total volume, are couplets. They are, variously, proverbial, apophthegmatic, epigrammatic, doctrinal, or gnomic. Their function is clearly and immediately didactic." (1962: 1)

which pronounce his religious beliefs (N-3 / 339 to N-16 / 342), a sequence that is broken by the inclusion of an anthem to God (N-17 / 342). He concludes *Noble Numbers* with a cluster of two self-conscious poems both addressed “*To God*” (N-261 / 398 and N-262 / 398), followed by a cluster of nine poems on the events of the Easter weekend (N-263 / 398 to N-271 / 403) and, finally, an epigram (N-272 / 403). As with *Hesperides*, then, Herrick imbues the beginning and ending of *Noble Numbers* with a cohesiveness which suggests that both works share a common organising principle and that, therefore, they are not widely disparate works, but are rather companion works.

A fourth way in which *Noble Numbers* continues where *Hesperides* left off is Herrick’s method of creating the engaged presence of a realistic figure, which I refer to as the “Herrickean Herrick”. With reference to Herrick’s characterisation of his Hesperidean persona, the poet typically intersperses a smattering of plausibly autobiographical references among the bulk of his non-autobiographical poems so as to encourage a sense that the book has been shaped in some way by the “real” Herrick.¹⁸⁷ Similarly, we get an impression in *Noble Numbers* of the poet’s country dwelling (which may or may not be Dean Prior in Devonshire) in a poem entitled, “*A Thanksgiving to God, for his House*” (N-47 / 349). In another poem, “*To his ever-loving God*” (N-51 / 352), Herrick describes a long walk home over “barres” and “stiles” (6) towards some “far off ... smoaking Villages” (10) which again evokes a country setting. In a third poem, entitled “*God, and the King*”, Herrick acknowledges his debt to King Charles for “the meanes whereby I live” (N-62 / 355 / 2); this reference is autobiographical in the sense that Charles granted Herrick the living of Dean Prior in 1629, the income from which sustained the poet until his eviction from the parish in 1646. Later, in a likely reference to his eviction, Herrick writes:

ALL I have lost, that co’d be rapt from me;
And fare it well: yet *Herrick*, if so be
Thy Dearest Saviour renders thee but one
Smile, that one smile’s full restitution.

“*The Recompence*” (N-112 / 371).

¹⁸⁷ In particular, see p.10-17 of this thesis.

Lastly, just as in *Hesperides*, *Noble Numbers* continues to demonstrate Herrick's self-reflexive musings about his literary creation, in which he signals his awareness of his book as a tangible physical object, outlines its intended uses, and states his hopes and fears for its reception – especially by God, to whom Herrick hopes to be a “*Prophet Lawreat*” (“*To God*”, N-262 / 398 / 4).¹⁸⁸ Although Herrick's self-presentation is less overtly self-referential in *Noble Numbers* as it is in *Hesperides*, he continues to craft the impression – faint as it may be – that his religious poetry is a manifestation of his conduct as a Christian.

By the same token, *Noble Numbers* continues Herrick's method of evoking a sense of time passing as the work progresses, which enhances his self-presentation in turn because it allows Herrick to create a slowly unfurling characterisation, caused by an accumulation of poetic experiences (some autobiographical, some fictional) over time. For example, *Hesperides* is arranged partly according to a calendrical order, imitating the passage of time.¹⁸⁹ In continuation of this ordering device, *Noble Numbers* sets up a progression of festivals from Christmas through to Easter, beginning with a loosely chronological arrangement of Christmas, New Year and Epiphany poems, which fall between “*An Ode of the Birth of our Saviour*” (N-33 / 345) and “*To his Saviour. The New yeers gift*” (N-125 / 376). These poems are succeeded some seventy poems later by a sprinkling of Lent poems, namely “*The Fast, or Lent*” (N-195 / 386) and “*To keep a true Lent*” (N-228 / 391). Finally, the book ends with a sequence of Holy Week poems, beginning with “*Good Friday: Rex Tragicus, or Christ going to His Crosse*” (N-263 / 398) and ending with “*His coming to the Sepulcher*” (N-271 / 403). In sum, Herrick's interlinked strategies of self-presentation and poetic arrangement which he deploys in *Hesperides* are continued in *Noble Numbers*, and both strategies lend further support to the claim that the two works are closely related to one another.

The fifth and final argument for continuity between *Hesperides* and *Noble Numbers* which I will put forward here links back to my observation in Chapter Two, in which I stated that the “Hesperidean Herrick” takes rests to recuperate from his labours at more-

¹⁸⁸ See also N-1, 339.1; N-2, 339.2; N-61, 335.2; N-115,371.4; and N-261, 398.1.

¹⁸⁹ See p.66-79 for my discussion of Herrick's character development of his Hesperidean *persona* as time passes within the work, as well as p.109 for evidence to support Alastair Fowler's argument about *Hesperides*'s “calendrical order” (1980: 249).

or-less evenly-spaced intervals in *Hesperides*.¹⁹⁰ These rests – the first at the 306th poem, the second at the 602nd poem, the third at the 922nd poem – subdivide the 1130 poems of *Hesperides* into four segments of roughly 300 poems each. In fact, the poet’s fourth rest, which occurs during a pair of couplets at the end of *Hesperides*, simultaneously looks ahead to the final segment of the work, *Noble Numbers*. Whereas the first couplet suggests that Herrick’s work comprises two parts, the second couplet modifies this statement by suggesting that the poet-speaker is bound for a second “Haven” beyond the first, a destination that was his intention from the beginning:

The end of his worke

PART of my worke remaines; one part is past:
And here my ship rides having Anchor cast. (H-1126 / 334)

To Crowne it

MY wearied Barke, O Let it now be Crown’d
The Haven reach’t to which I first was bound. (H-1127 / 334)

In a sense, Herrick’s body of religious poetry becomes a completion of what Herrick started in *Hesperides*, not a diversion or a discontinuation. What is more, *Noble Numbers* is itself nearly a 300-poem-sized segment (272 poems, to be exact) and it is not subdivided by the poet-persona taking any rests to recuperate. At the exact half-way point of *Noble Numbers*, the Hesperidean Herrick considers doing so, but spurs himself on by refusing to stop or to rest until the work is complete:

Salutation

CHRIST, I have read, did to His Chaplains say,
Sending them forth, *Salute no man by’th way*:
Not, that He taught His Ministers to be
Unsmooth, or sowre, to all civilitie;
But to instruct them, to avoid all snares
Of tardidation in the Lords Affaires.
Manners are good: but till his errand ends,
Salute we must, nor Strangers, Kin, or Friends. (N-137 / 378)

¹⁹⁰ See p.67-70.

Herrick, as one of Christ's "Chaplains", or ministers, dares not stop until he has completely carried out the "errand" of *Noble Numbers*. Thus, according to the *schema* I suggested in Chapter Two in which the poet-persona's regular rests subdivide *Hesperides* into equal segments, the Hesperidean Herrick's refusal to rest at any point during *Noble Numbers* turns this book of religious poems into the fifth and final segment of Herrick's combined, unified work.

If we view *Hesperides* and *Noble Numbers* together in the light of this five-part structure, we are reminded of Horace's recommendation in *Ars Poetica* that a play ought to consist of five acts (Parker 1971-2: 65-6). The introduction of God in the "fifth act", *Noble Numbers*, introduces Him as the *deus ex machina* (literally, "god from the machine") figure of classical dramatic comedy/tragedy. The sudden appearance of the *deus ex machina* device, usually in the final act of a play, provides a solution to the problems raised in the plot or sets seemingly intractable problems right.¹⁹¹ The concept of God as the *deus ex machina* of *Hesperides* and *Noble Numbers* is enhanced by the way in which Herrick figures Jesus as a tragic hero acting out his Passion in *Noble Numbers'* concluding Easter sequence, beginning with "Good Friday: Rex Tragicus, or Christ going to His Crosse":

The *Crosse* shall be Thy *Stage*; and Thou shalt there
 The spacious field have for Thy *Theater*.
 Thou art that *Roscius*, and that markt-out man,
 That must this day act the Tragedian,
 To wonder and affrightment: Thou art He,
 Whom all the flux of Nations comes to see;
 Not those poor Theeves that act their parts with Thee:
 Those act without regard, when once a *King*,
 And *God*, as Thou art, comes to suffering.
 No, No, this *Scene* from Thee takes life and sense,
 And soule and spirit plot, and excellence.
 Why then begin, great King! ascend Thy Throne,
 And thence proceed, to act Thy Passion

¹⁹¹ See, for example, the appearance of Hymen, the Greek god of marriage, in the final act and scene of Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, in which he says, "Then is there mirth in heaven,/ When earthly things made even/ Atone together," before resolving the lovers' entanglements (V.4.99-101). Shakespeare also uses the *deus ex machina* device in *Pericles* and *The Winter's Tale*. It is also a very popular device in the Stuart masque.

To such an height, to such a period rais'd,
As Hell, and Earth, and Heav'n may stand amaz'd. (N-263 / 398 / 17-31)

Herrick plays the part of Jesus' devoted follower in the play (N-264 / 399, N-265 / 399, N-269 / 402, N-270 / 402, N-271 / 403), while Jesus is once more called upon by Herrick to "go on to act" and "Act when Thou wilt" in "*The Crosse-Tree*" (N-268 / 401 / 7 & 10).¹⁹² There is a sense in which Jesus' crucifixion not only corrects the problem of the original sin bequeathed to mankind by the actions of Adam and Eve in Genesis, but it also redeems the so-called humane, secular or profane poems of *Hesperides* by responding to Herrick's confession and his prayer for absolution with which he began *Noble Numbers*.

In any five-act play, were one to strip away the final act and either to study it on its own, or not at all (as critics have tended to do with *Noble Numbers*), then the play would most likely fall apart. The same principle applies to *Hesperides* (by which I mean both *Hesperides* and *Noble Numbers* combined under one title). A consideration of *Noble Numbers* is essential to our being able to understand Herrick's self-presentation fully, because Herrick was ordained as an Anglican priest during a devoutly Christian era. Only when we have taken Herrick's religious self-presentation into account can we reintegrate what has mistakenly atomised the two works.

Herrick sets out his religious beliefs from the start of *Noble Numbers*. In "*His Confession*" (N-1 / 339) and "*His Prayer for Absolution*" (N-2 / 339), Herrick demonstrates the belief that man's salvation can be accomplished through a synergistic combination of both human free will and freely-offered divine grace (Corns 1992: 125).

¹⁹² For more on Herrick's "passion play", and its roots in medieval drama, see Leah Marcus, "*Herrick's Noble Numbers and the Politics of Playfulness*," *English Literary Renaissance* 7 (1977), 121-3. Marcus's ideas find support with Miriam Starkman, "*Noble Numbers and the Poetry of Devotion*," in *Reason and the Imagination: Studies in the History of Ideas, 1600-1800*, ed. Joseph A. Mazzeo (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1962), pp.11-13.

By coming to God to confess his sins, Herrick is exercising his agency and free will. His confession is performed in the expectation that if his repentance is genuinely-felt, God's universal grace will absolve him from his sins, because Christ died for the redemption of all men (Trevor-Roper 1989: 93). Herrick's belief contrasts with the Calvinist doctrine of double predestination, in which innately sinful man can do nothing to effect his salvation. As Malcolm Smuts explains,

for an orthodox Calvinist all men are predestined to salvation or damnation because none can achieve true faith through his own efforts. Sin has so corrupted our nature, hardening our hearts against God, that we can truly understand the Gospels only if God miraculously gives us the power to do so. Once bestowed, the gift of faith is irresistible. God therefore elects those he will save and damns everyone else, regardless of individual merit. (1987: 221)

Double predestination is so-called because, through the sins of Adam, the entirety of mankind is not only predestined to sin, but they are also predestined either to be saved or to be damned. For a Calvinist, double predestination is a source of great angst. A Calvinist would constantly ask himself, "Am I one of the elect?", and seek out assurances from the scriptures and sermons, because a Calvinist "had to convince himself that he was of the elite and to know the exacting rules by which his membership could be tested" (Trevor-Roper 94).

Herrick expands and develops his belief that salvation can be achieved through a combination of both human will and divine grace in the subsequent cluster of fourteen declarative statements at the beginning of *Noble Numbers*. Following Herrick's declarations in the book's two introductory poems, he also believes that God is a merciful and loving deity:

Mercy and Love

GOD hath two wings, which He doth ever move,
The one is Mercy, and the next is Love:
Under the first the Sinners ever trust;
And with the last he still directs the Just. (N-6 / 340)

God's mercy and justice extends to both sinners and the just, thereby collapsing the divinely predetermined (and therefore impenetrable) distinction which Calvinist dogma erects between the elect and the damned. At the same time, however, "*Gods Anger without Affection*" (N-7 / 340) and "*Affliction*" (N-10 / 341) both qualify the statement that God is merciful and loving by positing that God sometimes does choose to punish us, but does so mercifully because the punishment is always in due proportion to our sin. The nature of sin itself is treated in three more poems. The first, "*Three fatall Sisters*" (N-11 / 341), describes sin as the successive onset of fear, shame and guilt. The second, "*Mirth*" (N-13 / 341), implies that a happy life is one that is lived free of sin, as if Herrick were putting a religious spin on the classical ideal of the happy life.¹⁹³ The third, "*Loading and unloading*" (N-14 / 341), describes God's work as loading mankind with blessings and unloading us from the burden of our sins. This three-part progression from how sin is experienced by man, to what man can do to avoid it, and finally to what God does to help us avoid it, gives further expression to the doctrine of salvation through human will and divine grace.

Herrick's rejection of double predestination in these poems is later expressed even more vehemently in a sequence of seven poems beginning with "*Predestination*" (N-215 / 389). One of these poems subverts the doctrine of predestination by implying paradoxically that man's predestination lies in our own hands:

Another [on Predestination]

ART thou not destin'd? then, with hast, go on
To make thy faire *Predestination*:
If thou canst change thy life, God then will please
To change, or call back, His past *Sentences*. (N-216 / 389)

The poem stops short of supporting the Pelagian heresy – the controversial doctrine that “man can take the initial and fundamental steps towards salvation by his own efforts, apart from Divine Grace” (*ODCC* 1058). Herrick's rejection of predestination would nevertheless have been provocative to a Calvinist reader, especially when he expounds

¹⁹³ For more on Herrick's ruminations on the classical ideal of the happy life, in which he weighs up the relative merits and demerits of Epicureanism and Stoicism, see Chapter 3, p.88-111, of this thesis.

his views from the outset of *Noble Numbers*, and again later in one of the longest and therefore one of the most significant sequences of poems in the collection.

However, Herrick is not simply expounding theological ideas, but is presenting himself theologically, by showing us exactly who he is in terms of exactly what he believes. King Henry VIII's schism with the Catholic Church had occurred little more than a century earlier, and Catholic-leaning as well as fiercely anti-Catholic parties were still locked in a struggle for ideological control over the nascent Anglican Church. In an age when theology was fiercely contested, to the extent that European nations did not hesitate to go to war with one another because of fundamental religious disagreements, Herrick's spiritual beliefs form a more essential aspect of his identity (and therefore the way he presents himself) than they do for the majority of individuals in this secular day and age.

Predestination is just one of the religious controversies that arose within the Anglican Church during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Another religious controversy upon which Herrick feels compelled to declare his position from the outset of *Noble Numbers* is the extent to which the individual worshipper possesses direct, unmediated access to God. Herrick believes that man cannot presume to know God, as when he declares that "GOD is above the sphere of our esteem,/ And is the best known, not defining Him." (*What God is*", N-4 / 340). He repeats this position a few poems later: "'TIS hard to finde God, but to comprehend/ Him, as He is, is labour without end." (*God not to be comprehended*", N-8 / 340). The same point is reiterated, although somewhat less directly, in "*To finde God*" (N-3 / 339), as well as in "*Silence*" (N-12 / 341) and again in "*Gods Mercy*" (N-15 / 341). The latter poem expresses the paradox that although we cannot know or understand God, He is omnipresent in the world:

GODS boundlesse mercy is (to sinfull man)
 Like to the ever-wealthy Ocean:
 Which though it sends forth thousand streams, 'tis ne're
 Known, or els seen to be the emptier:
 And though it takes all in, 'tis yet no more
 Full, and fild-full, then when full-fild before.

The doctrine of God's omnipresence, or divine immanence, is qualified by Herrick with the assertion that, "GOD is not onely said to be/ An *Ens* [a being], but a *Supraentitie* [a higher being]" ("*Upon God*", N-5 / 340). The duality of divine immanence (in which God is omnipresent in his worldly creation) and divine transcendence (in which God is both of, and not of, this world) avoids the dubious theological assumptions (in Christian eyes, at least) of pantheism, and it also results in much of the mysteriousness of God which Herrick expresses as part of his theological position in *Noble Numbers*.¹⁹⁴

Whether or not God can (or ought) to be comprehended lies at the heart of the differences between the Catholic-leaning Arminian/Laudian method of worship and that of the Calvinists and Puritans in England during the seventeenth century.¹⁹⁵ The sacrament-centred service favoured by the former acknowledged God's immanence in the sacraments as symbolic of His immanence in the world. At the same time, little attempt was made to define scrupulously how this immanence manifests itself because, as Herrick has stated, God is a mysterious being whom we cannot know. The proximity between Catholicism and Arminianism/Laudianism on the matter of the sacrament-centred service left Arminianism open to Calvinist accusations of popish superstition (Trevor-Roper 95 and Landrum 1992: 247). Whatever sacramental worship the Calvinists did retain laid emphasis on the sacraments as expressive of the word of God (scripture). Calvinists and Puritans were more concerned with establishing a comprehensive understanding of the divine through reading the scripture and continually reflecting on its meanings in sermons because, as I have suggested already, a Calvinist sought Biblical assurances that he is one of the predestined elect.¹⁹⁶

One of the ways in which such assurances could be conveyed to true believers, Calvinists believed, is contained in the idea that God communicates special truth directly

¹⁹⁴ See *ODCC*, p.693.

¹⁹⁵ Arminius, or Jacob Harmensen, was a Dutch theologian and preacher who led the Dutch back to their liberal sixteenth century church traditions, and away from Calvinism, during the Twelve Years Truce (1609-18). Arminianism is essentially a compromise between Catholicism and Calvinism. Whereas in Holland, Arminianism was a Presbyterian, republican, lay movement, in England it was an episcopal, Royalist, clerical movement which enjoyed a brief supremacy under the direction of Archbishop William Laud during the reign of King Charles I. For a more detailed and nuanced account of the origins, rise and fall of Arminianism in England, see "Laudianism and Political Power" in Hugh Trevor-Roper. *Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans*. (London: Fontana, 1989): 40-119.

¹⁹⁶ The Catholic/Arminian/Laudian focus on sacramental rites made the altar the focal point of their church worship whereas the pulpit from which Scriptures were read and sermons preached was the focal point of Calvinist church (Trevor-Roper 94-5).

to individuals or congregations (Landrum 1992: 245). In Calvinism, what was important was the personal commitment of the individual to cultivating an unmediated relationship with God. Calvinists rejected the Episcopalian ecclesiastical model favoured by Catholics and Laudians, because they objected to Church-appointed intercessors, such as bishops and ministers, acting as spiritual mediators between man and God (Taylor 1989: 262). At the same time, the Calvinist belief in the limited numbers of the elect that are predestined for salvation meant that radical Protestantism was characterised by an individualistic streak premised on the understanding that each Christian must pursue his own salvation independently of his fellows (Guibbory 1977: 112). One of the consequences of this Calvinistic emphasis on religious individualism in England was the proliferation of radical Protestant sects led by preachers whose individual interpretations of Scripture did not conform to the limits of doctrine and practice set out by the established Church (Landrum 244-5). Radical Protestant enthusiasm was at odds with the High Church Anglican position, which mediated between Catholicism on the one hand and Calvinism on the other. As Landrum explains,

the English church admitted scripture to be the only source of divine revelation. Yet its leadership insisted on ‘the testimony, witness, and tradition of the church’ as the qualifying check on any interpretation of scripture.¹⁹⁷ This stance was in opposition to the Puritan-Independent idea of the self-attesting scriptures which alone and in and of themselves are the only source of truth. On the other side, the idea of an infallible church whose official pronouncements confirm the validity of scripture (the Romanist view) was an absurdity to Laud because, he said, ‘the Church consists of men subject to error.’ ... Legitimate Christian knowledge, according to high church formulations, did not rest with a hierarchical clergy or with a specially inspired elect. Instead, it was resident in the scriptures as interpreted by a scholarly clergy acting within a long established interpretative tradition. (250)

In addition to the scholarly clerical interpretative tradition, the outward show of ceremonial, liturgical, sacramental worship practised by the High Church Anglicans was another guarantee against unrestrained (and therefore dangerous) religious practices and

¹⁹⁷ Quotation from A.S Duncan-Jones. *Archbishop Laud*. (London: Macmillan, 1927): 12.

beliefs. Archbishop Laud, head of the Anglican Church during the 1630s, believed that the outward forms of worship were, in his words, “the hedge that fence the substance of religion from all the indignities which profaneness and sacrilege too commonly put upon it” (*Works*, quoted in *ODNB*). Thus, when Herrick declares that “GOD He rejects all Prayers that are sleight,/ And want their poise: words ought to have their weight.” (“*Prayers must have Poise*” N-16 / 342), he is asserting that the long-established liturgies, rituals and scholarly interpretative tradition of the established Church are crucial in endowing prayers and praises with the requisite “weight” or authority, which they lack when left to the individual worshipper, or maverick preacher, or unrestrained congregation.

Herrick is at pains to imbue his own book of religious verse with weight and poise. The transition in tone between *Hesperides* and *Noble Numbers* is noticeable, as Thomas Corns suggests when he says that Herrick becomes more serious and focussed in *Noble Numbers*, thereby setting up “a hierarchy of seriousness” between the two works (1992: 115). Herrick immediately signals his intention to be solemn and directed in *Noble Numbers* by his choice of the epigraph on its title page, a quotation from Hesiod’s *Theogony*, 27-28: “We know how to say many things that bear the guise of truth, and we also know when we intend to state the truth.” There is a sense in which, at this transitional juncture between the two works, the partly concealed religious outlook of *Hesperides* gives way to a serious and focussed attempt to say the truth in *Noble Numbers*. As I have suggested, the first sixteen epigrams in *Noble Numbers* which immediately follow the epigraph present Herrick’s religious beliefs in a direct and uncomplicated manner. In a sense, he is executing his intention “to state the truth”, in so far as he can do so, from the outset of the work.

Herrick’s stated “truth” is consciously aligned to the theological position maintained by the scholarly tradition of the High Anglican Church that privileges dignified, solemn, mysterious, ritualistic, communal ceremony. Hesiod’s *Theogony*, seen as an account of the origins of the ancient Greek gods, and attributed to a man who is generally considered to be the earliest Greek poet (together with Homer) whose work has survived, is invoked by Herrick so as to connect the religious “truth” of *Noble Numbers* with the “weight”, “poise”, or legitimacy that is gained by being associated with antiquity (Guibbory 1994:

41). Herrick is taking a radical step here. From a Puritan perspective, the origins of pagan gods should have nothing whatsoever to do with considerations of Christian theology. To Herrick, however, *Theogony* presents a link to the origins of theology as related by the ancient Greeks. While it is ludicrous to suggest that Herrick believes in pagan gods, he is making an important point about the intrinsic value of religious beliefs that have lasted (latterly in the humanistic imagination, rather than in reality) for as long as the paganism of antiquity. In the ideological tussles between the Arminians/Laudians and the Calvinists/Puritans for control of the Anglican Church, both parties sought to ground their arguments in claims of ancient legitimacy – the former in its associations with the practices of the pre-Reformation Catholic and primitive church, the latter in its associations with scripture as they believed God first intended it to be understood when he conveyed it in the Bible. By quoting Hesiod, even as he does not believe in pagan gods, Herrick is playing a serious game of theological tit-for-tat with the Calvinists/Puritans in the ongoing struggle to legitimise his church's beliefs over theirs.

The transition between *Hesperides* and *Noble Numbers*, with its accompanying shift in seriousness, is also reflected in the *personae* Herrick presents to us. What Rollin calls “the array of lovers, wits, lyrists, philosophers, courtiers, patriots [and] social critics” (1992: 129) in *Hesperides* gives way to fewer, more determined and focussed *personae* in *His Noble Numbers*.

The first of Herrick's *personae* in *Noble Numbers* is the priest. *Noble Numbers*'s epigraph provides an early indicator of Herrick's priestly persona. As *Theogony* begins, Hesiod is shepherding his flock of lambs on the slopes of Mount Helicon while he attempts to converse with the Muses. The phrase which Herrick quotes from *Theogony* as his epigraph (translated as “We know how to say many things that bear the guise of truth, and we also know when we intend to state the truth”) are actually the first words that the Muses say to Hesiod in response to his rhetorical *invocatio*, or call to them to inspire him

in the composition of an epic work.¹⁹⁸ Thus, the associations between *Theogony* and *Noble Numbers* are resonant with suggestions of Herrick's self-presentation as a pastor-poet, Herrick being the pastor ministering to his flock of parishioners in Dean Prior, which is in turn reminiscent of the Biblical poet-shepherd, King David, as well as Jesus's parable of himself as the good shepherd, and one of Christ's last instructions to his disciples, or ministers, to "feed my sheep".¹⁹⁹

Hesiod is also the earliest-known practitioner of gnomic verse.²⁰⁰ Hesiod's characteristic pithy, aphoristic verse was partly a response to the practical constraints of his pre-literate age in which knowledge had to be committed to memory and transferred orally, using complex memory aids such as sequences of maxims and aphorisms. Herrick, the poet-priest, would also have needed to overcome the constraints of low or non-existent literacy levels among the majority of his rural congregation at Dean Prior. The preponderance of gnomic utterances in *Noble Numbers* allows for Herrick, in his sacerdotal role, to facilitate the transfer of religious instruction beyond the confines of the printed book and the minds of a literate few. Herrick's success can be gauged from the following anecdote, retold by Leah Marcus from an account by Barron Field of his 1809 field trip to Dean Prior:

Dorothy King, an illiterate local woman in her nineties, had been taught five of Herrick's *Noble Numbers*, including "*His Letanie, to the Holy Spirit*," [N-41 / 347] by her mother. She "called them her prayers" and said them to herself in bed when she could not sleep. Even at her advanced age, she was able to recite them "with great exactness". (1977: 110)²⁰¹

¹⁹⁸ "To his Muse" (H-2 / 5) is Herrick's half-humorous epic *invocatio* at the beginning of *Hesperides*. For more on the *invocatio*, see Alastair Fowler. *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1982): 102.

¹⁹⁹ For David as the poet-shepherd, see I Samuel 16; for Jesus the good shepherd, see John 10.1-21, and especially v.14, in which Jesus says, "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep and am known by mine"; for Jesus's instruction to his disciples, see John 21, especially v. 17.

²⁰⁰ A gnome is defined as "a short pithy statement of a general truth; a proverb, maxim, aphorism, or apothegm" (*Princeton Encyclopaedia* 324).

²⁰¹ Field's original account can be found in *The Quarterly Review*, 4 (Aug. 1810), Article XI, p.172.

The aphoristic format of Herrick's verse is a manifestation of his self-enactment – “the action itself considered in terms of the sentiment or sentiments in which it is chosen and performed” (Oakeshott 1975: 71-2) – as a poet-priest ministering to his parishioners.²⁰²

Allied to the mnemonic properties of his gnomic verses in *Noble Numbers*, Herrick relies mainly on the terse didacticism of the epigrammatic couplet to give *Noble Numbers* its authoritative, priestly tone. As Corns observes, Herrick states his distinctively Arminian/Laudian religious beliefs from the beginning of *Noble Numbers* in a voice of “priestly instruction delivered with authority” (120). For example, the following series of uninterrupted epigrammatic couplets, near the mid-point of the volume:

Free welcome

GOD He refuseth no man; but makes way
For All that now come, or hereafter may.

Gods Grace

GODS Grace deserves here to be daily fed,
That, thus increast, it might be perfected.

Coming to Christ

TO him, who longs unto his CHRIST to go,
Celerity even it self is slow.

Correction

GOD had but one Son free from sin; but none
Of all His sonnes free from correction.

Gods Bounty

GOD, as He's potent, so He's likewise known,
To give us more than Hope can fix upon.

Knowledge

Science in God, is known to be
A Substance, not a Qualitie. (N-131 / 378 to N-136 / 378)

²⁰² For Oakeshott's distinction between self-enactment and self-disclosure in human conduct, see Chapter 2, p.44-5 of this thesis.

This series of poems takes up nearly all of one side of a page in the 1647/8 edition of *Noble Numbers*, and Corns estimates that epigrammatic couplets constitute over 40 percent of *Noble Numbers* as a whole (120). If we add the epigrammatic quatrains, the proportion of short poems in the entire work rises to just over 70 percent.

John Creaser has taken issue with Herrick's reliance on the epigram in *His Noble Numbers*, seeing it as evidence of "the imaginative impoverishment" of almost the entire final third of *Hesperides* (2009: 182-3). It is true that the epigrammatic couplet on its own might appear insignificant, or limited, but, as Rosalie Colie points out, Renaissance poetic theory maintained that the epigram is a tiny but nevertheless significant component of the greater poetic whole, and that the epigrammatic couplet constitutes the basic building blocks of larger, loftier genres (1973: 68). In fact, one of the connotations of the word "numbers" in Herrick's title is, "Senses relating to the aggregate of things enumerated or collected together", or an "aggregate of persons or things, not precisely reckoned or counted" (*OED*). The aggregation of numerous epigrammatic couplets in *Noble Numbers* manifests Herrick's priestly persona because the terse didactic couplets are suggestive of an authoritative, didactic voice. As Corns observes, the priest persona of these, and other series of epigrammatic couplets in *Noble Numbers*, "gives orders and enunciates general truths and he does so in a form which eschews explanation or justification, precludes lay questioning, and forecloses controversy" (121). In other words, Herrick speaks with authority, something which is not usually associated with the "literary" Herrick of *Hesperides*, but something which is essential to the actual Herrick in his autobiographical role as a parish priest.

Miriam Starkman has suggested that *Noble Numbers* is "a large, metrical prayer book: creeds and graces, confessions and thanksgivings, litanies and dirges, nativity and circumcision songs, anthems and carols, plus a large body of near-catechetical wisdom" (1962: 17).²⁰³ Further, I would suggest that Herrick seems to have arranged his book in order to resemble aspects of the Anglican liturgy outlined in *The Booke of common prayer, and administration of the sacraments. And other rites and ceremonies of the*

²⁰³ By "near-catechetical wisdom", Starkman refers to the practice of religious teaching by way of question and answer (*OED*)

Church of England (hereafter *BCP*), according to which, as a priest, he was expected to minister to his congregation on a daily basis. Anglican daily worship comprises a regular morning and evening prayer service. Prescribed prayers included the general confession, the absolution, the creed, the litany and a series of prayers of thanksgiving on diverse occasions. *Noble Numbers* likewise includes “*His Confession*” (N-1 / 339) and “*His Prayer for Absolution*” (N-2 / 339), as well as “*His Letanie, to the Holy Spirit*” (N-41 / 347), “*A Thanksgiving to God, for his House*” (N-47 / 349), and “*His Creed*” (N-78 / 258). The Anglican liturgy, prescribed in the *BCP*, is essentially a cyclical daily routine, punctuated by miscellaneous occasions (such as public and private baptisms, confirmation, marriages, visitations of the sick, and burials) and official occasions (such as festivals and holy days) which are themselves repeated as part of an annual routine. This repetition-with-variation is characteristic of *His Noble Numbers*, too, with its iterations of poem titles, themes and moods interspersed with occasional poems that Herrick has arranged chronologically to mark the major festivals in the first three months or so of the *BCP*’s ecclesiastical calendar. This progression is hinted at in the book’s full title, *His Noble Numbers: or, His Pious Pieces, Wherein (amongst other things) he sings the Birth of his Christ: and sighes for his Saviours suffering on the Crosse*, in which poems about the birth of Christ precede poems about his suffering on the cross. Herrick’s ecclesiastical calendar begins with “*An Ode of the Birth of our Saviour*” (N-33 / 345). In this poem, the speaker’s introductory pronouncement is that “IN Numbers, and but these few,/I sing Thy Birth, Oh JESU!” (1-2). “Numbers” can refer to “[m]etrical periods or feet; lines, verses” (*OED*), and it is possible that Herrick is referring not just to the remainder of this ode, but also to the other poems in the first third of the book which mark festivals associated with the Nativity. For example, Herrick places “*The New-yeeres Gift*” some thirty poems later:

LET others look for Pearle and Gold,
 Tissues, or Tabbies manifold:
 One onely lock of that sweet Hay
 Whereon the blessed Babie lay,
 Or one poore Swadling-clout, shall be
 The richest New-yeeres Gift to me. (N-60 / 355)

Other poems placed in this earlier section of the book include the celebratory three-poem sequence “A Christmas Caroll, sung to the King in the Presence at White-Hall” (N-96 / 364), “The New-yeeres Gift, or Circumcisions Song, sung to the King in the Presence at White-Hall” (N-97 / 364) and “Another New-yeeres Gift, or Song for the Circumcision” (N-98 / 365), as well as the poem commemorating the Epiphany on January 6 (N-102 / 367) and another New Year/circumcision poem, entitled “To his Saviour. The New years gift” not long after (N-125 / 376). Then there is a hiatus of nearly seventy poems in which no events in the church calendar are celebrated, in much the same way as the *BCP* contains no major events until the Annunciation to Mary on 25 March. Poems entitled “The Virgin Mary” (N-190 / 385) and “Upon Woman and Mary” (N-192 / 386) duly appear shortly before “The Fast, or Lent” (N-195 / 386), which is followed in turn by the instructional poem, “To keep a true Lent” (N-228 / 391). As Holy Week follows Lent in the Christian calendar, so does a nine-poem sequence of Holy Week poems follow Herrick’s Lent poems, beginning with “Good Friday: Rex Tragicus, or Christ going to His Crosse” (N-263 / 398). The Holy Week poems are arranged chronologically in turn, culminating with the poet-speaker coming to Christ’s empty tomb on Easter Sunday (“His coming to the Sepulchre”, N-271 / 403). Taken together, Herrick’s interspersing of his versions of daily prayers from the Anglican liturgy together with poems commemorating major Anglican holy days is further evidence that he presents himself playing the role of priest in *Noble Numbers*.

It may be going too far to claim that *His Noble Numbers* is a Herrickean version of the *BCP*, because the Anglican liturgy prescribes the entire twelve-month cycle of worship and includes many prayers and ceremonies which Herrick omits. However, the portion of the Anglican calendar which Herrick includes in *Noble Numbers* was traditionally the season of festive leisure, during which time little or no agricultural labour was possible because of the winter and early spring. To Calvinists, however, leisure was considered to be a necessary condition for sin to flourish. Calvinism was compatible with the promotion of work and the suppression of play because, as Achsah Guibbory notes, Calvinism is a “religion of work” based on the notion that even though man’s own efforts are futile in directing his spiritual destiny (because of the doctrine of predestination), he nevertheless must strive constantly against his own wicked nature as a way of

demonstrating evidence of his election (1977: 113). Herrick's calendar of worship in *Noble Numbers*, which includes only the half of the year associated with festivals, revelry and leisure, is therefore tacitly opposed to the Calvinistic work ethic, even though the *BCP* itself was a product of the Reformation. As Patrick Collinson has argued, the elevation to primacy of the Calvinist work ethic had important consequences for the annual calendar, a legacy which has continued into the industrial age and beyond:

In place of the seasonal complexities of the old calendar, the secular and festive half-years, there was a new rhythm of working days and Sabbaths, its keystone a weekly day to be set apart for the learning and performance of religious duties, when not only work but all forms of play were forbidden. (55)

When Parliament banned the *BCP* in 1645, replacing it with *The Directory of Public Worship of God in the Three Kingdoms*, it also banned church calendar-based festivals which coincided with pagan festivals such as Christmas (Guibbory 1994: 38).²⁰⁴ Herrick may therefore have subversively composed and arranged his work to function as a substitute for the *BCP*, or may be enacting himself as a believer who had accepted the banned *BCP* and all that it had stood for (Landrum 1992: 251). Meanwhile, the festive ceremonialism of *Noble Numbers*' companion book, *Hesperides*, with its songs of “*May-poles, Hock-carts, Wassails, Wakes*” (H-1 / 5 / 3), is, in a sense, a substitute for, or a statement of opposition against, the festive ceremonialism that the victorious Parliamentary/Puritan alliance had tried to legislate out of existence during the 1640s.

One of the rationales for the *BCP* given in its preface is that “Curates shall need none other books for their public service, but this book and the Bible”. The two-book prescription is amended by Herrick in “*His wish to God*” (N-115 / 371), a poem in which Herrick imagines his last days on earth being spent in “Some one poore Almes-house” (3), shorn of most material possessions (5-6), but determined to worship God “rightly” and in ways befitting “their time and place” (7), with the aid of only two books:

²⁰⁴ For a historical account of the systematic attempt by the Parliamentarians to dismantle the Church of England during the 1640s, including its liturgy, ceremonies and festivals, see John Morrill, “The Church in England, 1642-9” in *Reactions to the English Civil War, 1642-9*, ed. John Morrill (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983): pp. 89-114. See *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum*, ed. C.H. Firth and R.S. Rait (Abingdon: Professional Books, 1978).

So, here the remnant of my dayes I'd spend,
 Reading Thy Bible, and my Book; *so end.* (11-12)

The ambiguity of “my Book” might refer to the *BCP*, to which Herrick feels an almost proprietary ownership borne out of loyalty to the Church in which he had ministered for more than twenty years, or it might refer to *His Noble Numbers*, whose very title signals Herrick’s sense of proprietary ownership over it. In either case, the close alignment of *Noble Numbers* with the *BCP* is a self-presentational statement of Herrick’s loyalty to the ecclesiastical system of the *ancien régime*.

Despite presenting himself as the poet-pastor-shepherd in the epigraph, as well as adopting a tone of priestly epigrammatic didacticism, and arranging *Noble Numbers* according to the High Church Anglican liturgy, Herrick is curiously reticent about identifying himself as a priest (Rollin 1992: 129). He is far more circumspect about this role than he is, say, about his role as poet in *Hesperides*. Even in *Noble Numbers*, Herrick ultimately wishes to be remembered as one of God’s poets, not as one of His priests or ministers:

To God

THE work is done; now let my *Lawrell* be
 Given by none, but by Thy selfe, to me:
 That done, with Honour Thou dost me create
 Thy *Poet*, and Thy *Prophet Lawreat.* (N-262 / 398)

When the priest figure fleetingly appears, Herrick refers to him in the third-person, as if he were at one remove from himself:

8. When the Priest his last hath praid,
 And I nod to what is said,
 'Cause my speech is now decaid;
 Sweet Spirit comfort me!

(*“His Letanie, to the Holy Spirit”*, N-41 / 347)

4. Bring Him along, most pious Priest,
 And tell us then, when as thou seest
 His gently-gliding, Dove-like eyes,

And hear'st His whim'ring, and His cries;
How canst thou this Babe circumcise?

(“*The New-yeeres Gift, or
Circumcisions Song*”, N-97 / 365 / 1-15)

Herrick's reticence about his autobiographical role as a priest may have been a way of drawing attention away from his profession so that he does not need to suppress the so-called profane poems of *Hesperides*. Herrick's intention that *Hesperides* should co-exist with *Noble Numbers* goes beyond the self-disclosing motive of preserving his entire *oeuvre* for posterity – self-disclosure being “the ‘intention’ of an action [which] is the action itself understood in terms of the imagined and wished-for outcome the agent aims to procure in choosing and performing it” (Oakeshott 1975: 70). Instead, the co-existence of the two works, without the existence of one requiring a suppression of the existence of other, is a manifestation of Herrickean self-enactment – “the action itself considered in terms of the sentiment or sentiments in which it is chosen and performed” (Oakeshott 70). In other words, the co-existence of the profane and the sacred in Herrick's *oeuvre* is a fundamental expression of who Herrick is, and what he believes in, so that to suppress the one is to suppress a part of himself. Thus, Herrick's reticence about his role as a priest is a calculated act of self-disclosure which ensures that he can proceed with the self-enactment that is so central to his self-presentation in both works.

Of course, among his contemporary readers, some would already have known that Herrick was a priest. It may also have been prudent for an Anglican minister to maintain a low profile in the mid- to late-1640s, especially one who had been punished for his loyalty to the King by the sequestration of, and eviction from, his parish. On the other hand, the sense of a priestly persona pervades *Noble Numbers*, making it unnecessary for Herrick – who prefers to construct meaning through indirection and association, in any case – to state as much. It is also evident that Herrick wants his book to circulate among a wide readership, otherwise he would not have taken the trouble to print it. Herrick's characteristic awareness of his readers would dictate that he renders *Noble Numbers* approachable to as many of them as possible, and not to create an esoteric work that is only accessible to a handful of his fellow clergymen.

The second Herrickean persona in *His Noble Numbers*, then, is what Rollin refers to as Herrick's "Everyman", or "humble sinner", persona (1992: 134). As such, his book of religious poetry is "readable on some level by almost any literate individual of average intelligence" (129). In contrast to the epigrammatic public voice of the authoritative priest persona, Herrick's Everyman persona's voice is lyrical and intimate, as in "*His Creed*", which is almost an inversion of the order of the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds:

I Do believe, that die I must,
 And be return'd from out my dust:
 I do believe, that when I rise,
 Christ I shall see, with these same eyes:
 I do believe, that I must come,
 With others, to the dreadfull Doome:
 I do believe, the bad must goe
 From thence, to everlasting woe:
 I do believe, the good, and I,
 Shall live with Him eternally:
 I do believe, I shall inherit
 Heaven, by Christs mercies, not my merit:
 I do believe, the One in Three,
 And Three in perfect Unitie:
 Lastly, that JESUS is a Deed
 Of Gift from God: *And heres my Creed.* (N-78, 358.3)

The sense of intimacy in Herrick's credo is enhanced by the regular repetition of the first person singular pronoun. By comparison, Herrick speaks his didactic, priestly epigrams from an omniscient third-person standpoint, rendering them entirely impersonal, as in the series of four epigrammatic couplets which follows "*His Creed*":

Temptations

TEMPTATIONS hurt not, though they have accesse:
 Satan o'recomes none, but by willingnesse.

The Lamp

WHEN a mans Faith is frozen up, as dead;
Then is the Lamp and oyle extinguished.

Sorrowes

SORROWES our portion are: Ere hence we goe,
Crosses we must have; or, hereafter woe.

Penitencie

A MANS transgression God do's then remit,
When man he makes a Penitent for it. (N-79 / 359 to N-82 / 359)

While the statements in “*His Creed*” are straightforward, those in his didactic epigrams tend to be thought-provoking or unusual, and rely on contrast or paradox to make a point. The decisive difference between the two, however, is that the didactic epigrams are too brief in form, and too diverse in subject matter, for a sense of Herrick’s personality to emerge. By comparison, the Everyman persona poems tend to be longer, allowing Herrick to project his own persona more effectively. For example, in “*To God*”, the speaker outlines his ideal relationship with God:

COME to me God; but do not come
To me, as in the gen’rall Doome,
In power; or come Thou in that state,
When Thou Thy Lawes didst promulgate,
When as the Mountaine quak’d for dread,
And sullen clouds bound up his head.
No, lay thy stately terrours by,
To talke with me familiarly;
For if Thy thunder-claps I heare,
I shall less swoone, then die for feare.
Speake thou of love and I’le reply
By way of *Epithalamie*,
Or sing of *mercy*, and I’le suit
To it my Violl and my Lute:
Thus let Thy lips but love distill,
Then come my God, and hap what will. (N-232 / 393)

Is weather-proof;
 Under the sparres of which I lie
 Both soft, and drie;
 Where Thou my chamber for to ward
 Hast set a Guard
 Of harmlesse thoughts, to watch and keep
 Me, while I sleep. (1-10)

Up to this point in the poem, the speaker is suitably generalised as to be identifiable with almost anybody – provided, perhaps, that they enjoy the privilege of a roof over their heads at night. Next, the speaker introduces some details that hint at his specific autobiographical role as parish priest:

Low is my porch, as is my Fate,
 Both void of state;
 And yet the threshold of my doore
 Is worne by'th poore,
 Who thither come, and freely get
 Good words, or meat (11-16)

The multitude of poor people who come to Herrick for assistance are a sign that he is doubly-blessed; not just by having the words and meat to give them, but that their presence in numbers – sufficient to wear down the threshold over time – is in itself a blessing. The regularly alternating tetrameter and dimeter in this poem, which creates alternating long and short lines of verse, reinforces the poem's central paradox which is that God's small blessings are in fact His most bountiful blessings.²⁰⁶ The poem continues with details of the house's interior (ll.17-22). With its parlour, hall, kitchen and buttery, the house is more spacious than the "cell" (1) as it was first described in the poem, and approximates the "Dwelling house consisting of one Hall one Parlour one Kitchin one Cellar one Brewhouse fower Chambers one Studij, the walls of Stone" of the parsonage at Dean Prior, as it was described in a *glebe terrier*, or church property stocktake, in 1680 (Cain, <http://herrick.ncl.ac.uk>). The speaker also describes his general diet of pulse, worts and water-cress, but makes special mention of "my beloved Beet" as a

²⁰⁶ One is reminded of Herrick's attitude in an epigram elsewhere in *His Noble Numbers*, entitled "Welcome what comes": "Whatever comes, let's be content withal:/ Among Gods Blessings there is no one small." (N-55, 353.2)

refers to men as children and God as their (usually merciful) father, as in “*God has a twofold part*”:

GOD when for sin He makes His Children smart,
 His own He acts not, but another’s part:
 But when by stripes He saves them, then ’tis known,
 He comes to play the part that is his own. (N-22 / 343)

However, Herrick’s self-presentation as a child has more to do with the Christian commonplace of God the Father than with any immaturity on Herrick’s part:

Teares

GOD from our eyes all teares hereafter wipes,
 And gives His Children kisses then, not stripes. (N-139 / 379)

Perhaps what troubles Moorman is that Herrick sometimes speaks from the viewpoint of a child. Noteworthy in this regard is the three-poem sequence in *Noble Numbers* with children as their theme and, in two cases, as their speakers, too (N-93 / 363 to N-95 / 364).

Beginning with the first of three poems in the sequence, “*Graces for Children*”, Herrick combines a child-like sing-song tone with simple single-syllable diction and rhyming couplets. However, the rhyme scheme changes at the final tercet, and the poem ends with a more adult-like three-syllable word:

WHAT God gives, and what we take,
 ’Tis a gift for Christ His sake:
 Be the meale of Beans and Pease,
 God be thank’d for those, and these:
 Have we flesh, or have we fish,
 All are fragments from His dish.
 He His Church save, and the King,
 And our Peace here, like a Spring,
 Make it ever flourishing.

By differentiating the last three lines from the preceding six, the shift in rhyme scheme emphasises the thematic importance of the poem's conclusion. It is unlikely that "flourishing" is a word that a child would use much, thereby inviting the recognition that the poem is more nuanced and complex than it might at first appear.²⁰⁹

Leah Marcus has suggested that there is a political rationale behind Herrick's child-like self-presentation. She writes that Herrick was "lowering himself to the same level as his childishly ignorant parishioners" and that he "played the child to dramatize the humble obedience he and more rebellious countrymen owed to Laudian ecclesiastical authority" (1978: 130). There is some truth in Marcus's argument. For example, "*Graces for Children*" implies that children should pray for God's Church (the established Church of England) and the Crown, since the wellbeing of both institutions is connected to the continuation of peace within the realm (7-9). In a literal sense, then, these lines encourage children to respect their country's main institutions of authority. However, Marcus's claim is also questionable in the sense that, by and large, Herrick's parishioners were not ardent Laudians (Scott 1974: 61). Nor can their relatively low levels of formal education be used as a reliable yardstick to claim that they were either exceptionally obedient or unusually rebellious people. For these reasons, an explanation for the nuances and complexities which one senses in Herrick's child-like poems is not to be found in political didacticism alone.

Herrick's child-like persona should also remind us of Jesus's rebuke to his disciples after they had come to him and asked him who among them was greatest. Jesus says to them, "Verily, I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18.3). Jesus then identifies the humility, generosity and faith of children as important characteristics for his disciples to emulate (v. 5-7). Humility, generosity and faith are also characteristic of Herrick's attitude towards God in *Noble Numbers*. The self-disclosing political didacticism of Herrick's child-like persona is less important than the self-enacting statement that child-like faith *is* Herrick's attitude to God. That he comes across as child-like or naïve in *Noble Numbers* is more an indictment of our jaded secular cynicism than of Herrick's

²⁰⁹ Compare with Herrick's use of the same device, to different effect, in "*Upon Julia's Clothes*" (H-779 / 261).

disingenuous attitude towards God. Herrick's tone may be child-like, but it is never childish, because none of the poems is so un-nuanced as to be simply naïve (Starkman 9).

Thus, on a self-evident level, the second poem in the sequence of "child poems" counsels obedience to one's parents and, more importantly, obedience to God, but a straightforward versification of the fifth commandment – "Honour thy father and mother" (Exodus 21.7) – only accounts for the poem's first half-line:

God to be first serv'd

HONOUR thy Parents; but good manners call
Thee to adore thy God, the first of all. (N-94 / 363)

The remainder of the poem expresses the paradox that reverence for the divine is not a matter of obedience, but of social conduct. To recall Earl Miner's seminal account of the Cavalier "social mode", he writes that the social mode comprises "social relations interwoven with personal relations" (1971: 12).²¹⁰ The Cavalier poets are not typically associated with religious verse, and therefore Miner does not apply his theory to the relationship between man and God. Nevertheless, the social conduct between man and God to which Herrick refers in "*God to be first serv'd*" validates the notion that worship ought to be both personal and social. It is easy to dichotomise Catholics/ Arminians/ Laudians on the one hand and Calvinists/Puritans on the other, but the social, ceremonial worship privileged by the former should not, Herrick suggests, discount the private, individualised worship privileged by the latter. Good manners, Herrick tells God's children (a designation which, as I have suggested, includes adults under the Biblical metaphor of God as the Father) is a matter of worshipping God in both ways, while discounting neither. Herrick's position is, in fact, typical of the reasonable compromise advocated by the Anglican Church, and which remains a source of pride and satisfaction to its adherents even today. There is even a sense in which, coming as "*God to be first serv'd*" does in the midst of a three-poem series of "child poems", that Herrick's deliberate focalisation of worship through a child's point-of-view is a way of subtly disarming religious controversy. To a child, Catholicism, Anglicanism or Puritanism

²¹⁰ For more on the social mode as a manifestation of Herrick's poetic conduct, see Chapter 2, p.35-44 of this thesis.

matters very little, if at all. Instead, it is God who matters. Herrick's "child poems" are thus both self-disclosing (they have a motive, or a message) and self-enacting (they are an expression of who Herrick is, how he thinks, and what he believes).

The third poem in the sequence, "*Another Grace for a Child*", is similarly complex. Philip Pfatteicher believes that the childish persona Herrick adopts in this poem is "deceptively simple" (403):

Another Grace for a Child

HERE a little child I stand,
Heaving up my either hand;
Cold as Paddocks though they be,
Here I lift them up to Thee,
For a Benizon to fall
On our meat, and on us all. *Amen.*

Drawing on his personal experience with his own children at mealtimes, Pfatteicher argues that in "Heaving up" its hands clumsily to God in an act of thanks, the child knocks over cups and dishes, literally spilling food everywhere as symbolic of God's "Benizon", or blessing (404). In so doing, "the child in Herrick's poem, disrupting the decorum of the table and upsetting expectations, becomes temporarily a priest and minister of God's benediction" (406). Drawing on Biblical precedent, Pfatteicher suggests that "the child assumes the ancient priestly posture of prayer, standing with arms raised in the *orans* position of a priest at the altar, asking for blessing to descend" (404). He claims that the child's unwitting role as a miniature priest in this poem "in fact teaches by deeds a high church doctrine: sacramental actions are more basic and more powerful than the words even of prayer" (407). However, Pfatteicher overlooks the fact that this poem *is* a prayer – it is a "*Grace*", or type of prayer, and ends with "*Amen*", for example. Following on from the previous poem, and the notion it expresses that reverence for God is a matter of social conduct conceived of as both a social and a personal relationship, I would suggest that Pfatteicher has downplayed the importance of prayer in "*Another Grace for a Child*". While there is indeed something to be said for Pfatteicher's sacramental interpretation of the poem, his claim that the child knocks cups and plates over is fanciful rather than accurate. The poem itself gives no indication that

God's "Benizon" is a mess of spilt food and drink. Pfatteicher has complicated what is a straightforward prayer spoken by a child.

At the same time, the poem is far from simple. Pfatteicher explains that he was first drawn to the poem by the curious description of the child's hands being "Cold as Paddocks," or as frogs. From wiping his own son's cold, clammy hands from time-to-time, Pfatteicher found Herrick's description to be "exactly right" (403). While the attention Herrick pays to the detail of the child's hands is a likely indication of his love for children (these poems resonate with, and depend upon, other poems that are concerned with the wellbeing of children in *Hesperides*, for example),²¹¹ the slightly distasteful description of hands as frogs would not, I suspect, readily come from a child's point-of-view. The observation may be accurate, but most children would find it hurtful. One is reminded of the tactile imagery of Herrick's poem on Julia's legs:

Her Legs

Fain would I kiss my *Julia's* dainty Leg,
Which is as white and hair-less as an egge. (H-349 / 139)

There is something at once both compelling and repelling about Julia's leg, in much the same way the image of the child's frog-like hands is both attractive and repulsive. This sense of a disjuncture between Herrick the composer of "*Another Grace for a Child*", and the children expected to recite the poem at grace, suggests that an insurmountable gap exists between childish innocence and adult experience. Jesus's instruction to his disciples to "become as little children", though attractive, is not entirely possible. As Man discovered in Eden, once you lose your innocence, you cannot completely regain it. Moorman's complaint that Herrick's persona is "scarcely more mature than that of a child of eight" is belied by Herrick's self-enacting adoption of the child persona as he simultaneously complicates and qualifies such an identification.

²¹¹ He mourns the death of children (H-180 / 69, H-310 / 123 and H-514 / 189), or satirises men and women who treat their children badly (H-184 / 72, H-200 / 80, H-358 / 141 and H-1077 / 325), or even personifies his poems as children (H-3 / 6 and H-681 / 236). Elsewhere in *Noble Numbers*, Herrick chooses a child to be his emissary to Jesus (N-59 / 354).

Just as Herrick tries to relate to children and write graces for them to say as prayers in their daily lives, so too can he write poems for the entertainment of important men and women on prestigious occasions. Herrick's social versatility – his ability to converse with children and with kings – is a further manifestation of his role as an Everyman in *Noble Numbers*. For example, early in *Noble Numbers* we encounter a poem entitled “*To God: an Anthem, sung in the Chappell at White-Hall, before the King*” (N-17 / 342). There is also a cluster of poems about a third of the way through the collection: “*A Christmas Caroll, sung to the King in the Presence at White-Hall*” (N-96 / 364), “*The New-yeeres Gift, or Circumcisions Song, sung to the King in the Presence at White-Hall*” (N-97 / 365) and “*Another New-yeeres Gift, or Song for the Circumcision*” (N-98 / 366). We can assume this third song was also sung in the King's presence by virtue of its proximity to the other poems in the sequence as well as what we can glean from the coda:

Let's blesse the Babe; And, as we sing
His praise; so let us blesse the King:

Chor. Long may He live, till He hath told
His New-yeeres trebled to His old:
And, when that's done, to re-aspire
A new-borne *Phoenix* from His own chast fire. (25-30)

A fourth song follows shortly thereafter, entitled “*The Star-Song: A Caroll to the King; sung at White-Hall*” (N-102 / 367). Two things are striking about these poems. Firstly, N-96 and N-97 both include a footnote by Herrick stating that they were set to music composed by Henry Lawes (1596-1662). Lawes was already a member of the Chapel Royal by 1627 and was “[w]ithout doubt . . . the most famous songwriter of his age” (*ODNB*). The lyrics to these songs were probably written by Herrick between 1626 at the earliest and his departure for Devonshire in November 1630. As such, they reveal that Herrick played an important role in the court's entertainment on holy days. Secondly, Herrick placed the three-poem sequence of court compositions (N-96 to N-98) immediately after the three poem sequence of poems for children discussed above (N-93 to N-95). The juxtaposition of the two groups of poems – the former childlike, the latter courtly – is unmistakable. Herrick draws our attention towards his versatile ability to be

all things to all people, a trait which plays a significant part in the creation of his Everyman persona.

The third Herrickean persona in *Noble Numbers* is the learned scholar. Herrick's self-presentation as a scholar might come as a surprise to some of his critics, who tend to compare Herrick's intellect unfavourably with the likes of such toweringly learned neo-classical poets as Ben Jonson and John Milton, and similarly cerebral "metaphysical" poets such as John Donne and George Herbert. John Press, for example, believes that *Noble Numbers* is a disappointing work because "Herrick's intellectual and emotional resources are too meagre to sustain him when he exiles himself from the delicious pagan landscape and attempts to survey the divine order of the universe" (1971: 33). As Herrick's subjects of scholarly interest show, however, he associates himself with a company of learned men and he participates in their shared interests and mutually supportive enterprise, but he is not concerned with the competitive, proprietary acquisition of knowledge.

Herrick's self-enactment as a learned scholar is similar in some ways to Herrick's self-enactment as a priest; particularly in his use of brief epigrammatic statements to assert his intellectual authority. In other ways the learned scholar persona is different, most obviously the way in which Herrick cites examples of authoritative religious learning as if drawing on them to construct an intellectual argument of his own. Roger Rollin sees the two *personae* as interchangeable – Herrick is "by turns both donnish and parsonish" (1992: 132) – but for the purposes of this study, it will be necessary to separate the two in order to do justice to both.

Herrick arranges his scholarly epigrams into a self-contained section of the book, between "To God" (N-130 / 377) and "To God, his gift" (N-258 / 397), where their concentration in numbers accentuates Herrick's scholarly self-enactment. This section falls between an earlier section containing the longer religious lyrics which includes the Christmas, New Year and Epiphany poems in the first third of the book, and a later group of lyrics which marks the book's nine-poem Easter dénouement. A couple of lengthier

lyrics interrupt the scholarly epigrams, the one a meditation on the poet's death (N-230 / 392), the other a meditation on the poet meeting God (N-232 / 393). These two poems have probably been placed within the section of scholarly epigrams to remind us, in Herrick's characteristic way, that the largely impersonal epigrams are indeed his own.

If, as I have just suggested, Herrick intends the distinctive unit of learned, overwhelmingly epigrammatic pronouncements to form a self-contained section within *Noble Numbers*, then there needs to be a discernible beginning and end to the section in question. I would suggest that "To God" (N-130) marks the beginning of this section because it acts as a transitional poem between two longer lyrics directly before it, namely "The white Island, or place of the Blest" (N-128 / 376) and "To Christ" (N-129 / 377), and a sequence of terse epigrammatic couplets directly after it (N-131 / 378 to N-135 / 378). "To God" is a transitional poem in the sense that it is neither wholly lyric nor wholly epigrammatic. The poem is addressed to God from the subjective self-enacting point-of-view typical of Herrick's religious lyrics, but it also refers to an item of objective self-disclosing knowledge typical of his epigrams. Thus, the ambiguous generic status of "To God" signals its liminal position at the beginning of *Noble Numbers*'s self-contained section of scholarly epigrams:

GOD! to my little meale and oyle,
Add but a bit of flesh, to boyle:
And Thou my Pipkinnet shalt see,
Give a *wave-offring* unto Thee.

The "wave-offring" is an allusion to God's demand that the Israelites should honour Him by waving a sacrifice of ram's meat, three types of bread and some oil to and fro in the air before burning it on the altar (Exodus 24. 24). In Herrick's poem, the meat bobbing around in an earthenware pot of boiling corn meal and oil is reminiscent of the Jewish sacrifice, and suggests that Herrick has dedicated this section of poems to God.

One hundred and twenty-eight poems later, we encounter a similar poem, entitled "To God, his gift" (N-258 / 397), which seems to bring the section of scholarly epigrams to a close. In it, the speaker performs another obscure Old Testament sacrifice known as the

heave-offering. In contrast to the wave-offering, the heave-offering is heaved, or lifted, up and down in the air over the altar before being burned as a sacrifice:²¹²

AS my little Pot doth boyle,
We will keep this *Levell-Coyle*;
That a *Wave*, and I will bring
To my God, a *Heave-offering*.

“*To God, his gift*” is identifiable as a terminal marker because of its symmetrical position in relation to, and its echoing of, the “*wave-offring*” in “*To God*”. It is also followed by a series of four poems which change the subject and reflect on God’s likely reception of Herrick’s book. The series begins by expressing the possibility that God might be angered by *Noble Numbers* (a thought Herrick quickly dismisses) in “*Gods Anger*” (N-259 / 397), then suggests that Herrick has simply obeyed God in “*Gods Commands*” (N-260 / 397), then asks God in “*To God*” (N-261 / 398) to correct “gently with Thy Rod” whatever errors *Noble Numbers* may in fact contain, and concludes with the triumphant claim that:

THE work is done; now let my *Lawrell* be
Given by none, but by Thy selfe, to me:
That done, with Honour Thou dost me create
Thy *Poet*, and Thy *Prophet Lawreat*. (N-262 / 398)

To return, then, to the wave- and heave-offering poems, their idiosyncratic subject matter identifies them as liminal markers binding together the bulk of scholarly epigrams placed between them. They also dedicate and consecrate this self-contained section of poems to God while displaying something of Herrick’s learnedness in their references to somewhat obscure Jewish sacrifices described in the Old Testament.

Herrick’s title, *Noble Numbers*, is suggestive of the title of the Fourth Book of Moses in the Old Testament, Numbers. In the Mosaic texts (the first five books in the Bible upon which the laws of Judaism are based) God first creates the world and its peoples

²¹² The heave-offering is described in Numbers 15. 20: “Ye shall offer up a cake of the first of your dough for an heave offering: as ye do the heave offering of the threshingfloor, so shall ye heave it.”

(Genesis), and He later introduces the Jews to the Ten Commandments through his intermediary, Moses, at Sinai (Exodus). Next, God gives the Jews more detailed laws that are central to the conduct of Judaism, such as sacrifices as well as which objects are clean and which are unclean (Leviticus). Then, in Numbers, God instructs Moses to perform a census of the tribes of Israel (Chapter 1 and 2) as a prelude to creating a caste of priests out of the tribe of Levi to minister at the tabernacle (Chapter 3 and 4).²¹³ Numbers also outlines the consecration and period of service of the Levites in the tabernacle (Chapter 8), the law of priests and Levites (Chapter 18), and a calendar of offerings which outlines various sacrifices and ceremonies to be performed during the course of the year (Chapter 27 to 29). The fifth Mosaic text, Deuteronomy, outlines further testimonies, statutes and judgements which Moses gave to the Israelites on the banks of the River Jordan before they crossed into the Promised Land.

The Judaic religious customs described in Numbers resonates strongly with Herrick's religious and political circumstances in seventeenth century England, in particular the struggle between conservatives, such as the High Church Anglicans (whom Herrick supported), and radicals, such as the Puritans, for control of the Anglican Church. There is a sense in which Herrick's book of *Numbers* is his attempt to shore up the key tenets of High Church Anglicanism – in particular the sacredness of altars, the role of priests as intermediaries and intercessors between man and God, the sacrificial ceremonialism of the Holy Communion, and the beautification of the Church – by relating them to the ancient practices of the Jews (Guibbory 1994: 41). In so doing, Herrick claims legitimacy for the Anglican Church based on its continuations with ancient custom. The Puritans, on the other hand, “insisted that a properly reformed (Protestant) worship should be purged of remnants of Jewish ceremonial — that the Mosaic ceremonial law was entirely abrogated by Christ” (Guibbory 2002: 137). Whereas Puritans believed that Jesus's teachings superseded those of the Old Testament, High Church Anglicans argued that Jesus's coming in the New Testament fulfilled the teachings of the Old Testament (138). The value High Church Anglicans placed on the continuities between Old and New Testaments, between ancient custom and modern worship, between aspects of

²¹³ Hence the (now obsolete) definition of “numbers” as “[a]n enumeration, an account; a reckoning; (also) a count a census” (*OED*).

Catholicism and reformed Anglicanism, is eloquently expressed by Archbishop Laud, defending his views during his trial between 1644-5:

I would have them remember, that we live in a Church *Reformed*; not in one made *New*. Now all *Reformation*, that is good and orderly, takes nothing away from the old, but that which is Faulty and Erroneous. If any thing be good, it leaves that standing.²¹⁴

By 1648, the views of the Puritan party had triumphed. Altars, episcopacy, ceremonial communion and beautified churches were swept away by Parliamentary decree. Herrick's choice of *Noble Numbers* as his title is poignantly significant in that the Hebrew for "Numbers" also means "in the wilderness" – a reference to the Israelites' wanderings in the deserts of the Sinai peninsula, which Herrick transforms into a reference to the Anglican Church as he knew it now metaphorically being 'in the wilderness'.

Herrick's familiarity with Old Testament Judaism is matched by his knowledge of a sweeping range of patriarchal and scholastic sources whose intellectual authority adds further weight to his scholarly persona in *Noble Numbers*. The patriarchs, or Church Fathers, were the influential Christian theologians during the first eight centuries who laid the foundations of early Christian doctrine (ODCC 1044-5). They were succeeded by the scholastics, or Schoolmen, who sought to interpret earlier Christian doctrine in new ways in order to understand the Fathers' ideas better (ODCC 1245). The Fathers and the Schoolmen were the progenitors of the exegetical tradition, in which no scriptural passage was considered too obscure for detailed study and interpretation. The exegetical tradition was valued particularly highly by the Catholic Church, and later by High Church Anglicans, as providing the key to accurate scriptural interpretation. According to the Anglican preacher, Peter Gunning (1614-1684), the exegetical tradition disqualified lay interpretation entirely:

Reason and experience, and the direction of all wise men in the Church of God ancient and modern (the house of wisdom), Councils, reverend Fathers and writers, and our Church in particular, have

²¹⁴ Quoted by Guibbory (1988: 143) from *The History of the Troubles and Tryall of ... William Laud*, ed. Henry Wharton (London, 1695), 113.

directed and commanded us not to interpret Scripture ... but as we find it interpreted by the Holy Fathers and Doctors of the Church, as they had received it from those before them.²¹⁵

Thus, the scriptural interpretations of the established church were legitimised by having been deliberated, tested, and either proved or rejected by a succession of the greatest scholarly minds in the history of Western Christianity.

During the Reformation, however, Protestant theologians such as Calvin challenged the established Church's monopoly on the interpretation of knowledge. He argued instead for the supremacy of knowledge transferred directly from God to the individual. Divine inspiration had the advantage of being unadulterated by centuries of mediation by innately fallible men, so Calvinists claimed (*ODCC* 491). But, as High Church theologians pointed out, lay interpretation of scripture frequently resulted in an alarming variety of sometimes contradictory understandings. It was such variations that made Anglicans equally keen to guard against lay fallibility. As far as they were concerned, divine inspiration that is an intensely private, individualised experience cannot be made outwardly manifest to a community of worshippers where its worth can be tried, tested and evaluated (Greenblatt 2005: 58-73). Therefore the most reliable bulwark against the radical instability of scriptural interpretation by the laity was for Christian knowledge to be forged within the rigorous intellectual practices of the exegetical tradition, and upheld by legitimate interpreters, who were usually learned clergymen like Herrick who had been schooled in the tradition. In quoting the Fathers and the Schoolmen, Herrick is acknowledging himself to be incapable of making individual pronouncements, and instead identifies himself as belonging to a community of like-minded scholars.

As with the epigrams about Old Testament Jewish sacrifices, and several other Jewish customs outlined in the Talmud,²¹⁶ all Herrick's patristic and scholastic epigrams are placed within the self-contained section of learned epigrams within *Noble Numbers*. Their concentration in numbers draws attention to their status as a *silva* collection of

²¹⁵ Quoted by David Landrum (1992: 250) from Richard Cattermole, *The Literature of the Church of England*, Vol. 1 (London: John W. Parker, 1844), 339.

²¹⁶ The Talmud contains the collected teachings of major Jewish scholars who flourished during the classical period of rabbinic Judaism between 200-500 A.D. See "*Observation*" (N-178 / 384), "*North and South*" (N-193 / 386) and "*Penitence*" (N-206 / 388).

miscellaneous, heterogeneous religious knowledge. These epigrams do not attempt to treat their religious subject matter in an ordered, coherent or logical way because, as Herrick has repeatedly stated in the first dozen poems in *Noble Numbers*, God's overarching purposes cannot be discerned or comprehended by man.²¹⁷ To Herrick, a deliberately purposeful, comprehensively integrated and carefully ordered collection of religious poems is an artifice and an illusion. Furthermore, Herrick's pursuit of scholarly religious knowledge drawn from a wide range of sources is necessarily "collaborative, incremental, and open, rather than as systematic, definitive, and closed," in much the same way as early modern practitioners of natural philosophy and other sciences conducted their pursuit of knowledge (de Bruyn 2001: 348-9). In an age where the distinction between so-called literary and non-literary genres, and between religion and science, were not as clear-cut as they have subsequently become, the *silva* was an appropriate way for scholars to organise miscellaneous knowledge gleaned from what we now consider to be widely diverse fields (370).²¹⁸

Herrick's quotations from a wide range of Fathers and Schoolmen demonstrate the versatility of the exegetical tradition.²¹⁹ The implied question-and-answer format of these learned epigrams is also reminiscent of the catechism, a traditional way of answering theological questions that might trouble or confuse Christian believers (Landrum 1992: 254-5). Thus, in answer to the implied question, "Why does an all-powerful God allow man to be tempted by Satan?", we find an answer provided by Augustine (b. 354, d. 430):

Temptation

GOD tempteth no one (as S. *Aug'stine* saith)
 For any ill; but, for the proof of Faith:
 Unto temptation God exposeth some;
 But none, of purpose, to be overcome. (N-150 / 380)

²¹⁷ See, for example, "To finde God" (N-3 / 339), "What God is" (N-4 / 340), "Upon God" (N-5 / 340) and "God not to be comprehended" (N-8 / 340).

²¹⁸ I have appropriated de Bruyn's ideas from his article, "The Classical *Silva* and the Generic Development of Scientific Writing in Seventeenth Century" (*New Literary History* 32.2 (Spring, 2001): 347-73), to help explain Herrick's treatment of the exegetical tradition in *Noble Numbers*, even though de Bruyn concerns himself only indirectly with early modern poetry.

²¹⁹ Exegesis is defined as "The act of explaining a text, in theology usually a sacred text. The explanation may include translation, paraphrase or commentary on the meaning. Its purpose may be either to describe the author's meaning or to apply that meaning to a contemporary situation." (*ODCC* 490)

Similarly, a question about the nature or substance of sin is answered by a reference to the scholastic Aquinas (b. circa. 1225, d. 1274):

Sin

*Sin no Existence; Nature none it hath,
Or good at all, (as learn'd Aquinas saith). (N-173 / 383)*

Herrick, through Aquinas, neutralises the concept of sin, rendering it comparatively harmless. The attitude towards sin expressed by Herrick is in contrast with the all-pervasive Calvinistic obsession with sin, and its corollary, guilt. In yet another example, John of Damascus (b. circa 675, d. circa 749) explains the nature of God's substance, which is both immanent and transcendental:

God

GOD (as the learned *Damascen* doth write)
A Sea of Substance is, Indefinite. (N-161 / 381)

Similarly, Herrick cites Boethius (b. 480, d. circa. 524) to explain why God's Hebrew name lends linguistic support to the complex theological notion of the Holy Trinity:

JEHOVA

JEHOVA, as *Boëtius* saith,
No number of the *Plurall* hath. (N-168 / 382)

The point Herrick is making is that the three-part godhead – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – cannot be completely distinguished from one another, hence God's name, Jehova, is singular, and not plural.

Herrick also calls upon various Fathers and Schoolmen to explain puzzling passages of scripture. For example, with the help of Ambrose (b. circa. 339, d. 397), Herrick explains why the newly-resurrected Jesus first addresses the disbelieving Mary

Magdalene as “Woman” and only subsequently acknowledges her as “Mary” in John 20.1-18:

Upon Woman and Mary

SO long (it seem'd) as *Maries* Faith was small,
 Christ did her *Woman*, not her *Mary* call:
 But no more *Woman*, being strong in Faith;
 But Mary cal'd then (as *S. Ambrose* saith.) (N-192 / 386)

In other words, for as long as Mary refused to acknowledge that Jesus had been resurrected and was standing in front of her, Jesus in turn refused to acknowledge Mary by her proper name.

Another instance of the versatility of exegetical interpretation is that it can help to clarify obscure Biblical phrases. For example, God punished the Israelites for disobeying his commandments by throwing them into a “confusion of face” (Ezra 9. 7 and Daniel 9. 7-8) which led to their defeat by the Babylonians, the destruction of their temple, and their exile from the Promised Land and captivity in Babylon. In a pair of related epigrammatic couplets, Herrick turns to Cassiodorus (b.485, d. circa 580) to provide the meaning of “confusion of face”:

Confusion of face

GOD then confounds mans face, when He not hears
 The Vowes of those, who are Petitioners. (N-169 / 382)

Another

THE shame of mans face is no more
 Then prayers repel'd, (sayes *Cassiodore.*) (N-170 / 383)

So “confusion of face” refers to God’s rejection of the Jews’ pleas for forgiveness until they had suffered sufficiently at the hands of the Babylonians.

Herrick is likely to have taken more than a passing interest in the phrase “confusion of face”. The “confusion of face” which the Israelites experienced at the hands of the Babylonians is analogous to the dire situation in which Herrick found himself, as the

Anglican Church was systematically destroyed by the Puritans and Herrick's fellow-Royalists driven into exile during the 1640s (Guibbory 2002: 143-6). In much the same way that Herrick presents himself as a latter-day Ovid in *Hesperides* in order to figure his sense of alienation from the social and cultural milieu of Caroline London, so too does he present himself as a latter-day Israelite in *Noble Numbers* to suggest something of his own sense of political and religious exile as a result of the Parliamentary-Puritan triumph in the Civil War.

Even seemingly secular matters are not beneath the learned Fathers. For example, Ambrose is quoted to explain a secular question – “Why does the rose have soft buds but a thorny stem?” – by suggesting that “Mans fall” in Genesis was responsible:

The Rose

Before Mans fall, the Rose was born
 (S. Ambrose sayes) without the Thorn:
 But, for Mans fault, then was the Thorn,
 Without the fragrant Rose-bud, born;
 But ne're the Rose without the Thorn. (N-251 / 396)

Two Fathers lend particular legitimacy to Herrick's own latter-day project of melding the sacred and the secular in *The Works both Humane & Divine of Robert Herrick*. Boethius combined secular and Christian thought in his work to the extent that it used to be disputed whether he was really a Christian (ODCC 83).²²⁰ Meanwhile Cassiodorus divided his classic *Institutiones Divinarum et Saecularium Litteratum* into two parts; the first an introduction to the study of theology, the second a manual for studying the Seven Liberal Arts (ODCC 246-7). Herrick may therefore have deliberately chosen Cassiodorus as the first Father to begin the self-contained section of learned epigrams (see N-147 / 380), even though Cassiodorus is neither chronologically nor intellectually foremost among the Fathers (distinctions which both fall to Augustine and Ambrose).

The autobiographical veracity of Herrick's self-presentation as a learned scholar within the exegetical tradition is corroborated by poems he addresses to a handful of particularly distinguished seventeenth-century scholars in *Hesperides*, the first of which,

²²⁰ The same doubts have been aired about Herrick. For example, *The Oxford Book of Christian Verse* describes Herrick as “essentially not a Christian but a latter day pagan” (1940).

John Selden (1584-1654), was an acclaimed scholar of comparative religion, especially Judaism and Christianity (*ODNB*). Herrick praises Selden admiringly in “*To the most learned, wise, and Arch-Antiquary, Master John Selden*”:

A City here of *Heroes* I have made,
Upon the rock, whose firm foundation laid,
Shall never shrink, where making thine abode,
Live thou a *Selden*, that’s a Demi-god. (H-365 / 142 / 9 -12)

Selden exchanged commendatory poems with Ben Jonson and counted Bishop John Williams as his patron; both Jonson and Williams were learned figures who also make their abode in Herrick’s “*City of Heroes*” – *Hesperides* – together with Selden.²²¹ Herrick acknowledges yet another scholar, William Alabaster (1568-1640), for his towering intellect. “*To Doctor Alabaster*” (H-763 / 256) concludes: “Meane time like Earth-wormes we will craule below,/ And wonder at Those Things that thou dost know.” (21-2). Like Selden, Alabaster was on friendly terms with John Williams. Alabaster dedicated a poem to Williams and also took up lodgings near the Tower of London in order to spend time with the bishop during his incarceration between 1637 and 1640 (*ODNB*).²²² When Alabaster died, he was praised by Samuel Hartlib for having been “[t]he best Hebrician in England” (*ODNB*).²²³

Then, in the self-contained section of scholarly epigrams in *Noble Numbers*, Herrick includes all the scholarly epigrams which he versified from John Gregory’s prose work, *Notes and Observations upon Some Passages of Scripture*.²²⁴ The *ODNB* describes Gregory as an “orientalist” and “one of the best Hebraists of his day”. His most important contributions were in the field of biblical exegesis. He was a celebrated scholar with an

²²¹ Jonson – H-604 / 212, H-653 / 227, H-910 / 281, H-911 / 281; Williams – H-146A / 52.

²²² Herrick’s connection with Williams, a rival and opponent of Laud, somewhat complicates the notion that Herrick was uncompromisingly Laudian. As Janie McCauley argues, Herrick’s relationship with both men points to the “shifting loyalties and dynamic relationships” which texture *Hesperides* (1990/1: 92).

²²³ We do not know whether or not Herrick had been educated in Hebrew, although as a means to studying the Old Testament, it seems likely that at least some Hebrew was included in the upper school or university curricula. For more on the Renaissance education system in England, see Jonathan Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), pp.19-24.

²²⁴ According to Patrick, the versified extracts from Gregory appear in N-167 / 382, N-177 / 383 and N-178 / 384, N-180 / 384 and N-181 / 384, N-185 / 385 through to N-190 / 385, N-193 / 386, and N-195. The poems which refer specifically to Jewish customs outlined by Gregory include: “*Observation*” (N-178 / 384), “*North and South*” (N-193 / 386) and “*Penitence*” (N-206 / 288). *Hesperides* includes one other epigram derived from Gregory: “*Observation*” (H-429 / 162).

international reputation, and was eulogised by his friend, editor, and biographer, John Gurgany, as “the Miracle of his Age” (*ODNB*). According to the *ODNB*, Gregory made transcriptions for John Selden at the Bodleian in 1642, a sign of the kind of scholarly cooperation that occurred among Herrick’s learned connections. Herrick’s association with Selden, Jonson, Williams, Alabaster and Gregory hints at his scholarly credentials, and he seems to have shared an interest in comparative religion – especially between Judaism and Christianity – with Selden, Alabaster and Gregory.

The appearance of versified extracts from Gregory’s 1646 *Notes and Observations* in Herrick’s 1647 *Noble Numbers* has been decried by some critics as being the product of Herrick shamelessly padding out his book of religious poems at the last minute with epigrams cribbed from Gregory.²²⁵ Yet Gregory’s status by 1646 (the year of his death) as one of the foremost scholars of his age makes it probable that Herrick knew of Gregory either personally or by reputation before he began to prepare *Hesperides* for publication.²²⁶ It is not necessarily true that because Herrick lived in a rural Devonshire parish for seventeen years he was somehow hermetically sealed off from all scholarly and poetic developments elsewhere in the country. We know, for example, that Herrick enjoyed “a long and eventful visit” to London during 1639-40 without the permission of his ecclesiastical superior, just prior to the outbreak of the Civil War (Cain, <http://herrick.ncl.ac.uk>). It is also probable that Herrick had previously visited London from time to time during the 1630s. For these reasons, I would suggest that Herrick would have been aware of Gregory’s reputation, and may even have been acquainted with Gregory personally, so that to plagiarise Gregory in 1646-7 would have been both foolish and disrespectful. On the contrary, from the little we know about the social connections and scholarly collaborations between Gregory and some of the other scholars Herrick included in his “Colledge” (“*To his kinsman, M. Tho: Herrick, who desired to be in his Book*”, H-983 / 305 / 1), I would suggest that Herrick’s use of *Notes and Observations* in *Noble Numbers* may have been an elegiac compliment to Gregory, who died as Herrick was in the process of collecting, arranging and publishing his book.

²²⁵ See, for example, John Creaser, who bemoans their “careless and casual workmanship” (2009: 183).

²²⁶ Although Gregory graduated with an MA from Oxford in June 1631, six months or so after Herrick had left London for Devon, we can ascertain from Gregory’s tenure as Christ Church college librarian from 1628-30 and his ordination as dean of Christ Church in 1629 that his intellectual standing was already established before his graduation (*ODNB*).

Herrick's use of Gregory's work is also a tacit acknowledgement on Herrick's part – as he acknowledges with Selden and Alabaster in turn – that he may not be as profoundly knowledgeable in exegetical scholarship as some men, but that he nevertheless belongs in their company. Unlike us moderns, Herrick is not preoccupied with uniqueness and originality, which leads individuals on compulsive, competitive and often ludicrous quests to be the first ones to think, say or do something new, and to then take proprietary ownership of it (Collinson 1988: 92-3). In *Noble Numbers*, and in the self-contained section of scholarly epigrams in particular, Herrick is not concerned with thinking, saying, or doing anything new. Instead, his search for originality is other-directed. He is seeking out the origins of thoughts and ideas from others who either lived long before he did (like the Jews, the Fathers and the Schoolmen), or contemporaries whom he is happy to acknowledge are more learned than he is, but who are similarly engaged in a scholarly quest for religious truth.

I have now discussed Herrick's three main *personae* in *Noble Numbers* – the priest, the Everyman, and the learned exegetical scholar. When combined together in Herrick's overall self-presentation, these *personae* help further to represent Herrick's well-rounded personality by bringing the religious aspects of his life to the fore. The religious aspects of who Herrick understands himself to be, especially his role as a priest and his interest in exegetical scholarship, are not overtly present in *Hesperides*. Only when we take *Noble Numbers* into account, then, do we realise that Herrick is not just the jolly pagan poet some of his critics have taken him for (although, as I suggested in Chapter 3, even his classical self-presentation is learned and complex). Nor can he be said merely to be the half-hearted Christian whose religious poems “appear thin, flat, and barren of intellectual or psychological complexity” (Marcus 1977: 108). Instead, his religious self-presentation reveals both his expansive interests, and his instinct to include, rather than to exclude, the beliefs of others.

I end this chapter by proposing that *Noble Numbers* helps to locate the spiritual dimension of *Hesperides*, something which is often overlooked by Herrick's literary critics. Again and again in *Noble Numbers*, Herrick iterates his belief in divine immanence, the doctrine that God is everywhere, and exists in everything. For example, in one of several scholarly epigrams, Herrick points out that God's Hebrew name signifies his divine immanence:

God

GOD, in the *holy Tongue*, they call
The Place that filleth *All in all*. (N-185 / 385)

God's immanence is explained somewhat abstractly as His being not only a person, but also a place. This sense of God as place is a way of conceiving of his presence as spatial and all-encompassing. In a related poem, Herrick turns to the teachings of the Schoolmen in order to explain God's all-encompassing presence in another way:

Gods presence

GOD'S present ev'ry where: but most of all
Present by Union *Hypostaticall*:
God, He is there, where's nothing else (Schooles say)
And nothing else is there, *where He's away*. (N-207 / 388)

Herrick repeats the idea a short while later, as the recurring frequency of these poems about divine immanence emerge as a thematic undercurrent within the self-contained section of learned epigrams.

Gods presence

GOD is *all-present* to what e're we do,
And as all-present, so *all-filling* too. (N-238 / 394)

The shift in focus here, from explaining God's immanence as a theological concept, to applying the consequences of the concept to "what e're" Herrick does, is repeated in the untitled epigrammatic statement which concludes *Noble Numbers*:

OF all the good things, whatsoe're we do,
God is the APXH , and the ΤΕΛΟΣ too. (N-272 / 403).

Coming as it does at the end of Herrick's work, the significance of this epigram to *Noble Numbers* cannot be overstated. In fact, the connection which Herrick makes between God being everywhere and God being present in "whatsoe're we do", means that God is not only everywhere in *Noble Numbers* but, perhaps startlingly for those who would dichotomise the two works, He is also everywhere in *Hesperides* too.

The concluding epigram recalls a passage from Revelation, which, like Herrick's poem, is positioned as the final book in the Bible: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come" (Revelation 1.8). A couple of verses later, the phrase is repeated, as if to signal its importance: "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book" (1.11). Herrick has changed the Greek *omega*, meaning "ending" or "end", to the Greek *telos*, whose multiple meanings include "coming to pass", "performance", "consummation", "fulfilment" or "execution".²²⁷ The connotations of *telos*, particularly as a consummation, fulfilment or an execution, overlaps with the connotations of *omega*, as an "ending" or "end". But Herrick's striking use of *telos*, not *omega*, has enriched the application of the phrase as he would have encountered it in Revelation. God is not only the beginning and end of what we do, Herrick implies, but he is also all-present in the performance that occurs between the two terminal points (the beginning and ending). He is also what motivates and drives Herrick towards the consummation, fulfilment, or execution of his poetic project.

With God as both the *alpha* and the *telos*, the beginning, middle, and end of everything Herrick does, it makes sense that He should be manifest everywhere within Herrick's work, not just in *Noble Numbers*, but also throughout the so-called secular,

²²⁷ Henry George Liddell & Robert Scott (eds.), *A Greek-English Lexicon*, Vol. 1 & 2, Oxford: Clarendon, 1925.

pagan, or profane poems of *Hesperides*. The difference is that whereas Herrick foregrounds God in *Noble Numbers*, God's presence is all-but-transparent in *Hesperides*. Nevertheless, the reader wanders through the sylvan landscape of *Hesperides*, eventually encounters Herrick's explicitly Christian self-presentation in *Noble Numbers*, and finally arrives at the work's terminal point, where the final epigram is an invitation to wander back through *Hesperides* again, starting from the beginning, but this time with a fuller conceptualisation of the divine immanence manifested within and throughout Herrick's poetry.

Thus, if we return to *Hesperides*, we encounter Herrick's Christian self-presentation at work in subtle ways. Although there is no indication from the frontispiece portrait that Herrick is a Christian, and the title page refers to him not as a clergyman but as Robert Herrick, Esq., nevertheless the introductory "*Argument of his Book*" outlines the poet's intended progression via an epic range of secular subjects to his ultimate consideration, the *telos* of *Hesperides* and *Noble Numbers*:

I write of *Hell*; I sing (and ever shall)
Of *Heaven*, and hope to have it after all. (H-1 / 5 / 13-14)

Within *Hesperides* itself, Christenings, weddings and funerals abound, as do festivals such as Candlemas, Christmas, New Year and Twelfth Night. Saints, sacrifices and altars make regular appearances. Herrick's Hesperidean gods may be Jove, Apollo, Juno, Venus, Bacchus, Mars, Neptune and Vulcan, but taken together, they are all playful substitutes for his Christian God. Meanwhile, Herrick's evaluation of the relative merits of an Epicurean or a Stoic way of life is directed towards a Christian concern of how to live a virtuous life. Similarly, Herrick's identification with Hercules as a way of giving *Hesperides* a sense of cohesion is not out of kilter with Christian typological identifications of Hercules with both Solomon and Christ.

In much the same way as Herrick's classicism is subsumed under his Christian self-understanding, so Herrick also expresses his seemingly secular love of merrymaking in incarnational terms, implying an understanding of pleasure as holy. For example, in "*The Argument of his Book*", Herrick does not separate pleasure and holiness; instead, he

intends to “sing of cleanly-*Wantonnesse*” (H-1 / 5 / 4). Similarly, in “*When he would have his verses read*”, he envisages his poems being read in the context of “sacred *Orgies*” (H-8 / 7 / 8). Another example of the implied holiness of pleasure can be found in “*Meat without Mirth*”, in which Herrick draws a comparison between dining with friends and the Holy Eucharist:

EATEN I have; and though I had good cheere,
I did not sup, because no friends were there.
Where Mirth and Friends are absent when we dine
Or Sup, there wants the Incense and the Wine. (H-541 / 197)

Even Herrick’s inclusion of his so-called foul epigrams, which seem to mock a wide selection of decrepit, unhygienic and badly-behaved human specimens, can be seen as a celebration of the existence of the foul, as well as the fair, in God’s creation.

Finally, Herrick’s religious syncretism, which becomes apparent in *Noble Numbers*, and in which he sees more continuities than contradictions between paganism, Judaism and Christianity, between the Old and New Testaments, between Catholicism and Anglicanism, and between the man-made and natural worlds, is nowhere more effectively expressed than in the diverse religious figurative imagery of “*Corinna’s Going a Maying*” (H-178 / 67). For example, in the poem’s first stanza, the “Blooming Morne” is presided over by Apollo, while the pagan goddess Aurora “throwes her faire/ Fresh-quilted colours through the aire” (1-4). Flowers are seen “bow’d towards the East”, in an echo of Islam (7), while “all the Birds have Mattens seyde,/ And sung their thankfull Hymnes” as though they were Catholic or High Church Anglican worshippers (10-11). In the second stanza, man and nature momentarily merge, as Herrick tells Corinna,

Rise; and put on your Foliage, and be seene
To come forth, like the Spring-time, fresh and green (15-16).

Corinna is also likened to Flora, the Roman goddess of flowers and spring (17), while Titan, another name for the Greek sun god Helios, stands sentinel on the hilltops (25). In a second echo of Catholicism, Corinna is encouraged to “Wash, dress, be briefe in praying:/ Few Beads are best, when once we goe a Maying” (27-8). Then, in the third

stanza, man and nature again seem to merge as houses bedecked in tree boughs turn each street into “a Parke/ Made green, and trimm’d with trees” (30-1). Next, allusions to Jewish religious custom are reintroduced:

Each Porch, each doore, ere this,
An Arke a Tabernacle is
Made up of white-thorn neatly enterwove (33-5)

Guibbory (2002: 128) points out that these lines not only refer to the Jewish holy architecture and furniture of worship, but they also recall Leviticus 23.40-42, in which the Israelites are instructed that on the first day of the autumnal festival of Sukkot, they should:

[take] the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days ... Ye shall dwell in booths seven days, all that are Israelites born should dwell in booths.

Finally, as the third stanza of “*Corinna’s Going a Maying*” draws to a close, Herrick decries Corinna’s seeming reluctance to wholeheartedly engage in the May Day festivities as “sin”:

And sin no more, as we have done, by staying;
But my *Corinna*, come, let’s goe a Maying. (H-178 / 67 / 41-2)

The remaining two stanzas of the poem proceed to express a *carpe diem* philosophy, but the point of the first three stanzas I have quoted is that they each demonstrate Herrick’s awareness that play, pleasure and fun are essentially holy, no matter what religion one adheres to, because of the immanence of God in everything. In order to appreciate Herrick’s understanding of himself as a Christian, we therefore need to lay aside our impulse to dichotomise and divide between secular and religious poetry, and between *Hesperides* and *Noble Numbers*, and instead, as Virginia Mollenkott suggests, to allow for “a collapsing of any distinctions between what is natural, what is pleasurable, and what is worshipful” across the entire collection (1978: 202).

Mollenkott first suggested that “Herrick is not only a religious poet in *Noble Numbers* but especially in *Hesperides*” (197) at a conference of Herrick scholars in 1974, where her views generated controversy among her colleagues. Roger Rollin and J. Max Patrick, the editors of the ensuing collection of Herrick tercentenary essays in which Mollenkott’s ideas were published, admitted to holding reservations about her methodology but opted to include her essay on the basis that “it could give rise to fruitful critical debate in the future” (1978: 5). They also opted to include an article by William Oram which, presumably, was more congenial to the Herrickean critical consensus because its conclusions went unremarked by the editors. Oram argues that “when Herrick incorporates sacred materials in his work he changes them radically. They serve the purposes of an ordering that is more artistic than religious” (1978: 211). In other words, Herrick uses sacred materials “in a spirit of fun” (212), placing “serious religious text in a playfully blasphemous context” (213). The basic distinction between Oram’s and Mollenkott’s theses is that Oram believes Herrick is less serious about religion than he is about poetry, whereas Mollenkott believes that religion is the cornerstone of Herrick’s poetry:

Though sometimes used playfully, the religious images sprinkled thickly through *Hesperides* need not be regarded as merely facetious; they can entail the sort of significant playfulness which strikes through to ultimate matters, and they imply that Herrick could have been conscious of a religious dimension in much of his ostensibly secular writing. (205)

If we were to read *Hesperides* on its own, then Oram would probably be right. However, when we take *Noble Numbers* into account as well, in which Herrick presents himself to us as a serious, committed and learned Christian, then we need to reconsider Herrick’s self-presentation in the collection as a whole.

All of which is not to say that every Herrick poem is a religious poem. But, as Sidney Musgrove has observed, with reference to Herrick’s metonymic worldview,

behind the pale gold of daffodil and primrose there shines a more distant glory, the hint of which is caught in the shifting reflex of

epithet and simile, in the sudden revelation of lucid heights and depths above and beneath the benign surface of the poem. (1971: 5)

The placement of *Noble Numbers* after *Hesperides* is not a signal that Herrick privileged the former, or took his religion less seriously than he did his poetry, but rather that in Herrick's understanding of his world, the fleeting glimpses of God in the secular sphere give way to a fuller comprehension of Him in the divine sphere.

Conclusion

Michael Oakeshott's theoretical understanding of human conduct has informed my study of Robert Herrick's self-presentation in *Hesperides* and *Noble Numbers*. Oakeshott's premise is disarmingly simple. Human conduct is an exhibition of intelligence in which an agent subscribes to practices that are an intelligent response to his understood situations, events or customs (1975: 13-4). At the same time, any attempt to diagnose human conduct (such as my diagnosis of Herrick's poetic conduct as manifested by his self-presentation) requires that the theorist illustrates what is being understood in the performance of an action (7). The action, or conduct, under investigation can only be understood in the context in which it was performed by an agent, or, as Oakeshott puts it, "an investigation of the conditions of this particular performance" (92).

It could legitimately be argued that one cannot return to the context in which an agent performed an action, and that therefore one cannot reliably diagnose human conduct. Oakeshott makes no attempt to deny the validity of such an objection, but his response is worth quoting at length:

Like all other adventures in theorizing, this engagement to understand a substantive performance in terms of its contingent conditions is an engagement to abate mystery rather than to achieve a suppositious definitive understanding ... It may be hindered, or even frustrated, by the absence of evidence; the scent may be lost by inadvertence; it may founder in fantasy. But it is an engagement of understanding ... What he [the theorist] must bring to this understanding is a deep respect for the individual action, patience in exploring its connections, an exact appreciation of its provenance and circumstances, an eye for shades of difference between plausible likenesses, an ear for echoes and the imagination, not to conjecture what was likely, but to devise, recognize, entertain, and criticize a variety of contingent relationships, each sustained by a reading of the evidence. And it is an engagement of theoretical understanding: the theorist here is not concerned to understand the performance merely in order to respond it. He is not one of the parties in the transaction he is theorizing. (106)

Oakeshott's theory of human conduct provides a useful corrective to the reader-centric New Criticism of the mid-twentieth century, which would deny the author his agency for fear of failing to provide what Oakeshott calls "a suppositious definitive understanding" of his work. The long shadow of the author which fell over his readers and how they would approach his work was simply replaced by the totalising hegemony of the reader who insisted on becoming "one of the parties in the transaction he is theorizing," to quote Oakeshott's warning. The consequences for Herrick studies (which continue to be felt today) is that readers feel little or no need to familiarise themselves with seventeenth century genre studies, or the Renaissance classical humanist tradition, or seventeenth century religious practices, and instead impose their own beliefs, prejudices and self-understandings on Herrick's work. They subsequently mistake the richly complex *silva* tradition for haphazard laziness on Herrick's part, for example, or they pronounce Herrick to be a pagan poet without an appreciation for the multifaceted nature of his classical self-presentation, or they dismiss his religious sincerity out of hand partly because it is not immediately evident in *Hesperides* and partly because they are not sensitive to the complexities of religious experience. These are just three of the misconceptions which I have sought to address in Chapters 2-4 of this thesis, amongst several others.

The New Historicist approach to literary studies emerged as a response to New Criticism, and attempted to return a literary work to its socio-political context. In so doing, however, much of the subtleties of an agent's self-understandings tend to be overlooked, due to the keenly-felt New Historicist imperative to shoehorn a literary work into a socio-political paradigm that is often not necessarily of its author's own choosing. The consequences of New Historicism for Herrick studies include foregrounding his Royalism and his Laudianism at the expense of other aspects of his self-presentation, such as his sense of himself as a literary innovator or as an aspiring exegetical scholar. Herrick's purported loyalty to Crown and Church – while no doubt a legitimate subject of study – have received such disproportionate attention from critics that one would be forgiven for believing Herrick to be a politician rather than a poet.

In conclusion, then, my thesis is an attempt to wrest the initiative from the reader-centric New Criticism and redirect it back towards a fundamental respect for the author as

a human agent conducting himself as he understands himself to be within his context, while at the same time avoiding the worst excesses of New Historicism by recognising Herrick not just as a socio-political signifier, but as a fully-rounded and complex human being.

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Numbers in bold indicate sections where a topic is discussed at length, or is directly relevant to the topic of this thesis, Herrick's self-presentation.

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