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The verse letters of John Donne: A study of the rhetorical traditions of the verse epistle.

Allen Barry Cameron

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THE VERSE LETTERS OF JOHN DONNE:
A STUDY OF THE RHETORICAL TRADITIONS OF
THE VERSE EPISTLE

BY
ALLEN BARRY CAMERON, B.A.

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies through the
Department of English in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts at the
University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario
1965
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ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to set forth the traditions in which the verse epistle of the Renaissance was written and to place the verse letters of John Donne in those traditions. Chapter I includes a review of the existing critical literature, a brief sketch of the place of the verse epistle in the canon of Renaissance poetry, and a review of the basic precepts of rhetoric.

Chapter II concerns itself with the epistolary tradition into which Donne's deliberative epistles fall. The structural and formal aspects of the verse epistle, as well as the Renaissance principle of decorum and the didactic theory of poetry in their application to the verse epistle, are discussed. In order to give a firm sense of the tradition, some of Donne's Renaissance predecessors in the deliberative epistle are examined. Chapter III considers in detail four fairly representative examples of Donne's deliberative epistles.

Donne's complimentary epistles are treated in a similar manner. Chapter IV discusses the complimentary tradition of the verse epistle, and, as with the deliberative epistle, the Renaissance principle of decorum and the didactic theory of poetry in their application to the complimentary epistle are treated. Donne's Renaissance predecessors in the complimentary epistle are also examined.
Chapter V examines in detail three representative examples of Donne's complimentary epistles.

The conclusions reached in this study are several. The first, and most significant, is that it is necessary to know the traditions of the verse epistle in order to understand and appreciate both the deliberative and complimentary epistles of Donne. The second conclusion, and a corollary to the first, is that an understanding of the verse letters, although written in a different tradition than Donne's other, more popular poems, does cast light on the rest of his poetry. The third and more general conclusion is that an awareness of the importance of rhetoric is essential not only in the study of the verse epistle in the Renaissance, but also in the study of all Renaissance poetry.

The concluding chapter offers some suggestions for further study, such as an investigation of the influence of logic on the verse of John Donne, but the primary conclusion reached in the study is that Donne's verse letters are indeed worthy of consideration in themselves.
PREFACE

This thesis has grown out of a knowledge that the verse letters of John Donne have heretofore been unjustly neglected by readers and critics alike. Criticism is limited and usually derogatory. To the best of my knowledge, Donne's verse letters have never been viewed critically in their proper perspective. Moreover, it is my firm conviction that a thorough knowledge of not only the conventions and the traditions of the verse letters, but also an understanding of Donne's artistic technique in these poems renders them deserving of attention. One of the basic purposes of this study, then, is to draw attention to this hitherto neglected aspect of Donne's poetic canon: to show that the verse letters are not only worthy of consideration for an understanding of Donne's overall poetic art, but also to show that they are worth looking at in and of themselves. This aim can best be achieved by placing the verse letters in their proper perspective, that is, by viewing them in their traditions.

For Donne's poems I have used John Hayward's edition, Complete Poetry and Selected Prose, (London: The Nonesuch Press, 1929). I shall quote by line and page number.

The late Professor Itrat-Husain Zuberi helped me to arrive at the present subject and oversaw my preliminary research: my debt to him cannot now be paid. Professor
John F. Sullivan kindly agreed to assume direction of the thesis; by his encouraging suggestions, his careful reading of the draft, and his seasoned knowledge of Renaissance English literature, he has been most helpful. To Professors Raymond Smith and Ralph Nelson must also go my sincerest thanks—not only for their encouragement, but also for their helpful suggestions. Professor Charles Fantazzi's enthusiasm for my work has been a constant source of inspiration. Professor John T. Shawcross of Rutgers University has also made several encouraging suggestions.

Miss Sally Matheson also deserves my thanks for her careful and painstaking typing of the manuscript. Finally, to my parents and my wife I owe thanks for their years of encouragement, understanding, and patience.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

May therefore this be enough to testify
My true devotion, free from flattery;
He that believes himself, doth never lie.
(187,vv. 61-63)

Despite the inclusion of John Donne's verse letters in collected editions, such as those of Herbert J.C. Grierson (still the most definitive collection), John Hayward (who offers several new, acceptable readings), R.E. Bennett, Charles M. Coffin, and Hugh I'Anson Fausset, very little critical work has been done on the letters themselves. The last three named editions do not include textual or critical comment on the letters. On the other hand, while Grierson's and Hayward's editions include textual and some critical commentary, the letters are not viewed in the Renaissance tradition of epistolary writing.

Moreover, critical literature of significant value is extremely limited. Except for a few articles by such critics as R.E. Bennett, I.A. Shapiro, R.C. Bald, B.W. Whitlock, and David Novarr,¹ there has been nothing said about Donne's

verse letters from a critical point of view. Laurence Stapleton's article appears to be the only critical study which approximates treating the letters as worthy of consideration and as literature in themselves.

Aside from these meager instances, comment, when it is made, is usually of a derogatory nature, and maintains that the letters, or epistles, are negligible because they sometimes flatter. Although this criticism is directed particularly at the poems addressed to "Noble Ladies", the entire group of verse letters has been neglected as a result. Frank Kermode sums up poignantly the critical position to date on the verse letters:

Of the occasional verse included under the title 'Letters to Seve all Personages' a word must suffice. There is a mistaken view that they are negligible because they occasionally flatter.

Despite Kermode's recognition of this erroneous view

Literary Supplement, October 24, 1952, p. 700. Most of these articles are more directly concerned with the prose letters and/or problems of chronology. It should also be noted here that a separate volume of Donne's verse letters has never appeared—although separate editions of both the Songs and Sonnets and Divine Poems have been published as individual works. Similarly, there has never been a critical work devoted exclusively to the verse letters as there has been to the rest of Donne's poetry (aside from the satires) and even to his prose works.

2"The Theme of Virtue in Donne's Verse Epistles," Studies in Philology, LV (April, 1958), 187-200. Stapleton does not concern himself, however, with the traditions in which the letters were written.


concerning the verse letters, he devotes only one paragraph to them.

This mistaken or abusive view (and the resulting neglect) stems, in my opinion, from two basic errors on the part of commentators. First, critics in general tend to compare the verse letters with the rest of Donne's poetry, particularly with the *Songs and Sonnets* and the *Divine Poems*; they mistakenly identify the elements of exaggeration, or amplification (a rhetorical technique), as excessive flattery or unwarranted hyperbole, and promptly dismiss the poems as negligible—unworthy of consideration. Failing to realize that these poems were not written in the same tradition of poetry as his other works were, these critics misinterpret, not only the basic intention of the verse letters, but, as a further result, their basic meaning. On the surface, the basic intention of the verse letters is a didactic one, but it is my contention that a more subtle and often complex, symbolic intention and meaning is also implied. In the case of those letters addressed to patronesses, the surface

5 The popularity of these poems, not only with critics but also with readers in general, is due no doubt to the revival of interest in Donne and metaphysical poetry which was instigated by T.S. Eliot and still endures.

6 "Hyperbole" may be defined as a figure of speech in which conscious exaggeration is used without the intent of literal persuasion. In Donne's case, as we shall see, an understanding of both his didactic, and in turn, his literal intent indicates that he is indeed exaggerating, but not necessarily for a hyperbolic effect.

intention appears to be one of flattery. Donne, no doubt, had an eye open for economic remuneration, but even here, as a careful examination will reveal, he was able to transcend the conventional intentions.

The following comments on the letters may be taken as fairly representative statements of this first group of erroneous critics. When comparing the Songs and Sonnets with the verse letters, Clay Hunt makes the following remark:

> His generally feeble and listlessly written commendatory epistles to Noble Ladies labor...[his idea of] conceptual antithesis endlessly. It provides the recurrent subject matter and imaginative pattern for those poems in praise of the Countess of Bedford in which we see Donne just mechanically running through a routine intellectual intrication, like a dutiful Boy Scout practicing the standard knots.  

Even Herbert Grierson, Donne's great editor and most profound critic, has little of value to say on the verse letters:

> They abound in extravagances of metaphysical compliment. Even more than the early extravagances of perverse wit one might regard the excesses of flattery in these letters and the worse funeral elegies as 'an expense of spirit in a waste of shame'.

The second fault applies to those critics who do recognize that the poems were written in another tradition, but either through ignorance of the tradition, or sheer laziness, fail to assess Donne's true place in that tradition. For example, J.W. Saunders criticizes Patricia Thomson for not looking at Donne's verse letters in their proper perspective,

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that is, for not realizing that the poems were written in a different tradition. However, he fails to show what this tradition is and how Donne's poems fit into it.

This thesis, then, will primarily be an attempt not only to show what the traditions of the verse epistle are and what Donne's place in the traditions is, but also to demonstrate to some extent how he manipulated the conventional patterns of the traditions and added his own touch of originality to the verse letter. In other words, I intend to point out how Donne transcended the conventional limits of the verse letter and to show that a thorough knowledge of the traditions in which they were written renders the verse letters far from negligible.

The two basic traditions into which Donne's verse letters fall are essentially rhetorical in nature and both are extremely complex and not necessarily distinct. Moreover, all of his verse epistles (aside from the "Storme" and the "Calme") fit primarily into either one or the other tradition with some slight overlapping. The first part of the thesis is concerned with what I have chosen to call the "epistolary" tradition, that is, with an examination of the epistle, or

---

10See J.W. Saunders, "Donne and Daniel," Essays in Criticism, III (January, 1953), 109-14. See also Patricia Thomson, "The Literature of Patronage, 1580-1630," Essays in Criticism, II (July, 1952), 267-84. Miss Thomson maintains that Donne's verse letters were a product only of the system of patronage and that they were written with a strong sense of competition in mind.

11For a complete, chronological listing of the verse letters according to their divisions, see Appendix A.
letter, which exemplifies an ethical, or paraenetic (teach-
ing, persuading by precept), motif. In Chapter II, the
tradition itself and its conventions are discussed. Chapter
III looks at several representative examples of Donne's
verse letters which were written in this tradition. Atten-
tion here will be focused mainly on the deliberative
category of rhetoric and those aspects of elocution, or
style, which apply to Donne's poems. Since the rhetorical
nature of this particular group of poems is essentially
deliberative, these letters might better be labelled
deliberative epistles. In the discussion, the Renaissance
principle of decorum and its application both in style and
genre to the letters will also be considered. To some
extent, moreover, Donne's Renaissance predecessors in the
deliberative epistle will be examined, in order to gain a
historical sense of this kind of verse letter.

The second half of the thesis is concerned with the
complimentary tradition, that is, with an examination of the
epistle which not only illustrates a complimentary motif, but
also attempts to instruct or persuade its readers by treating
the subject of praise as an example of virtue. Attention
here, however, will be focused on the epideictic category.

12The two groups of poems might also be isolated on
the basis of the addressee; the ethical, or paraenetic,
epistles are addressed to his friends, not to his patronesses.

13Aside from the two basic didactic elements already
mentioned, a third instructive aspect runs through both
groups of poems—the use of a satiric antithesis, or
opposite.
of rhetoric, and those aspects of invention (such as the
traditional topics of praise) as they apply to Donne's verse
letters. Here, as before, the principle of decorum and its
application will be discussed. Chapter IV concerns itself
with the tradition proper, and Chapter V looks at represen-
tative examples.

Before beginning the discussion of the traditions, it
is necessary to know the place of the verse epistle in the
canon of Renaissance poetry. The verse epistle, as one
might suspect, was a poetic genre practised by the ancients,
particularly by Horace. In the Renaissance, it was renewed
by Petrarch in Italy and to some extent by Lodge in England.
Perhaps because of Petrarch, but more likely because of the
revival of interest in Horace and the ancient writers in
general, the verse epistle became an extremely popular form
of poetry. It became acceptable to write verse letters to
one's patrons (or patronesses) and one's friends. In at
least one way, the complex system of patronage in the
Renaissance promoted this popularity, for the verse letter
enabled the poet to fulfil his duty to a patron; the very
fact that the poem was addressed to an individual patron was
a form of compliment. Not only Donne, but also such English
Renaissance poets as Jonson, Daniel, Lodge, and Drayton
wrote verse epistles.

There are several reasons for the revival and popularity
of this form of poetry. Because of its looseness of form
(an aspect I shall be dealing with later), an immense scope
for observation was possible. The poet could comment on
definite human types, or situations; he could narrate an
incident (e.g., the "Storme" and the "Calme"); he could
"philosophize," or teach; and he could praise. In short, the
poet could talk about or comment on anything that attracted
his attention; and is not this, in some sense, the very
nature of any letter? When we write a letter to a friend,
we usually talk about anything we like; we are not confined
to certain topics or a particular form. The epistolary art,
then, was essentially an art of reportage and comment and,
to some extent, compliment. Its topographical nature is an
important quality to remember. With this brief introduction
as to the place of the verse epistle in the Renaissance in
mind, it might be wise to review briefly the art of rhetoric
and its essential precepts, since, as I have already
mentioned, the traditions of Donne's verse letters are
essentially rhetorical.

Ancient rhetoric divides oratory into three great
categories: the deliberative, the forensic, and the epideictic,
or occasional. The first, the deliberative, is
concerned with the oratory of parliament or public assembly,
its function being persuasion or exhortation in such matters
as the making of policy or legislation. The forensic, or
judicial, is the oratory of the law courts and its business
is accusation and defense. The third division, epideictic,

14For a more complete discussion of rhetoric and parti-
cularly its function in Renaissance poetics, see D.L. Clark,
Rhetoric and Poetry in the Renaissance (New York, 1922) and
also D.L. Clark, Rhetoric in Greco-Roman Education (New
York, 1957).
demonstrative, or occasional, is concerned with the ceremonial oration of which the subject is usually praise and sometimes, though rarely, blame. In terms of time, the deliberative oration deals with the future, the forensic with the past, and the epideictic with the present. The purpose of the deliberative oration is to vindicate the expedient and expose the harmful, the forensic to vindicate the just and condemn the unjust, and the epideictic to vindicate the noble and dispraise the ignoble. These three categories we may loosely label as the subject matter of rhetoric. However, as Aristotle suggests, anything can be made the subject of rhetoric, for any subject can be made persuasive. Moreover, the classical consensus concerning the purpose of rhetoric is that it is "persuasive" public speaking. The essence of rhetoric then, is persuasion. P.A. Duhamel puts it succinctly:

Rhetoric is better thought of as an idea, the concept of effective expression, than as a set or collection of principles with an abiding purpose... Terms and purposes are meaningful only within the context of the author's system taken as a whole. All rhetoricians have had one object: the teaching of effective expression.

However, in our discussion of the traditions of the verse letter, we will be concerned directly with the first


16 See D.L. Clark, Rhetoric and Poetry, p. 25.

category, the deliberative, and the third, the epideictic.

The subject of rhetoric was commonly divided into five parts. **Inventio** (often translated as invention), the first part, is the art of exploring the material "to discover all the arguments which may be brought to bear in support of a proposition and in refutation of the opposing arguments."¹⁸ It includes the study of arguments and fallacies. The kinds of argument treated in classical rhetoric were two: the enthymeme, or rhetorical syllogism, and the rhetorical induction of example.¹⁹ The latter is the most important for our purposes, as it applies to the majority of Donne's verse letters, but enthymemes also frequently occur, especially in the deliberative epistles.

**Dispositio** (disposition) is the art of arranging the material gathered for presentation to an audience. With the traditional transfer of rhetorical techniques to poetry, this aspect naturally varied according to the particular poet's art.²⁰ The third part of rhetoric is **elocutio** (often translated elocution), or style, the choice or arrangements of various words in a sentence and, in this case, the choice of words and their arrangement in a verse letter.

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¹⁸Clark, *Rhetoric and Poetry*, p. 27. The author gives a comprehensive discussion of these five parts. See also, *Rhetoric in Greco-Roman Education*, pp. 71-143.


²⁰Clark points out that "The tendency to use the terminology of rhetoric in discussing poetical theory did not originate in the English renaissance, but is largely an inheritance from classical criticism as interpreted by the middle ages" (*Rhetoric and Poetry*, p. 4).
The fourth and fifth parts, memória (memory) and pronuntiatio (delivery), are directly concerned with oratory and are not pertinent to this discussion. Our interest is only in the first three parts: invention, disposition, and elocution; and also in Donne's application of these rhetorical devices in his verse letters. Because the traditions of the verse epistle are essentially rhetorical in nature, it is quite necessary to have these rhetorical terms and their meanings clearly in mind. Attention can now be turned to the epistolary tradition, into which the first group of Donne's epistles, the deliberative, fall.
CHAPTER II

THE EPISTOLARY TRADITION

One of the basic problems in looking at Renaissance poetry, or the poetry of any preceding age for that matter, is a tendency on the part of critics and readers alike to remove it from its context, that is, a tendency not to look at it on its own grounds. Poetry is not written in a vacuum; it is written in a particular place and at a particular time. We cannot, of course, become Renaissance readers, but we can sharpen our understanding of sixteenth and seventeenth century poetry by becoming aware of its ambience and traditions, and of the possibilities for originality within imposed limits of convention. Consequently, in dealing with the verse letters of John Donne, an awareness of their traditions is a prerequisite for further discussion.

The Nature of the Verse Epistle

Most of the established poetic genres received adequate, if not extensive treatment, in the critical treatises of the Renaissance, but the verse epistle was singularly ignored. The age of Neo-Classicism, which generally cultivated the theory of genres and poetic form, likewise ignored the verse epistle in its treatises, and even today it is still ignored by critics and scholars. Perhaps the
fact that it was neglected by the Neo-Classicists and the fact that it is still paid little attention to today is, to some extent, justified, for it was not treated critically as a poetic form in the age which cultivated it. When it is commented upon in the various poetical treatises of the Renaissance and other critical documents, there is much indecision as to what the verse epistle actually is; commentators generally regard it as either an elegiac mode, or as a way of writing satire. ¹

For the verse epistle written by Donne and his contemporaries, the only classical precedent of merit was the Epistolae of Horace. However, even the demand of the Horatian epistle to consideration as a classified poetic type has remained a matter of argument between those who would regard it as a sub-division of the sermo(satiric dialogue) and those who would view it as a form different from the sermo or

¹See, for example, Pierre de Laudun, Art Poétique Francois, in Three Centuries of French Poetic Theory, ed. Warren F. Patterson (Ann Arbor, 1935), I, 765. For Patterson's comments upon the confusion of the elegy and the epistle, see I, 270-1, 383, 466, 586, 857. See also Jean Vauquelin de la Fresnaye, Preface to Satyres Françoises, in Critical Prefaces of the French Renaissance, ed. Bernard Weinberg (Evanston, 1950), p. 275. The foregoing works are cited by Jay Arnold Levine in, "The Status of the Verse Epistle before Pope," Studies in Philology, LIX (1962), 660. Aside from Clay Hunt's sketchy treatment in "The Elizabethan Background of Neo-Classic Polite Verse," ELH, VIII (1941), 273-304, this article is the only study available on the verse epistle as a poetic form in the Renaissance and Neo-Classic periods of literature. The author is concerned only with the ethical, or moral, epistle as it was developed by the Neo-Classicists, especially in Pope.
"satire" generally. The most successful way, it appears, of distinguishing between the epistle and the sermo has been on the basis of style (elocution) rather than structure (disposition) or content (invention).

Encompassing as they do such a wide variety of topics (from the rejection of dinner invitations to very serious moral and critical disquisitions), and unlike pastoral or satire, which can be distinguished by subject matter (as well as by structural and stylistic elements), or the ode, elegy, epigram, and sonnet, which must conform to certain formal requirements, the Horatian epistle cannot be conveniently categorized by such simple criteria as theme and/or form.

2See Levine, Studies in Philology, LIX, 660; see also, for example, G.L. Hendrickson, "Are the Letters of Horace Satires?," American Journal of Philology, XVIII (1897), 313-24. Hendrickson maintains that the Epistles of Horace are a subdivision of the wider genre sermo and hence could likewise be called satires; see also Smith P. Bovie, "General Introduction," in Satires and Epistles of Horace (Chicago, 1959), p. 8; see also Eduard Fraenkel, Horace (Oxford, 1957), p. 309. Although the last two scholars distinguish between the Satires and Epistles on the basis of style, they both classify the epistle as part of the genre sermo, which also includes satire. Therefore, both the Epistles and the Satires could be classified as sermones, the distinction between the two being one of style.


4See Levine, Studies in Philology, LIX, 660.

5Many of Donne's verse epistles might well be classified on the basis of form as elegies, odes, epigrams, or satires. Indeed, the epistles that illustrate a paraenetic motif have many qualities of the epigram and satire. For the affinity between satires and epistles, see Mary Claire Randolph, "The Structural Design of the Formal Verse Satire," Philological Quarterly, XXI (1942), 368-384.
Therefore, as Joseph Trapp suggests and Levine maintains, the verse epistle should probably be viewed not as a genre in itself, but as "a manner of writing adaptable to such fixed forms as the elegy and the satire." We would otherwise not be able to justify calling all thirty-five of Donne's verse letters epistles. It is this very looseness of form which enables Donne to treat various subjects in diverse ways, that is, satirically and philosophically. Indeed, as Joseph Trapp says about the verse epistle:

Many Elegies are writ in the Epistolary Manner... Satire may be writ on the Dialogue or Epistolary Manner, and we have instances of both Forms in Horace, Juvenal, and Persius. As some of Horace's which are call'd Satires, are as truly Epistles; so many of his Epistles might as well be call'd Satires.  

The distinguishing feature of the verse epistle, then, is its inner form: attitude, tone, and purpose—more crudely, subject and audience, all of which are included in the element of style. I shall have more to say about

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6Studies in Philology, LIX, 661; see also, 661, n. 10: "By way of analogy, we can agree that both Pamela and Tom Jones are novels, without maintaining that the epistolary mode of narration either precludes or justifies our classification or Richardson's work."

7Perhaps at this point, the distinction between a letter and an epistle should be made. What makes a letter an epistle is the predominance of general content over topical interest. The letter is more particular and more familiar in style, whereas the epistle has an ethical or moral quality about it; it is more exhortatory in nature. There are examples of both the letter and the epistle in Donne's poems, but for our purposes the distinction is not too important.

style later when I discuss the principle of decorum. However, the critical problem now is to find the other dimension (the outer form) to complete the picture.\(^9\)

Despite the lack of significant critical comment, Levine points out that comments when they are made stress the informality and freedom of the epistolary mode of writing: "Whatever means might be employed to secure the effect, the intention of the epistolary writer was [at least] to convey the air of free and intimate spontaneity."\(^10\)

For this reason, the writer of verse epistles had to seem non-professional. To achieve this purpose, it is my contention, as it is Levine's, that the Renaissance poet simply adopted the techniques of rhetoric which for him offered

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\text{in codified form those basic principles of persuasion which are applicable to numerous types of discourse, and which may be applied with as little self-consciousness as the rules of grammar.}\]  \(^11\)

Moreover, the unusual dependence of Donne's verse letters upon rhetorical formulations suggests that the epistolary style of writing maintained a particularly close alignment

\(^9\)Rene Wellek and Austin Warren define genre "as a grouping of literary works based, theoretically, upon both outer form (specific metre and structure) and also upon inner form (attitude, tone, purpose—more crudely, subject and audience). The ostensible basis may be one or the other (e.g. 'pastoral' and 'satire' for the inner form; dipodic verse and Pindaric ode for outer); but the critical problem will then be to find the other dimension, to complete the diagram" (Theory of Literature [New York, 1956], p. 231.

\(^10\)Studies in Philology, LIX, 662.

\(^11\)Ibid., 665.
with the oratorical art. To substantiate this claim, a consideration of the place held by epistolary composition in the rhetorical education of the Renaissance is in order.

As the need for public oratory declined, classical rhetoric served the Middle Ages in ways appropriate to the new demands of the period, principally in the writing of sermons, and in the composition of letters with the aid of the formulae of the *ars dictaminis*. Similarly, when the Renaissance humanists later cultivated the familiar epistle, which ranged broadly over philosophical, scholarly, and intimate matters, the most notable practitioner of the form, Erasmus, collected the rhetorical rules for such compositions in his *De Ratione Conscribendi Epistolæ* (1522), a primary text in English schools in the sixteenth century, preceding Aphthonius's as a composition text (which I shall have more to say about later). This often-imitated manual

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12See, for example, Er. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. W.R. Trask (New York, 1953), pp. 75-76. For an example of the use of rhetoric in sermons, see Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana*. The influence of the various *ars dictaminis* on the invention and structure of the verse epistle may have given the Renaissance poetic form many of its qualities. The *ars* provided a highly developed theory of the formal letter and, along with Horace's *Epistles*, must surely have influenced the development of the verse epistle. This relationship should be explored in more detail.

describes the main types of letters in terms of the traditional rhetorical division of subject:

Rhetorum plerisque tria causarum genera placurent, suasorium, encomisticon & judiciale.  

In his discussion of the deliberative letter, which is the concern here because it resembles Donne's paraenetic, or moral epistle, Erasmus stresses an adherence to the divisions of the rhetor's **dispositio**:

Si res postulabit captanda paucis est benevolentia. Id quemadmodum fieri conveniat, a Rhetoribus diligentiter monstratum est. Deinde narrationem subjiciemus, in qua omnia ad saudendum accommodamus, & tanquam argumentorum semina jaciemus. Deinde si res ipsa partes in se continebit, eas cum divisone proponemus....

Erasmus, besides distinguishing the kinds of epistles and outlining their rhetorical structure, provides stylistic advice and offers numerous examples of complete letters. Throughout his presentation of these examples, he emphasizes the necessity of attending to the **ethos** of the oration—of observing, that is, the particular nature of the speaker


15 Epistolas, I, col 402. "If the subject demands it, familiarity is especially to be desired. It has been carefully shown by rhetoricians how this may be agreeably done. Then we shall let the argument follow in which we shall adapt everything to exhortation (persuasiveness) and we shall sow the seeds, so to speak, of the evidence. Then, if the subject contains divisions within itself, we shall set them out with logical division..." (translation mine).
and of his audience (the principle of decorum).\textsuperscript{16}

With Erasmus's text (or one of its numerous progenies) as their basic model, Renaissance students were thoroughly drilled in the composition of epistles according to rhetorical forms. These exercises were not only in prose (with Cicero as the inevitable model), but also in verse (with Ovid or more likely Horace as a poetic model).\textsuperscript{17}

This assertion concerning the relationship between the verse epistle and rhetorical education is not to be taken as a claim that the Renaissance writer of verse epistles was simply continuing his school-day 'exercises; rather, it is a suggestion that a partial conception of the rhetorical possibilities of this form must have lingered in his writings, manifesting itself particularly in the accommodation of the audience.\textsuperscript{18} When we look at the deliberative epistles of Donne and his predecessors later in the thesis, we shall be looking then for the degree to which these poems depend upon a truly rhetorical


\textsuperscript{17}See T.W. Baldwin, \textit{Small Latine & Lesse Greek}, II, 239-87, especially 242; see also, II, 289: "So far as structure was concerned, poetry was regarded as being fundamentally the same as prose." I have not been able to explore this link between the prose epistle and the verse epistle, but it seems to me that the prose letters of Cicero would be a good starting point. See G.F. Singer, \textit{The Epistolary Novel} (New York, 1933), chap. 1, for a discussion of the epistolary prose tradition.

\textsuperscript{18}See Levine, \textit{Studies in Philology}, LIX, 669. The link between rhetorical formulations and Renaissance poetry should not surprise us, as it has been amply explored by such scholars as Rosemond Tuve in \textit{Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery} (Chicago, 1947).
relationship between the speaker and his audience (both intimate and public). It is such involvement of the recipient in terms of the address, which, as Levine points out, fulfils the rhetorical potential of the verse letter.¹⁹

Perhaps, at this point, it might be wise to offer, from the discussion so far, a tentative definition of the deliberative verse epistle. Generally speaking it is that kind of poem, presented as a letter, which discusses serious matters of individual, social, or political conduct in an intimate or familiar style. On its discursive level, such a poem attempts to persuade its recipient—and through him, its wider audience (in Donne's case, his select society of friends) of the wisdom in a certain attitude or course of action.²⁰ Moreover, as we noted before, the soul of the deliberative category of rhetoric is persuasion. The two outstanding structural features of the deliberative epistle, then, are the significant involvement of the addressee and the address to a dual audience. However, our knowledge of this particular kind of verse letter can be increased by a study of the theory of decorum in the Renaissance and its application to this group of Donne's verse letters.

The Principle of Decorum

In Renaissance literary theory, the principle of decorum performed a function somewhat similar to that which is

¹⁹Studies in Philology, LIX, 669.
²⁰See Levine, Studies in Philology, LIX, 661. This address to a dual audience is what Levine calls the "inherent duplicity" of the verse epistle itself.
exercised by taste in modern literary criticism: both serve for author and reader as criteria of what is socially and aesthetically permissible.  

Primarily a rhetorical concept in antiquity, decorum was absorbed into literary theory as rhetoric and poetry became blended.  

By strict observance of the principle of decorum, the Renaissance poet determined the level of speech, kind of figures, and poetic genre appropriate to the matter he had chosen to treat. The Latin term for decorum then, was aptly *proprietas*. The larger basis of the concept was social: it sprung naturally from a society that was hierarchical in organization, not democratic or egalitarian. Such a hierarchical organization

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22 See Clark, Rhetoric and Poetry, chap. iv, pp. 35-42. It should be noted here that, with the breakdown of the classical, formal school of rhetoric and the advent of the Sophistic and Second Sophistic school of rhetoric, the deliberative and forensic categories of rhetoric were gradually absorbed by the epideictic division. It is at this point that rhetoric and poetry became prominently conflated. In actual fact, the absorption was really the disjunction of *inventio* and *elocutio*. "What had happened," Duhamel says, "can be stated in still other terms: the later rhetoricians, instead of attempting to discover new arguments to persuade about their propositions, sought to express old ideas in epigrammatic form, their *sententiae*. They did not seek to discover the more probable truth of an issue; they sought to delight their hearers. Preoccupation with form [emphasis on elocution] had captured the art of rhetoric and effective expression had become the expression in a well-turned phrase of inconsequential material" (Journal of the History of Ideas, X, 353).


24 For a more complete discussion of the principle of decorum and its operation in Renaissance poetry, see Rosemond Tuve, Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery, pp. 192-247; see also Cain, "The Poem of Compliment," pp. 85-139.
of society existed in the Renaissance.

Rosemond Tuve notes that "when the notion of a hierarchy of values becomes suspect, the principle of decorum simply ceases to operate." She emphasizes, in her treatment of the principle of decorum, its basis in a graded society. It is this basis of decorum in a hierarchical concept of society that makes it important not only for the deliberative epistle, but especially for the complimentary epistle. By the operation of decorum, the mode of persuasion is adjusted to fit the rank of the subject.

After the Renaissance poet had his subject matter and theme (inventio) firmly in mind, he had to fit style (elocutio) to this invention by couching his matter on the correct level of style and in the appropriate genre. The foundation of his choice, ordinarily by the principle of decorum, was the rank of the subject. Let us consider, first of all, the choice of style based on the application of the principle of decorum to the verse epistle.

25 Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery, p. 234.

26 Deliberative, or paraenetic, epistles as well as those of praise, or compliment, are to some extent epideictic. The deliberative epistle implies some praise of the addressee by the very fact that it is addressed to him, and praise is often briefly explicit, especially towards the beginning or end of the poem. We shall see this factor when we look more closely at Donne's deliberative epistles. The rhetorical term for the poem of praise that gives counsel in lieu of complete praise is paraenesis. All of Donne's verse letters, then, are in some sense complimentary poems.

Decorum of Style

The appropriateness of style to subject was first treated formally by Aristotle in his *Rhetoric*. But it was Cicero's elaborate discussion in *De Oratore* that established as a rhetorical commonplace the theory of the three basic levels of style—high, low, and middle. Like many other rhetorical precepts, it was absorbed into poetic theory. This transfer of the three styles to poetry was brought about in part by the universal admiration for Virgil, expressed in the Middle Ages by Dante and in the Renaissance by Landino and Scaliger, to mention only representative commentators. The three divisions or levels of style became a common principle among Renaissance theorists.

Style, however, is partly dependent on genre, but not ultimately, for genre is conditioned by decorum in the same way the style is determined: both rely on the nature of the subject and the dignity of the person addressed or involved in the poem. In the epic, for example, as long as the action is heroic and the persons dignified, the high style is appropriate. However, since style is basically consistent with matter rather than genre, the epic style

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28 See *Rhetoric*, iii.1(1404b 1-40); iii.6,7(1408a 1-36), pp. 167-8, 177-79.


30 For a fuller discussion of the concept of the three styles and their transfer to poetry, see Cain, "The Poem of Compliment," pp. 80-100.
need not be equally high at all points because it depends on matter. In other words, there can be shifts of style within the verse epistle because the dignity of the subject may vary. Style depends on matter, which in turn depends ultimately on the rank of the characters. The high style is generally reserved for subjects of royal rank (the monarch, for example). However, since Donne's verse epistles (both the deliberative and complimentary variety) usually deal with non-royal figures, we may expect to find them in the middle, or familiar, style.

31Since style is basically consistent with subject matter and not solely with genre, a poem, such as Pope's The Rape of the Lock becomes even more effective as a satire, when it is realized that not only the epic form (reserved for extremely serious and universal matters, and the pinnacle in the hierarchy of genres), but also the high style is being utilized to mock the subject. Neither the genre nor the style should have been used, according to the principle of decorum, because the subject matter lacks the appropriate dignity. The ironic contrast produces the satiric effect of the poem.

32In Donne's paraenetic, or deliberative epistles, there are actually two distinct levels of rank addressed: the rank of non-aristocratic friends, such as Rowland Woodward, Christopher Brooks, and Thomas Woodward, and the rank of his aristocratic friends, such as Sir Henry Goodyere and Sir Henry Wotton. The level of style in all of these poems, however, is generally middle, or familiar, and varies according to subject matter.

33In terms of the epideictic category of rhetoric, the poem of praise addressed to a royal figure or a god is called a full panegyric or encomium. Cain says "It is characteristically splendid, hymnic, highly ornamented. In addressing a figure of less exalted rank, however, a less ornate and imposing form is employed. That is, the literary concept of the decorum of styles and genres is made to correspond to the decorum of the social hierarchy. For this lesser panegyric I have adopted the term compliment, to reflect its distinction from full praise in the hierarchy of kinds" ("The Poem of Compliment," p. 3).
Decorum of Genre

Like the decorum of style, the decorum of genre was based on subject matter grounded in the social rank of the persons described or addressed. Although style was not dependent solely on genre, the major genres were conveniently understood to have a certain level of style particularly appropriate to them: for example, the high style for epic and tragedy and the low style for satire and pastoral. However, the ultimate basis for both style and genre resided in the decorum of a traditional social structure. And the verse epistle was considered by theorists as a genre of the middle level. Among the other genres of the middle level were: comedy, the purely didactic poem, often lyrics (depending on their subject matter), the epigram, the sonnet, and sometimes the ode.34

Moreover, the epistle, or verse letter, presents itself as particularly valid for moral or ethical comment, as well as for compliment, for it is constantly associated with familiar subjects and the middle style. Du Bellay comments on the familiarity of the verse epistle in his Defense:

Quand aux epistres, ce n'est un poème qui puisse grandement enrichir nostre vulgaire, pource qu'elles sont volontiers de chose familiers & domestiques, si tu ne les voulois faire a l'imitation d'elegies, comme Ovide, ou sentencieuses & graves, comme Horace.35


This statement indicates, as noted earlier, the great flexibility of the verse letter; a relaxed, or loose, form, it may be composed in a number of ways. Commenting on the decorum of persons in the verse epistle, Peletier du Mans claims that it may even be used to address the great, though the verse form should vary with the dignity of the subject. The verse epistle, he says,

\[
et \text{tant longue qu'on-veut, e la ou lon veut.}
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\[
\text{Si on ecrit a\'us gran Signeurs, a cause que ce doceut e}\text{tre propos plus importans, on usera de vers Decassilabes.}\text{ Aus autres personnes, selon leur dinite e selon le merite de l'afere, on ch\'agera de mesure}.
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Horace's \textit{Epistolae} is the suggested model for this poetic form, because it illustrates familiar disquisitions on moral themes and the poems are addressed to acquaintances of the poet.\textsuperscript{37}

In general, the verse letter was employed by Renaissance poets as a kind of catch-all for miscellaneous and occasional subjects, especially those admitting of familiar treatment and address.\textsuperscript{38} Moreover, as stated earlier, Donne's verse letters include a good number of poems devoted to praise, although the majority are moral, or deliberative, epistles of the type found in Horace. On the


\textsuperscript{37}Ibid. p. 181. It was the morally instructive side of Horace, the \textit{Satires} and the \textit{Epistles}, that was known to the Middle Ages, and hence the epithet \textit{ethicus}. His \textit{Odes} were scarcely known until the Renaissance. See Gilbert Highet, \textit{The Classical Tradition} (Oxford, 1949), p. 634, n.64.

whole, then, the verse epistle furnishes a nearly perfect genre for the ethical, or deliberative, poem as well as the poem of compliment, for it allows such familiarity of address as would befit a non-royal subject, uses the middle or intimate style, and is flexible in subject and length. These qualities, especially its flexibility, facilitate the adaptation of the verse epistle to particular occasions.

It should now be evident why Donne basically chose to write poems in the epistolary form and also why he employed the middle style. One further aspect of Donne's intention in writing deliberative epistles should be considered before looking at his poems and those of his Renaissance predecessors—his didactic intention.

The Didactic Intention

The didactic theory of poetry is a commonplace of Renaissance poetic. A poem must instruct as well as delight—in Horace's terms, be utile as well as dulce; it must clothe doctrina and sapientia with eloquentia. 39 Sidney's Apology for Poetry or Spenser's Letter may be considered representative of the normal Renaissance emphasis on the instructive function of the poem. However, there has been some confusion on the part of critics as to exactly what this function was. Rosemund Tuve has argued,

and I think correctly, that, in general, the Renaissance understood the teaching function of poetry as not merely homiletic but as the enlarging of human experience. Not much Renaissance poetry could otherwise be justified, such as the love songs and sonnets, if the didactic purpose of Renaissance poetry was thought of solely as instruction by sententiousness or example. The didactic purpose of a Renaissance poem is not always discernible, and it is wise to keep in mind Miss Tuve's argument.

However, three fairly explicit varieties of didactic method can be seen in the verse letters of Donne and in the verse epistle in general. The first method concerns counselling the subject of the poem directly by precept and, in turn, its wider audience indirectly (paraenesis). This method is used most often in Donne's deliberative epistles. The second method made use of is teaching by example, whereby the poet uses his subject as an image of virtue. This method is by far the most often used didactic technique in the verse epistle and although it occurs occasionally in Donne's deliberative epistles, its employment is much more frequent in his complimentary epistles to "Noble Ladies." There is yet another method employed in the verse epistle, that of comparing the subject of the poem with a reprehensible anti-type, or satiric opposite, to show him representative of the norms.

40 See "Images and a Redefined Didactic Theory," in Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery, pp. 382-410, especially pp. 382-84.
of the age. The third didactic element can be observed in both groups of Donne's verse letters.41

The most frequently utilized method of instruction in Donne's deliberative epistles, then, is counselling by precept. These poems fall most readily into the rhetoric of exhortation (deliberative category); they endeavour to persuade or move their readers or hearers to a course of action. The address, as noted earlier, is to a dual audience. But it must be remembered that the deliberative category has a strong affinity with the epideictic and that these poems are in some sense poems of praise. Paraenesis partakes, then, of both epideictic and deliberative categories, for it utilizes the encomiastic pattern but replaces the topic of praise by precepts for attaining the qualities it designates as praiseworthy.42 The informality of the verse epistle facilitates the introduction of teaching by precept. Renaissance verse letters commonly ranged from epideictic (praise emphasized) to deliberative (counsel emphasized) themes. Indeed, as Aristotle suggests:

To praise a man is in one respect akin to urging a course of action. The suggestions which would be made in the latter case become encomiums when differently expressed.43

In writing verse epistles, Renaissance poets often emphasize the didactic relevance of their subject by

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41 For a full discussion of the three methods as they operate in all Renaissance poetry, see Cain, "The Poem of Compliment," pp. 141-163.

42 Ibid., p. 148.

43 Rhetoric, 1.9 (1368a 37-40), p. 61.
complementing his virtues with some statement of the corresponding vices. Because the deliberative category has a strong relationship to the epideictic (the rhetoric of praise and blame), it should not surprise us that Donne often used this method of instruction in his deliberative epistles. The antithetical element, or topic of blame, heightens the exemplary force of his subject by contrast. The similarity of this method with that of formal satire should be noted. The topic of blame in the verse epistle is executed in general terms without stating an identifiable or even caricatured subject of blame, in contrast to the ideal personalized praise of the subject. The execution is exactly the opposite in formal satire:

For the social and ethical purpose of formal satire is like that of compliment [or the verse epistle in general], the difference being more in manner of statement than in ultimate intent. In the poem of compliment the subject chosen for praise stands as the norm of responsible behaviour, giving example to his own and the lesser ranks, while the topic of blame brings modern abuses into contrast with the proffered example. In satire itself blame is the major theme, with the norm of right living, when it is made explicit, an ancillary theme that clarifies by contrast the basis of condemnation.\(^4\)

Of the two instructive poetic forms, the verse epistle is the more discreet.

The kind of poem, then, which may be called the moral, ethical, philosophical, paraenetic, or deliberative epistle is an addressed disquisition on an ethical or philosophical theme. It is derived generically from the imitation of

Horace's subject matter in his *Epistles*, but, from a rhetorical point of view, it reflects the deliberative strain of occasional literature—the tendency of praise to become counsel. Moreover, the impingement of the deliberative category on the epideictic allows the writer of verse epistles to praise and counsel at the same time.

The History of the Deliberative Verse Epistle in the Renaissance

With this background firmly in mind, let us now look at some examples of the deliberative epistle as it was composed by Donne's predecessors in the Renaissance. The purpose in doing so is two-fold: to give a firm sense of the history of the deliberative verse letter in the Renaissance and of its traditions and conventions; secondly, to show how Donne, in his practice of this poetic form, improved on his predecessors. In the examination, we shall be watching for those qualities that make an epistle deliberative, such as the discussion of, or disquisition on, an ethical or philosophical theme (that is, serious matters of individual, social, or political conduct); the use of a middle, intimate, or familiar style; the attempt to persuade the recipient of the poem and, through him, its public readers of the wisdom in a certain attitude or course of action; in other words, the significant involvement of the addressee and the address to a dual audience; and finally, if present, the use of a satiric or antithetical opposite treated in a generalized, not a personalized, manner with the use of the addressee as a positive norm.
Sir Thomas Wyatt, who is most often associated with the strong vogue of Petrarchanism that entered England in the early part of the Tudor reign, has one good example of the deliberative, paraenetic epistle in his canon—his third satire. Writing in the eighteenth century, Thomas Warton, who was the first to call Wyatt's three poems satires, says of them: "Three of his poetical epistles are professedly written in the Horatian strain, two to John Poines, and the other to Francis Brian...Wyatt may justly be deemed the first English satirist." Without this testimony of Warton, it would be difficult to recognize these poems as epistles, for they are based not on Horace's Epistles, but rather on his Satires, and the ambiguity of sermo, satire, and epistle arises. However, these three poems may be considered deliberative epistles by virtue of the fact that they are addressed to friends and exemplify the main characteristics of the epistolary form. The third poem, "How to Use The Court and Himself," significantly reshapes the dialogue form of his model, Horace's Satire II, v.

The title itself suggests the deliberative and paraenetic aspects of the poem, "How to Use The Court and Himself." The poem, addressed to Sir Francis Brian, opens in rhetorical fashion with sententiae, or proverbs, that suggest its deliberative quality:

A spending hand that alway poureth out,
Has need to have a bringer—in as fast:
And on the stone that still doth turn about
There groweth no moss: these proverbs yet do last;
Reason hath set them in so sure a place,
That length of years their force can never waste.46

Wyatt next turns to his addressee, Brian:

When I remember this, and eke the case
Wherein thou standst, I thought forthwith to write,
Brian, to thee, who knows how great a grace
In writing is, to counsel man the right.

(vv. 7-10, p. 194)

The paraenetic intent of the poem becomes quite clear in these lines. Moreover, to a much greater extent than either of his other two satires, the addressee of this one remains vitally present throughout the epistle, for it is Brian who provides full opposition to the views of the speaker: "Likest thou not this? No. Why?..." (v.18). It is the recipient who represents the positive norm and offers the correct ethical position, for Wyatt assumes the ironic persona of a materialistic adviser. Consequently, Wyatt is also utilizing the third didactic method—the satiric, or antithetical, opposite—and the topic of blame is treated in generalized terms. Thus, while seeming to present his addressee with one set of suggestions, Wyatt is actually endorsing for his public readers the contrary outlook of his unworldly private audience. Such ironic manipulation of the possibilities suggested by a dual audience is often exploited by Donne. Wyatt, here, it should be noted is obviously trying for intimacy and

conversational ease (the middle style).

Lodge

The first clear and elaborate introduction of the verse epistle to English readers was undertaken by Thomas Lodge in *A Fig for Momus* (1595): "For my Epistles, they are in that kind, wherein no Englishman of our time hath publickly written." Lodge revived a form which had fallen into disuse and his epistles are modelled on those of Horace, as one might suspect, and appear to lean heavily on classical sources. Although the wide diversity of his epistles anticipates the multiformity of Donne's verse letters, Lodge treats all of his subjects in a uniform manner. Indeed, as Levine maintains,

all the poems are presented so rhetorically as to deny the epistolary mode of the form rather than fulfill it. With only slight exceptions, each epistle is a rhetorical 'theme,' with a salutation and conclusion simply tacked on in observance of the allegedly epistolary character of the piece. For each epistle, Lodge takes a proposition or sententia for analysis, and subjects it to the kinds of argument which in his school-days he would have learned in the writing of his Latin themes.

The epistolary mode, of course, requires the significant involvement of the addressee and the address to a larger audience, in other words, a truly rhetorical

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47 "To the Gentleman Readers whatsoever," in *Complete Works* (Glasgow, 1883), III, 5. The text of the poem is from the same edition. For a discussion of Lodge's introduction of the verse epistle, see Levine, *Studies in Philology*, LIX, 671.

48 *Studies in Philology*, LIX, 671.
relationship between the poet and his audience.

The first epistle is a good example of Lodge's use of the epistolary mode. It proposes to defend a thesis from Pliny: "For I will prove, that creatures being dombe/Have some foreknowledge of things to come (p. 13, vv. 5–6)." The entire poem takes on the aspect of a straightforward classical syllogism. Lodge certainly thought of the epistolary mode as a rhetorical formulation, but his method remains so steeped in classical or academic argumentation that he fails to maintain the prime fiction of the verse letter—"the concealment of art in an intimate address." Lodge's verse letters deny the most necessary technical ingredient of such an address—the involvement of the addressee, and through him, the subtle persuasion of a wider audience. This denial occurs in spite of the implicit rhetorical structure of his epistles, or rather because of it. None of Lodge's successors in verse epistles uses the rhetoric of the form quite so blatantly.

Daniel

Like their models in Horace's Epistolae, the six poems of Daniel's Certaine Epistles (1601–03) tend to become ethical discourses. However, the element of compliment is often implied and sometimes forms a sufficiently

49For an explication of this poem, see Levine, Studies in Philology, LIX, 672.
50 Ibid.
51 Ibid.
developed motif. Nevertheless, from a paraenetic point of view, he often succeeds in involving the particular nature of his audience with the subject of his disquisition, and all of his epistles can be classified as deliberative. For example, the epistle, "To Sir Thomas Egerton, Knight, Keeper of the Great Seale of England," begins by mentioning the subject of Egerton's worthiness in office, but proceeds almost immediately to a discourse on the nature of law.\(^5\) Egerton himself becomes an exemplified personification of Daniel's argument concerning the nature of law. The poem devotes itself to a deliberation of the policies of law, but the presence of the addressee is felt throughout. Two basic didactic methods are used here, that of teaching by example as well as by precept. The epistle is also written in the middle style.

Jonson

While Jonson's excellence in the verse letter lies primarily in his complimentary epistles, some of his epistles possess qualities of the deliberative letter. Of these, "An Epistle To a Friend, To Perswade Him To The Warres,"\(^5\) is the most obviously deliberative and hortatory, as the very title suggests. Although primarily a complimentary epistle, the letter "To Sir Robert Wroth" (VIII, 96),


is deliberative to some extent and makes good use of the satiric opposite. The poem goes from praise of rural happiness and virtue enjoyed by Wroth to an indictment of the evils that he has wisely escaped. Wroth is both the exemplar of virtue and the positive norm. Jonson thus appeals to both audiences, and the epistle fulfils its didactic intention even more effectively.

With a knowledge of the tradition and conventions of deliberative epistle and this brief history of its practitioners prior to Donne as a background, attention can now be directed fully to his deliberative, paraenetic epistles. This background material is necessary for a true understanding of Donne's artistic technique in these poems. It is also necessary in order not only to see his improvement over his predecessors in the practise of this poetic form, but also to enable us to see when and how he transcends the conventional limits of the verse epistle.
CHAPTER III

DONNE'S DELIBERATIVE EPISTLES

Of the twenty-three verse letters addressed to Donne's friends other than his patronesses, twenty-one can be classified loosely as deliberative epistles. Some of them are extremely short and have a distinct epigrammatic quality. Others, particularly the ones addressed to nobles, such as Sir Henry Wotton, border on the complimentary epistle. However, the majority of them exhibit the main characteristics of the deliberative epistle. Moreover, the predominant didactic method utilized is that of counselling by precept (paraenesis) which is, as previously noted, the main instructive motif of the deliberative epistle. The use of an antithetical, or satiric, opposite also frequently occurs.

Obviously, not all twenty-three of Donne's deliberative letters can be treated adequately in a thesis of this scope. Consequently, I have chosen to examine in depth four fairly representative poems of the tradition. The observations made on the general traditional and conventional aspects of these poems can of course be applied to his other poems in the tradition. The main concern with these poems as with those of Donne's predecessors will be their deliberative quality. But more than the deliberative aspects, we shall also be watching for Donne's improvement
on the tradition and its conventional patterns. In other words, we shall be looking for the particular artistic and poetic qualities of these poems: Donne's originality and how he achieves it.

"To Sir Henry Wotton" ("Sir, more than kisses,...")

Grierson in his notes to the poems points out that the occasion of this poem was apparently...a literary débat among some of the wits of Essex's circle. The subject of the débat was 'Which kind of life is best, that of Court, Country, or City?' and the suggestion came from the two epigrams in the Greek Anthology attributed to Posidippus and Metrodorus...In the first...each kind of life in turn is condemned; in the second each is defended.¹

Like one of Lodge's epistles then, this poem is to some extent a formal exercise in persuasion; it falls quite readily into the deliberative category of rhetoric. Moreover, its very subject reflects the topographical nature of a familiar letter. Donne begins the poem in an epigrammatic fashion with a sententia, commenting on the value of letters:

Sir, more than kisses, letters mingle Soules; 
For, thus friends absent speake. This ease controules 
The tediousnesse of my life: But for these 
I could ideate nothing, which could please, 
But I should wither in one day, and passe 
To a bottle of Hay, that am a Locke of Grasse. 
(p. 152,vv.1-6)

The characteristic metaphysical wit is obviously discernible in these lines. Donne goes on to introduce the general topic of deliberation with a traditional image of life as

¹The Poems of John Donne (Oxford, 1912), II, 140.
Life in the country, at court, or in town is equally distasteful. Yet man's state in life is such that he must have contact with them, and the taint or stain of such contact is worse than being destroyed. However, if a man lives in the mean between the icy extremes of court and country and knows of a temperate state, Donne advises dwelling there.

The beginning of an elaborate series of opposites, which is so typical of Donne's paradoxical thought patterns, should be noted here. The use of the more familiar "thou" (v.13) for the more formal "you" of the letters addressed to "Noble Ladies" should also be noted, for its use reflects the more familiar and intimate style of this group of poems. Donne goes on to elaborate his argument on a discursive level:

But Oh, what refuge canst thou winne
Parch'd in the Court, and in the country frozen?
Shall cities, built of both extremes, be chosen?
Can dung and garlike be'a perfume? or can
A Scorpion and Torpedo cure a man?

Can good come out of combining equally distasteful opposites?
Does the combination of the court and country (antidotes for each other) produce a livable state?

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2See Grierson, Poems, II, 131.
The next section of the poem reflects an aspect of Donne's thought in his verse letters which takes on a far more significant meaning in the second group of poems that will be considered—his stoical attitude of detachment and his Platonic concept of virtue. The poem at this point takes on the quality of a rhetorical syllogism (enthymeme) which is quite characteristic of the deliberative category:

Cities are worst of all three; of all three (O knottie riddle) each is worst equally. Cities are Sepulchers; they who dwell there Are carcasses, as if such there were. And Courts are Theaters, where some men play Princes, some slaves, all to one end, and of one clay. The Country is a desert, where no good. Gain'd (as habits, not borne,) is understood. There men become beasts, and prone to more evils; In cities blockes, and in a lewd court, devills. I thinke if men, which in these places live Durst looke for themselves, and themselves retrive, They would like strangers greet themselves, seeing then Utopian youth growne old Italian.

(vv. 19-46)

In each of the three (city, court, and country), virtue is a stranger ("barbarous"). Men to whom external environment means a great deal are incapable of self-knowledge; if they "durst looke for themselves.../They would like strangers greet themselves, seeing then/Utopian youth, growne old Italian." Typical of Donne is the abandonment of all three possibilities after his partition and proof:

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Be thou thine owne home, and in thy selfe dwell;  
Inne any where, continuance maketh hell.  
And seeing the snaile, which every where doth rome,  
Carrying his owne house still, still is at home,  
Follow (for he is easie pac'd) this snaile,  
Bee thine owne Palace, or the world's thy gaole.  

The counsel which Donne offers in these lines occurs  
frequently in the deliberative letters;^4 virtue is indivi­
sible and must be sought in self-knowledge. Donne ends the  
poem with a courteous disclaimer, praising his friend  
Wotton as one from whom he has learned good counsel:  

But, Sir, I advise not you, I rather doe  
Say ofer those lessons, which I learn'd of you.  

Despite the rather straightforward analogical argument,  
Donne, unlike Lodge, does effectively relate the discourse  
to the recipient of the letter; Wotton is significantly  
involved. The final tribute to Wotton serves to capture  
the goodwill of Donne's immediate audience (Wotton himself)  
and it also provides the concluding evidence in support of  
the poet's position. Moreover, the tribute illustrates  
the close affinity between the deliberative and epideictic  
(praise) categories of rhetoric. The intensity of Donne's  
respect for the universally admired Wotton, and the intimate  
or familiar relationship which it implies, operates as an  
ethical proof in reaffirming the speaker's wisdom and in­
tegrity.  

Several aspects of this poem should be noted which  
substantiate the hypothesis concerning the deliberative  

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^4See, for example, "To Mr. Rowland Woodward" ("Like one  
who'in her third widowhood..."), p. 156.
epistles of Donne. First of all, the poem is a rhetorical disquisition on an ethical theme (a serious matter of social and individual conduct). Secondly, the use of the familiar or middle style should also be noted. Thirdly, the attempt to persuade on its discursive level the recipient of the poem and, through him, its public readers (Donne's society of friends) to a certain attitude or course of action: "Be thou thine own home, and in thy selfe dwell"; the recipient of this poem is significantly involved in the discourse and we are made aware of the address to a dual audience. This last aspect (a truly rhetorical relationship between the speaker and his audience), coupled with the overall persuasiveness of the poem, places it firmly in the deliberative, paraenetic tradition of verse letters. Wotton also becomes, with the disclaimer, the personalized positive norm. Finally, one should notice the elaborate and ingenious use of paradoxical metaphor which is so characteristic of Donne's metaphysical wit. This last quality of the poem, aside from his obviously polished handling of the conventional rhetorical pattern, demonstrates Donne's particular originality in his manipulation of the traditional pattern of the deliberative epistle.

"To Sir Henry Goodyere" ("Who makes the Past, a pattern...")

In this poem a more subtle involvement of the addressee is demanded. The epistle begins not with a direct salutation, like the last one, but immediately with the proposition to be deliberated:
Who makes the Past, a patterne for next yeare,  
Turnes no new leafe, but still the same things reads,  
Seene things, he sees againe, heard things doth heare,  
And makes his life, but like a paire of beads.  
(p. 154,vv.1-4)

Donne continues the argument by extending the basic metaphor with a series of ingenious metaphors, a technique which is quite typical of his metaphysical wit:

A Palace, when'tis that, which it should be,  
Leaves growing, and stands such, or else decayes:  
But hee which dwells there, is not so; for hee  
Strives to urge upward, and his fortune raise;  
..................................................  
Let falsehood like a discord anger you,  
Else be not froward.  
(vv. 5-42)

The series of proofs expressed in ingenious images has the effect of counterpoint in music; each image is a variation on the same theme and supports the overall effectiveness of the argument.

The omission of an opening address can be explained by Donne's hortatory intention: he is appealing to a courtier friend who is wasting himself (both morally and financially) in a dissolute and extravagant court.5 The admonition is not only gentle, but is indeed actually denied by Donne's careful disclaimer at the conclusion of the letter, when he addresses Goodyere directly for the first time:

But why doe I touch  
Things of which none is in your practise new,  
And Tables, or fruit-trenchers teach as much;  

But thus I make you keepe your promise Sir,  
Riding I had you, though you still staid there,  
And in these thoughts, although you never stirre,  
You came with mee to Micham, and are here.  
(vv. 42-48)

5See Grierson, Poems, II, 145.
The implicit wish, of course, is that Goodyere were at Micham with Donne and not at the court. The apparent impersonality of the opening and of the body of the poem (the use of a satiric, generalized opposite, implying that Goodyere is the positive norm although, paradoxically, in actual fact he is not), directed to no one in particular and with no explicit application, and the disavowal of the conclusion, all succeed in establishing Donne's concern for his friend's condition with as little offense as possible.

From a rhetorical point of view, the poem may lack an exordium (an opening to render the audience attentive and friendly), but as a whole it is an extended insinuatio (indirect persuasion) in which Donne forestalls the rejection of his advice, or counsel, by never forwarding it ungraciously.\(^6\)

The appeal to a dual audience is obvious in the poem and Donne's indirect method of counsel (which is paraenetic as well as satiric) shows his improvement upon the conventional pattern of such a poem. Goodyere, as the intimate audience remains significantly and subtly involved and the appeal to a wider audience is made by the generalized treatment of the topic of blame. However, unlike the first poem examined, the integrity of the recipient is not actually used as an ethical proof to validate Donne's position; the counsel, this time, is directed more concretely at Goodyere

himself rather than at the wider audience, although both audiences remain firmly in view.

Donne's originality can be seen not only in this subtle means of persuasion, but also in the play of metaphysical wit. The pun on the word "Stirre" (v. 47), for example, is particularly effective.

"To Sir Edward Herbert at Julyers" ("Man is a lumpe,...")

Not unlike his Renaissance predecessors, Donne sometimes takes a traditional proposition and subjects it to rhetorical scrutiny. The third of the examples is mainly a didactic exposition of a tenet in Renaissance psychology, that wisdom should control the lower souls ("beasts") in man. To some degree, then, the argument is a rhetorical syllogism on a typical Renaissance proposition.

Moreover, the poem reflects Donne's characteristic obscurity and harshness in poetry, although this obscurity and harshness is, at the same time, a parody of Herbert's own verse. Nevertheless, the poem is a good example of the

7Evelyn M. Simpson points out that this tenet was based on "the Aristotelian and Scholastic doctrine of the three souls, according to which plants have a vegetative soul, which can select what it can feed on and reject what it cannot. Above this is the soul of motion, possessed by beasts who can select ends and means, and thirdly, there is the rational and immortal soul belonging to man alone. The unborn child possesses first the soul of sense. At last, however, God infuses into the child the immortal soul, which swallows up the two preceding souls" (A Study of the Prose Works of John Donne [Oxford, 1948], p. 116). For further examples of this notion in the poetry of Donne, see "To the Countess of Salisbury," (p. 188, vv. 52-54); "To the Countess of Bedford," (p. 183, vv. 34-35); The Second Anniversary, (p. 214, vv. 160-62).

8Grierson, commenting on this poem, says "Donne's letter humours both his [Herbert's] philosophical pose and his love of obscurity and harshness in poetry. His own poems with a
deliberative, paraenetic epistle and illustrates Donne's fecundity of inventio.

The poem begins not with a salutation, but in couplet fashion with a sententia, the beast image being borrowed from Plato's Republic (IX, 588): 9

Man is a lumpe, where all beasts kneaded bee,  
Wisdom makes him an Arke where all agree.  
(163, vv. 1-2)

He goes on to elaborate the argument with the notion that man needs to develop self-control (a common theme in Donne's deliberative letters), describing the position of the fool "in whom these beasts do live at jarr'e," and pondering on the happiness of him "which hath due place assign'd/To his beasts, and disaforested his minde" (vv. 8-9). The man who does otherwise is like the "swine" possessed by the devil; in fact, he is the devil as well, "For man can adde weight to heavens heaviest curse" (v. 18). The argument next moves to some reflections on "The poysnonous tincture of Originall sinne" (v. 20). Sin involves punishments, and these punishments are like "hemlocke," which poison God intends to serve, "At least for physicke, if not for our food" (v. 30). Yet man does not always use God's punishments rightly and they become in fact few exceptions are intolerably difficult and unmusical" (The Poems of John Donne, II, 158). Donald A. Keister points out that Donne is parodying in particular Herbert's "Aug. 1608. At Merlow in France," which, he argues, was actually sent to Donne ("Donne and Herbert of Cherbury: An Exchange of Verses," Modern Language Quarterly, VIII [1947], 430-34). "To Sir Edward Herbert at Julyers," then, is, in some sense, an answer poem. 9

9See Grierson, Poems, II, 158.
poison. Nevertheless, man's "business," with God's help implied, is to "rectifie/Nature, to what she was," but he is often distracted by those "who man to us in little show" (vv. 33-35). Actually,

Man into himselfe can draw
All; All his faith can swallow, 'or reason chaw.
All that is fill'd, and all that which doth fill,
All the round world, to man is but a pill,
In all it workes not, but it is in all
Poysonous, or purgative, or cordiall,
For, knowledge kindles Calentures in some,
And is to others icy Opium.

(vv. 37-44)

The poem ends with a typical, though neatly executed, compliment to the addressee, Herbert:

As brave as true, is that profession then
..........................
Actions are authors, and of those in you
Your friends finde every day a mart of new.

(vv. 45-50)

The deliberative aspect of the poem is quite clear: the poem deliberates the problem of evil and the regulation of sin as it appears in man. Donne's approach, or inventio, however, is basically theological. The address is to a dual audience; this time the wider audience seems to be more firmly in Donne's mind. The absence of an opening address supports this view, although it may be that Donne intended to administer a subtle rebuke to Herbert (as he did to Goodyere), which is also implied in the parody of Herbert's verse. However, the implied criticism, if it exists, is tempered by the compliment at the end of the poem. If this last view is accepted, the integrity of the recipient is a further validation of the poet's position and the generalized treatment of the antithetical opposite
serves as an effective contrast. The paraenetic didactic intent of the poem is obvious.

"To Sir Edward Herbert At Jultyers" is not an easy poem to understand, partly because of Donne's obscurity and the far-reaching allusions throughout the poem. Nevertheless, these qualities do show how he chose to handle the traditional, rhetorical pattern of this kind of epistle and, in my opinion, they intensify the argument on an artistic level. Moreover, the poem fulfills the essential ingredient of the verse epistle—the truly rhetorical relationship between the speaker and his audience.

"To Mr. Rowland Woodward"
("Like One Who 'in her Third Widdowhood..."")

This fourth example illustrates many of the same qualities of the three previously discussed poems, but one unusual new feature is added—self-persuasion as well as counsel to a friend. Because of this self-persuasive aspect, the poem possesses a greater intensity of feeling than any of the previously considered epistles. This intensity of feeling and its poetic expression in the poem makes it, in my opinion, one of Donne's most beautiful verse letters, perhaps, one of the most beautiful of all his poems. Donne is deeply personal in this poem and although the paraenetic motif remains clearly throughout, the counsel is directed not only to Woodward and his wider audience, but also, more significantly, to himself:

The poem is concerned in some way with Donne's sense of a calling, with his sense of himself
as a writer, and with an impending dedication to religion which will involve the sacrifice of part of his aims, ambitions and interests.  

Here in the verse letters, as in the Songs and Sonnets and Divine Poems, Donne is at his best when musing about a personal conflict.

The opening lines establish the basic mood of the poem and introduce the basic farming image which is carried throughout the poem (and is, incidentally, a good example of Donne's metaphysical conceits):

Like one who in her third widdowhood doth professe  
Her selfe a Nunne, tyed to retirednesse,  
So affects my muse now, a chaste fallownesse;

Since shee to few, yet to too many hath shonwne  
How love-song weeds, and Satyrique thornes are growne  
Where seeds of better Arts, were early sown.

(156, vv. 1-6)

The absence of a salutation here and the personal quality of the lines suggest the self-persuasive aspect of the poem; at the same time, they suggest the meditative atmosphere of the letter. Donne goes on to explore his divided mind:

Though to use, and love Poetrie, to mee,  
Betroth'd to no'one Art, be no'adulterie:  
Omissions of good, ill, as ill deeds bee.

(vv. 7-9)

He moves finally to a strong affirmation that "There is no Vertue, but Religion" (v. 16). The separate virtues ("Wise, valiant, sober, just") are names which seemingly discreet men may possess, but do not constitute true virtue. Real virtue is one and it must be sought in

10 Laurence Stapleton, Studies in Philology, LV, 194.
self-knowledge:

Seek to know ourselves through ourselves; for as
We are but farmers of ourselves, yet may,
If we can stock ourselves and thrive, uplay
Much, much dear treasure for the great rent day.

Manure thy selfe then, to thy selfe be approved.
(vv. 19-34)

This concept of virtue, as noted earlier, is a common one
in the verse letters and is Platonic in essence. The poem
ends, as so often is the case, with a direct address to
the recipient:

And with vain outward things be no more mov'd,
But to know, that I love thee and would be lov'd.
(vv. 35-36)

The poem is characteristically deliberative in its
exploration of a proposition, in this case, a personal
problem. It is paraenetic in that it attempts to move
not only the recipient and the wider audience, but also
the speaker to a course of action. Moreover, the intensity
of feeling and the ingeniously drawn metaphors not only
illustrate Donne's skillful handling of the conventions
of the verse epistle, but at the same time indicate his
original and personal touch to the verse epistle
form. Donne is definitely transcending the conventions
of the verse epistle in this poem by manipulating the
rhetorical pattern to produce a self-persuasive and medi­
tative tone and atmosphere.

These comments on "To Mr. Rowland Woodward" conclude
the discussion of Donne's deliberative epistles, which
can only be properly understood with a thorough knowledge
of the tradition in which they were written. To look at the poems in any other way is to distort their intention and basic meaning. Although they illustrate many of Donne's characteristic poetic processes (the same ones that are operating in the Songs and Sonnets), it should be obvious from the discussion that a knowledge of these similar processes is not sufficient to understand the full meaning and implications of these poems. In short, it is also necessary to know the tradition in which they were written and to know that it is not the same tradition in which his other, more popular poems were written. I have not been able to examine all of Donne's deliberative verse epistles, but the examples used are adequately representative of the variety and complexity of this kind of epistle to enable us to grasp a sense of Donne's art in his deliberative epistles. However, for a better understanding of Donne's art in the verse letter, a discussion of his complimentary epistles is also warranted. As with his deliberative epistles, a thorough knowledge of the tradition in which the complimentary letters were written is a prerequisite for an understanding and accurate evaluation of their artistic worth.
CHAPTER IV

THE COMPLIMENTARY TRADITION

Like the first group of Donne's verse letters, the second group, the complimentary epistles, fall essentially into a rhetorical tradition. Although the second group of poems displays many of the same characteristics found in the deliberative epistles, it must be understood that its basic nature is complimentary and, as with the first group of poems considered, it is necessary to know the conventions and history of that tradition in order to understand and appreciate Donne's art in this kind of poem.

The procedure in this part of the thesis will be similar to that of the preceding part. This chapter looks at the tradition itself and representative examples of Donne's predecessors in the complimentary epistle. Chapter V examines in detail three representative complimentary epistles of Donne. Attention this time, however, will be directed to the epideictic category of rhetoric and more specifically to the inventio of that category.\(^1\) The Renaissance theory of decorum will also be discussed in its application to Donne's complimentary epistles. Moreover,

\(^1\) It must always be remembered that with the conflation of rhetoric and poetic the deliberative category of rhetoric was eventually absorbed by the epideictic and that there is a definite affinity between the two, as noted earlier (pp. 21, 22, 29).
I shall be dealing not only with Donne's didactic purpose once again, but also with his symbolic intent. Let us first of all examine the nature of the epideictic category of rhetoric.

The Nature of the Epideictic Category

Introduction

The poem of compliment, in particular the complimentary epistle, falls clearly within the general rhetorical category of the epideictic, the literature of praise and blame. Its purpose is a simple one—to honour and instruct. It is most closely related to, and most easily confused with, panegyric. Full panegyric, as noted earlier (p. 24), is usually addressed to a god or monarch. In addressing a figure of less exalted rank, however, a less ornate and imposing form is employed. For this lesser form of panegyric, Cain adopts the term compliment, to emphasize its distinctions from full praise in the hierarchy of literary kinds. The verse epistle, along with other genres, such as the epigram and the sonnet can be, and often is, a form of the poetry of compliment.

In compliment, one usually finds a somewhat more familiar and more didactic manner (elements we have come to expect in the verse letter by now) than one does in full panegyric. Especially in the more serious examples of

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3Ibid.
compliment, one finds a considerable amount of social concern (another element we expect to find in the verse letter).

Although in complimentary epistles, the mood is more practical and the tone less elevated than in a full panegyric to a monarch, for example, some latitude of exaggeration and hyperbole must be allowed for, since elaborate comparison and figures of outdoing are intrinsic to the whole epideictic category of rhetoric, of which compliment as well as more high-flown praise is a part. The nature of epideictic literature itself, then, explains to some degree Donne's elaborate conceits and the paradoxical element of exaggeration in his verse letters addressed to "Nobles Ladies," but it is partly the intention of this thesis to show precisely how these techniques are operating in these poems.

Cain's basic contention concerning the relationship between the epideictic category of rhetoric and the poem of compliment, particularly the verse epistle, is that "the epideictic topics [that is, the inventio, or topics of praise] largely predict the matter and sometimes the structure of the complimentary poem." To see how Donne adopted the conventional topics of praise to suit his particular purpose in writing a complimentary epistle, it is necessary to know

For an excellent discussion of the nature of the epideictic category of rhetoric and the poem of compliment, see Cain, "The Poem of Compliment," pp. 10-70. Cain's dissertation, to the best of my knowledge, is the most comprehensive treatment of the complimentary tradition of poetry in the Renaissance.

first of all what the topics were.

The Theory of Praise: The Traditional Topics

Underlying the complimentary epistle is a fixed general pattern of praise stemming not from poetic theory but from traditional rhetoric. The topics of praise that form this pattern of encomium were so fixed, from antiquity to the sixteenth century, that the Renaissance poet, equipped with them from his grammar school days, automatically utilized them as the basis for any type of panegyrical address. The mere versifier simply followed, of course, the fixed pattern of topics to grind out his compliment, but a talented and original poet, such as Donne, made use of them for compliment even while transcending them.

The epideictic category, as previously pointed out (pp. 8–9, 29), is the rhetoric applying to ceremonial or occasional oratory, for epideictic is the general oratory of ceremony.

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and occasion rather than merely praise or blame.® In speeches for an occasion, one expects a heightening of style, an eloquence of delivery, even exaggeration of matter. This quality, called amplification (amplificatio) is inherent in occasional oratory⁹ and so traditional that it was described by all the great classical rhetoricians—Aristotle, Cicero, the anonymous author of Rhetorica ad Herennium, and Quintilian.¹⁰ Aristotle, for example, says that amplification is achieved by magnifying in the subject some quality that is nearly unique or demonstrably superior.¹¹ Superiority may be demonstrated by comparison (comparatio),¹² a method which is frequently used by Donne and which will be seen when looking, later on, at his complimentary epistles. How important amplification is to the epideictic oration, Aristotle indicates when he says that it is primary to the epideictic category in the same way that example (inductive reasoning) is central to proof, or argument, in the deliberative:

And, in general, of the lines of argument which are common to all speeches, this 'heightening of effect' [amplification] is most suitable for declamations, where we take our hero's actions as admitted facts, and our business is simply to invest these with dignity and nobility. 'Examples' are

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¹²Ibid., i.9(1368a 20-25), p. 62.
most suitable to deliberative speeches; for we judge of future events by divination from past events....

As mentioned earlier (p. 21), the Sophistic and Second Sophistic movements in rhetoric brought with them an emphasis on elocution (elocutio) and for the sophistic orator, then, amplification meant a general embellishing of style and form, in addition to the Aristotelian method whereby unique or superior qualities in the subject were asserted. Historically, the flamboyance of the Sophists triumphed and became the dominant characteristic of epideictic oratory, and this tradition continued up to the Renaissance and made itself felt in literature, particularly in poetry with the blending of rhetoric and poetics.

Two other elements in Renaissance rhetoric contributed to the emphasis on elocution—the use of the progymnasmata and the rearranged logic and rhetoric of the Ramists. The

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13 Rhetoric, i.9 (1368a) 29-30), p. 63.


15 Ibid.

16 Francis R. Johnson points out that "Rhetoric, as taught during the Middle Ages, had suffered severely as an intellectual discipline through the loss of two of its branches, inventio and dispositio, which were customarily transferred to the province of logic" (Huntington Library Quarterly, VI, 433). In a thesis of this scope, the full influence of logic on the verse of John Donne cannot, of course, be explored. The dispositio and inventio of Donne's complimentary epistles certainly owe something to logic, particularly Ramist logic, but a discussion of this debt would take the main subject of the thesis too far afield. For a fairly comprehensive treatment of the influence of formal logic on the poetry of Donne, see Elizabeth Lewis Wiggins, "Logic in the Poetry of John Donne," Studies in Philology, XLII (January, 1945), 41-60.
progymnasmata (simply meaning introductory exercises in
theme writing) were originally put together in the second
period of Greek Sophistry (2nd - 4th centuries,
A.D.). They were translated into Latin and edited for
school use with the scholia and added examples.

Aphthonius's Progymnasmata became one of the most
universal of Renaissance schoolbooks. A sophistically
conceived text, the Progymnasmata of Aphthonius emphasized
amplification and dilation, partly by solving the problem
of invention for the student who had nothing to say, yet
had a theme to write. For a given kind of theme, the
Progymnasmata and texts like it provided a set series of
appropriate topics from which the student could manufacture
material. These works, though only partially concerned
with epideictic themes, reinforced the emphasis on elocution,
which is traditionally associated with the epideictic category.

17 See Clark, Speech Monographs, XIX, 259-60.
18 Ibid., 260-61.
19 See Cain, "The Poem of Compliment," p. 41; see also
Clark, Speech Monographs, XIX, 259-63; and Johnson, Huntington
Library Quarterly, VI, 434-38.
20 See Clark, Speech Monographs, XIX, 260.
21 Aphthonius became such a standard text for theme
writing in the Renaissance that, as T.W. Baldwin remarks, "it
may be fairly said that there was no other" (Small Latine,
II, 286). Among other progymnasmata available to Renaissance
schools were those of Theon of Alexandria and Hermogenes of
Tarsus, but Aphthonius's was by far the most popular because
of the model themes with which he supplemented his directions.
For a fuller discussion of these texts and the relationship
between them, see Cain, "The Poem of Compliment," pp. 40-41.
22 See Duhamel, Journal of the History of Ideas, X,
353-56.
There is no need to be concerned here with the general topics of praise in classical rhetoric, but rather to look at their formation in the Renaissance, after their development from antiquity through the Middle Ages. The topics are basic to the invention of rhetoric and simply mean certain general areas to be considered when searching out matter for oration, in this case, matter for a complimentary epistle. There were topics which applied to any sort of oration, but the epideictic category has a set of general topics which are particularly useful or appropriate to it, and these are especially well defined when the category is concerned with praise.

These topics were given in the *Progymnasmata* of Aphthonius, of which the most important version was the combination of the translations of Joannes Maria Cataneus (1507) and Rudolph Agricola (1532), which was first published in 1542. It was augmented in 1546 with extra model themes from a version by Petrus Mosellanus (1523), plus points of instruction culled from Priscian's *Hermogenes* and Quintilian's comments on exercises in rhetoric. Both the 1542 version and the 1546 were arranged by the German Protestant scholar Reinhart Lorichius.  

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traditional topics of praise. There were fourteen themes, or exercises, in all: fable, tale, chreia, proverb, refutation, confirmation, commonplace, encomium, vituperation, comparison, characterization, description, thesis, and legislation. Of these fourteen, the following is a list, in chart form, from Aphthonius of the general topics within the epideictic or demonstrative category:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laus</td>
<td>(encomium)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vituperatio</td>
<td>(blame)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imitatio</td>
<td>(impersonation or characterization)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparatio</td>
<td>(e.g. comparison of subject to a lesser subject to show superiority)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptio</td>
<td>(practice in the use of detail)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, the demonstrative or epideictic group contains the theme of praise and blame plus three others, basically ornamental in nature. The other nine themes, or topics, which form the other two categories may be used as techniques in presenting the subject of the oration; in this case, of the verse letter.

However, Aphthonius considered the exercise of laus or praise as an independent theme. The following, taken from Aphthonius, is a list with three main subdivisions of the topic of praise:


25See Cain, "The Poem of Compliment," p. 45. He offers a chart similar to this one based on the grouping of Lorichius.
Laus

1) **Genus**
   - Gentem (race)
   - Patriam (fatherland)
   - Maiores (forebears)
   - Patres (fathers)
   - Institutione (inclination to study)

2) **Educatio**
   - Arte (talent)
   - Legibus (rules)
   - Anima bona (spirit)

3) **Res Gestae**
   - Corporis bona (body)
   - Externa bona (fortunae) (fortune)

Aphthonius suggests that the oration should begin with an exordium, followed by the topics and completed with a comparison (comparatio), in order to infer a greater position for the one being praised.  

For the purpose of this thesis, the essential section of Aphthonius’s treatment of laus is his delineation of the topics of praise. They are largely the topics which Cicero and the other classical writers recommended and, naturally so, since these rhetoricians little interested themselves in epideictic rhetoric and probably drew their directions for it from the parallel sophistic tradition where it was highly regarded.  

By fixing the order of the topics as he lists them, Aphthonius suggests

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26 See Nadeau, Speech Monographs, XIX, 273. The chart which I offer here has been made from this translation.

27 See Cain, "The Poem of Compliment," p. 47. The classical rhetoricians were more interested in the other two categories and with the sophistic movement in rhetoric, as Johnson points out: "Forgotten was the sound teaching of Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian that true style is merely the giving of effective expression to subject matter; that it is not superimposed ornament but is inseparable from the thoughts and emotions which the author seeks to convey" (Huntington Library Quarterly, VI, 434).
dispositio (disposition, arrangement, or structure) as well as invention. In other words, in composing a complimentary epistle, for example, one can follow Aphthonius's suggestions by treating the topics of praise in the order he gives them; he offers instructions not only in what to say, but also in how to say it.

The emphasis here, as with the classical rhetoricians, falls on the topic of deeds, res gestae, divided into the good qualities of character (animi bona), body (corporis bona), and fortune (externa bona). The other topics genus and educatio, fill out (or, perhaps more accurately, pad) the depiction of the subject. They are used for amplification.

The topic genus is made up of the sub-topics race, country, ancestors, and parents, and concerns antecedents, that is, factors over which the recipient has no control. Donne, it will be seen, often utilizes this topic in as much as his subjects are of noble birth. The topic educatio receives no comment at all in the Aphthonian Progymnasmata and is generally a weak topic in the practice of encomium. The topic res gestae is treated extensively and is by far the most important and most frequently utilized topic in the writing of complimentary epistles. As already noted, there is a three part sub-division within this

29See Nadeau, Speech Monographs, XIX, 273.
30Ibid., 273-4.
topic, and, of the three, animi bona (the possession of virtue, or qualities of character) is universally considered more praiseworthy by rhetoricians. In addition, it is the most important topic both for the theory and the practice of complimentary epistles, or encomium in general. The main topic, to which all the deeds of the subject are related, sometimes revolves around the four cardinal virtues—justice, temperance, fortitude, and prudence.

Corporis bona (health, strength, and beauty) is the basis of praise and is often extended by comparatio. Externa bona, or fortuna (extraneous goods, or gifts of fortune), is, perhaps, the least utilized topic of the three.

The explicit aim of the directions given in Aphthonius is to produce copious expression. Amplicication here clearly means verbal elaborateness and prolixity of detail, achieved through the application of the general topics of invention to the special topics designated by Aphthonius as appropriate to praise. It should be noted that comparison is regularly utilized as one of the general topics for the development of each part of res gestae. In practice, however, encomium frequently utilizes comparison, as both a special topic with its own allotted section, and also as a general topic used to amplify each of the other topics of praise. In other words, the writer

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32 Ibid.
33 Ibid., p. 52.
of complimentary verse epistles could, when praising the virtue of a particular man or woman of noble rank, amplify his praise by comparing his subject's particular possession of virtue with that of a subject of less virtue. The comparison would heighten the effect of the compliment. In looking at Donne's complimentary epistles later on in the paper, it will be seen that he often uses *comparatio* to amplify his praise of "Noble Ladies."

In the Aphthonian directions for *laus* and their Renaissance scholia, the schoolboy had a ready-made method for the invention and disposition of praise. Properly an exercise, this pattern of praise tended to carry over into adult practice, no doubt, as T.H. Cain suggests, because praise by its very nature is rather static and not conducive to originality of thought. To some extent, Cain's statement that "the topics and disposition of the laudatory oration tend to be adapted to the laudatory poem," is true of a great many Renaissance poets. Yet talented and original poets of compliment, such as Donne, made use of the traditional pattern even while transcending it.

It should now be obvious that in rhetoric and poetic there was an established method for the praise of a man and that this method embraced a set of topics of which the writer of complimentary verse epistles could avail himself. However, before looking at some examples of the

complimentary verse epistle, the Renaissance principle of decorum and its application to the complimentary epistle should be discussed, for the theory of compliment arises from the impact of the principle of decorum on the traditional pattern of praise established by the rhetoricians.

Decorum in the Complimentary Epistle

It has already been noted in the previous discussion of decorum (pp. 25-27) that the verse epistle is the genre most suited to compliment; it uses the middle style because the compliment is addressed to a non-royal figure, and the principle of decorum which has its basis in subject, and in turn rank, dictates the use of the genre for compliment. The principle of decorum is all-important in determining literary appropriateness of style and genre. But from a rhetorical point of view, style, and to a certain extent genre, are really facets of elocution, and the concern in this half of the thesis is more properly with the element of invention. The question which arises, then, is how decorum operates to control the invention of the complimentary epistle in such a way that matter suitable to lesser praise than a full panegyric may be produced. The full panegyric, the highest form of praise, is directed to a god or a monarch, usually in the form of a hymn or an ode; it makes full use of all the topics of praise. The answer to our question, then, is that the writer or poet of complimentary verse epistles simply creates a less
hyperbolic effect than full panegyric aims at.\textsuperscript{37} The poet of compliment, in particular the poet of complimentary epistles, does not normally feel, according to Cain, that decorum requires him to treat the full set of topics, and, consequently, he chooses among them rather informally, selecting especially appropriate topics and ignoring others in the traditional pattern.\textsuperscript{38} Perhaps he bases his choice on topics that have some justification in the real character and achievements of the subject he is treating,

For the royal praise usually works toward the portrait of an idealized incumbent of office, a symbolized perfection, often necessarily without scrupulous regard for the qualities the prince actually possesses.\textsuperscript{39}

This statement suggests the need in full panegyric to use fully the set of encomiastic topics, while the poet of the complimentary verse epistle employs them more sparingly and at his discretion.

Some of the traditional topics are abandoned more readily than others. However, the primary topic in the encomiastic pattern of invention, \textit{res gestae}, is almost always utilized to some extent in the complimentary verse letter. Obviously, \textit{bona animi} (virtue) is one of the foremost special topics of concern to the poet of

\textsuperscript{37}See Cain, "The Poem of Compliment," p. 126. Cain asks and answers a similar question for the poem of compliment in general.

\textsuperscript{38}\textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{39}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 126-27.
complimentary epistles. Bona fortunae are frequently used, especially in reference to gentle birth. Bona corporis is least utilized, unless, of course, the subject of praise is a woman; in such a case, it is always decorous to treat her beauty.\footnote{For a more complete discussion of the topics discarded and the topics utilized by the poet of compliment, see Cain, "The Poem of Compliment," pp. 126-130.}

Educatio (upbringing) occurs sparingly. Genus (ancestry, parents, race, country) is, perhaps, the most optional of all. Comparatio, however, seems to be a standard topic; and bona animi, bona corporis and this topic are the most frequently employed topics of Donne's invention in his complimentary verse letters.

It must be remembered that the complimentary verse epistle can scarcely avoid some degree of magnification of the subject, for the inherent characteristic of all forms of praise is their tendency to view the subject in the most favourable light. T.H. Cain cautions wisely here concerning the principle of decorum:

While the principle of decorum was everywhere insisted on in the Renaissance as 'the great matter to observe,' actual methods of observing it varied with the practice of individual poets. Hence we should not...be disconcerted to come upon a poem to a lesser man that is decked out with a fuller set of topics and more amplification than seems decorous...\footnote{"The Poem of Compliment," p. 129.}

Donne's middle style in the complimentary epistles, for example, is not at all Jonson's middle style. But if the complimentary epistles of Donne seem extravagant and hyperbolic as poems of compliment, comparison with the...
the *Anniversaries* shows that Donne did conceive of a higher manner. One further aspect of the complimentary tradition of verse epistles must be considered before looking at examples of this kind of poem—the didactic intent of the complimentary poet.

**The Didactic Intention in the Complimentary Epistle**

Earlier in the discussion (pp. 27-31), I talked of the general theory of the didactic function of poetry in the Renaissance and mentioned the three methods of achieving didactic intent that could be used by the poet of verse epistles. The most obvious of these three, used by the poet of complimentary verse letters, is the treatment of the subject of praise as an example of virtue. Such instruction by example is usually directed toward the general readers of the poem, but, in addition, it is often an indirect method of leading the subject himself along the path to personal or public virtue. An example of this method can be seen in the epistle looked at earlier (pp. 42-44), "To Sir Henry Goodyere," although the primary method utilized in this poem was counsel by precept, or paraenesis. As a result of using the addressee as an example, the didactic vein, working through the rhetorical

42The principle of decorum explains to some extent, Ben Jonson's derogatory criticism of the *Anniversaries*. Frank Manley, however, in his introduction to *The Anniversaries* (Baltimore, 1963), feels that Jonson's criticism is still unjustified because Jonson, and critics in general, did not know what Donne was trying to do in these two poems. Manley maintains, throughout his introduction, that the function of elaborate symbolism in the poems requires the elevated style.
pattern of praise, leads normally to the idealization of
the subject. One of the results of the combination of
these two elements is the exaggerated quality intrinsic
to the nature of praise.

However, no matter how strong his didactic intent,
the poet who praised an idealized subject left himself
open to the charge of flattery. Defence on this charge
became a frequent theme with the Renaissance poet who
dealt in compliment. Daniel, Jonson, Donne, and even
Hamlet, all defended themselves of the charge of flattery.

Jonson in his "An Epistle to Master John Seldon"
(Underwood, XIX) makes it quite clear how seriously he takes
the didactic mission of the complimentary epistle, and his
statement may be taken as a fairly representative defence:

Though I confess (as every Muse hath err'd
And mine not least) I have too oft preferr'd
Men past their terms, and prais'd some names
too much,
But 'twas with purpose to have made them such.

This passage is important for its explicit declaration that
not flattery, but the instruction of the subject is the
aim of exaggerated and idealized praise. Jonson believes
that in praising a man he is presenting him with an


44See, for example, Hamlet, III, ii, 59-64.

45The Complete Works of Ben Jonson, eds. C.H. Herford
and Percy Simpson (Oxford, 1947), VIII, 159. One should
note here that the poem praises a literary man. Cain points
out that "Jonson goes on to praise Seldon in fulsome terms
for his scholarship and style. Hence the disavowal of
flattery here may be considered as actually contributing
to the heightening of the praise" ("The Poem of Compliment,"
p. 177, n. 25).
idealized mirror of what he might be, in the hope that the recipient will further improve in virtue. The subject of the poem, as the idealized example, may also inspire the general readers of the poem. However, if the subject is not really possessed of some exemplary virtue to begin with, then the act of praise is unmerited. The subject's virtue alone justifies idealized praise. A statement of Donne's comparable to Jonson's (other than his answer to Jonson concerning the *Anniversaries*) is the one with which I began the thesis:

May therefore this be enough to testifie.
My true devotion, free from flattery;
He that beleeves himselfe, doth never lie.
(187, vv. 61-3)

Nevertheless, it must be admitted that fulsomeness and adulation sometimes make Renaissance encomia liable to the criticism that exaggerated praise exists only to elicit remuneration from the person of wealth and power. Patricia Thomson's criticism of Donne's verse epistles is based on this view. In light of the Renaissance poet's dependence on an elaborate system of competition for patronage, one must expect, in complimentary verse epistles, some idealization of subject that aims at reward more than, or as well as, at instruction. Donne's extravagant idealization leave us initially in doubt as to whether or not the intention of teaching by an idealized example has not been engulfed by flattery springing from his need of


However, there is more than just Donne's didactic intention to consider here. It may be granted that the complimentary epistles were designed on the surface to praise his patronesses as fulsomely as possible, and at the same time to instruct by setting up the subject as an example of virtue to be imitated, and they even do so by utilizing the traditional rhetorical pattern of praise. But the poems are considerably more than this. In my opinion, Donne transformed the verse letters into something deeply personal by adding an elaborate symbolic level to the poems. Ironically, it is precisely this symbolic level, mistaken for unwarranted hyperbolic praise of his patronesses, that has made the poems seem so distasteful to commentators. This same view prevails about the two Anniversaries.

Even if the poems were simply looked at within the tradition of complimentary poetry, the hyperbolic effect would not seem unwarranted: it is the very nature of praise to amplify. This kind of poetry (for and about public figures) was a normal and indeed obligatory duty.


49 See Manley, "Introduction," in The Anniversaries, p. 6; see also L. Stapleton, "The Theme of Virtue in Donne's Verse Epistles," Studies in Philology, LV (April, 1958), 187-200. Manley treats this symbolic level of the Anniversaries at great length; it is an extremely complex phenomenon, but it is my contention that this same sort of symbolic level exists in the complimentary epistles. Stapleton deals, although sparingly, with the symbolic level in the verse epistles, especially with the symbolism of virtue. Obviously, in a thesis of this length, it is impossible to treat adequately this aspect of Donne's complimentary verse letters.
for the courtly poet of the day, and Donne was a courtly poet. Indeed, as J.W. Saunders maintains:

If Donne's 'middle' verse does not attain to the standard of his earlier love poems, I would prefer to seek the reason NOT in his alleged unhappiness in 'public' poetry—for these poems were not really public at all, if we accept his printed verse—but rather in the nature of the poetry. Here Donne is unbuttoned and discursive. There is no close or complex poetic unity or the profundity of the 'song or sonnet' (the most serious structure in Renaissance poetry). Donne is less taut and 'neurotic' in these occasional verses than in his amatory and divine poetry, where he is looking into his own heart and is busy 'in seeking truth.'

At any rate, there is no reason why a poet dependent on patronage should not fulfill his didactic intention and any other aim he may have in mind, and apply for financial assistance at the same time. The very fact that poets of complimentary epistles felt it necessary to disavow flattery in their work suggests the importance of instruction by idealized example in this kind of poem. It also suggests the possibility of a deeper and symbolic intent, which is the case in Donne's complimentary letters. At this point in the discussion, it might be useful to offer a definition of the complimentary epistle, since the discussion of the tradition is now completed.

50"Donne and Daniel," Essays in Criticism, III (January, 1953), 112. This article is an answer to the criticism of Patricia Thomson who maintains that literature produced by the system of patronage is 'public' poetry. Saunders is inaccurate only in saying that no complex poetic unity exists in the verse letters, for as it has already been noted, a complex poetic unity does often exist in Donne's verse letters. It will be seen even more clearly in viewing the complimentary epistles.

A Definition of the Complimentary Epistle

The complimentary verse epistle is largely a product of decorum as that concept appeals to social rank. The qualities of the poem are fitted to the rank of the subject. As a result, the complimentary epistle praises a person of less rank than a monarch, though usually noble. This lesser dignity is realized in elocution by the use of the middle style and, of course, in poetic form by a middle genre, the verse epistle. It is realized in invention by a somewhat sparing selection of topics from the traditional pattern in praise of a ruler. With this definition and a knowledge of the tradition and conventions in mind, attention can now be turned to examples of the complimentary verse epistle as practiced by Donne's contemporaries or immediate predecessors. The purpose in doing so is twofold: to make us aware of the fact that Donne was not the only poet practicing this manner of poetic form and, secondly, to point out how Donne improved upon the conventional pattern of such a poem and, in some cases, how he transcended it.

It should be remembered that many complimentary epistles display characteristics similar to the deliberative epistle, first of all because they are both in fact verse letters. The complimentary epistles, like the deliberative, are addressed to a dual audience and depend upon the significant

52See Cain, "The Poem of Compliment," pp. 130-31. This definition is founded partly on Cain's findings on the poem of compliment in general.
involvement of the addressee for a truly rhetorical relationship and effect. They often employ the paraenetic didactic method, but instruct primarily by idealized example. They also offer a form of praise by the very fact that they are addressed to a particular subject. However, their main distinguishing characteristic is the utilization of the traditional rhetorical topics of praise—their inventio.

Donne’s Predecessors in the Complimentary Epistle

Daniel

To some extent, Daniel’s Certaine Epistles have already been discussed (pp. 35–36); they tend more often toward moral discourse and paraenesis than compliment. However, the element of compliment forms a sufficiently developed motif in one epistle, "To Henry Wriothesly Earle of Southamton," to warrant attention. Instruction is a secondary concern in this poem, and that drawn from the subject’s example. The theme of the poem is that adversity brings a man’s true virtues to light. Daniel praises Southampton’s qualities as they have emerged from his handling of ill-fortune (res gestae):

The world had neuer taken to full note
Of what thou art, hadst thou not been vndone;
And onely thy affliction hath begot
More fame, then thy best fortunes could haue done;
For euer, by aduersitie are wrought
The greatest workes of admiration.
And all the faire examples of renowne
Out of distresse and miserie are growne.

(vv. 13–20)

The poem continues by moving slowly into a deliberative statement of the conflict between virtue and fortune:

He that indues for what his conscience knows
Not to be ill, doth from a patience hie

Onely the best compos'd and worthiest harts
God fets to act the hardest and constant' st parts.

(vv. 53-60)

Aside from res gestae, the only other encomiastic topic
to appear is a comparatio, strongly worked out:

Mutius the fire, the tortures Regulus,
Did make the miracles of faith and zeale,
Exile renown'd, and grac'd Rutilius;
Imprisonment and poysen did reueale
The worht of Socrates; Fabritius'
Pouertie did grace that Common-weale
More than all Syllaes riches, got with strife;
And Catoes death did vie with Caesars life.

(vv. 21-8)

The main feature of Daniel's complimentary epistles is
their affinity with the deliberative category of rhetoric.
Nevertheless, this particular poem does fulfil the definition of the complimentary epistle by its familiar middle style and the utilization of the main topic of praise, res gestae. Obviously, Southampton is a figure of nobility and does remain significantly involved throughout the epistle despite the rather clear address to a wider audience.

Jonson

Not only because of the large number of poems of compliment in his collected lyrics, but also because of their quality and the evidence they provide of interest in and easy mastery of the poem of compliment, Jonson is the most significant poet of compliment in the English Renaissance. Yet he never transcends the conventions of the

complimentary verse epistle as artfully or originally as Donne. He is significant as a writer of complimentary epistles in his close adherence to the conventions of the form, not in his originality.

In the epistle "To Katherine, Lady Aubigny" (The Forest, XIII), for example, the invention conforms very closely to the traditional pattern. The poem deals heavily in the satirical or antithetical topic, the third main didactic method of the verse letter. The poem begins with the introduction of this topic:

Tis growne almoste a danger to speak true
Of any good minde, now: There are so few.

(vv. 1-2)

In complimenting Lady Aubigny, Jonson sets up a mirror wherein she may see herself; that is, he instructs by example:

I, Madame, am become your praiser. Where,
If it may stand with your soft blushe to heare
Your selfe but told unto your selfe, and see
In my character, what your features bee,
You will not from the paper slightly passe:
No lady, but, at some time, loves her glasse.

(vv. 21-6)

It will not be the usual kind of mirror reflecting her beauty (that is, corporis bona implied), yet her beauty is worthy of praise:

Looke then, and see your selfe. I will not say
Your beautie; for you see that every day:
And so doe many more. All which can call
It perfect, proper, pure, and naturall,

Nor that your beautie wanted not a dower,
Doe I reflect.

(vv. 29-38)

55Pen Jonson, VIII, 116-120.
This mirror will not show her fortunae bona either:

Some alderman has power,
Or cos'ning farmer of the customs so,
T(o) 'aduance his doubtful issue, and oreflow
A Princes fortune: These are gifts of chance,
And raise not vertue; they may vice enhance.
My mirror is more subtile, cleere, refin'd,
And takes, and giues the beauties of the mind.

(vv. 38-44)

Jonson, however, does not disclaim fortunae bona completely, for he immediately praises the lady for her "bloud, and match" (v. 46), and for her "so great title, birth" (v. 49). Yet it is Lady Aubigny's virtue (animi bona) which makes these gifts of fortune subjects for praise:

Wherewith, then, Madame, can you better pay
This blessing of your starres, then by that way
Of Virtue, which you tread?

(vv. 53-5)

This epistle, like the majority of Jonson's, follows so closely the conventions of the traditional pattern of praise that it almost takes on the quality of a "rehearsal". He does, however, make the rehearsal itself contribute to the compliment. He goes on to particularize the topic of animi bona: he compliments Lady Aubigny for her individual and unswerving pursuit of virtue, "instead of succumbing to the giddy fluctuating morality of the age, based on spectacle and outward values." The satirical topic of blame is introduced once again and the topic of educatio is suggested:

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57 Ibid. Cain gives an extremely good explication of this poem in light of the rhetorical complimentary tradition.
You, Madame, yong haue learn' d to shun those shelues,
Wheron the most of mankind's wracke themselues.
(vv. 89-90)

The topic of good wish is developed strongly toward the end of the poem where Jonson prophesies that Lady Aubigny will bear children who will bring honour to her husband's name and her father's blood (vv. 94-111). A short praise of Katherine as the ideal wife follows and the poem closes with a wish for a long life of continued virtue (111-24).

Although the topic of comparatio is absent, except as it is represented by the topic of blame, this poem follows very closely the traditional encomiastic pattern. The style of the poem is unmistakeably middle, and the address to a dual audience with Lady Aubigny as the idealized example is obvious. There is no need to look further at Jonson's complimentary verse epistles, for the majority of them follow the conventional pattern almost as closely as this poem.

Daniel and Jonson are two of Donne's most significant predecessors or contemporaries in the practice of the complimentary verse epistle. Having examined their work, it will now be possible to show Donne's improvement on the conventional handling of the pattern and also to point out when and how he transcends the conventions—his originality in the complimentary verse epistle. With a knowledge of the conventional qualities of the traditional, rhetorical topics of praise and their handling by Donne's predecessors now in mind, attention can be turned fully to an analysis of
representative examples of Donne's complimentary verse letters.
CHAPTER V

DONNE'S COMPLIMENTARY VERSE EPISTLES

Of Donne's thirty-five verse letters, twelve are addressed to "Noble Ladies," and the majority of the twelve are to Donne's greatest patroness, the Countess of Bedford. It is not possible to treat all twelve letters at adequate length and, therefore, I have chosen to deal with three poems addressed to three different women. They are sufficiently representative of Donne's complimentary verse epistles to give us an understanding of his art in this kind of poem.

"To The Countess of Bedford" ("REASON is our Soules..."

This poem illustrates Donne's extravagant and original approach to the complimentary verse letter. It begins with a somewhat startling comparison between the Countess and the object of religious devotion—divinity. The basic conceit is taken either from the "religion" of love, or simply from an analogy with religion itself. Bedford is a "divinity"; Donne accepts her by faith, but, by analogy with theology, must use his reason to express that faith. Her friends, Donne says, are able to give reasons for their love; he, on the other hand, loves by faith alone since he does not know her. Yet he would like to exercise his reasoning faculty:

81
REASON is our Soules left hand, Faith her right,
By these wee reach divinity, that's you;
Their loves, who have the blessings of your light,
Grew from their reason, mine from faire faith grew.

But as, although a squint lefthandednesse
Be'ungracious, yet we cannot want that hand,
So would I, not to encrease, but to expresse
My faith, as I beleeve, so understand.

(p. 159, vv. 1-8)

This argument leads to the basic topic of res gestae (her deeds): he studies her in her Saints (those elected to her friendship), in her deeds, in her granting and withholding of favour, and in her reading and thoughts:

Therefore I study you first in your Saints,
Those friends, whom your election glorifies,
Then in your deeds, accesses, and restraints,
And what you reade, and what your selfe devize.

(vv. 9-12)

However, the reasons for which she is loved soon become infinite and he must fall back on what the "Catholique voice doth teach":

That you are good: and not one Heretique
Denies it: if he did, yet you are so.
For, rockes, which high top'd and deep rooted sticke,
Waves wash, not undermine, nor overthrow.

(vv. 17-20)

Donne drops the religious analogy temporarily to introduce an image of the preserving balsam described by Paracelsus,¹ that suggests the topic genus (perhaps fortunae bona) and corporis bona:

In every thing there naturally growes
A Balsamum to keepe it fresh, and new,

If 'twere not injur'd by extrinsique blowes:
Your birth and beauty are this Balme in you.

(vv. 21-4)

Maintaining the basic image, Donne moves on to animi bona (virtue):

But you of learning and religion,
And vertue, 'and such ingredients, have made
A methridate, whose operation
Keepes off, or cures what can be done or said.

(vv. 25-8)

Donne's equation of the Platonic idea of virtue as necessarily indivisible with the Paracelsian notion of a balsam, or life force, is a common theme throughout the complimentary verse epistles. From the conjunction of these two notions, he originated an almost symbolic term that gives a common focus to the complimentary epistles.² The naming of a lady as a symbol of virtue and the image of virtue as a life-force shows that Donne had something more in mind than a fancy compliment, and the intellectual and imaginative process here is stronger than analogy. The entire context of the poem indicates that Donne is drawing upon his free meditations on the unity of virtue, at once the principle of life and the world's soul.³

Returning to the religious figure of thought, Donne describes the Countess as:

The first good Angell, since the worlds frame stood,
That ever did in womans shape appeare.

(vv. 31-2)

The final stanza continues this thought:

²See Stapleton, Studies in Philology, LV, 189.
³Ibid., 198.
Since you are then Gods masterpeece, and so
His Factor for our loves; do as you doe...
(vv. 33-8)

These kinds of images occur frequently in Donne's complimentary epistles to "Noble Ladies" and also form a primary motif in the two Anniversaries. Throughout the poem, the Countess, although remaining visibly herself, has become something much more—a symbol in the full sense of the word. She has done so partly through the predominant Platonism of the day, that is, through the concept of virtue as indivisible, one; partly through the tendency to worship a woman as the representative of spiritual things, that is, the beauty of the soul, and outer and inner harmony; and also partly through the universal tendency to look at woman in general as an image of Eden, summarizing in herself the land of the heart's desire.\(^4\)

Jung's theory of the *anima*, the "idea of a woman" in man—the image of his own soul, his own deepest reality—is also involved here.\(^5\) The Hebraic and mediaeval traditions of Wisdom also play a strong part in the symbolic meaning of the poem:

the traditional concept of Wisdom...like the *anima*, was almost always symbolized by woman, who represented the subconscious, intuitive, feminine intelligence of the heart as opposed to the active, conscious, masculine intelligence of the mind.\(^6\)


\(^5\)Ibid., p. 18.

\(^6\)Ibid.
The Countess is a concrete symbol of all these things and the poem makes sense, not only literally as a compliment, but also in a poetic, metaphoric way through an intuitive, symbolic understanding. Donne's skill here in transcending the conventional limits of the complimentary verse letter is outstanding.

Donne's debt to logic can also be discerned in the image-making process of the poem. His keen awareness of properties and accidents can be seen in his syllogistic reasoning, whereby the Countess is attributed with divinity on the basis of her possession of a property of divinity:

The syllogistic process utilized in such amplifications and image-making is sometimes that of the enthymeme (an abbreviated syllogism, with the middle term omitted) or sometimes merely implied in an imaginative bridging of a gap to arrive at an equation of diverse elements which can be reconciled only by such a process.7

Both processes combine in "To the Countess of Bedford."

Several other things about this poem should be noted in light of the discussion concerning the nature and tradition of the complimentary epistle. The didactic intent of the letter is obvious: the Countess becomes an idealized example of virtue which society can look up to. Amplification is achieved through the use of the traditional topics of praise, but Donne's own fecundity of invention and elocution dominates the encomiastic pattern in this epistle. Nevertheless, the basic topics can still be discerned in the background. Here as elsewhere in his complimentary

epistles, it is typical of Donne's practice to develop the topic of virtue in an elaborate conceit, while simply listing the other topics in a line or two. I have already suggested a reason for this practice—the symbolic level of the poem.

I have spent more time on this poem than I intend to spend on the next two, principally because it is the first of Donne's complimentary epistles considered and many of the same elements are operating in the other complimentary epistles and therefore, need not be discussed in as great detail.

"To the Countess of Huntingdon" ("MAN to Gods' image,...")

Donne begins this poem by apostrophising the Countess with an image drawn from the new astronomy: against the background of the generally inferior feminine state, the lady's virtue of "milde innocence" (v. 9), animi bona, seems rarer than any "transitory Comets" (v. 5). Donne asserts that there is no evidence in Scripture that women have souls, and points out that they cannot hold office in Church or State. He declares that harmlessness is rare among them, but active goodness a miracle:

MAN to Gods image, Eve, to mans was made,
Nor finde wee that God breath'd a soule in her,
Canons will not Church functions you invade,
Nor lawes to civill office you preferre.

In woma, so perchance milde innocence
A seldom comet is, but active good
A miracle, which reason scapes, and sense;
For, Art and Nature this in them withstood.

(p. 169, vv. 1-12)
Donne gives the image a didactic turn to show the lady as an exemplar of virtue:

As such a starre, the Magi led to view
The manger—cradled infant, God below:
By vertues beames by fame deriv'd from you,
May apt soules, and the worst may, vertue know.

(vv. 13-6)

Some might fear that virtue is nearing extinction since she has sunk so low as to inhabit a woman (vv. 17-20). On the contrary, Donne says that virtue "exiled by men" (v. 21), or "thinly scatter'd" (v. 23) among them, has fled to "heaven" and "heavenly things" (v. 22) and has become incarnate in the Countess. Virtue has transubstantiated the lady into herself:

But you are gold, and Shee;
Us she inform'd, but transubstantiates you;
Soft dispositions which ductile bee,
Elixarlike, she makes not cleane, but new.

(vv. 25-8)

The next two stanzas are the most difficult in the poem. On the surface, the stanzas contain an extravagant, hyperbolic conceit, with overtones of the Incarnation. However, Donne's debt to logic is also discernible here. The Countess, whose true essence or substance being virtue itself, is to be perceived only through the inseparable accidents of wifehood and motherhood, which are incident to her as subject.8 She has taken the nature of wife and mother upon her so that man might be able to understand true virtue:

Though you a wifes and mothers name retaine,
'Tis not a woman, for all are not soe,

8See Wiggins, Studies in Philology, XLII, 49.
But vertue having made you vertue, 'is faine
T'adhere in these names, her and you to show,

Else, being alike pure, wee should neither see;
As, water being into ayre rarify'd,
Neither appeare, till in one cloud they bee,
So, for our sakes you do low names abide...
(vv. 29-36)

Elizabeth Lewis Wiggins offers an explanation of these lines in terms of metaphysics:

Virtue is here made on accident which 'adheres in these names' as in subjects, which in turn may be considered accidents to their subject the Countess; she, however, is Virtue: thus her substance and accidents are one, and this is a property of divinity itself, according to Scholastic philosophy.9

Helen L. Gardner explicates these lines in this way:

Though you are known as a wife and mother, it is not to your womanhood that you owe these names, for not all women are wives and mothers. That is to say, you show your virtue, not your femininity, in being a wife and mother, for the words wife, mother, woman, are not interchangeable. Virtue, having made you virtue, has to find a way of displaying you and herself to the world. Both you and virtue are too pure for sight; but, just as when water evaporates into air, neither is visible until the aqueous vapour is condensed into a cloud, so, in order to become visible to men, you show virtue in the low forms of womanhood, wifehood, and motherhood.10

Both interpretations are equally valid and indicate the extravagant complexity of symbolism operating in the poem. On the surface, Donne is simply praising the Countess' virtue, but underneath lies a complicated web of symbolism. Donne here has transformed the poem into something personal and very meaningful.

9Studies in Philology, XLII, 50.
This complicated eulogy ends with Donne's disclaimer of flattery, during which he summarizes the topics of res gestae:

To whom, because from you all vertues flow,
And 'tis not none, to dare contemplate you,
I, which doe so, as your true subject owe
Some tribute for that, so these lines are due.

If you can thinke these flatteries, they are,
For then your judgement is below my praise,
If they were so, oft, flatteries work as farre,
As Counsels, and as farre th'endeavour raise.

So my ill reaching you might there grow good,
But I remaine a poysond fountaine still;
But not your beauty, vertue, knowledge, blood
Are more above all flattery, than my will.

(vv. 45-56.)

Aside from the obviously discernible traditional topics of praise, these lines are important for Donne's recognition of the affinity between counsel and praise: he has praised the Countess in the hope that she and others (including himself) might "grow good" (v. 53). The Countess, as the addressee, has become significantly involved, and Donne, by depicting her as an idealized example of virtue, has directed his counsel not only to society, but also to the Countess herself. He goes on to echo the traditional assertion of the supreme importance of animi bona:

And if I flatter any, 'tis not you
But my owne judgement, who did long agoe
Pronounce, that all these praises should be true,
And vertue should your beauty, 'and birth outgrow.

(vv. 57-60)

This letter does not have the interest or the beauty of the epistle "To the Countess of Bedford," but it does succeed in impressing upon us an ideal image of virtue. It possesses, like the first one, the complex symbolic level.
which can only be truly understood metaphorically. The traditional and conventional aspects of the poem are quite clear: the topics of praise, the address to a dual audience and the significant involvement of the addressee, and the didactic intent of the poem in using the subject as an idealized example.

"A Letter to the Lady Carey and Mrs. Essex Riche, From Amyens"

This letter was written not long after the Anniversaries and is in part an apology for having chosen Elizabeth Drury, a girl unknown to Donne, as a central figure in poems, casting into shadow his verse epistles to ladies of his own circle. The poem begins with a religious analogy whereby the ladies (the compliment is largely addressed to the first) become "Saints" (v. 1) and Donne their "Convertite" (v. 7):

Here where by All All Saints invoked are,  
'Twere too much schisme to be singular,  
And 'gainst a practise generall to warre.  
Yet turning to Saincts, should my'thumility  
To other Sainct than you directed bee,  
That were to make my schisme, heresie.  
Nor would I bee a Convertite so cold,  
As not to tell it; If this be too bold,  
Pardons are in this market cheaply sold.  
(p. 185–86, vv. 1–9)

Lady Carey is a firmament  
Of virtues, where no one is growne, or spent,  
They're your materials, not your ornament.  
(vv. 13–5)

The Lady is virtue; her substance and her accidents are one.

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11 See Stapleton, Studies in Philology, LV, 199.
There is no health in the predominance of one humour, neither is virtue divisible:

Others whom we call vertuous are not so
In their whole substance, but, their virtues grow
But in their humours, and at seasons show.

Antithesis is next introduced, based on the physical psychology of the four humours, and serves to deprecate the virtues of men when they suffer comparison with these two women (vv. 19-30). "We are thus but parcel guilt" (v. 31); virtue is true gold only when it is "our Soules complexion" (v. 32), as it is with these ladies. One should note in these lines (vv. 19-33) the use of the antithetical, or satiric, topic of blame and also the topic of comparatio, used as a supporting technique. A general treatment of animi bona (vv. 31-39) precedes the topic of beauty, corporis bona:

Shee therefore wrought upon that part of you
Which is scarce lesse than soule, as she could do,
And so hath made your beauty, Vertue too.

Their beauty itself is a compound of virtue:

What must I thinke that influence must doe,
Where it findes sympathie and matter too,
Vertue, and beauty of the same stuffe, as you?

In the background is the doctrine, emphasized by Renaissance neo-Platonists and familiar to us from Spenser, that beauty of body shadows forth beauty of soul. The two women are finally presented to society at large as influential and instructive examples of virtue (vv. 52-63).

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The symbolic level of this poem is not as complex as those in the two previously discussed poems. The ladies are simply idealized examples of virtue. The traditional and conventional aspects of the poem are obvious: the use of an antithetical topic of blame, the topics of praise, the address to a dual audience, and the blending of compliment and counsel.

The apparent extravagance and seeming hyperbolic intent of these compliments may initially seem inappropriate in a genre such as the verse letter, but it is actually only a further manifestation of Donne's analogy-making mind and his love for transcendent paradox, which is a constant quality of his art. The first two poems, "To the Countess of Bedford," and "To the Countess of Huntingdon," certainly demonstrate Donne's ability to be original and to transcend the conventional limits of such a complimentary poem. Comparison with Daniel and Jonson will verify this view.

Donne's unique approach to the encomiastic pattern in these poems is startling, but no more so than his constant evasiveness about animi bona or virtue. One can only tell intuitively what virtue symbolizes; he seldom particularizes the term. In addition to the previously suggested reasons for this occurrence, the following reasons might be added. Together with the Herbraic and mediaeval traditions of Wisdom, and the anima, the tradition of love poetry is operating in a symbolic fashion in these poems. Some evidence for this suggestion can be garnered from a comparison with Donne's love poetry, which has such elements...
running through it as Ovidian eroticism, late Mediaeval lyric praise of the Blessed Virgin, Provencal and Courtly love, pastoral love, and Petrarchan and Platonic idealizations. It is safe to say that Donne would not completely put these themes and traditions aside simply because he was writing a different kind of poem. The complimentary verse letters of Donne, like the deliberative epistles, are essentially more private in character than his other poems, and the didacticism, when it does appear, is not very serious. The main features of these poems, then, are their symbolic qualities and Donne’s manifestations of his complex thought-patterns.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

One of the basic problems for the student or critic of English literature is the question of deciding what is intrinsic to an understanding and appreciation of a work and what is extrinsic. With the advent and ensuing success of the "new criticism" in the twentieth century, this problem has become even more acute. Formal critics tend often to ignore the traditional and sociological context surrounding a work in the belief that such material would be extrinsic to the meaning. Much of the derogatory criticism of Donne's verse letters, as I have pointed out in the first chapter, has arisen because of this tendency.

I have attempted in this thesis to show precisely what the traditions of Donne's verse letters are, and it should be obvious from the discussions in Chapters II and IV that the nature of the verse epistle is not a simple one. It is part of two elaborate rhetorical traditions which extend back to classical times. In Chapters III and V, I have shown that without a knowledge of these traditions and their conventions it is impossible to truly understand and appreciate Donne's art in the verse epistle. In short, a knowledge of the traditions of Donne's verse letters is far from being extrinsic material.
In my analysis of representative examples of Donne's verse letters, I have shown how he handled the conventional pattern of such poems and, in some cases, how, in transcending it, he manifested his poetic talent and originality.

From the discussions in Chapters II and IV, one fact is overwhelmingly obvious—the importance of rhetoric in the study of Renaissance poetry, particularly in the work of a man like Donne, who was a poet as well as an orator. Grierson makes this point about Donne quite clear:

...his poetry and his oratory have much in common, for poetry as an art may be said to move between the poles of song or music on the one hand and of eloquence on the other...But the poetry of Donne...is neither the one nor the other. It is the poetry of talk vigorous and direct.\(^1\)

There has been a great deal of recent scholarship concerning the influence of rhetoric on Renaissance poetry, but there is much to be done, even on Donne's verse letters. The rhetorical tradition of prose epistles and its precise relationship to the composition of the verse epistle has never been explored.\(^2\) The influence of the mediaeval artes dictaminis and their Renaissance formations on the invention and structure of the verse epistle also has not been sufficiently treated.

Although there has been a large amount of criticism devoted to Donne's image-making and thought patterns in the Songs and Sonnets and Divine Poems, almost no work


\(^2\)Donne, himself wrote well over a hundred prose letters.
has been done on these aspects in the verse letters. There is need, it seems to me, for a study of the symbolic qualities of the verse letters especially. I am sure there is much to be unravelled in this area which would cast further light not only on our comprehension of the verse epistles, but also on a great deal of Donne's poetry in general.

It is, of course, evident to the most casual reader of Donne's poetry that logic was an important influence. And this would be quite natural in view of Donne's training in scholastic philosophy and theology. Modern scholarship has, indeed, begun to explore this relation of logic to the poetry of Donne as well as to that of other Renaissance poets. The precise nature and extent of this relationship, however, has yet to be established, and, while I have indicated in this thesis some of the connections between logic and the rhetorical traditions of the verse letters, much remains to be done in this area too. As I have shown, the verse letters are a significant element in Donne's work, and no study of any aspect of Donne which ignores the verse letters can be regarded as in any way complete.

This study has broken the ground, at least, for further criticism and scholarship. It has shown that the derogatory criticism of Donne's verse letters is founded on misconceptions and failure to understand their context. It has demonstrated, rather, that the poems are of significant value and that they prove rewarding when subjected to the same kind of examination that has been previously limited.
to his other work.

Just as Donne insists that all virtue is one, so his poetic work is a unity and he is "diminished" if any part of his canon is ignored. Indeed, his famous sentence, "No man is an Iland, intire of it self; every man is a peace of the Continent, a part of the maine," might aptly be applied to his poetry. No part of his poetry, such as the Songs and Sonnets, is an island, entire of itself; each element (the verse letters, for example) is a necessary part of his poetic canon. To ignore such an element as the verse letters is to "diminish" Donne's poetic genius.

APPENDIX A

A CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF JOHN DONNE'S LETTERS TO SEVERAL PERSONAGES

The dating of Donne's Letters to Several Personages has in many cases not been established. In this thesis, I have accepted R.C. Bald's assignment of one group of epistles to the earlier part of the decade 1590-1600. In the case of the verse letter addressed to the Countess of Huntingdon that begins "That unripe side of the earth...", I have accepted John Yoklavich's dating. Otherwise, I have usually been guided by the dates suggested by Herbert J.C. Grierson in the notes of his edition. I have divided the poems into three different groups: those addressed to his friends (deliberative epistles); those addressed to "Noble Ladies," or his patronesses (complimentary epistles); and those addressed to his friend Christopher Brook (the "Calme" and the "Storme") which do not fit into either one or the other.

1See "Donne's Early Verse Letters," Huntington Library Quarterly, XV (May, 1952), 283-89. The author argues both from internal and external evidence for an earlier dating of this group of letters than that offered by Grierson. His position seems quite valid.


3See The Poems of John Donne (Oxford, 1912), II, pp. 130-133.
traditions conveniently and moreover are narrative in nature.

A. DELIBERATIVE EPISTLES

1. "To Mr. T.W." (Thomas Woodward) ("ALL haile sweet Poët...") 1592-94
2. "To Mr. T.W." (Thomas Woodward) ("HASTE thee harsh verse...") 1592-94
3. "To Mr. T.W." (Thomas Woodward) ("PREGNANT again with...") 1592-94
4. "To Mr. T.W." (Thomas Woodward) ("At once, from hence...") 1592-94
5. "To Mr. R.W." (Rowland Woodward) ("ZEALOUSLY my Muse...") 1592-94
6. "To Mr. R.W." (Rowland Woodward) ("MUSE not that by thy Mind...") 1592-94
7. "To Mr. C.B." (Christopher Brooke) ("THY friend, whom thy...") 1592-94
8. "To Mr. R.W." (Rowland Woodward) ("KINDLY I envy thy songs...") 1592-94
9. "To Mr. S.B." (Samuel Brooke) ("O THOU which...") late 1592 or early 1593
10. "To Mr. I.L." (personage unknown) ("Of that short Roll...") not earlier than 1589 and not later than 1594
11. "To Mr. B.B." (Beaupré Bell?) ("Is not thy sacred...") late 1593 or early 1594
12. "To Mr. E.G." (Edward Gilpin) ("EVEN as lame things...") summer 1593
13. "To Mr. I.L." (personage unknown) ("BLEST are your North parts...") August 1594
14. "To Mr. R.W." (Rowland Woodward) ("If, as mine is...") 1597
15. "To Sir Henry Wotton" ("Sir, more than kisses...") 1597-98
17. "Henrico Wottoni In Hibernia Belligeranti" 1599
18. "To Mr. Rowland Woodward"  
    ("Like one who'in her third...")  
    1599

    Going Ambassador To Venice"  
    1604

20. "To Sir Henry Goodyere"  
    ("Who makes the Past...")  
    1605-08

21. "To Sir Edward Herbert At Julyers"  
    1610

B. COMPLIMENTARY EPISTLES

1. "To The Countess Of Bedford  
    On New-Yeares day"  
    after 1600  
    probably 1607-08

2. "To Mrs. M.H." (Magdalen Herbert)  
    ("MAD paper stay...")  
    1604

3. "To The Countesse Of Huntingdon"  
    ("THAT unripe side of earth...")  
    after 1605  
    not later than 1614

4. "To The Countesse Of Bedford  
    ("MADAME,/Reason is our Soules...")  
    1607-08

5. "To The Countesse Of Bedford  
    ("MADAME,/You have refin'd mee,...")  
    1607-08

6. "To The Countesse Of Bedford"  
    ("I'AVE written then,...")  
    after 1609

7. "To The Lady Bedford"  
    ("You that are she and you,...")  
    after 1609

8. "To The Countesse Of Bedford"  
    ("HONOUR is so sublime perfection,...")  
    1611-12

9. "To The Countess Of Bedford  
    Begun in France but never perfected"  
    1611-12

10. "A Letter To The Lady Carey And  
    Mrs. Essex Riche, From Amyens"  
    1611-12

11. "To The Countesse Of Salisbury"  
    August 1614

12. "To The Countesse Of Huntingdon"  
    ("Madame,/Man to Gods image...")  
    1614-15

C. NARRATIVE EPISTLES

1. "To Mr. Christopher Brooke"  
    "The Storme"  
    1597
2. "To Mr. Christopher Brooke"
"The Calme"
1597
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Dissertations


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