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# THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RICHARD HURD'S LITERARY CRITICISM

by
Michael Joseph Marcuse

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(English Language and Literature)
in The University of Michigan
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Doctoral Committee:

Professor H. V. S. Ogden, Chairman
Professor Alexander W. Allison
Professor Otto G. Graf
Professor Morris Greenhut

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TO GISELA

AND

TO THOSE
WHOSE PRESENCE
GAVE ME REASON TO BELIEVE
THAT WRITING A DOCTORAL DISSERTATION
IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
IN 1971 WAS NOT ANACHRONISTIC

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I must acknowledge those whose earlier scholarship has been enabling to me in this study of Hurd's criticism and its significance. I am especially grateful for the meticulous research of Mrs. Edwine Montague Martz, whose dissertation (Yale, 1939) records her painstaking labors. And I must acknowledge the Interlibrary Loan Staff at the University of Michigan Graduate Library for their great help in locating materials and making them available to me.

And, too, I must record my appreciation for the patient care of my doctoral committee, Professors Allison, Graf, and Greenhut, and especially for the kindness of its chairman, Professor H. V. S. Ogden. He erred only in blaming himself for my deficiencies.

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MJM

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| Aristotle (trans. Bywater) | Bywater, Ingram, ed. *Aristotle On the Art of Poetry. A Revised Text with Critical Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*. Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1909. |
| Bacon (trans. Spedding) | *The Works of Francis Bacon*. Ed. by Spedding, James, Ellis, Robert Leslie, and Heath, Douglas Denon. 14 vols. New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1864. |
| Coleridge (ed. Raysor) | Raysor, Thomas Middleton, ed. *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Shakespearean Criticism*. 2nd ed. 2 vols. London: Dent (Everyman's Library), 1960. |
| Coleridge (ed. Shawcross) | Shawcross, J., ed. *Biographia Literaria by S. T. Coleridge . . . with his Aesthetical Essays*. 2 vols. London: Oxford University Press, 1907. |
| *CPB* | "Commonplace Book" of Richard Hurd. Unpublished MSS at Hartlebury Castle: 2 vols. folio, 1 vol. quarto, dated 1744-1808 (?). |
| Dryden (ed. Watson) | Watson, George, ed. *John Dryden: Of Dramatic Poesy and Other Critical Essays*. 2 vols. London: Dent (Everyman's Library), 1962. |
| Horace (trans. Fairclough) | Fairclough, H. Rushton, trans. *Horace: Satires, Epistles and Ars Poetica*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press (Loed Classical Library), 1926. Reprinted 1966. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Hurd's Addison | Hurd, Richard, ed. The Works of the Right Honourable Joseph Addison, A New Edition, with Notes. . . . 6 vols. London: for T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1811. |
| Hurd's Cowley | [Hurd, Richard], ed. Select Works of Mr. A. Cowley . . . with a Preface and Notes. 2 vols. Dublin: for J. Ekshaw, D. Chamberlaine, W. Sleater, J J. Williams, W. Wilson, T. Walker, and C. Jenkin, 1772. |
| Kilvert | Kilvert, Francis, Rev. Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Richard Hurd . . . with a Selection from His Correspondence and Other Unpublished Papers. London: Richard Bentley, 1860. |
| Martz dissertation | [Martz], Edwine Montague. "Bishop Hurd as Critic." Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Yale University, 1939. |
| Mason Letters | Pearce, Ernest Harold, and Whibley, Leonard, eds. The Correspondence of Richard Hurd & William Mason. Cambridge: at the University Press, 1932. |
| Nankivell | Nankivell, James, Rev. "Extracts from the Destroyed Letters of Richard Hurd to William Mason," MLR, XLV (April, (April, 1950), 153-63. |
| Sidney (ed. Shepherd) | Shepherd, Geoffrey, ed. Sir Philip Sidney: An Apology for Poetry or The Defense of Poesy. London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1965. |
| Spingarn | Spingarn, Joel E., ed. Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century. 3 vols. Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1908-9. Reissued Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1957. |

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|---|---|
| Warburton *Letters* | [Hurd, Richard], ed. *Letters of a Late Eminent Prelate to One of His Friends*. 3rd ed. London: for T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1809. |
| Warburton Life | Hurd, Richard, ed. *The Works of the Right Reverend William Warburton, D. D., Lord Bishop of Gloucester. A New edition. . . . to which is Prefixed a Discourse by Way of General Preface; Containing Some Account of the Life, Writings, and Character of the Author*. 12 vols. London: for T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1811. Volume I. |

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

A satisfying consensus has not been reached regarding the significance of Bishop Richard Hurd's literary criticism, either in itself or in the larger context of the history of criticism in England. His work has nevertheless seemed important enough to warrant the attention of a relatively large number of modern scholars. And it has been rich and complex enough to occasion considerable differences of opinion.

Not only recent commentators have been unable to achieve consensus about Hurd. The reactions of his contemporaries are also perplexing--he seems to belong to no group among them. Dr. Johnson finds Hurd too "scientific:"

> one of a set of men who account for every thing systematically; for instance, it has been a fashion to wear scarlet breeches; these men would tell you, that according to causes and effects, no other wear could at that time be chosen.[1]

Percy, though welcoming the respectable light which Hurd casts on the "Old Romances" (in the Letters on Chivalry and

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[1] Boswell's Life of Johnson, ed. by George Birkbeck Hill, revised and enlarged by L. F. Powell (6 vols.; Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1934), IV, 219.

Romance),[1] regrets Hurd's insufficient commitment to their thorough study, his reliance on others (like Percy himself) to do the "spade-work."[2] Mason, a closer acquaintance, jokes with a mutual friend Gray about Hurd's penchant for over-nice annotation. Imagining his editing of their correspondence, Mason suggests to Gray that Hurd would probably misunderstand a metaphor and then note a correction.[3] Gray leaves a thumb-nail sketch of Hurd as "the last person who left off stiff-topped gloves."[4] And Boswell records Johnson's fear that Hurd was "a Whig in his heart."[5] In short, his contemporaries find Hurd both over-systematic and dilettantish; both laughably conservative and insufficiently traditional. It is perhaps not merely fanciful to see in these mixed and random comments of Hurd's contemporaries

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[1]Letter to Richard Farmer of September 9, 1762, in Cleanth Brooks, ed., The Correspondence of Thomas Percy & Richard Farmer, Vol. II of The Percy Letters, ed. by David Nichol Smith and Cleanth Brooks (6 vols.; Baton Rouge: The Louisiana State University Press, 1944-57, and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), p. 7.

[2]Letter to William Shenstone of June 17, 1762, Ibid., p. 5.

[3]Letter to Thomas Gray of July 16, 1767, in The Letters of Thomas Gray, ed. by Duncan C. Tovey (3 vols.; London: Bohn's Standard Library, 1904-12), I, 147.

[4]In "Reminiscences of Gray" appended to the Tovey edition of the Letters, II, 291.

[5]Boswell's Life of Johnson, ed. by Hill and Powell, IV, 219.

a foreshadowing of differences among recent scholars.

* * *

Aside from a biographical memoir,[1] Hurd's writings were not commented on until the end of the nineteenth century. Phelps' famous study of the Beginnings of the English Romantic Movement (Boston: Ginn & Co., 1895) was the first modern attempt to assess Hurd's significance. The context into which Hurd fit was, of course, the only context for which Phelps valued the eighteenth-century generally: that is, as a preparation for Romanticism. Phelps sees Hurd as one of the earliest and boldest prophets of the coming revolution, whose work did much to accelerate its triumph, especially through his help in "dethroning Pope by exalting the imaginative poets."[2] This view of Hurd's significance as a prophet of Romanticism--a "pre-romantic"--was shared by many commentators of the next several decades.[3] It is

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[1]Francis Kilvert, Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Richard Hurd (London: Richard Bentley, 1860).

[2]W. L. Phelps, p. 115.

[3]The "pre-romantic" interpretations include: Edith J. Morley, ed., Hurd's Letters on Chivalry and Romance with the Third Elizabethan Dialogue (London: H. Frowde, 1911), introduction; Herbert E. Cory, The Critics of Spenser (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1911), pp. 168ff.; Clarissa Rinaker, Thomas Warton: A Biographical and Critical Study, University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, II (1916), 56ff.; Harko Gerrit de Maar, Elizabethan Romance in the Eighteenth Century (Zalt-Bommel, Netherlands: N. V. Van de Garde & Co.'s Druckkerij, 1924), published in England as A History of Modern English Romanticism, Volume I, Elizabethan and Modern Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century (London: Oxford University Press, 1924), p. 230; Henry A. Beers, A History of English Romanticism in the Eighteenth-Century (New York: Henry Holt and Company,

held most firmly by those whose acquaintance with Hurd is limited to a particular reading of the Letters on Chivalry and Romance and who stress the centrality of that work in that reading. This view of Hurd's significance is generally held also by those who would place authors always in the context of historical movements from one pole (e.g. neo-classicism) to its categorical antithesis (e.g. romanticism).

Four years after Phelps' study, Paul Hamelius published his history of seventeenth and eighteenth-century literary criticism. His "controlling idea" is the rise of "historischen Kritik" or "Philologie." He thinks of Hurd as transcending the neo-classical-versus-romantic antithesis, seeking a higher criticism, and finding it in "the historical point of view."[1] Partially accepting the categorical antithesis, Hamelius places Hurd in the neo-classical camp, but reminds us that, though neo-classicist, Hurd "begünstigt

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1899; reprinted New York: Dover Books, 1968), pp. 221ff.; Aisso Bosker, Literary Criticism in the Age of Johnson (Groningen: J. B. Wolters, 1930; 2nd ed., rev., New York: Hafner, 1953), chap. 22; Jewel Wurtsbaugh, Two Centuries of Spenserian Scholarship, 1609-1805 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1932), p. 119; Frederick C. Green, Minuet (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1935), republished with the title Literary Ideas in 18th Century France and England (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1966), p. 267; and others reviewed in the text.

[1]Die Kritik in der englischen Literatur des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts (Leipzig: T. Grieben, 1897), pp. 146, 166.

eher die Romantik durch seine Schriften über Spenser und das Rittertum."[1] Hamelius' view of Hurd is more complex than Phelps' reading: he essays three comments on Hurd's significance: (1) that he is fundamentally neo-classical in his allegiances; (2) that his work was nevertheless enabling to the Romantics; and (3) that his work is an achievement in the establishment of an historical relativism in literary criticism.

Twentieth-century views of Hurd's general significance can be said to involve further elaboration of the views of Phelps and Hamelius, with a majority of commentary through the thirties circling about Phelps' view and, since then, more and more fully extending the interpretation of Hamelius.

* * *

Hurd's first major appearance in Saintsbury's 1904 history is as author of the quotation which serves to headnote Book VII, "The Dissolvents of Neo-classicism."[2] There is no doubt in Saintsbury's mind about Hurd's position in the history of criticism. Nor is there much doubt in Samuel Holt Monk's view thirty years later. "Hurd," says Monk, "represents a break with the ancients, the rules, and the

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[1] Ibid., p. 172. See also p. 147.

[2] George Saintsbury, A History of Criticism and Literary Taste in Europe from the Earliest Texts to the Present Day (3 vols.; Edinburgh: W. Blackwood and Sons, 1900-1904), III, 1.

neo-classical conception of nature."[1]

In 1937, though, a brief article appeared in PMLA which posed an important question about Hurd's Letters on Chivalry and Romance. The author, Victor M. Hamm, compares Hurd's so-called "landmark in the Genesis of the Romantic Movement"[2] with a brief dialogue by Jean Chapelain written in the middle of the seventeenth-century, published posthumously in 1743, and titled De la Lecture des Vieux Romans. Hamm notices similarities between Hurd and Chapelain which he summarizes as follows: "relativistic approach to literature and criticism; comparison of 'Gothic' with 'Heroic' manners, often to the advantage of the former; and preference for the 'Gothic' marvelous."[3] He offers parallel passages to support his contention of a direct influence and concludes by remarking that

> much of the "new" and "radical" in Hurd's work must seem strangely tame and derivative when we realize that it had already been uttered more than a hundred years before, and by the founder of French classicism itself.[4]

Though his interests were elsewhere, Hamelius had already pointed in this direction in 1897 as had A. O. Lovejoy in his "Parallel of Deism and Classicism." Lovejoy's

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[1]Samuel Holt Monk, The Sublime: A Study of Critical Theories in XVIII-Century England (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1935; reissued Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1960), pp. 235-36.

[2]"A Seventeenth-Century Source for Hurd's Letters on Chivalry and Romance," PMLA, LII (1937), 821.

[3]Ibid., p. 824. [4]Ibid., p. 828.

1932 essay associated Hurd's early work with strictly neo-classical "uniformitarian rationalism," and remarked the manner in which Hurd, in other works (one assumes the Letters on Chivalry and Romance), tended to contradict his early views.[1] After Hamm had questioned the revolutionary character of even the Letters, it really seemed no longer possible to ignore Hurd's connections with the neo-classical tradition.

Given this imperative, one could talk about a split in Hurd's personality, much as R. D. Havens, exploring Thomas Warton's "dilemma,"[2] had argued that Warton's intellect was firmly bound to neo-classicism, while his heart yearned for romance. This "unreconciled dualism between head and heart," as René Wellek calls it,[3] was also proposed in terms of a neo-classical poetics confronted by, and made to account for, a taste for romances. Such, at least, is the account Mrs. Edwine Montague Martz offers in her 1939 Yale dissertation.[4] Mrs. Martz believes that Hurd possessed a melancholy romantic temperament, which provided the continuing impetus for a gradual development from neo-classi-

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[1] Modern Philology, XXIX (1932), 281-99; repr. in Essays in the History of Ideas (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1948), pp. 78-98. See, especially, pp. 92-93.

[2] "Thomas Warton and the Eighteenth-Century Dilemma," SP, XXV (1928), 36-50.

[3] A History of Modern Criticism, Vol. I: The Later Eighteenth Century (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), p. 130.

[4] Dissertation Abstracts, XXVII, 4258A-9A.

cal to romantic views, and culminated in the wholly romantic Letters on Chivalry and Romance. In her later, well-argued discussion of "Bishop Hurd's Association with Thomas Warton,"[1] Mrs. Martz responds also to Hamm's view, insisting that Hurd's significance as a prophet of Romanticism is not impaired by the "derivativeness" of the Letters, since his immediate influence on Warton was nonetheless extensive. For Montague, their combined influence in pointing out "the forgotten treasures of early English literature," and in significantly evaluating "the Gothic beauties of Spenser, Ariosto, Tasso, and Milton" accumulates to argue for their "startling radicalism."[2]

Audley Smith, in a subsequently published section from his 1938 dissertation,[3] shares with Mrs. Martz a belief in Hurd's essential romanticism in spite of his neo-classical affiliations. Rather than accepting her view of a gradual development, however, Smith sees Hurd's Letters as a sudden about-face: "Having vigorously defended for more than a decade the orthodox precepts of his day, Richard Hurd finally yielded to the romantic spell," in a conversion that

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[1]Published in Stanford Studies in Language and Literature, ed. by Hardin Craig (Celebrating the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Founding of Stanford University; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1941), PP. 233-56.

[2]Ibid., pp. 255-56.

[3]"Richard Hurd's Letters on Chivalry and Romance," ELH, VII (1939), 58-81.

was permanent.[1] Smith proposes that Hurd's romanticism as demonstrated in his treatment of Spenser has less to do with his apparently unoriginal view of the "Gothic" regularity of The Faerie Queene, and more with his enthusiastic "aesthetic appreciation of Spenser's 'celestial song and music's wondrous might.'"[2] He also affirms the novelty of Hurd's "historical point of view," seeking to counteract similar arguments about its "derivativeness."[3]

Several years later, Hoyt Trowbridge published an article that was to have an enormous impact on future interpretations of Hurd.[4] Declining to accept a discontinuity in Hurd's writings (whether attributed to a split between head and heart, a gradual development, or a sudden conversion), Trowbridge seeks to demonstrate "the underlying unity of Hurd's thought" by emphasizing "not doctrines and conclusions but a way of reasoning, a critical method."[5] Through this focus he hopes to "outflank the traditional critics of Hurd"[6] whose preoccupation with his literal statements, some apparently traditional and others revolutionary, had led to the need for unlikely explanations.

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[1] Ibid., pp. 58, 65. [2] Ibid., p. 78.

[3] See below, p. 14. Smith's thesis of a "definite shift in critical position" is echoed in H. T. Swedenbourg, Jr., The Theory of the Epic in England, 1650-1800 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1944), pp. 167-68.

[4] "Bishop Hurd: A Reinterpretation," PMLA, LVIII (1943), 450-465.

[5] Ibid., p. 451. [6] Ibid.

Hurd's method, according to Trowbridge, consists of three related elements. It is first of all a priori and deductive, seeking to establish principles which "apply to particular works by necessity and without reference to authority or to poetic precedent."[1] This method is grounded, according to Trowbridge, on Hurd's assumption of the human mind's uniformity. This assumption "governs the deduction of his critical principles and determines the specific rules of the art."[2] Finally, Trowbridge argues, Hurd's method involves the application of these universal poetic principles as they are systematically deduced through the assumption of psychological uniformity, by means of the theory of kinds or literary genres.[3] Trowbridge calls Hurd's method "a systematic relativism." Such relativism requires "that all of Hurd's propositions be understood in their systematic context; except in their most general form, the rules are not transferable from one kind to another."[4] On this basis, Trowbridge interprets Hurd's Letters as an attempt at the systematic discovery of the rules which govern the particular genres of medieval romances and of Renaissance epics. Such an attempt is hardly a manifesto for the Romantic revolution. In fact, Trowbridge finds Hurd fundamentally neo-classical, representative of "the systematic and rational neo-classicism of the 1750's and 60's," a kind of neo-classicism which

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[1] Ibid., p. 452.

[2] Ibid., pp. 453-54

[3] Ibid., p. 455.

[4] Ibid., pp. 457-58.

Trowbridge associates with critics such as Hume, Kames, Reynolds, and Burke.[1]

After Trowbridge, other commentators pointed to neo-classical features of Hurd's writings. Walter Jackson Bate, in 1946, mentions Hurd's views as prime examples of the expression of a strictly uniformitarian conception of human nature.[2] John Butt stresses Hurd's adherence to the neo-classic doctrine of literary kinds. He celebrates Hurd's work on Spenser and the romances as an example of the degree to which "a possibility of growth and development" inhered in the methods of neo-classical criticism. "The tradition," says Butt, "was capable of adapting itself to new forms and conditions of writing without changing its essentially 'regular' nature."[3] Meyer Abrams also stresses the degree to which Hurd is associated with neo-classical poetics. He labels Hurd's early "Discourse on Poetical Imitation" "the most systematic of all expressions of uniformitarian theory,"[4] and bemoans the fact that "on the basis of isolated passages from his Letters on Chivalry and Romance, Hurd is commonly

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[1] Ibid., pp. 464-65.

[2] From Classic to Romantic (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1946; repr. New York: Harper and Row, 1961), pp. 5, 9.

[3] The Augustan Age (London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1950; repr. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1966), p. 45.

[4] The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition (London: Oxford University Press, 1953; repr. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1958), pp. 230-31.

treated as a 'pre-romantic' critic."[1] Ronald Crane, too, supports this general interpretation. Consonant with his opinion that affiliations between critics are discovered by a common critical vocabulary, Crane points out the extent to which Hurd's vocabulary is shared with Rapin, though their doctrines, of course, differ somewhat.[2] Crane is responding here to J. W. H. Atkins' continuation, albeit in muted tones, of the "pre-romantic" view of Hurd's significance.[3]

There are others who have shared Atkins' view. George Sherburn celebrates Hurd's occasional pre-romanticism, notes his ardent defense of many neo-classical views, and explains that "such apparent confusion must be expected in most so-called 'liberal' critics of the time."[4] Aisso Bosker, in his 1953 revision of his history of criticism in the second half of the eighteenth-century, originally published in 1930, upholds his earlier view in the face of the Trowbridge-Crane argument. Because Hurd "champions the

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[1] Ibid., p. 18.

[2] "On Writing the History of Criticism in England, 1650-1800," UTQ, XXII (1953), 376-391; repr. in The Idea of the Humanities and Other Essays Critical and Historical (2 vols., Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967), II, 169.

[3] J. W. H. Atkins, English Literary Criticism, 17th and 18th Centuries (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1951; repr. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1966), pp. 215-16, 223.

[4] George Sherburn, The Restoration and the Eighteenth Century, Vol. III of A Literary History of England, ed. by Albert C. Baugh (4 vols., New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1948); Vol. III rev. by Donald F. Bond for the 2nd ed., 1967, p. 988.

cause of the imagination and emotion," Bosker is unwilling to accept the view "that he is merely an 'enlightened' neo-classicist." "His criticism," continues Bosker,

> is openly directed against reason, correctness, and rational truth, the main pillars of Augustanism. Therefore the importance of the Letters on Chivalry and Romance in the history of the emancipation of critical thought from the bondage of rationalism cannot easily be over-estimated.[1]

Bosker also denies the conversion theory put forward by Audley Smith and suggests that Hurd's "incipient romanticism" is in evidence in his earliest works, a view similar to that advanced by Montague.

* * *

Disagreements between those who think of Hurd as a pre-romantic and those who see him as fundamentally neo-classical seem incapable of resolution. Much depends on what is understood as characteristic of the neo-classical camp, what fundamental to the romantic (or pre-romantic) category. For Phelps an interest in things medieval is the decisive characteristic, pre-romantics have it, neo-classicists do not. For Bosker the division turns on the reason-passion dichotomy: those whose interest is in the thought-content of poetry are neo-classical, while those who focus on its emotional and "imaginative" qualities are romantic. For Trowbridge the neo-classical critic is interested in a systematic poetics, the romantic presumably is

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[1] Literary Criticism in the Age of Johnson (Groningen: J. B. Wolters, 1930; 2nd. ed., rev. New York: Hafner, 1953), p. 274.

not a system-builder. Butt contrasts the essential 'regularity' of the neo-classicals with romantic love of the irregular. Crane looks to vocabulary to find grounds for distinction; others stress Lovejoy's polarization of uniformitarian neo-classicism and romantic diversitarianism.

Given this confusion of views, it seems natural to seek another context in which to place Hurd. Many commentators, beginning with Hamelius, have sought this more general context in "the historical point of view." Here, too, much depends on what is understood as essential to the view: depending on that, Hurd has it or he doesn't.

It will be recalled that Paul Hamelius in 1897 had looked at Hurd's writings primarily from the point of view of one seeking to establish the origins and development of "historischen Kritik" in literary criticism. He found Hurd a pivotal figure in this connection. When Audley Smith addressed himself to this issue, nearly half-a-century later, it had become clear that Hurd's use of history was hardly original among literary critics. Smith, concerned to show Hurd's particular contribution, enumerates many of Hurd's predecessors who also used history in the criticism of literature and argues that Hurd's originality lies not in the use of the method per se, but in its use "to interpret and justify poetry not highly regarded."[1] Given Smith's fundamental emphasis on Hurd's pre-romanticism, his

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[1]Audley L. Smith, "Richard Hurd's Letters on Chivalry and Romance," ELH, VII (1939), 68-69.

conception of the significance of Hurd's "historical point of view" is also explained as an essentially pre-romantic viewpoint. By pointing out the determinate relation obtaining between a work and the particular historical circumstances out of which it grows, Hurd is on his way, according to Smith, to the romantic notion of organic form, for a view which emphasizes the degree to which a work is dependent on a unique set of historical circumstances is beginning to insist that the "form" of a work is unique to that work.[1]

Friedrich Meinecke had already argued against such an interpretation. He associated Hurd with a number of other mid-century critics, all of whom failed to rid themselves fully of the Enlightenment quest for absolute normative principles. Says Meinecke of Hurd:

> er schoss in seiner Begeisterung für alles Gotische und Romantische in der Poesie nun gleich über das Ziel hinaus und kehrte das normative klassizistische Kunstideal, das es zu bekämpfen galt, nur um, wenn er die gotischen Sitten und Fiktionen als besser geeignet für die Zwecke der Poesie, wie die klassischen erklärte.[2]

In spite of this inversion of the normative quest, Meinecke finds many of Hurd's views genuinely pre-historical, such as his argument for the determinate relation between the structure of literature and the time and place of its cre-

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[1] Ibid., p. 74.

[2] Friedrich Meinecke, Die Entstehung des Historismus (2 vols.; Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1936; published later as Vol. III of the Werke, ed. by Carl Hinrichs (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1959), p. 255.

ation[1] (this alone was sufficient to define "the historical point of view" for Smith), and his comparison of classical and Gothic methods for achieving unity.[2] In contrast to Smith's view, Meinecke's conception of genuine Historismus consists in the refusal to make universal normative statements about any historical phenomena. Because Hurd fails to keep himself from such statements, he does not belong among those who have "the view."

René Wellek echoes Meinecke's opinion. Regarding Hurd's Letters he writes: "there is little in the book that can be described as historical; the Letters are a plea for the poetical use of Gothic manners and a defense of the composition of The Faerie Queene . . . ."[3] For Wellek neither an apology nor a manifesto are proper to the genuinely historical critic.

The most recent extensive study of Hurd, a 1962 Wisconsin dissertation by Steven J. Curry, argues against the Meinecke-Wellek view. Curry accepts Trowbridge's general assessment, but argues that labelling Hurd is less important than fully analyzing his critical method. This method, according to Curry, is a peculiar combination of genre criticism with the full use of "the historical

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[1] Ibid., p. 256.

[2] Ibid., p. 257.

[3] The Rise of English Literary History (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1941), p. 154.

method."[1] In a later article, appropriately titled "The Use of History in Bishop Hurd's Literary Criticism," Curry argues that Hurd is "the first to give a convincing demonstration of how neo-classical rules need modification if the critic is to accept the influence that environment had upon writers of the past."[2] According to Curry, Hurd uses the historical method "to arrive at a point where one can put the traditional rules into practice."[3] Curry's work is essentially an elaboration of the practical meaning of Trowbridge's concept of "systematic relativism." His suggestion that Hurd's procedure is in the tradition of historical exegesis which reaches back to Erasmus is apt. For Curry, the historical point of view is synonymous with the interpretive procedure elaborated by this tradition.

Since 1962, there has been no extensive study of Hurd. A few scholars have, however, made some particularly suggestive contributions to the continuing discussion. Chapman, in his edition of passages from literary critics, 1660-1800, offers this comment in a headnote to a quotation from Hurd's "Idea of Universal Poetry:"

> By disentangling poetic structure from accessory questions of utility, instruction, or historical subject-matter, Hurd recovered a more purely

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[1] Dissertation Abstracts, XXIII, p. 2133.

[2] Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters, LIV (1965), 83.

[3] Ibid., p. 86.

> Aristotelian approach than was common at mid-century.[1]

In a similar vein, Arthur Johnston, in his study of medieval romance in the eighteenth-century, makes this interesting comment:

> Hurd is Chapelain's returning Aristotle, prepared to find "Une matière d'Art poétique" in Spenser, which could be applied to test romantic or Gothic structure.[2]

Johnston is referring here to Chapelain's De la Lecture des Vieux Romans in which Chapelain prophesies:

> If Aristotle were to come back and take it into his head to find the subject-matter of a poetics in Lancelot, I am sure he would succeed just as well as with the Illiad or the Odyssey, and that his intelligence or his authority would easily overcome the inconveniences which he might encounter . . . .[3]

Other recent commentators are less complimentary to Hurd than Johnston and Chapman. Hoyt Trowbridge's brief introduction to the Augustan Reprint Society's photocopy of Hurd's Letters on Chivalry and Romance is a restatement, more or less, of his earlier and more serious study. He concludes his remarks with this assessment:

> Hurd is not a critic of major status or significance.

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[1]Gerald Wester Chapman, ed. Literary Criticism in England, 1660-1800 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), p. 377.

[2]Arthur Johnston, Enchanted Ground: The Study of Medieval Romance in the 18th Century (London: The Athlone Press, 1964), p. 66. ff

[3]Taken from the translation of Chapelain's essay in Scott Elledge and Donald Schier, eds., The Continental Model: Selected French Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century, in English Translation (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1960; rev. ed. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970), p. 37.

> He is never very weighty. In philosophical scope and penetration he cannot be compared with Burke or Gerard, to say nothing of Hume, and as an historian he does not pretend to compete with Warton, Sainte-Palaye, or Dr. Johnson. . . . Preferring the amateur and relaxed standards of the easy style, he was usually content with facile generalizations and ingenious conjectures in both aspects of his criticism. Granting all this, however, we may still claim a certain position for him as an interesting minor writer . . . .[1]

Whatever this "certain position" might be, Trowbridge, an affiliate of the Chicago school, would hardly be prepared to grant Hurd a position such as "Chapelain's returning Aristotle."

Nor would Lawrence Lipking. His newly published study, The Ordering of the Arts in Eighteenth Century England (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), is concerned with tracing the history of histories of the fine arts through their development in the eighteenth-century. Lipking, like Wellek, finds Hurd a meager historian. And, "as a critic," asserts Lipking,

> Hurd is an amphibian. He accepts the prejudices against medieval wildness and credulity--he knew the medieval romances only through Sainte-Palaye and Chapelain--and ingeniously reverses the argument by preferring wild epics to more regular art. Facile conjectures like these seem to cost him very little thought. With the same ease he could defend the aesthetic priority of Horace or Spenser, truth or allegory, and accommodate his tastes to each new context.[2]

Lipking argues that the basis for Hurd's contemporary

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[1]Augustan Reprint Society, nos. 101-102 (Los Angeles: The William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 1963), pp. viii-ix.

[2]Lipking, pp. 358-59.

influence was his "willingness to defend any taste on systematic principles,"[1] which is how Lipking dismisses the critical method that Trowbridge had dubbed "systematic relativism" and that Curry had linked with the tradition of historical exegesis stemming from Erasmus. George Saintsbury, writing more or less at the beginning of modern commentary on Hurd's significance, had said that "his writings, at least the critical part of them, can be spoken of with contempt by no good critic who has read them."[2] One must suppose that Saintsbury was unable to predict the extremity of confusion which has obtained in the intervening seventy years, in the context of which, contempt, too, has become a possible response.

* * *

Given the disagreement which obtains among commentators on the significance of Hurd's criticism, and the degree to which this disagreement stems from varying understandings of the context in which Hurd should be considered, it may seem foolhardy to propose yet another context. For two reasons I wish to venture the attempt. First, I believe it is the most appropriate context and second, it is a context about which there seems more agreement, at least regarding fundamentals.

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[1] Ibid., p. 369.

[2] A Short History of English Literature (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1898), p. 650n.

Following the hints offered by Chapman and Johnston, I propose to assess the evidence which may be mustered in support of Chapman's assertion that Hurd "recovered a more purely Aristotelian approach than was common at mid-century," and for Johnston's opinion that Hurd "is Chapelain's returning Aristotle." Toward that end, I have chosen to consider Hurd's theoretical position and his practical criticism with respect to issues which seem fundamental to an "Aristotelian" approach to literature. In the next two chapters, I study Hurd's views on the nature of poetry and of poetic forms, comparing and contrasting them with the views of representative earlier and later critics (principally Sidney, Dryden, and Coleridge). I use the same procedure to explore and define Hurd's views on the function of poetry in the fourth chapter. Finally, in the fifth chapter, I analyze Hurd's conception of the function of criticism and the methods proper to it, both in its theoretical aspect, and as it informs his own practical criticism. In a brief concluding chapter I summarize the most important of my findings and illustrate the way in which they help to understand the views of earlier commentators on Hurd, while at the same time overcoming some of their difficulties in determining his significance.

If this study can be said to offer opinions of general importance, these will surely be found in my criticism, both explicit and implicit, of the use of contexts involving either abstract categorical antitheses (whatever

their content) or <u>the</u> method (whatever its procedure) as ways of comprehending the activity of literary critics. It seems strange that we, who rarely want to be understood as either tract writers for some party's line or as mere instruments of some univocal "method," should so readily reduce our predecessors' activity to so inhumane a meaning.

# PART ONE: THEORY

IT IS SO NATURAL FOR MEN ON ALL OCCASIONS, TO FLY OUT INTO EXTREMES, THAT TOO MUCH CARE CANNOT BE HAD TO RETAIN THEM IN A DUE MEDIUM.

-RICHARD HURD (Works, II:54)

## CHAPTER TWO

## HURD ON THE NATURE OF POETRY

Richard Hurd had a great admiration for Francis Bacon. Nevertheless, one is surprised and not a little perplexed to find him appealing to Bacon for a description of poetry and commending that description, with some adjustments of his own, to mid-eighteenth-century English readers. Hurd was familiar with ancient literary criticism; he also knew and studied the works of some modern Italian, French, and English literary theorists. How odd, and how unexpected, that he should turn to Bacon in such a field of inquiry as this. After all, Bacon was convinced that poetry was not among those branches of learning requiring reformation, encouragement, or commendation, and what little he had to say on the subject was so terse and taxonomic, so brief, in fact, that the relevant passages in the De Augmentis Scientiarum (1623) comprise only a few pages.[1]

It would not be appropriate to engage in an explication of Bacon's views here; suffice it to say that modern

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[1]Book II, chapter xiii. These passages are a slight enlargement in Latin, for the benefit of his continental readers, of the views Bacon originally proposed in Book II, chapter iv. of The Proficience and Advancement of Learning (1605). The relationship between the two statements is carefully explored in Thomas H. Jameson, Francis Bacon: Criticism and the Modern World (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1954), chapter 1.

commentators are in no more agreement regarding the significance of his conception of poetry, than they are in the case of Richard Hurd's views.[1] What is wanted here, in a study of Hurd's literary criticism, is an understanding of his admiration for Bacon's statements, the use to which he puts those statements in his own writings, and the reasons why he might have found Bacon's scheme congenial to his own purposes.

## I. Poetry and History

Hurd's most extensive citation and discussion of Bacon's

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[1]Contemporary assessments of Bacon's relationship to poetry run the gamut from Murray Wright Bundy's conviction that "Bacon the rationalist had an instinctive fear of the free play of imagination" ("Bacon's True Opinion of Poetry," SP, XXVII [1930], p. 264) and L. C. Knights's view that "there is never any indication that Bacon has been moved by poetry" ("Bacon and the Seventeenth Century Dissociation of Sensibility," in Explorations [London: Chatto & Windus, 1946], p. 122), to such contrary views as Clarence DeWitt Thorpe's (The Aesthetic Theory of Thomas Hobbes, with Special Reference to his Contribution to the Psychological Approach in English Literary Criticism, Vol. XVIII in University of Michigan Publications in Language and Literature [Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1940], p. 71) that Bacon's "approach to poetry is obviously in fundamental opposition to the spirit of French and English neoclassicism . . . and . . . sets him apart from the whole race of traditionalists," and J. E. Spingarn's (Literary Criticism in the Renaissance [New York: Columbia University Press, 1899; 2nd ed., 1908; republished New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1963], p. 176) that Bacon's thought on poetry is "pure idealism of the romantic type." Indeed, a brief review would seem to substantiate Thomas H. Jameson's claim that Bacon "has been cut over as it were by critics whose only interest was to supply themselves with sound timber to fit into a preconceived architecture" (Francis Bacon: Criticism and the Modern World, p. 29). Jameson's own "architecture" is borrowed from Alfred North Whitehead, as his title proclaims. His aim "is to reaffirm Shelley's view [that Bacon was a "poet"] in terms appropriate to our twentieth century" (Ibid., p. 1).

thought on poetry appears in his "Discourse on Poetical Imitation" appended to the first edition of his commentary on Horace's Epistle to Augustus (1751). The occasion, purpose, and major outlines of this discourse will be discussed later, in connection with an analysis of Hurd's concept of imitation.[1] The specific context for his introduction of Bacon's views in this discourse is an attempt to differentiate poetry from history, for the sake of discriminating between the aims of poets and historians, thus describing our legitimate expectations from their works. "All poetry, as lord Bacon admirably observes, 'nihil aliud est quam HISTORIAE IMITATIO AD PLACITUM.'" But Hurd immediately qualifies the quotation, fixing its meaning to serve his own purposes (II:178):[2]

> By which is not meant, that the poet is at liberty to conduct his imitation absolutely in any manner he pleases, but with such deviations from the rule of history, as the end of poetry prescribes. This end is, universally, PLEASURE; as that of simple history is, INFORMATION.

Poetry then is an imitation of history--by which Hurd (and Bacon) mean the record of actuality--which deviates from a mirror-image fidelity to it, for the sake of giving pleasure in ways that elude "mere history." The record of actuality, bound as it is to mirror the complexity

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[1]See below, pp. 46ff.

[2]In order to reduce the number of footnotes, all references to The Works of Richard Hurd (8 vols.; London: for T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1811) will be given in the text, cited by volume and page number.

and confusion of actual happenings, fails to satisfy the mind of man. From this fact Bacon, and Hurd, attempt to reason out an account of the human desire to make poems and the human response of delight in poetry. Hurd quotes Bacon's comparison of the two kinds of learning (II:179-80):

> Cum res gestae et eventus, qui verae historiae subjiciuntur, non sint ejus amplitudinis, in quâ anima humana sibi satisfaciat, praesto est poësis, quae facta magis heroica confingat.
>
> (Since the acts and events which are the subjects of real history are not of sufficient grandeur to satisfy the human mind, Poesy is at hand to feign acts more heroical [trans. Spedding]).

Poetry is more accordant to our ideas of magnanimity than history is.

> Cum historia vera successus rerum minime pro meritis virtutum & scelerum, narret; corrigit eam poësis, & exitus & fortunas, secundum merita, & ex lege Nemeseos, exhibet.
>
> (Since the successes and issues of actions as related in true history are far from being agreeable to the merits of virtue and vice, Poesy corrects it, exhibiting events and fortunes as according to merit and the law of providence [trans. Spedding]).

Poetry is more in accord with our ethical ideas than history is.

> Cum historia vera, obviâ rerum satietate & similitudine, animae humanae fastidio sit; reficit eam poësis, inexpectata, & varia & vicissitudinum plena canens.
>
> (Since true history wearies the mind with satiety of ordinary events, one like another, Poetry refreshes it, by reciting things unexpected and various and full of vicissitudes [trans. Spedding]).

Poetry is more delightful to us than history is.

> Quare & merito etiam divinitatis cujuspiam particeps videri possit; quia animum erigit & in sublime rapit; rerum simulachra ad animi desideria accommodando, non animum rebus (quod ratio facit, & historia) submittendo. [italics Hurd's]
>
> (Whence it may be fairly thought to partake somewhat of divine nature; because it raises the mind and carries it aloft, accommodating the shows of things to the desires of the mind, not [like reason and history] buckling and bowing the mind to the nature of things [trans. Spedding]).

Men make "heroic" poems, then, because actual happenings do not accord fully with our ideas about the way things might be.

Having quoted the reasons Bacon proposes to account for our making "narrative poetry, and above all, the Epos," Hurd continues beyond Bacon's text to develop a more general contrast between the record of actuality and poetry. His aim is to display more fundamental advantages that poetry in general (and not merely the epic form) has over that record with respect to pleasurable contemplation. "The historian," Hurd writes (II:180-81):

> is bound to record a series of independent events and actions; and so, at once, falls into two defects, which make him incapable of affording perfect pleasure to the mind. For 1. The flow of passion, produced in us by contemplating any signal event, is greatly checked and disturbed amidst a variety and succession of actions. And 2. being obliged to pass with celerity over each transaction (for otherwise history would be too tedious for the purpose of information) he has not time to draw out single circumstances in full light and impress them with all their force on the imagination. Poetry . . . by confining the attention to one object only, . . . gives the fancy and affections fair play: and by bringing forth to view and even magnifying all the circumstances of that one, it gives to every subject its proper dignity and importance.

The image of things that poetry presents to the mind for contemplation is more pleasurable than a mere record of actuality since the poet, not bound strictly to that record, can achieve greater unity in his imitation than can the historian who is so bound. In addition, the poet is able to display his object in its own integrity more readily than the historian; free from obligations of inclusiveness, he can represent individual elements for their own sake and not merely as parts of an historical trend, movement, or period.

In addition, Hurd continues, "to satisfy the human mind," (II:181):

> there must not only be an unity and integrity, but a strict connexion and continuity of the fable or action represented. Otherwise the mind languishes, and the transition of the passions, which gives the chief pleasure, is broken and interrupted. The historian fails, also, in this. By proceeding in the gradual and orderly succession of time, the several incidents, which compose the story, are not laid close enough together to content the natural avidity of our expectations. Whilst poetry, neglecting this regularity of succession, and setting out in the midst of the story, gratifies our instinctive impatience, and carries the affections along, with the utmost rapidity, towards the event.

Again, poetry and the record of actuality are contrasted in terms of the characteristics of the former which make it more able to please the mind. Actuality is a flowing together of multiple events and actions without clear beginnings and without unambiguously intelligible ends. A record of human doings bound by a fidelity to actuality is thus a record partially disconnected and discontinuous with respect to any one action or event. The poet, not bounded by requirements

of such fidelity, may draw together the component parts of an action and show their connection with great clarity.

It seems to me that Hurd presents Bacon's contrast between poetry and history, and elaborates upon it, for three related reasons. First, and foremost, he is looking for an answer to that seemingly simple and yet almost unanswerable question: Why tell a story? If that question were answered, it might yield a firm basis for understanding the excellence of poetry through a clear view of its normal function in human life. Second, Hurd is seeking to understand the relationship between art and life, for the sake of knowing better what precisely the poet's obligation to his imitated object is, and, at the other side of the poem, what the audience can properly expect poems to provide. Behind the latter double-edged question stands the full weight of neo-classical theory regarding the imitation of nature (what nature?) and verisimilitude (similitudes of what verities?). Finally, Hurd and Bacon seem to be in general agreement about the function of poetry, at least in the terms of the neo-classical formula, please and teach, which both reject (though for somewhat different reasons, I believe). It would be difficult to find any other "authority" in English letters whom Hurd might have cited on this judgment, and who would bear consistent witness to its truth.

Hurd's views on the function of poetry will be explored more explicitly and more fully in a later chapter

of this study.[1] Here I am interested only in pointing out Hurd's statement of what poetry, in general, is. But it is important to remember that, for Hurd, what poetry is, is intimately related to and ultimately inseparable from what poems do, and what poems do is equally inseparable from what they are. Hurd is of the opinion that a full answer to the question why we make and enjoy poetry is ultimately the same as an answer to the question of what it is we make and enjoy.

## II. The Elements of Universal Poetry

Why tell a story? Hurd's answer is that stories, well made, naturally give men pleasure. What is the poet's obligation to his object? To imitate it. What can the audience expect of poems? To be properly pleased when contemplating them.

"To please by imitation" is Hurd's view of the end of all poetry.[2]

. . . From a respect to this <u>end</u>, together with some

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[1]See chapter 4. In that chapter it is shown that Hurd's opinion of poetry's function is the result of his consideration of what poems, as poems, can do, distinctively. His rejection of the didactic function of poetry is related to his view that poetry is not very able to teach either morals, or ethics, or religious truths. But poetry, as an imitation of human activity, may and does use such matters as material for poetic ends. Hence though poems do not teach, they do have cognitive value because they may show what it means to have morals, act virtuously, or worship the Gods.

[2]Fully aware of the relative unconventionality of his view, Hurd elsewhere (II:4) supplements it thus: ". . . they, who like a principle the better for seeing it in Greek, may take it in the words of an old philosopher, ERATOSTHENES. . . ." He quotes, in Greek, Strabo's statement of

> proper allowance for the diversity of the subject matter, and the mode of imitation (I mean whether it be in the way of recital, or of action) are the essential differences of poetry from mere history, and the form or disposition of its several species, derived (II:178-79).

It appears to have been Hurd's ambition to formulate a complete theory of poetry, both in general, and in its various forms, in accord with this program. In a late essay titled "On the Idea of Universal Poetry" published separately in 1766 and placed also at the head of the dissertations supplementary to the fourth edition of the Horace commentaries (1766), Hurd sought ". . . to deduce some general conclusions [from the end of poetry], concerning Universal Poetry, which seem preparatory to those nicer disquisitions, concerning its several sorts or species" (II:5).

The principle on which his "deductions" in this essay are founded is sensible enough: if poems are meant to please by imitation, "whatever contributes to produce that end most perfectly, all circumstances taken into account, must be thought of the nature or essence of the kind" (II: 14).[1] This is all the more important a consideration, Hurd

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Eratosthenes' view that the poet's aim is to please, not to instruct (Geography 1. 2. 3.); and, to make certain that they who need an Horatian tag are also satisfied, he adds line 377 from the Ars Poetica: "sic animis natum inventumque poema iuvandis" (so a poem whose birth and creation are for the soul's delight [trans. Fairclough]). For Strabo's argument against Eratosthenes and Hurd's defense of his own and Eratosthenes' view, see below, p. 155.

[1]This principle is also a fairly clear example of Hurd's conviction, noted earlier, of the fundamentally inseparable nature of being and doing: what a thing is depends on what it does; what it is determines what it does. Poems

believes, because poetry, as a fine and therefore not primarily a useful art, cannot tolerate mediocrity. His comment on Horace's similar view (Ars Poetica, ll. 366-84) is emphatic (I:56):

> . . . the main end of poetry it to please, if it did not reach that point (which it could not do by stopping ever so little on this side excellence) it was, like indifferent music, indifferent perfumes, or any other indifferent thing, which we can do without, and whose end should be to please, offensive and disagreeable, and for want of being very good, absolutely and insufferably bad.

The main drift of the argument in the essay reflects this conviction; it is similar to arguments that Hurd uses in connection with the majority of issues facing critical inquiry in his time: any conclusion he reaches is strictly enforced as a necessary implication of the measure of excellence that had been established.

The "general conclusions" which Hurd deduces from the end of poetry "to please by imitation" are only three in number (II:25-26):

> . . . UNIVERSAL POETRY . . . is the art of treating any subject in such a way as is found most delightful to us; that is, IN AN ORNAMENTED AND NUMEROUS STYLE--IN THE WAY OF FICTION--AND IN VERSE. Whatever deserves the name of POEM must unite these three properties; only in different degrees of each, according to its nature.[1]

It seems unnecessary to review here Hurd's arguments for the

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can be used for many things, but what they are, as poems, is defined by what they, as poems, do. See below, chapter 4.

[1]Compare Sidney (ed. Shepherd, p. 99) ". . . that . . . exquisite observing of number and measure in words, and that high flying liberty of conceit proper to the poet . . . ."

importance of rhythm,[1] figurative expression,[2] and numbers.[3] Hurd's conception of fiction, however, is a matter more central to the line of inquiry I am following in this chapter.

In a letter to Warburton of March 18, 1761, Hurd reports his conclusions about Rousseau's La Nouvelle Héloïse. Among them is the following comment: "There are many exquisite beauties in this odd romance; so odd, that one may be sure the story is two thirds fact for one of fiction."[4] As was often the case, Hurd's letter is a distillation of notes jotted down in his Commonplace Book after reading a work. There he is more explicit about the oddness of Rousseau's novel. He found the plot improbable, as though it were "laid in fact rather than fiction." He mentions Julia's sudden marriage with M. de Wolmar and her receiving a lover in the house of her husband as examples of

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[1]"Some manners of placing [words] . . . are . . . more agreeable to the ear, than others: Poetry, then, is studious of these, as it would by all means, not manifestly absurd, give pleasure . . . ." (II:5-6).

[2]". . . Of all the means of adorning and enlivening a discourse by words, which are infinite, and perpetually grow upon us, as our knowledge of the tongue, in which we write, and our skill in adapting it to the ends of poetry, increases, there is none that pleases more . . . ." (II:6).

[3]". . . it is not a mere verbal dispute, as it is commonly thought, whether poems should be written in verse, or no. . . . What I contend for, is, that metre, as an instrument of pleasing, is essential to every work of poetic art, and would therefore enter into such idea, if men judged of poetry according to its confessed nature and end" (II:17).

[4]Warburton Letters, pp. 323-24.

improbabilities that suggest facticity.[1] Warburton's answer to the letter confirms Hurd's judgment:

> There is more of fact than fiction in it. There would never else have been so much of the domestic part. But, above all, the inartificial contexture of the story, and the not rounding and completing its parts, shows the author had not a fiction to manage over which he was an absolute master.[2]

This discussion of the oddness, improbability, and consequent facticity (i.e. actuality) of Rousseau's story seems an appropriate context for Hurd's view of the nature of fiction. Returning for a moment to that passage from Bacon's De Augmentis Scientiarum which Hurd thought important enough to italicize when quoting, it may be possible now to gain additional clarity about Hurd's use of Bacon's opinions. Poetry pleases the mind, according to Bacon, because it accommodates "the shows of things to the desires of the mind, not (like reason and history) buckling and bowing the mind to the nature of things." What are the "shows of things" as Hurd understood Bacon to mean them? What are the "desires of the mind" in his view, and what do poems do to allay them? What "reason" is it that buckles and bows the mind to which "nature" of what "things"?

Setting forth his reasoning about the necessity of fiction to poetry, if its end be intellectual pleasure, Hurd

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[1] CPB, II, 65, 347, quoted in Martz dissertation, pp. 81-82.

[2] Warburton Letters (March 24, 1761), pp. 325-26.

proceeds as follows (II:8):

> From the idea of the end of poetry, it follows, . . . that FICTION, in the largest sense of the word, is essential to poetry. For its purpose ["to please by imitation" was the earlier formulation] is, not to delineate truth simply, but to present it in its most taking forms; not to reflect the real face of things, but to illustrate and adorn it; not to represent the fairest objects only, but to represent them in the fairest lights, and to heighten all their beauties up to the possibility of their natures; nay, to outstrip nature, and to address itself to our wildest fancy, rather than to our judgment and cooler sense.

To please by imitation, the end of poetry, requires fiction in order to present truth "in its most taking forms," to "illustrate and adorn" the real [i.e. actual] face of things, to represent the loveliest objects "in the fairest lights," and to heighten them "up to the possibility of their natures." And not this only, but "to outstrip nature." Fiction, Hurd adds enthusiastically (II:9-10):[1]

> . . . deals in apostrophes and invocations; . . .it

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[1]For Hurd's view of the need for "enthusiasm" in critical discourse, see below, chapter five. Much of my emphasis in interpreting quotations such as this stems from taking Hurd seriously when he argues that the critic must "borrow something of the dress, and . . . mimic the airs of fancy" (I:284) in his writings, for the sake of moving his audience to consent. In this interpretation I disagree, for example, with Samuel Holt Monk, who believes the "enthusiastic" phrases bear the crux of Hurd's meaning: "All of this, at first glance, seems only a harking back to the classical conception of art. . . . But Hurd at once colors his ideas with 'romantic' tints . . . ," etc. (The Sublime: A Study of Critical Theories in XVIII-Century England [New York: the Modern Language Association of American, 1935; reissued Ann Arbor: the University of Michigan Press, 1960], pp. 104-05).

> impersonates the virtues and vices; peoples all creation with new and living forms; calls up infernal spectres to terrify, or brings down celestial natures to astonish, the imagination; assembles, combines, or connects its ideas, at pleasure; in short, prefers not only the agreeable, and the graceful, but, as occasion calls upon her, the vast, the incredible, I had almost said, the impossible, to the obvious truth and nature of things.

Shakespeare's Theseus is brought in to attest these remarkable powers (II:10):

> The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rowling,
> Doth glance from heav'n to earth, from earth to heav'n;
> And, as Imagination bodies forth
> The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
> Turns them to shape, and gives to aery nothing
> A local habitation and a name.[1]

Voltaire, it will be remembered, had criticized Milton's Paradise Lost in his Essay . . . upon the Epick Poetry of the European Nations from Homer down to Milton.[2] That altogether enlightened Frenchman found Pandemonium unnecessary and the dwarfing of the devils absurd.[3] Hurd, remembering Theseus' speech,

> the poet's pen
> Turns them to shape, and gives to aery nothing
> A local habitation and a name.

found "Voltaire's whole criticism contemptible. If poetry be to paint angelic natures at all, it must paint them more

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[1] A Midsummer Night's Dream, V.i.12-17.

[2] London, 1727. A French translation was published in Paris in 1728, and a revised French edition in 1733. A full discussion of the different versions, together with an annotated edition of the original Essay are to be found in Florence Donnell White's published doctoral dissertation, Voltaire's Essay on Epic Poetry: A Study and an Edition (Albany, N. Y.: The Brandow Printing Company, 1915).

[3] See White edition, pp. 138-39.

humano. Hence Pandaemonium, i.e. a Senate, & not a field. hence too, the metamorphosis, to preserve, at once, an idea of the numbers, & of different rank."[1]

Voltaire's judgment was mistaken because, presumably, Voltaire had an inadequate conception of the immense range of poetic fiction and, equally important, of its limitations. These limitations, which would make it necessary for Milton to "paint angelic natures . . . more humano" and for Rousseau's story to be regarded as an "odd romance . . . laid in fact rather than fiction" can be summed up in terms of the probable.

The intellectual pleasure that Hurd identifies as the effect at which the poet's imitation aims, is in large part a concommitant of our contemplation of the probable in fiction. Unlike history, the record of actuality, poetry presents the mind with a representation of human doings that is more intelligible because more probable than actuality oftentimes is. The "shows of things" do not fully correspond to, and satisfy, the "desires of the mind" in the sense that actuality, the possible, is often improbable (as

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[1]MS note in Paradise Lost . . . The second edition with notes of various authors, by Thomas Newton, D.D., (2 vols.; London: for J. and R. Tonson et al., 1750),I, p.82. The volume is located in Hurd's library at Hartlebury Castle and was inspected by Mrs. Martz who quotes this note in her dissertation, p. 355. In his "Discourse on Poetical Imitation" Hurd mentions the matter again, without reference to Voltaire: "It was . . . attention to nature, which led Milton to dispose of his fallen angels after the manner, described in the second book of Paradise lost" (II:157).

in Julia's sudden marriage with M. de Wolmar). Poetry imitates actuality in accord with the mind's natural desire for a probability that increases intelligibility. "Reason" in a naturalistic, positivistic sense, does indeed buckle and bow the mind to the actual nature of actual things, under the assumption that particular actuality is definitive of reality. Especially in those cases where the poet chooses to represent that which is believed to be, the intellect requires that his representation be formed according to a normal man's view of the way such things would probably be, if they actually were the case (as in Milton's imitation of fallen angels taking counsel).

Hurd was utterly fascinated by the power of poetry. His essays offer frequent quotations from a variety of writers attesting vehemently to that (I:397):

> . . . wondrous force of dramatic representation, which compels us to take part in feigned adventures and situations, as if they were real; and exercises the passions with the same violence, in remote fancied scenes, as in the present distresses of real life.

In addition to the lines from A Midsummer Night's Dream, already quoted, Hurd's favorite citation is from Horace's Epistle to Augustus:[1]

> ille per extentum funem mihi posse videtur
> ire poeta, meum qui pectus inaniter angit,
> irritat, mulcet, falsis terroribus implet,
> ut magus, et modo me Thebis, modo ponit Athenis.
>
> (methinks that poet is able to walk a tightrope,
> who with airy nothings wrings my heart, inflames,

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[1] Epistles 2. 1. 210-13 (trans. Fairclough).

> soothes, fills it with vain alarms like a magician, and sets me down now at Thebes, now at Athens).

In his commentary on this epistle, Hurd glosses these lines with the paraphrase of another favorite quotation, from Sidney's Apology (I:397):

> . . . This is that sovereign quality in poetry, which, as an old writer of our own naturally expresses it, is of force to hold children from play, and old men from the chimney corner [sic].[1]

Poetry's extraordinary power to move us is related, in Hurd's opinion, to the desires of the mind and the poem's capacity to fill them. He writes (II:8-9):

> . . . There is something in the mind of man, sublime and elevated, which prompts it to overlook all obvious and familiar appearances, and to feign to itself other and more extraordinary; such as correspond to the extent of its own powers, and fill out all the faculties and capacities of our souls. This restless and aspiring disposition, poetry, first and principally, would indulge and flatter. . . ."

But not just any sort of indulgence or flattery will do, because the mind desires to contemplate fictions that "correspond to the extent of its own powers," filling out "all the faculties and capacities of our souls." Fiction, Hurd had said, was "to delineate truth . . . in its most taking forms." It was to illustrate and adorn "the real

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[1]The Sidney passage, which Hurd quotes also in his Commonplace Book (I, 146, cited in Martz dissertation, p. 76n), occurs in the "Proof" section of the Apology (ed. Shepherd, pp. 106-114). Sidney, having argued the poet's superiority to his caricature of an historian ("loaden with old mouse-eaten records"), is here engaged in arguing poetry's superiority to philosophy as a means of moving men to virtue. Hurd rejects Sidney's argument (see below, chapter 4), but accepts the fact that Sidney adduces in its favor: poetry does indeed have great power to move us.

face of things . . . representing the fairest objects . . . in the fairest lights . . . up to the possibility of their own natures" (II:18). Even when, marvelously, fiction "outstrips nature," it seeks to imitate our beliefs about the supernatural, never violating the "powers" of the mind, or the "faculties and capacities of our souls," for its end is to achieve that excellence ". . . which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney corner,"[1] satisfying the mind through lovely language, rhythmical and harmonious, and through fiction: that is, probable imitation.[2]

## III. Invention, Imitation, and Copying

In the January 1747 number of the Gentleman's Magazine appeared the first installment of a series of articles titled "An Essay on Milton's Imitation of the Moderns."[3] Written by one William Lauder, these articles consist of a list of so-called parallel passages culled from Paradise

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[1]Sidney (ed. Shepherd), p. 113.

[2]For further discussion of Hurd's view regarding imitation of the marvellous in poetry, and its relation to the artistic requirement of probability, see below, chapter 5, pp. 246ff.

[3]XVII (January 1747), 24-26. The later installments appeared in the same volume: (February, 1747), 82-86; (April, 1747), 189; (June, 1747), 285-86; and (August, 1747) 363-66. The last of these is Lauder's reply to one of the many objections to his thesis which were published in the same magazine during the year. In reading through the installments one notes a progression in tone from a diffident inquiry into Milton's possible sources to an assured assertion of his thefts. Compare Warren Mild, "Johnson and Lauder: a reexamination," MLQ, XIV (1953), 149-53, who neglects to notice this change.

Lost and various continental neo-Latin writers' works, for the purpose of establishing Milton's "imitation" of them. A controversy of several years' duration thus began: in the pages of the Gentleman's Magazine alone, between January 1747 and December 1750, some seventeen additional articles appeared in support or refutation of Lauder.[1] In addition, a

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[1]The responses vary considerably. Some are wildly enthusiastic about Lauder's work (XVII [May, 1747], 211-12), even reporting on the locations of copies of the obscure neo-Latin writers he had cited (XVII [October, 1747], 485), suggesting that his detection method be applied to Addison "who, as he had studied Milton very much, must be supposed to have known his tactics . . ." (XX [January, 1750], 33), and delighting in the possibility of finally debunking "the great geniuses, who . . . are not so much above the common level of mankind, as they seem to be, . . . whereas [they] merely happen to have read more, and have better memories" (Ibid., p. 34). Others are as wildly pious in defense of "Milton's laurels . . . [profaned] with rude hands" (XVII [March, 1747], 145; see also XVII [September, 1747], 423-24, and XVIII [February, 1748], 67-68). Some are ironic in their dismissal of Lauder's allegations, warning future authors to beware of "picking and stealing" for fear of other Lauders (XX [April, 1750], 155-57), suggesting that instead of Milton borrowing from his predecessors, they all stole from him, pace "chronological niceties" (XX [May, 1750], 224), advising Lauder to turn next to Spenser and then to all other writers of the last 2000 years (XX [June, 1750], 269), and noting that Lauder, already able to extract Paradise Lost from dull neo-Latin works, makes a suitable successor to the projector from Lagado, who specialized in extracting sunbeams out of cucumbers (XX [August, 1750], 245). Others, more detached, requested better proofs (XVII [February, 1747], 58), or questioned why there was such an uproar since, even if Milton stood convicted, there were sufficient other monuments to attest "the character of the ENGLISH genius" (XVII [June, 1747], 278-79). One more thoughtful letter-writer, signing himself Miltonicus, whose views were annotated by the editors to the effect that "several other Gentlemen agree with the above Letter-writer," questions Lauder's use of the term "imitation," insisting that a terminological distinction be maintained to separate "transcription" from "imitation" since these are different activities (XVII [February, 1747], 67-68). Another, signed R. R., asks whether it be "strange or absurd to suppose, that two pictures by two different hands should have a general likeness, which are drawn from the

number of pamphlets were published in response to the original magazine articles and to the volume Lauder published in 1750[1] which incorporated them.[2] With the possible

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same original" (XVII [July, 1747], 322-24). I might add that it appears the Gentleman's Magazine, not unlike some more recent journalistic endeavours, seems to have encouraged and fanned the controversy, reporting on it in the manner of a sportscaster (see XX [December, 1750], 535-36), withholding from publication a relatively decisive refutation of Lauder's claims (Ibid.), and offering prizes for English translations "in Miltonic verse" of the rare neo-Latin works in question (XVII [February, 1747], 86).

[1]An Essay on Milton's Use and Imitation of the Moderns, in his Paradise Lost (London: for J. Payne and J. Bouquet, 1750 [actually 1749]). Lauder's tone and intent can be observed readily in his concluding sentences: "By this mean practice [of imitating], indeed, he has acquired the title of the BRITISH HOMER; nay, has been preferred to Homer and Virgil both, and, consequently, to every other poet of every age and nation. Cowley, Waller, Denham, Dryden, Prior, Pope, in comparison with Milton, have bore no greater proportion than that of dwarfs to a giant; who, now he is reduced to his true standard, appears mortal and uninspired, and in ability little superior to the poets above mentioned, but in honesty and open dealing, the best quality of the human mind, not inferior, perhaps to the most unlicensed plagiary that ever wrote" (p. 163). The Preface and Postscript to this volume were written by Dr. Johnson, whom Lauder appears to have duped into a conviction that his researches would contribute to a fuller understanding of the development of Paradise Lost. See below, p. 45n.

[2]Those pamphlets included [Richard Richardson], Zoilmastrix, or a vindication of Milton from all the invidious charges of Mr. William Lauder, with several new remarks on Paradise Lost (London: for M. Cooper, 1747); Philalethes, [pseud], Pandaemonium; or, a new infernal expedition, transcribed to a being who calls himself W. Lauder. By Philalethes [A satire in verse] (London: ?, 1750); The Progress of Envy, a poem in imitation of Spenser. Occasioned by Mr. Lauder's attack on the character of Milton (London: for J. Newberry, 1751); John Douglas (later Bishop of Salisbury and an acquaintance of Hurd's), Milton Vindicated from the Charge of Plagiarism, brought against him by Mr. Lauder, and Lauder himself convicted of several Forgeries and gross impositions on the Public . . . (London: for A. Millar, 1751); [Andrew Henderson], Furius: or a modest attempt towards a history of the life and surprising exploits of the famous W. L. Critic

exception of one pamphlet[1] and one or two of the articles in the Gentleman's Magazine,[2] Lauder's efforts seem to have

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and thief catcher . . . to which is added some remarks on the passages adduced by Furius, with intent to prove . . . Milton a Plagiary (London: for H. Carpenter, 1754). This list is not, as far as I know, exhaustive. Given the extent of the uproar, one would expect a thorough search to discover many more titles.

[1]John Douglas' Milton Vindicated . . . seems most substantial. His main purpose, however, is to deny that there is an issue of "imitation" by exposing Lauder's forgeries and misrepresentations in the parallel passages from neo-Latin. He accuses Lauder of deliberate falsification of his materials, a charge to which Lauder subsequently admitted in both An Apology for Mr. Lauder in a letter most humbly addressed to His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury (London: for W. Owen, 1751) written by himself, and in A Letter to the Reverend Mr. Douglas, on his Vindication of Milton (London: for W. Owen, 1751) which was written by Dr. Johnson (see Boswell's Life of Johnson, ed. Hill and Powell, I, 228-32, for details). Apparently Lauder's confession and profuse claims of repentance were not to be taken seriously. On the basis of a new work of Lauder's, The Grand Imposter Detected, or King Charles I vindicated from the charge of plagiarism, brought against him by Milton; and Milton himself convicted of forgery against King Charles I (London: for W. Owen, 1754), Douglas in his second edition (titled Milton no Plagiary; or, a detection of the forgeries contained in Lauder's Essay on the Imitation of the Moderns in the Paradise Lost . . . [London: for A. Millar, 1756]) declares him fully unrepentant. It seems that Lauder's motive in the whole affair was to drum up business for himself. Douglas (2nd ed., p. 76) mentions his scheme for an edition of the obscure neo-Latin authors who "have held out the Torch to Milton." Apparently that edition only got as far as a two volume edition of selected Latin authors from whose works Milton was said to have plagiarized, published in 1752, and a single volume of sacred poems by Jacobus Masenius published in 1753. Lauder also used the occasion of his 1750 volume to advertise himself as a Latin tutor to metropolitan gentlemen and their children. His, too, was an ill-received scheme to purge the Paradise Lost, translate it into Latin, and use it in the schools to replace the Roman authors who "tend to debauch the morals of unguarded youth" (see the Gentleman's Magazine, XVII [November, 1747], 530-31).

[2]See above, p. 42n, the last two items mentioned.

brought forward no very thoughtful, theoretically conceived responses.[1]

Warburton, writing Hurd about Lauder's volume ("the most silly and knavish book I ever saw"), may well have put his finger on a significant reason for the essentially superficial public response. "The matter of imitation," he wrote, "is a thing very little understood."[2] Hurd, who was then working on his commentary to the Epistle to Augustus, was urged to append a note to it which might clarify the issues.[3]

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[1]The most perplexing fact about the "Lauder Controversy," aside from its very existence, is Dr. Johnson's relationship to it all. From Boswell's discussion in the Life of Johnson (ed. Hill and Powell, I, 223-32), an apology for Johnson's involvement, to the assertion by Hawkins that Johnson was an accomplice motivated by a vicious desire to debunk Milton (cited in John Ker Spittal, Contemporary Criticism of Dr. Samuel Johnson: His Works and His Biographers [London: John Murray, 1923], p. 55) and the equally strong denial of this and similar charges by Arthur Murphy (An Essay on the Life and Genius of Samuel Johnson, 1792, repr. in George Birkbeck Hill, ed., Johnsonian Miscellanies [2 vols.; Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1897; repr. New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1966], I, 355-488, the discussion of Johnson and Lauder on pp. 393-99), the actual case appears anything but clear. It has been most recently reviewed by J. L. Smith-Dampier in Who's Who in Boswell? (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1935); by Warren Mild, "Johnson and Lauder: a Reexamination," MLQ, XIV (1953), 149-53; and by Lloyd B. Lacy, "Samuel Johnson and William Lauder: Malevolence in the Criticism of Milton," The New Rambler (Members' Evercirculator of the Johnson Society of London), copy 7 (1969?), pp. 38-44, which was unavailable for inspection. Whatever the actual case may have been, it is certain that a reasoned discussion of the matter would have been an inappropriate undertaking for the undoubtedly embarassed Dr. Johnson.

[2]Warburton Letters (December 23, 1749), p. 29.

[3]Ibid. (January 13, 1750), p. 32. Warburton's letters over the next months record Hurd's progress in the "note." He provides him with bibliographical materials (Ibid. [February 10, 1750], p. 40); offers general encouragement as the note expands to a discourse (Ibid. [n.d.],

Such as it is, this was the set of circumstances surrounding and, in part, directing, Hurd's "Dissertation on Poetical Imitation." The theoretical content of this essay is consequently subservient to an essentially rhetorical purpose: Hurd's aim is to clarify the public's understanding of poetical imitation, an understanding which must have been utterly confused, one supposes, to occasion and foster such an improbable thing as the "Lauder Controversy."

"The source of bad criticism, as universally of bad philosophy, is the abuse of terms," remarked Hurd in his discussion of the meaning of the injunction to "follow Nature."[1] Following his own judgment, Hurd's own discourse begins with a clarification of terms meant to underline a major distinction. "All Poetry," Hurd writes (II:111):

> to Speak with Aristotle and the Greek critics (if for so plain a point authorities be thought wanting) is, properly, imitation. . . . This primary or original copying, which in the ideas of Philosophy is Imitation, is, in the language of Criticism, called INVENTION.

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p. 44); and advises him not to publish it as a pamphlet (Ibid.[April 21, 1750], p. 49). Hurd apparently developed a sketch of the essay and then put it aside. Warburton prods him to add it to the Augustus edition: "If it be but an essay, on the plan you have laid down, it will be sufficient: but it will end your work so properly that something of the kind I think should be done. Besides, the subject is now fresh, and would engage the attention. In a little time the occasion that raised it, the silly book of Lauder, will be lost and forgotten, and with it the question itself, as far as concerns the general attention" (Ibid. [October 27, 1750], pp. 65-66).

[1] Letters on Chivalry and Romance (London: for A. Millar . . . W. Thurlbourne and J. Woodyer, 1762), pp. 92-93.

But a fine poet's work, Hurd continues (II:112-13):

> . . . glows with such apparent life, that it becomes, thenceforth, the object . . . and is itself original to future reflexions. This secondary or derivative image, is that alone which Criticism considers under the Idea of IMITATION.

Central to the problem of imitation ("a thing very little understood," Warburton had written) in the mid-eighteenth-century was the confusion of meanings in the word's semantic field. Imitation, in a meaning equivalent to Aristotle's mimesis, was rapidly losing currency. Imitation meaning the imitation-of-models was still current, but gradually shifting to a third meaning of second-hand and second-rate, a fake, the meaning which the word retains in modern usage.[1] The first part of Hurd's discourse is an argument that, because all poetry is "imitation" in the sense of mimesis, it is improper to use the term "imitation," in the sense of imitation-of-models unless there are sufficient grounds for believing a poem to be, in fact, the "imitation" of an earlier poem. The second part of the discourse is an argument meant to demonstrate that a poem properly

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[1]A good measure of the degree to which this pejorative definition is the meaning of "imitation" in modern English usage is the extent to which we employ another term to name our imitation products. Imitation fur is "man-made" and imitation leather is "leatherette" while imitation jewelry is "costume jewelry". Even "artificial" which has undergone a similar narrowing of meaning with accompanying pejorative overtones is preferable to us, as in "artificial food coloring," "artificial limbs," and "artificial flowers." It would be an immensely useful philological enquiry carefully to chart the history of this word's usage during the period 1700-1800. With firm information to rely on, the interpretation of critical texts using it might be much less tentative and uncertain.

denominated an "imitation" in the sense of an imitation-of-a-model, is not necessarily an "imitation" in the third sense of second-hand and second-rate. In order to keep the two main senses distinct, he proposes that the term "invention" be used to mean imitation (mimesis) and that the term "imitation" be reserved for imitation (-of-models).

Those who consider critical communities of understanding and approach to be revealed through terminology will be quick to point out Hurd's apparent affiliation with Roman rhetorical theory and hence with Horatian (neo-classical) poetics, on the basis of the shared term "invention." But that affiliation is less than self-evident, determined on the basis of this term. "Invention" can mean the creation of something wholly new; it can also mean the discovery or finding out of what is the case. In this sense, the product of the poet's invention is his imitation (mimesis). The poet finds out the form of a tragic action and imitates it. In rhetorical theory, of course, what the orator finds out is an appropriate line of argument. Although it is true enough that Hurd might have picked out a less ambiguous term, or used the term mimesis itself as modern writers confronting a similar situation would, it is nevertheless clear that his choice is less confusing, for example, that Edward Young's. Young, in his Conjectures on Original Composition (London: for A. Millar, 1759) informs the reader that "Imitations are of two kinds: one of nature, one of authors. The first we call originals, and confine the term imitation

to the second."[1] If one had to choose between "invention" and "original" to serve temporary duty for "imitation" (mimesis), surely "invention" is a less ambiguous choice, particularly when that choice is accompanied by notice that the term is a technical term in literary criticism, and that the proper, philosophical equivalent is "imitation."[2] Finally, the contexts which Hurd provides show that when he uses "invention" he doesn't mean what orators do, but rather what poets as mimetic artists do.

Having proposed technical definitions for "invention" (mimesis) and "imitation" (-of-models), Hurd then takes up the body of his discourse, proposing to demonstrate three theses: first, that the materials available to the poet's observation are such that general similarity in this respect between works may well show an excellence in invention (mimesis) and is never a proof of imitation (-of-models);[3] second, that the forming of these materials follows a set of natural conditions such that general similarity in form, some similarity in detailed arrangement, and even certain similarities in expression show no necessary failure of invention (mimesis) and are no certain proofs of imitation

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[1] In Edmund D. Jones, ed. English Critical Essays [of the] Sixteenth, Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries (London: Oxford University Press, 1922), p. 273.

[2] In order to keep unintelligibility to a minimum, I will provide the reader with the terms "mimesis" and "-of-models," and "second-rate copy" in parentheses after the words "invention" and "imitation" in the following section.

[3] II:115-176, passim.

(-of-models);[1] and last, that the imitation of models has itself an excellence, which serves as the proper measure for those works which are legitimately denominated "imitations"[2] and which distinguishes them from the merely second-hand and second rate.

For more thorough consideration and demonstration, Hurd divides the materials available to the poet into three classes (II:116):

> 1. The material world, or that vast compages of corporeal forms, of which this universe is compounded.
> 2. The internal workings and movements of his own mind, under which I comprehend the manners, sentiments, and passions.
> 3. Those internal operations, that are made objective to sense by the outward signs of gesture, attitude, or action.

He summarizes his findings regarding them as follows: "The objects of imitation [mimesis], like the materials of human knowledge, are a common stock, which experience furnishes to all men" (II:176).[3] But this is no lowest-common-denominator

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[1] II: 176-215, passim.

[2] II: 215-41, passim.

[3] Regarding similarity in imitation (mimesis) of the external world, Hurd writes ". . . of all the various delineations in the poets, of the HEAVENS, in their vicissitude of times and seasons; of the EARTH, in its diversity of mountains, valleys, promontories, &c. of the SEA, under its several aspects of turbulence, or serenity; of the make and structure of ANIMALS, &c. it can rarely be affirmed, that they are copies of one another, but rather the genuine products of the same creating fancy, operating uniformly in them all" (II:122-23). Similarly, "if . . . the poet turn his attention to what passes within, he immediately discovers a new world, invisible indeed and intellectual; but which is equally capable of being represented to the internal sense of others. This arises from that similarity of mind, if I may so speak, which, like that of ourward form and make, by

uniformitarianism either for, in Hurd's view, though these materials are available to all men's observation, only the most perceptive see them with the kind of clarity that makes for excellence in poetry.[1]

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the wise provision of nature, runs through the whole species. We are all furnished with the same original properties and affections, as with the same stock of perceptions and ideas" (II:128-29). Again, regarding the external signs of the inward workings of the mind, ". . . regular and constant observation hath found such external signs consociated with the correspondent internal workings. A heaven overhung with clouds, the tossing of waves, and intermingled flashes of lightning are not surer indications of a storm, than the gloomy face, distorted limb, and indignant eye are of the outrage of conflicting passion. The simplest spectator is capable of observing this. And the artist deceives himself, or would reflect a false honour on his art, who suspects there is any mystery in making such discoveries" (II:161). It is, by the way, no mere commonplace metaphorical convenience that may be thought to prompt Hurd's choice of the storm as a term in this comparison. An endless agonising over some enormous gap between "appearance" and "reality," "subjective" and "objective" which is characteristic of more recent thought is foreign to his writings. In response to such agony Hurd might well have asked "But on what basis do you take shelter, not quibbling about the probable, when it looks as though a storm is brewing?"

[1]According to Hurd, the genius of the great poet stands out as uncommon in his representations of all three sets of materials available uniformly to all men's observation. A capacity to observe the material world is given to all men, but ". . . the shapes and appearances of things are apprehended, only in the gross, by dull minds. They think they see, but it is as through a mist, where if they catch but a faint glimpse of the form before them, it is well. . . . Whereas every object stands forth in bright sunshine to the mind of the true poet. . . . And having these bright and determinate conceptions of things in his own mind, he finds it no difficulty to convey the liveliest ideas of them to others" (II:127). Regarding the internal workings of the mind, "the poet . . . hath only to consult with his own conscious reflexion. . . . [for] whatever is taken thus from the life, will, we may be sure, affect other minds, in proportion to the vigour of . . . conception and expression of it" (II:130-31). Similarly in the representation of gesture, attitude, and action, great poets distinguish themselves. "Sluggish, unactive understandings, which seldom look abroad

Great poets distinguish themselves particularly in the "manner" of their representation, according to Hurd. But, even here, similarity between poems may not provide evidence of imitation (-of-models). For, as Hurd puts it, ". . . the question recurs, whether of the several forms, of which his materials are susceptible, there be nothing in the nature of things, which determines the artist to prefer a particular one to all others" (II:177-78).

Again dividing the question for more thorough consideration and demonstration, Hurd proposes that the "manner" of imitation (mimesis) includes the following aspects (II:178):

1. The general plan or disposition of a poem.
2. The choice and application of particular subjects and
3. The expression.

His general conclusion is that similarities in each of these three aspects of "manner" provide grounds for the conclusion of imitation (-of-models) in descending order; even in the case of expression, not all similarity is a "mark" of the

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into living nature, or, when they do, have not curiosity or vigor enough to direct their attention to the nicer particularities of her beauties, will unavoidably overlook the commonest appearances. . . . But quick, perceptive, intelligent minds (and of such only I can be thought to speak) will hardly fail of seeing nature in the same light, and of noting the same distinct features and proportions. The superiority of Homer and Shakespeare to other poets doth not lie in their discovery of new sentiments or images, but in the forceable manner, in which their sublime genius taught them to convey and impress old ones" (II:159-60).

imitation (-of-models).[1]

The "general plan or disposition of a poem," its form, is determined by its subject matter and its end; similarity between poems in this aspect of the poet's "manner" is therefore a sign of excellence in invention (mimesis) and never a "mark" of imitation (-of-models), since resemblances in form between poems imitating similar objects and seeking to achieve similar ends is of the nature of things (II:181-84).[2] Though this is the case, ". . . yet . . . there [is] nothing, it may be said, in the nature of things to fix the order and connexion of single parts" (II: 184). But here, too, not every degree of resemblance is, according to Hurd, a "mark" of imitation (-of-models). Both the form and the object of imitation may well occasion correspondences between works, whereas ". . . nothing but the power of imitation [-of-models] can be reasonably thought to produce a close and perpetual similarity in the composition of two works" (II:184).[3]

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[1] "A Letter to Mr. Mason on the Marks of Imitation" (1757) was Hurd's title to a brief analysis, by type, of the sorts of evidence most conducive to an inference of "copying" between authors.

[2] Hurd's concept of form is considered below, pp. 64ff.

[3] Hurd's examination of this aspect of poetical "manner" is conducted under the headings of Episodes, Descriptions, and Similes. In each case he finds that similarities in form, intended effect, subject matter, or general human nature (normal patterns of association can be said to account for some degree of similarity in metaphors and similes) may be grounds for viewing similarities between "the order and connexion of single parts" as an excellence in invention (mimesis) and no necessary "mark" of imitation (-of-models).

Even in the aspect of poetical "manner" denominated expression, in which ". . . the surest and least equivocal marks of imitation [-of-models]" are to be found (II:204), not all sorts of similarity are the necessary results of imitation (-of-models). The styles of two writers may be similar by virtue of natural causes.[1] Even an identity of phrase and diction, usually ". . . a much surer note of plagiarism," is not always a certain "mark" (II:208).[2] Hurd's conclusion to this section is a restatement of his central argument (II:213-14):

> . . . if similarity, even in this province of words, which the reason of the thing shews to be most free from the constraint of general rules, be no argument of theft in all cases; much less can it be pretended of the other subjects of this inquiry, which from the necessary uniformity of nature in all her appearances, and of common sense in its operations upon them, must give frequent and unavoidable occasion to such similarity.

The last section of Hurd's dissertation takes up the question of the nature of proclaimed or discovered imitation (-of-models) and its excellence. This defense, though interesting, is rather conventional, suggesting that the

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[1]". . . If different writers agree in the same general disposition, or in the same national character; live together in the same period of time; or in corresponding periods of the progression of manners [i.e., are both barbarians, irrespective of their dates], or are under the influence of a corresponding genius of policy and government [i.e., both live in a totalitarian state]; in every of these cases, some considerable similarity of expression may be occasioned by the agency of general principles, without any suspicion of studied or designed imitation [-of-models]" (II:207-208).

[2]Exceptions that Hurd considers include formulas of varying kinds.

imitator of a model is not necessarily a slavish copier, and may improve upon the model in a variety of ways. The present concern is, however, with Hurd's conception of "invention" (mimesis) as it is indirectly revealed in his analysis, occasioned by a particular rhetorical purpose, of what "imitation" (of-models) is not.

As was noted earlier, Hurd's dissertation begins with a distinction between "invention" (mimesis) and "imitation (-of-models). The description of "invention" is brief enough to quote fully (II:111):

> All Poetry, to speak with Aristotle and the Greek critics (if for so plain a point authorities be thought wanting) is, properly, imitation. It is, indeed, the noblest and most extensive of the mimetic arts; having all creation for its object, and ranging the entire circuit of universal being. In this view every wondrous original, which ages have gazed at, as the offspring of creative fancy; and of which poets themselves, to do honour to their inventions, have feigned, as of the immortal panoply of their heroes, that it came down from heaven, is itself but a copy, a transcript from some brighter page of this vast volume of the universe. Thus all is derived; all is unoriginal. And the office of genius is but to select the fairest forms of things, and to present them in due place and circumstance, and in the richest colouring of expression, to the imagination. This primary or original copying, which in the ideas of Philosophy is Imitation, is, in the language of Criticism, called INVENTION.

Hurd continues his description of the poet's "invention," this "copy," this "transcript" selected from "the fairest forms of things," to help his readers understand its excellence (II:112)

> . . . of the endless variety of these original forms, which the poet's eye is incessantly

> traversing, those, which take his attention most, his active mimetic faculty prompts him to convert into fair and living resemblances. This magical operation the divine philosopher [Plato] . . . excellently illustrates by the similitude of a mirror.[1] . . . Just so, on whatever side the poet turns his imagination, the shapes of things immediately imprint themselves upon it, and a new corresponding creation reflects the old one. This shadowy ideal world, though unsubstantial . . . yet glows with such apparent life, that it becomes, thenceforth, the object of other mirrors, and is itself original to future reflexions.

Hence comes the ". . . secondary or derivative image . . . which Criticism considers under the Idea of "IMITATION" (II:113).

The poet's "copy," his "transcript" selected from "the fairest forms of things" is made by an "active mimetic faculty" which, like a mirror (and yet active!) makes "resemblances" of the "shapes of things," the "original forms" in nature. These resemblances, though "shadowy" and "ideal" and "unsubstantial," glow with "apparent life" and are like "a new corresponding creation" that "reflects the old one." The similarities in subject matter and form among some poets which Hurd asserts are the natural result of normal poetical activity--the critical term, invention; the philosophical, imitation--attest to the nature of the poet's work as Hurd understands it. Poets are not, in his view, to be overwhelmed with the ultimately unsatisfiable requirement of absolute novelty, either by their own pretense or by the cravings of a misguided audience. Rather their aim is the

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[1] The Republic, Book X (596d-e).

probable imitation of the "shapes of things," and the audience can properly expect this and neither more nor less.

Hurd's conception of *mimesis* seems to be fundamentally Aristotelian, in distinction from both Horatian views (related to the invention of arguments and the imitation of models) and Platonic ideas. Although Hurd uses the term "invention," his description of the activity, converting the "endless variety . . . of . . . *original forms*" by means of an "active mimetic faculty" into "fair and living resemblances" is clearly not to be confused with the rhetorical *invenio*. And Hurd's discourse is occupied with the distinguishing of imitation (mimesis) from imitation (-of-models) so that the word is not wholly given over to meanings equivalent to the rhetorical *imitatio*.

Hurd's views, once differentiated from the Horatian conception, may also be distinguished, at least partially, from Plato's idea of *mimesis*.

The question is what the poet imitates and what, consequently, the poem presents to the contemplating mind. The Platonic view is that the poet imitates sensible actuality which is itself an imitation of reality. The poet is a copier, a mirror, and his poem, because it is a copy of a copy is, with respect to truth, at two removes from the idea, and affords the contemplating mind, thus, an appearance even further removed from reality than actuality is. In contrast, the Aristotelian view is that poetry, though not philosophy, is more philosophical than history, because

it is an imitation not of particulars, but rather of universals. Since reality is not transcendent, in Aristotle's view, the forms informing matter and existent as they inform may be made more visible to the contemplating mind in well-made poems, where the merely particular and accidental may be minimized and the universal and essential clarified, than they are in actuality, where the universal is in the particular, the accidental mixed with the essential, and forms informing a somewhat recalcitrant matter.

Hurd's view is mixed and somewhat confused with respect to a clear adherence to either the Platonic or the Aristotelian conception. It tends toward the Aristotelian, in my opinion. Take, for example, this "reply" to Plato's argument against the cognitive value of poetry (I:256-57)

> . . . in deviating from particular and partial, the poet more faithfully imitates universal, truth. And thus an answer occurs to that refined argument, which Plato invented[1] and urged, with much seeming complacency, against poetry . . . For, by abstracting from existences all that peculiarly respects and discriminates the individual, the poet's conception, as it were neglecting the intermediate particular objects, catches as far as may be, and reflects the divine archetypal idea, and so becomes itself the copy or image of truth. Hence too we are taught the force of that unusual encomium of poetry by the great critic, that it is something more severe and philosophical than history . . . .

Hurd does not here, as nearly as I can tell, commit himself fully to either an Aristotelian or a Platonic view of the locus of form. He speaks of it as a "divine

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[1]Here Hurd uses "invent" in the rhetorical sense.

archetypal idea" which seems Platonic, but he describes the means of its acquisition as an empirical and inductive sequence, "abstracting from existences all that peculiarly respects and discriminates the individual," so that it appears he believes the forms are known as and because they inform existent actuality.

What seems to have been a misinterpretation of a statement in the Poetics may give further insight into Hurd's understanding of this matter. Aristotle's point is made in connection with lines of argument to be used in justifying imitations of the impossible:

> If the poet's description be criticized as not true to fact, one may urge perhaps that the object ought to be as described--an answer like that of Sophocles, who said that he drew men as they ought to be, and Euripides as they were (1460b33-36, trans. Bywater).

Hurd interprets this passage as follows (I:257-58):

> The meaning . . . is, Sophocles, from his more extended commerce with mankind, had enlarged and widened the narrow, partial conception, arising from the contemplation of particular characters, into a complete comprehension of the kind. Whereas the philosophic Euripides, having been mostly conversant in the academy, when he came to look into life, keeping his eye too intent on single, really existing personages, sunk the kind in the individual; and so painted his characters naturally indeed, and truly, with regard to the objects in view, but sometimes without that general and universally striking likeness, which is demanded to the full exhibition of poetical truth.

It appears from this interpretation that Hurd understood the idea(l) (which Sophocles imitated) to be a complex induction, involving abstraction from the empirical

experience of actually existing individuals, rather than a separately existent transcendental reality of which actuality is but a sensible copy, and which is accessible to the mind by way of a platonic ladder of cognition, the ascent of which is the glorious privilege of the disciplined philosopher, but hardly possible to that merely imitative monkey, the poet.

If Hurd's view of mimesis tends toward an Aristotelian conception, Thomas Twining's in his translation and commentary on the Poetics tends toward the Platonic, though only in regard to this particular issue of the object of the poet's imitation and its relation to the real, the ideal, and the actual.[1] A comparison of Hurd and Twining here may help clarify Hurd's position. Twining, correcting Hurd's misinterpretation, offers this reading of the passage from the Poetics, impersonating Sophocles for the purpose:

> If you would have men represented as they are . . . you must, indeed, go to Euripides. I have not drawn them so. I have done better--I have delineated mankind, not such as they really

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[1]Others of Twinings fundamentally Aristotelian views are discussed below, chapter 6, where I compare them with Hurd's conceptions by way of a concluding estimate of the degree of Hurd's Aristotelianism. James Malek, in his study of Twining ("Thomas Twining's Analysis of Poetry and Music as Imitative Arts," MP, LXVIII [1971], 260-68), correctly points out the Platonic character of Twining's view in this connection (p. 262), but goes on to argue that his conception of the object of imitation does not seriously affect other of his fundamentally Aristotelian arguments.

> are, but such as they ought to be.[1]

Twining amplifies his point:

> "In applying himself to the general idea, Euripides collected it from an enlarged view of real life; whereas Sophocles took it from the nobler conception of it, as subsisting only in the mind."--this I take to be the sense of Aristotle.[2]

If we add to this quotation, Twining's argument in the preface to his commentary ("Aristotle . . . everywhere reminds him [the Poet], that it is his business to represent, not what is, but what should be; to look beyond actual and common nature, to the ideal model of perfection in his own mind"[3]), I believe we have sufficient evidence to conclude that Twining tends toward a Platonic view of these matters. The idea(l) is separate from what is, and not therefore available to the mind, by way of a complex induction from experience of the actually existent. Unlike Plato, however, Twining believes that the poet may have access to "the ideal model of perfection;" the basis of this assertion is not given in Twining's text and is not of direct concern here. Suffice it to say that whereas Twining offers an answer tending toward the Platonic to Plato's question regarding

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[1] Thomas Twining, Aristotle's Treatise on Poetry Translated with Notes on the Translation, and on the Original and Two Dissertations, on Poetical, and Musical, Imitation (London: Payne & Son, et al., 1789), p.508.

[2] Ibid., p. 509.

[3] Ibid., p. xv.

the cognitive value of poetry, as imitation, Hurd gives an answer tending toward the Aristotelian.

The reason why it can be affirmed at most that Hurd's own position tends toward the Aristotelian, is that Twining, in his refutation of Hurd's interpretation of the passage from the Poetics quotes Hurd's own words back to him, changing their context. Earlier in the same note to the Ars Poetica, prior to his explanation of the way in which Plato's strictures might be answered, Hurd had written that ". . . truth may be followed too closely in works of imitation, as is evident in two respects. For, 1. the artist . . . may confine himself too scrupulously to the exhibition of particulars, and so fail of representing the general idea of the kind. Or, 2. . . . he may collect [that general idea] . . . from an enlarged view of real life, whereas it were still better taken from the nobler conception of it as subsisting only in the mind" (I:255-56). Twining very skilfully picks out this single passage, which is in accord with his own view. It is definitely Platonic, but is not, I think, representative of Hurd's usual position. Its presence does, however, make it impossible to assert, without qualification, that Hurd's view on this matter is Aristotelian. A judgment has to be made by comparing this single passage with others, and by looking, for example, to Hurd's description of the poet whose eye has "all creation for its object," traversing the "endless variety of . . . original [i.e. not imitated] forms" in "this vast

volume of the universe" and whose imagination is imprinted by "the shapes of things" which his "active mimetic faculty prompts him to convert into fair and living resemblances." This hardly seems an appropriate way of celebrating the Platonic poet-philosopher's apprehension of the idea(l). "All creation" in its "endless variety" is just what the Platonist looks to transcend.

In contrast, Hurd's view seems generally to have been that the poet imitates the "forms" of things, forms which exist in actuality, as and because they are informing matter. By abstracting those forms from the accidental and particular, the poet, in his imitation makes a fiction, something which is not actually the case. Because the forms are abstracted from actuality, however, they are more pleasing, because less unambiguously intelligible, to the contemplating mind. Human activities, as their forms are imitated, may be rendered with greater probability than those activities, in their historical possibility, actually are. Thus much seems reasonable inference from Hurd's discussions in both the "Dissertation on the Idea of Universal Poetry" and the "Discourse on Poetical Imitation." The former is primarily taken up with the question of the end of poetry; the latter is an argument against confounding the different meanings of "imitation". It is to be regretted that other purposes kept Hurd from devoting himself to a systematic treatment of the nature of imitation (mimesis). Such a

work would make the interpretation of his views less circumstantial.

## IV. Hurd's Idea of Form

Although Hurd's view on topics of theoretical importance, as we have seen, are often embedded in contexts not admitting their systematic elaboration, such is fortunately not always the case. A particular welcome exception is the essay first printed as a preface to the third edition (1765) of the Moral and Political Dialogues. This edition was the first to acknowledge the dialogues as Hurd's own productions rather than as documents of antiquarian interest recovered from the "last age" and published by an unnamed editor.[1] His purpose in the essay, somewhat misleadingly titled "On the Manner of Writing Dialogues," is consequently to commend them to the public in their own right by defining the dialogue form, sketching its history, and explaining its intrinsic excellence. A brief analysis of this essay will

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[1]The dialogues, originally six in number, were first published in 1759. An unaltered second edition appeared in 1760. The third edition of 1765 contained, in addition to the original six dialogues, the two Dialogues on the Uses of Foreign Travel (originally published separately in 1764 and reprinted in the same year) and the twelve Letters on Chivalry and Romance (first published in 1762 and reprinted in the same year). The whole third edition, with its essay preface, went through a fourth, fifth, and sixth edition (1771, 1776, 1788) and occupies volumes III and IV of the Collected Works. The first volume of a German translation from the fourth London edition (including the preface and the first three dialogues) appeared in Leipzig in 1775. The translator, Ludwig Heinrich Holti, promised the completion of the work, but I have found no record of further volumes.

provide a more substantial basis for understanding Hurd's concept of literary form.

In this discussion I am arguing against the view advanced by Stephen J. Curry in a recent article.[1] Following the line of interpretation codified, so to speak, by Hoyt Trowbridge,[2] Curry interprets Hurd's preface as the description of a "neoclassical," conventional "genre," with a rhetorical purpose and unorganically conceived "rules." He does not seem to make a distinction between "genre" and "generic form," in terms of the difference between a traditional kind of literature made in accordance with a set of rules conventionally handed down from generation to generation of poets and well-bred audiences (a genre), and a kind of literature which is defined by the similarity of the forms of each individual work (modified by the particular materials unique to each case), considered essentially in relation to each other (a generic form). In my view, Hurd is essaying a description of the generic form of the dialogue in this preface.

Hurd's essay begins with a general description of the subject matter appropriate to the dialogue form, which is also meant to serve as an argument for the form's excellence as a way of shaping such materials. The ancients,

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[1] "Richard Hurd's Genre Criticism," Texas Studies in Literature and Language, VIII (Summer, 1968), 207-17.

[2] "Bishop Hurd: A Reinterpretation," PMLA, LVIII (1943), 450-65.

Hurd explains, generally chose the form "WHEN [they] . . . had any thing to say to the world on the subject either of morals or government . . ." (III:18). It is characteristic of subjects drawn from ethics and politics that they generally admit of debate or "familiar discourse" as Hurd calls it (III:20). Those subjects considered indisputable--Hurd is thinking of ". . . such as both for their sacredness, and certainty, no man in his senses affects to disbelieve" (III:21)--are ill-suited to the form. This restriction will, of course, apply differently in different circumstances since all men at all times and in all places have not always agreed about what is debatable. But, in general, Hurd finds it reasonable to include all subjects in the "province" of the form ". . . as are either, in the strict sense of the word, not important . . . or not so important as to exclude the sceptical inconclusive air, which the decorum of polite dialogue necessarily demands" (III:22).

The decorum of polite dialogue is a way, for Hurd, of talking about the kind of probability which the form requires. That probability is partly assured by the limits of the form's subject matter: a writer of dialogue normally chooses to show his characters debating, and debating probably, about subjects which by their very nature are debatable. The dialogue form, then, is not improbably imposed upon just any subject matter, but rather the chosen subject matter (characters debating probably) is shaped by

the writer to exhibit its nature more clearly. This is a somewhat complicated point. In a sense, there are two sets of materials the appropriateness of which is at issue. First there is the matter about which the characters debate, the thought, so to speak, of the dialogue. This subject matter must be debatable. Second, there is the material which the writer of the dialogue shapes, the characters-in-action, debating on a debatable subject. This distinction will perhaps clarify Hurd's points. It is of course the case that materials taken from ethics and politics may be treated in other forms than the dialogue (as, for example, in the essay or treatise). Materials may be appropriate to a number of forms.[1] Hurd's point pushes in the opposite direction. Whatever forms materials may be susceptible of, only those that are in the province of dialogue potentially may be made into actual dialogues. If the materials are debatable then an imitation of characters-in-action debating them is potential. In short, if matters in ethics and politics were not

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[1]Stories of lovers are perhaps the best example of this multiplicity of possible forms of which certain materials are susceptible. It would be possible, I suppose, for the same poet to make a tragedy, a comedy, and a romance out of the Antony, Cleopatra, and Caesar materials. As it is, Shakespeare, Shaw, and Dryden (whose play is a mixture of tragedy and romance ["Or, The World Well Lost"], I think) show in Antony and Cleopatra, Caesar and Cleopatra and All for Love the point about Plutarch's materials I am interested here in emphasizing. These materials would not, I believe, be susceptible of any form at all. But that is another question. Perhaps love stories are that amorphous.

debatable, men would not debate them, and if men did not debate them, then dialogues (moral and political) would not be possible imitations.

The persons of the dialogue also contribute to the form's probability, as does the representation of its setting and its occasion. Since the dialogue is an imitation of a (serious) conversation, the writer who undertakes such an imitation ". . . obliges himself to keep up to the idea, at least, of what he professes [to be making]." The reader knows that "the conversation may not have really [i.e. acttually] been such as is represented . . ." but he knows what a conversation is, and expects that an imitated conversation will ". . . have all the forms of reality," since the writer's purpose is ". . . to feign probably" (III:25). The "forms" of reality require that probable imitations of (serious) conversation include, in addition to subject matters within the "province" of the form, speakers who are known, and whose stature and capacities would render their views interesting to a normal reader. They (the "forms" of reality) also require a probable rendering of circumstances which would bring these speakers together and an appropriate setting for their debate (III:25).

It is not the case that writers cannot make dialogues which are conducted by fictitious persons in odd circumstances. Such a choice, however, would render the dialogue little more than an all too transparent rhetorical posture taken by a writer who really ought to compose a treatise,

since it will be evident to any reasonable reader that he is merely pretending to make dialogues. His fictitious persons will be seen to be no more than ". . . a sort of Puppets" who will be observed only with that interest which ". . . the opinion we chance to entertain of their Prompter demands from us" (III:26). In such a case, as in all merely rhetorical writing, the character of the author is of great importance; in a correctly formed dialogue ". . . the writer himself disappears," since his work has a kind of life of its own. Indeed, Hurd notes, the successful maker of dialogues ". . . is even among the first to fall into his own delusion," as Cicero says he did when, reading his dialogue on old age, he almost concluded that it was Cato himself speaking and not just a character of his making (III:26).

Although the well-formed dialogue requires known and respected persons and a rendering of likely circumstances for their meeting, it would be mistaken, according to Hurd, to place undue emphasis on the characters or setting of the interlocutors, since these parts of the dialogue form are subordinate to the issues being debated and the debate itself (III:27). An excessive emphasis on the characters of the speakers would render them of greater interest than their conversation, and a work with such emphasis could easily come to be more like a character sketch or a piece of dramatic repartee than a dialogue proper.

Since the imitation of a (serious) conversation is the purpose of the form, and since the persons are rendered

for the sake of their conversation, it is all the more reasonable to employ ". . . REAL, KNOWN, and RESPECTED speakers." Their actual existence ". . . excites our curiosity . . . [to see what they have to say]" while our knowledge of their characters ". . . affords [the writer] an easy opportunity of painting the manners by those slight and careless strokes, which alone can be employed for this [necessary but subordinate] purpose, and which would not sufficiently mark the characters of unknown or fictitious persons . . . [to give them a kind of life of their own]." Our respect for the persons thus represented ". . . gives weight and dignity to the whole composition" (III:34). By choosing such persons, the writer is better able to achieve his aim, the imitation of a (serious) conversation, and the reader, possessed already of a ". . . rule . . . by which to estimate the pertinence and propriety of what is said . . . [by such interlocutors]," can give his attention wholly ". . . to bear[ing] a part, as it were, in the conversation of such persons" (III:34).

In addition to these parts of the dialogue form and their correct interrelationship, the maker of dialogues must pay attention to the language, the ". . . style or manner of expression," of the speakers. It will be a style appropriate to the characters of the speakers, ". . . seriously debating, as the philosophic dialogue imports in the very terms, on some useful or important subject" (III:35). A reasonable adherence to the ". . . general cast or manner of speaking . . ." of the chosen persons is necessary since such general

cast is determined by the known characters of the speakers (III:35). Writers of dialogue do not find it necessary, however, to render minute peculiarities of the speakers' manner since such idiosyncracies are not required to render the characters more probable, and an undue attention to such quirks could easily bring the dialogue too close to mimicry and ridicule, ". . . the thing of all others which the genius of the Dialogue most abhors" (III:39). A minute faithfulness to idiomatic features of expression is only acceptable if those peculiarities are so ". . . great and so notorious" as to make their inclusion necessary for the sake of probable imitation (III:39).

These preliminaries explored, Hurd proposes a definition of the dialogue form. It is (III:40):

> An imitated, and mannered conversation between certain real, known, and respected persons, on some useful or serious subject, in an elegant, and suitably adorned, but not characteristic style.

This definition, seeking to be faithful to ". . . the reason of the thing . . ." (III:37) is achieved by an examination in due course of extant dialogues both ancient and modern in combination with a thoughtful consideration of what an imitation of a (serious) conversation is, irrespective of "the best authorities" (ibid.). This procedure, combining inductive examination of extant works with a deductive analysis of the implications of a purpose, is characteristic of Hurd's analysis of forms. Trowbridge's emphasis on his

deduction[1] tends to blur an understanding of Hurd's reasoning by rendering it rigidly simple-minded. Seeking to show "the underlying unity of Hurd's thought" by emphasizing "not doctrine and conclusions but a way of reasoning, a critical method," Trowbridge's "way of reasoning," his own "critical method" reduces Hurd's work to a "single critical approach."[2] Hurd is fully aware of the need to consider the practice of earlier writers when trying to understand the nature and function of a form. In the course of his analysis of the dialogue, Hurd very carefully considers the practice of "best authorities."

Among these best authorities, Hurd includes the achievements of Plato, Cicero, and (with reservations) Lucian among the ancients, as well as Lord Shaftesbury, Addison, and Bishop Berkeley among the English. Plato, benefiting from "the inquisitive genius of the Academic Philosophy [which] gave great scope to the freedom of debate," is, though not the inventor of the form,[3] at least the model for subsequent ancient writers. He chose the form, according to Hurd, ". . . for the sake of exposing Falsehood

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[1] "Bishop Hurd: A Reinterpretation," PMLA, LVIII (1943), 450-65.

[2] Ibid., p. 451.

[3] It is of no small importance that Hurd recognizes the "artificial" status of literary forms. Unlike the forms of nature, literary forms are invented (i.e. found out), perfected, and decline in a way different from natural forms. In nature, it is individual things which follow this cycle; in art, the forms themselves come to be and pass away.

and discovering Truth" in each of the various subjects under discussion (III:20). By Cicero's time, a general skepticism, convinced ". . . that nothing could be certainly affirmed to be either true or false," rendered all subject matters equally appropriate to the form. Hence it came to be ". . . that the only end, proposed by it was to shew the writer's dexterity in disputing for, or against any opinion . . ." (III:20-21). In Cicero's time, in other words, the "province" of the forms was unlimited. Circumstances have changed again, Hurd adds, since Cicero's day, and a modern writer who took just any subject, whether now considered debatable or not, and made a dialogue from it, would deserve the charge of being a servile imitator since he would follow Cicero's usage rather than finding out the contemporary materials appropriate to the demands of the form (III:21).[1]

Another sort of error might result from an uncritical emulation of Lucian's "comic" dialogues. He, like another Prometheus, took for his aim the extension of the province of the dialogue form by attempting to enlarge the form itself, by way of a new species "the merit of which consists in associating two things, not naturally allied together, The severity of Philosophic Dialogue, with the humour of the Comic" (III:28). Lucian himself, Hurd gladly

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[1]For a brief discussion of Hurd's "historical method," as evidenced in this and similar discussions of the implications for literature, of changing circumstance, see chapter 6.

notes, was fully aware of the difficulty which attends a mixing of aims not naturally complementary. As Hurd puts it (III:32):

> . . . the two excellencies he meant to incorporate . . . cannot, in a supreme degree of each, subsist together. The one must be sacrificed to the other. Either the philosophic part must give place to the dramatic; or the dramatic must withdraw, or restrain itself at least, to give room for a just display of the philosophic.

The former subordination Hurd finds characteristic of Lucian's dialogues which have for their subject matter ". . . not a QUESTION DEBATED; but, a TENET RIDICULED, or a CHARACTER EXPOSED" (III:32). Plato also used humour and ridicule, but always in subordination to the speculative aim of the dialogue. Imitating a Socratic discussion which characteristically sought to expose falsehood and discover truth through debate, Plato represents Socrates' irony for the sake of exposing other interlocutors or their opinions to a deserved ridicule; the humour in Plato is always subordinate to the debate and its proper end (III:28ff.). Lucian has inverted this relationship; his dialogues are like passages of repartee from a comic drama offered out of a context of dramatic action. Lacking the action of comedy and missing the genuine serious debate of properly formed dialogue, they are neither fish nor fowl, according to Hurd. They achieve their purpose "but in part" and are ". . . at best, the faint copy of a higher species, the Comic Drama" (III:33).

As Lucian's dialogues fail to measure up to the highest standard, so too, the best modern dialogues. ". . . The Moralists of Lord SHAFTESBURY; Mr. ADDISON'S Treatise on Medals; and the Minute Philosopher of Bishop BERKELEY" (III:24) have an essential defect in their use of fictitious persons. This usage is both contrary to ancient practice and, worse according to Hurd, it is contrary to the requirements of the form.

As a result of these considerations, a modern writer would be in error to form his idea of the dialogue form by a close study of Lucian's works or the dialogues of Shaftesbury, Addison, or Berkeley, though these works would aid him in understanding the form better, partly through their negative example, and largely because, though inferior, they are dialogues nonetheless. The achievements of Plato and Cicero would be worth greater study, since knowing their excellence will mean knowing the fullest capability of the form, as it has been realized in practice (III:28).

Those capabilities or powers of the form (to turn to the audience directly for a moment) are similar to the powers of good conversation itself. An excellently composed dialogue is highly agreeable, can engage the reader's interest and attention, and may even persuade him to alter his views (III:22). The excellence of the form is not measured by its rhetorical success, however, but rather by what it is in itself: that is, an imitation of a serious conversation.

It seems likely that this consideration may have contributed to Hurd's delimitation of the subject matter appropriate to the form as one which would not suffocate in a "sceptical inclusive air." It would destroy the effectiveness of the imitation as an imitation of serious conversation if the dialogue had formal obligations to persuade readers in some specific way. The interlocutors may have this aim with respect to each other, but not the writer of their dialogue, or at least not as he is the writer of a dialogue. The excellence of individual dialogues is measured rather by the degree to which they achieve the excellence of the form.

It is not the case, however, that one assesses the excellence of either the form or the individual dialogue by comparing them in a direct way with actual conversation(s). This mistaken conviction had led some persons to believe that modern Englishmen couldn't make dialogues at all, since there are no ". . . precedents of grave and continued conversation in modern times" (III:42). In addition to this difficulty another had often been pointed out, the fact that modern manners ". . . are over-run with respect, compliment, and ceremony" which formalities, if imitated, appear silly, and left out, render an unfaithful copy of contemporary conversation (III:42).

Hurd considers the last difficulty first, as the more easily resolved of the two. It is true, he argues, that ". . . a formal and studied civility is foreign to the

genius of this sort of composition . . ." (III:43), since such an emphasis on formalities and ceremonies would detract from the aim of the form, an imitation of serious conversation, and would render the work similar to an excerpt from a comedy of manners. It is also true, in Hurd's opinion, ". . . that somewhat of this constrained civility is scarce separable from a just copy and faithful picture of conversation in our days" (III:43). Since these are facts of life, the modern dialogue writer can not blink them, but will skilfully manage to select those persons for his imitated conversation who are relatively equal in rank, and who have no need, therefore, to stand on undue ceremony with each other. The titles and epithets can be kept to a minimum, and so handled as to be ". . . almost overlooked, or at least endured," by a reasonable reader (III:43-45).

The second difficulty, that modern men seldom conduct extended serious conversations in actuality, is resolved in a similar way, by an appeal to the intelligence and skill of the writer. A skillful writer recognizes that modern men ". . . are not so wholly frivolous, but that they sometimes discourse seriously, and even pursue a subject of learning or business, not with coherence only, but with some care." This fact, Hurd argues, will be ". . . ground enough for a capable writer to go upon" (III:46).

Hurd's aim in both of these arguments is to secure the art of the dialogue from a too exacting requirement to mirror actual life. This requirement, in Hurd's view, is

violated only if there is no such thing as (serious) conversation (which the dialogue intends to imitate) in life. Even though here Hurd is arguing against the formalist's extreme, it is important to see that he is equally unwilling to propose a "romantic" view of form, which sees actual life as unformed and therefore inimitable, because ultimately unintelligible. Hurd in this essay, and elsewhere, always thinks of literary form as originating in the imitation of human activities that are themselves formed, if often unclearly, partially, or potentially. As long, therefore, as there is (serious) conversation, the writer is free, in Hurd's opinion, to imitate that human activity in a way that makes its essential nature clearer and purer than it is in actual life. The normal audience will find his imitation pleasing since they will delight in seeing the form of actual conversation more clearly presented than it ever is in life, where conversations are mixed with matters of etiquette, considerations of extraneous facts about the persons we talk with, headaches, other appointments, ambulance sirens, and itching mosquito bites. So much is irrelevant, in short, which the skilful writer can exclude from his imitation. In this connection, it should be remarked, Hurd advises the modern dialogue writer to choose past figures as interlocutors since "we may fancy of the dead, what we cannot so readily believe of the living" (III:46). This strategm is a good example of the kind of thoughtful and skilful artistry which Hurd commends to the writer as the method of adjusting the

occasionally competing claims of art and life. "Since the audience knows too much about contemporary figures that is extraneous to your purpose," Hurd might say if he were advising writers and not analyzing a form, "present them with past figures so that their irrelevant knowledge won't affect their recognition of your imitated conversation."

Having explored at some length the form of the dialogue, its history (by way of the achievements of past authors working in the form) and its excellence (like all imitations, it renders the formal nature of its subject matter more intelligible than in actual life and therefore pleasing to us), Hurd concludes his essay with a more personal apology for the eight dialogues that follow. "Such," Hurd concludes, "at least is the IDEA, which the Author of these Dialogues has formed to himself . . . ." He adds wistfully, ". . . to conceive an excellence, and to copy it, he understands and laments, are very different things" (III:47).[1]

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[1]Some of Hurd's dialogues were not well received by the public. His friends tended to account for this by the corruption of contemporary taste. The public, they claimed, was not accustomed to the form, and therefore incapable of enjoying works in it. Hurd thought differently. In a letter to William Mason of May 3, 1761 (four years before the preface was published), he referred to the dialogue "Entretien sur les Romans, entre l'Éditeur et un Homme de Lettres" prefaced to the Nouvelle Héloïse: "It shows me . . . why my Dialogues of famous memory were so ill received by you judges. It was not the form, as you flatters pretended. It was the execution that did all the mischief. If I had known how to write like Rousseau, its success had been certain" (Mason Letters, p. 55).

## V. Genre, Form, and Organic Form

In summary, several points about Hurd's concept of literary form may be re-emphasized. Literary form, for Hurd, is inseparable from the subject matter it informs, except by way of theoretical analysis. Not only are form and matter inseparable, but they are intimately related in the sense that each is, to a significant degree, specific for the other. This specificity is not merely a matter of literary convention--certain genres traditionally have dealt with certain sorts of materials following a certain set of rules--but rather it inheres in the nature of things. Consequently, a mere following of precedent is no guarantee of literary excellence, since circumstances change over time, bringing with them changes in the sorts of subject matters which are specific to (that is, in the "province" of) certain forms. Hence, as we have seen, the dialogue form requires a debatable subject matter (in both senses discussed above).[1] That fact, as all facts about forms themselves, is unchangeable. A form not requiring a debatable subject matter might exist or come into existence (in the sense of being invented [i.e. found out] by a writer), but it would never be the form of dialogue. What does vary is the subject matter which admits of this necessary qualification. Put into other terms, all men at all times and in

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[1]Assuming, of course, as Hurd does in the case of the dialogue, that the form has been fully invented (i.e. found out), and that it can be therefore described with confidence.

all places (sparing accidental circumstances which would, say, forbid it) do debate, but they debate about different things. Since men debate, a literary imitation of their activity is always possible; since they debate about different subjects, the matter of the imitation will vary accordingly.

Out of this crucial fact, that literary forms are imitations of the forms of human activities, arises the criterion of probability as a way of assessing the excellence of an individual imitation. An imitation of a serious conversation, if it is excellent, must have all the components essential to such an activity, and they must all work together in a way that corresponds to the way actual serious conversations (as serious conversations) normally are.

A further and related criterion for assessing the excellence of a particular work is the degree to which it achieves the pleasure appropriate to its form. Hurd's discussion of Lucian's dialogues is an example of the way such an assessment might be conducted. Those dialogues, in his opinion, fail in perfection because of their inappropriate subject matter which is not really amenable to debate, and because they are formed in such a way as to have the effect of comic repartee in part. Of course, the two reasons are intimately connected: the failure to achieve the excellence of the form entails the failure to win the "proper pleasure" of the normal reader. On the other hand,

Hurd leaves the question open whether a skilful artist cannot, using the "tricks," so to speak, "of his trade," achieve a satisfying formal excellence with less than perfect materials.

In this way, Hurd's concept of form seems as different from "neo-classical" formalism as it does from a more modern organicism. "Form" in the sense in which Hurd uses it, is not really a part of the vocabulary of his predecessors. There are, no doubt, a number of reasons for this fact; those which seem most important are first, the characteristic neo-classical collapsing of formal-functional distinctions and their replacement by a general rhetorical purpose governing the making and judging of all poetry, and second, the theory of literary genres, governed by a tradition consisting of conventions and rules. It seems unnecessary to reconstruct the "neo-classical" pattern here; a few quotations from its first and best exponents in England--Sidney and Dryden--will suffice to illustrate the position which, fully described in its English manifestation includes dozens of critics over two centuries.[1]

At the conclusion of the "proof" section of the Defense of Poesy, Sidney summarizes the case for poetry, compared with history and philosophy, as an instrument of

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[1]This "pattern" is described extensively in the works of Professors Abrams, Bate, Boyd, Crane, Green, Herrick, and Weinberg, as listed in the bibliography, to whose writings I am largely indebted, even if, in the case of Hurd's significance, I differ from their usual assessments.

virtue:

> By these, therefore, examples and reasons, I think it may be manifest that the poet, with that same hand of delight, doth draw the mind more effectually than any other art doth. And so a conclusion not unfitly ensueth: that, as virtue is the most excellent resting place for all worldly learning to make his end of, so Poetry, being the most familiar to teach it, and most princely to move towards it, in the most excellent work is the most excellent workman.[1]

Poetry, thus understood in terms of a rhetorically conceived general purpose, has no need of specific formal-functional distinctions. Sidney continues:

> . . . in his parts, kinds, or species (as you list to term them), it is to be noted that some poesies have coupled together two or three kinds. . . . But that cometh all to one in this question, for, if severed they be good, the conjunction can not be hurtful.[2]

There follows an enumeration of genres, which is not, however, meant to be complete. Each of those described is given a brief summary of traditional subject matters meant to characterize it, and is praised for its ability to please and teach, moving men to virtue.

Since Sidney's aim is the defense of poetry in general, he is entirely willing later in the Defense to join the puritan attack on specific practices in England. Those judgments of failings included in the Defense are referred to the general purpose of all poetry and to the rules of genres. His comment on Gorboduc is a typical and

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[1](ed. Shepherd), p. 115.

[2]Ibid., p. 116.

instructive example:

> . . . full of notable morality, which it doth most delightfully teach, and so obtain the very end of Poesy, yet in truth it is very defectious in the circumstances, which grieveth me, because it might not remain as an exact model of all tragedies. For it is faulty both in place and time . . . .[1]

The possibility of a judgment such as this, in which a work is thought to accomplish its end ("it doth most delightfully teach") even though it does not work within the formal confines which are thought essential to that accomplishment ("it is faulty both in [the unities of] place and time") is typical of neo-classic poetic theory. It occurs because form and function are not understood as organically related--function is generalized and rhetorically conceived, and form is reduced to a set of conventional rules observed for the sake of decorum (i.e. propriety, not probability).[2]

A later example of this way of thinking about poetry is to be found in Dryden's criticism. Dryden, whose "liberal" neo-classicism is well known and often celebrated, displays his affiliation with the Horatian tradition quite clearly in his "Heads of an Answer to Rymer" (1677). His purpose in these reading notes[3] is to defend the modern English poets against Rymer's orthodox strictures.

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[1] Ibid., p. 134.

[2] See Shepherd's note to this passage, pp. 219-20.

[3] They were originally written on the blank leaves of his copy of Rymer's The Tragedies of the Last Age Considered . . . (for further information see Watson ed., I, 210).

The "Heads of an Answer . . ." is a sort of outline brief for the defense. ". . . I believe," notes Dryden, that:

> upon a true definition of tragedy, it will be found that its work extends farther [than Aristotle's definition], and that it is to reform manners by delightful representation of human life in great persons, by way of dialogue. If this be true, then not only pity and terror are to be moved as the only means to bring us to virtue, but generally love to virtue and hatred to vice; by shewing the rewards of one, and punishments of the other; at least by rendering virtue always amiable, though it be shown unfortunate; and vice detestable, tho' it be shown triumphant.[1]

Since the end of tragedy is not seen as specific to the tragic form, the defender of the moderns can argue against the orthodox neo-classicist that his own view of the purpose of tragedy is better served by modern tragi-comedy:

> If then the encouragement of virtue and discouragement of vice be the proper ends of poetry in tragedy: pity and terror, tho' good means, are not the only. For all the passions in their turns are to be set in a ferment: as joy, anger, love, fear are to be used as the poet's commonplaces; and a general concernment for the principal actors is to be raised by making them appear such in their characters, their words, and actions, as will interest the audience in their fortunes.[2]

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[1](ed. Watson), I, 212-13. I mean this and other quotations from Dryden to serve as exemplary of a way of thinking about poetry which differs from Hurd's view. Dryden's criticism, because it is written occasionally and not by profession, so to speak, is notoriously difficult to view as a unified whole, presenting a single theory of poetry. The most recent attempt to view Dryden's criticism in that way is Robert D. Hume's study Dryden's Criticism (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970). For my purposes, I am willing to admit the possibility that the view of Dryden's criticism here presented is of Dryden in only one of his stances.

[2]Ibid.

Dryden uses a similar argument years later when his particular aim is to argue that the epic, rather than tragedy, achieves the greatest excellence of which poetry is capable. In the Preface to Aeneis in his Virgil translation (1697), Dryden writes:

> . . . better a mechanic rule were stretched or broken than a great beauty were omitted. To raise, and afterwards to calm the passions, to purge the soul from pride, by the examples of human miseries, which befall the greatest; in few words, to expel arrogance, and introduce compassion, are the great effects of tragedy.[1]

The rules are mechanical precisely because they have no essential relation to the function of the form as it is here described. Indeed, even when freed from observing these "mechanical rules" strictly, tragedy is still inferior to the epic, since the latter's ". . . cure is likely to be more perfect."[2] Forms and formal excellences are of no great importance, since the standard of comparison and judgment is a generalized rhetorical aim rather than one that is specific to and a function of each of the forms in question.

As I said earlier, Hurd's concept of form seems as different from this sort of "neo-classical" formalism, even in its so-called "liberal" phase, as it does from a more modern organicism. It differs from the former in the two ways that my examples are meant to show: viz. in the notion that forms are related to specific functions rather than to a generalized purpose rhetorically conceived, and in the view that the limits of a form are a function of a set of

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[1](ed. Watson), II, 227. [2]Ibid.

relations determined by the probable nature of things rather than by a set of traditional rules and conventions which must be observed for the sake of propriety. Hurd's concept of form differs from the latter, a more modern organicism, in other ways which I will use the example of Coleridge to illustrate.

Perhaps the most basic difference between Hurd's and Coleridge's view of form has to do with the latter's more modern belief that nature is unformed as far as we can tell,[1] and that forms, not in the nature of things, are contributed to a chaotic nature by the mind as a necessity of its own creation. Given such a state of affairs, Coleridge's opening comment in "On Poesy or Art" seems basic to his view: "Art . . . is the mediatress between, and reconciler of, nature and man."[2]

The reconciling artist cannot, however, imitate the so-called forms of things, for that order of things which is available to human understanding is external and mechanical structure only. Rather, he

> must imitate that which is within the thing, that which is active through form and figure, and discourses to us by symbols--the Naturgeist, or spirit of nature, as we unconsciously imitate those whom we love, for so only can he hope to produce any work

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[1]Coleridge does have a faith that nature is somehow formed, but its real form is perceptible only to a transcendent being. He writes: ". . . nature itself would give us the impression of a work of art, if we could see the thought which is present at once in the whole and in every part" ("On Poesy or Art," ed. Shawcross, II, 255).

[2](ed. Shawcross), II, 253.

> truly natural in the object and truly human in the effect. The idea which puts the form together cannot itself be the form. It is above form, and is its essence, the universal in the individual, or the individuality itself,--the glance and the exponent of the indwelling power.[1]

"Remember," adds Coleridge,

> that there is a difference between form as proceeding and shape as superinduced;--the latter is either the death or the imprisonment of the thing;--the former is its selfwitnessing and self-effected sphere of agency. Art would or should be the abridgement of nature. Now the fulness of nature is without character, as water is purest when without taste, smell, or colour, but this is the highest apex only,--it is not the whole. The object of art is to give the whole ad hominem; hence each step of nature hath its ideal, and hence the possibility of a climax up to the perfect form of a harmonized chaos.[2]

Nature, then, is "without character" and unformed, at least to human understanding. The poet, serving as a kind of receptacle for the Natur-geist, is able to make contact with a transcendent spirit, the wisdom of which is expressed, through the poet, to men, by symbols. The idea of this spirit is "above form, and is its essence." The form that a particular poem has is, in Coleridge's view, a function of the peculiar circumstances under which the poet's vision of this "indwelling power" occurred, and is, so to speak, the unique structure of this unique vision.

"The Spirit of Poetry," says Coleridge elsewhere, is

> common to all ages, and to imitate the antients wisely, we should do as they did; that is, embody

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[1] Ibid., II, 259.

[2] Ibid., II, 262.

> the Spirit in Forms adapted to all the Circumstances of Time, State of Society, etc.[1]

This "spirit" of Poetry and not their formal entity is what makes poems poems. To express itself, the spirit, through the agency of the poet,

> . . . incorporates and takes up surrounding materials, as a plant clothes itself with soil and climate, whilst it bears marks of a vital principle within, independant of all accidental circumstances.[2]

Literary form, then, is an historical accident in Coleridge's view, a sort of fashion, that clothes the vision of the poet to which it is "organically" related. The implications of this view of the nature of literary form are far reaching. As Father Appleyard puts it:

> Thehistorical argument for the circumstantial derivation of literary forms has analogies with the central doctrine of Coleridge's subsequent poetic: if literary forms and genres, the very shapes of the meaning in literature, are influenced in their development by a collective history of mind and culture, why should not the form of particular poems depend upon the way in which the individual creator knows and imagines?[3]

Precisely this is Coleridge's conception of the individual literary form: it is the unique shaping (by a genius) of a unique insight which the unique poem expresses. In an argument against the view that Shakespeare was a wild and

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[1](ed. Raysor), II, 200.

[2]Ibid., II, 211.

[3]Joseph A. Appleyard, S.J., Coleridge's Philosophy of Literature: The Development of a Concept of Poetry, 1791-1819 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), pp. 128-29n.

untutored genius, Coleridge adds the following points:

> No work of true genius dare want its appropriate form; neither indeed is there any danger of this. . . . For it is even this that constitutes its genius--the power of acting creatively under laws of its own origination. . . . The true ground of the mistake [regarding the nature of Shakespeare's genius] . . . lies in the confounding mechanical regularity with organic form. The form is mechanic when on any given material we impress a pre-determined form, not necessarily arising out of the properties of the material, as when to a mass of wet clay we give whatever shape we wish it to retain when hardened. The organic form, on the other hand, is innate; it shapes as it develops itself from within, and the fullness of its development is one and the same with the perfection of its outward form. . . . Nature, the prime genial artist, inexhaustible in diverse powers, is equally inexhaustible in forms. Each exterior is the physiognomy of the being within, its true image reflected and thrown out from the concave mirror.[1]

Hurd would have found much of Coleridge's argument sympathetic, especially his stress on the unacceptability of a merely "mechanical regularity," of impressing on materials a form which does not belong to them.[2]

But Hurd would not have agreed with Coleridge on other points of equal or greater importance. He would not have thought that poetic genius has the "power of acting creatively under laws of its own origination." At least three reasons can be offered to explain Hurd's disagreement. First, the poet has available to him for his observation and understanding, the formed universe which is his to imitate;

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[1](ed. Raysor), I, 197-98.

[2]For Hurd's version of this argument, in connection with the "decorum" between subject matter and form in the dialogue, see above, pp. 65ff.

he does not have the power to create "a" world. Second, though the outstanding poet has insight, his insight is into the formed nature of things, which it is his great capacity to exhibit more clearly, in probable imitations. Finally, in contrast both to Coleridge and to neo-classical theorists, the poet, in Hurd's view, doesn't make poetry, but poems, in a variety of different forms, each with a variety of subject matters appropriate to them, and each with a proper pleasure, a specific function, of its own.

## CHAPTER THREE

## HURD ON THE FORMS OF POETRY

Poetry in general, though a topic of some interest to Hurd, is, along with his "Dissertation on the Idea of Universal Poetry," a preliminary matter, to be followed by inquiries more specific. But the preliminaries are not unrelated to Hurd's special studies, for his understanding and his expectations are guided throughout by a view of what, in general, poetry is and what, in general, its purpose is to be in human life. Universal poetry, Hurd says in the conclusion to his dissertation (II:25-26) is

> . . . the art of treating any subject in <u>such</u> a way as is found most delightful to us; that is, IN AN ORNAMENTED AND NUMEROUS STYLE--IN THE WAY OF FICTION--AND IN VERSE. Whatever deserves the name of POEM must unite these three properties; only in different degrees of each, according to its nature. For the art of every <u>kind</u> of poetry is only this general art so modified as the <u>nature</u> of each, that is, its more immediate and subordinate end, may respectively require.

Thus, it is of no surprise to the reader of Hurd's properly ordered <u>Collected Works</u> that his next dissertation, "On the Provinces of the Drama"[1] begins with this statement of purpose: ". . . I attempt to deduce the laws of one of [the] . . . kinds [of Universal Poetry], the <u>Dramatic</u>, under

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[1]This dissertation was first published in the second edition (1753) of Hurd's Horace commentaries.

all its forms. . . . to distinguish, with exactness, its several species" (II:29). Hurd's terminology here corresponds to distinctions first made in his 1751 "Discourse on Poetical Imitation."[1] There he differentiated, following and augmenting Bacon's views, between poetry and history in terms of the former's purpose of imitating for the sake of intellectual pleasure. The two "general forms" of universal poetry were then differentiated according to the ways in which they became more pleasing than history. The dramatic kind, according to Hurd, uses the means of unity and integrity, connexion and continuity, to achieve its end of pleasing the mind through the imitation of actual life by way of dramatic action. The narrative kind employs these means, and also those which Bacon had adduced in his comparison (viz. magnanimity, morality, and delectability), to achieve its end of pleasing the mind through the imitation of life as men believe it might be, by way of narrated action. In that discourse, as in this dissertation, Hurd continues from this second distinction between the dramatic and narrative kinds of poetry, to elaborate the particular forms, the species of each kind (II:181ff.).

Hurd's definition of the forms of dramatic poetry in his dissertation "On the Provinces of the Drama" is controlled by an examination of the means required to achieve their particular ends (II:29-30):

> . . . not the general end of poetry, which alone was

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[1]See above, pp. 26ff.

> proper to be considered in the former case, but the proximate end of this kind. For from these ends, in subordination to that, which governs the genus, or which all poetry, as such, designs and prosecutes, are the peculiar rules and maxims of each species to be derived.

It is important to notice that the ends which Hurd distinguishes as proper to poetry, to dramatic poetry, and to each form (or species) of dramatic poetry are subordinate to each other in a different way from the subordination of pleasure as a more proximate to teaching as a final end of poetry which we find in Dryden, for example.[1] Hurd's subordination of more to less proximate ends is more organically conceived. All poetry pleases; some pleases this way, some that. Each subordinate end is related to the end to which it is subordinate as an adjectival or adverbial component is related to its noun or verb, as qualifier, rather than as a competing or even a complementary principle. In Hurd's view, the fully qualified proper pleasure of a particular form is specific to that form, and related to the proper pleasures of other forms only in so far as, and to the same degree that those forms are related to each other.

This procedure of defining forms by a consideration of the means appropriate to their specific ends Hurd considers correctly philosophical. Elsewhere he had "defined" literary forms from an "historical" point of view for another

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[1]See Watson ed., II, 219.

purpose.[1] His aim in this dissertation is, however, to be as precise as possible, for one of its subordinate purposes is to refute Fontenelle's view[2] that there are no forms in writing for the theatre, but rather a sort of spectrum of dramas in a continuous series, each individual work blending into the next and rendering formal distinctions superficial and meaningless. I have thought it best to postpone an analysis of Hurd's argument *contra* Fontenelle to the end of this chapter, since it belongs properly with a consideration

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[1]Hurd's treatment of forms from "the historical point of view" occurs in the second section of his "Discourse on Poetical Imitation." There he was seeking to establish the conclusion that a similarity in form between some works of literature is, as he says, ". . . *necessary* . . . whether their authors had, or had not, been guided by the pole-star of *example*" (II:182). To demonstrate this conclusion more forcefully, he describes the way in which poets, given a subject matter, an object for imitation, naturally find themselves working in a certain form appropriate to that subject-matter. Hurd's explanation is brief enough to quote in full: "If a proper allowance be made for a diversity of *subject-matter*, in either *mode* of composition, it will be easy, as I said, to account for the *particular forms* of the several subordinate species. And I the rather choose to do it in this way, and not from the peculiar *end* of each, which indeed were more philosophical, because the business is to make appear, how nature leads to the same general plan of composition in *practice*, not to establish the laws of each in the exact way of *theory*. Now in considering the matter *historically*, the diversity of *subject-matter* was doubtless *that* which first determined the writer to a different *form* of composition, tho' afterwards, a consideration of the *end*, accomplished by *each*, be requisite to deduce, with more precision of method, its distinct laws. The *latter* is that from whence the *speculative critic* rightly estimates the character of every species; but the inventor had his direction principally from the *former*" (II:182-83).

[2]Set forth in the "Préface generale de la tragedie et des six comedies de ce recueil," in *Oeuvres de Monsieur de Fontenelle*, nouvelle édition (7 vols.; Paris: Brunet, 1752), VII, i-xliv.

of mixed forms, the source, in his view, of all the confusion.[1] My immediate concern is with Hurd's analysis of dramatic poetry, that kind of poetry which pleases the mind through dramatic (as opposed to narrative) imitation of human action, rendered with a high degree of unity, integrity, connexion, and continuity.

## I. Forms of Drama

"THE PURPOSE OF THE DRAMA is, universally, to represent human life in the way of action" (II:30). Hurd's preface asserts the basic fact about this kind of poetry: all drama is enacted, even when read in the closet. "But," continues Hurd, "as such [enacted] representation is made for separate and distinct ENDS, it is, further, distinguished into different species, which we know by the names of TRAGEDY, COMEDY, and FARCE" (II:30). Three statements of purpose follow:

> By TRAGEDY, then, I mean that species of dramatic representation, whose end is to excite the passions of PITY and TERROR, and perhaps some others, nearly allied to them.
>
> By COMEDY that, which proposeth, for the ends of its representation, the sensation of pleasure arising from a view of the truth of CHARACTERS, more especially their specific differences.
>
> By FARCE I understand, that species of the drama, whose sole aim and tendency is to excite LAUGHTER.

The excellence of a tragedy, its capacity, as an imitation of men "in action," to move us to pity and terror

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[1] See below, pp. 135ff.

("and perhaps some others, nearly allied to them")[1] when

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[1]By this phrase Hurd does not mean what Dryden, for example, does in his argument, already quoted, that "pity and terror, tho' good means, are not the only [toward the "ends of poetry in tragedy"]. For all the passions in their turns are to be set in a ferment: as joy, anger, love, fear are to be used as the poet's commonplaces . . . " (ed. Watson, I, 213). On the other hand, Hurd's phrase does suggest some other emotions besides pity and fear ["terror" is his word; the implications of which I am unable to consider here, but which do not, I think, affect the interpretation I am about to offer] as the possible affects of tragedy. This view, particularly as modified by "nearly allied to them" is not, however, self-evidently contradictory to Aristotle's own analysis. Aristotle does not, to be sure, mention any other emotions by name, but neither does Hurd. And scholars of the Poetics are far from agreement about the meaning of the Greek words in that famous clause (1449b27-28) which Bywater translates "with incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish its catharsis of such emotions," and Butcher (Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art, with a Critical Text and Translation of the Poetics [London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1895; 4th ed., 1907; repr. with corrections, 1911]) englishes "through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions." Butcher's view (Ibid., p. 240n) is that all translations which render the Greek tōn toiouton with "all such emotions" or "these and suchlike emotions" are mistaken, and that it is with pity and fear "these, and these only, that tragedy is concerned." In contrast, Bywater and the majority of other translators prefer the "such" ("dergleichen," "de ce genre," "talium," etc.). Gerald F. Else, having recited this list of renderings (Aristotle's Poetics: The Argument [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967], pp. 226-27), notes that this "translation . . . if pressed, would force one to admit that there are other "such" emotions (i.e. tragic emotions) besides pity and fear." Indeed. And as Else himself notes, this eventuality did not seem to dismay the majority of translators in this and earlier centuries. Bywater writes that the phrase in question "is a general expression for this whole group of disturbing emotions (enthusiasm, pity, fear, etc.), instead of being, as is so often thought, either limited to the two emotions (pity and fear) which appear in the context, or applying to the emotions in general" (Aristotle on the Art of Poetry: A Revised Text with Critical Introduction, Translation and Commentary [Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1909], p. 152). Bywater also provides, in an appendix, a synopsis of versions of Poetics 1449b27-28 in Latin, Italian, Spanish, English, French, and German from 1527 to 1899 the overwhelming majority of which agree with his translation of the line with respect to the phrase in question here (pp. 361-5). In

contemplating it, suggests to Hurd some further conclusions about its nature. Action is more important in a tragedy than character is, since we are moved most by ". . . those signal circumstances of felicity or distress, which occur in the fortunes of men." Citing Aristotle, "the great critic" (Poetics, 1450a19-20: "it is in our actions--what we do--that we are happy or the reverse" [trans. Bywater]), Hurd restates the point: ". . . felicity and distress, . . . depend on action" (II:32). The subordination of "manners" does not mean their neglect, but merely that their representation is for the sake of ". . . making the action more proper to interest us" (II:32). The action represented, Hurd's next assertion about the form of tragedy, must be important (hence

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his eminently sensible little volume (Aristotle's Poetics: A Course of Eight Lectures, revised, with a preface by Colin Hardie [London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1956]), Humphrey House quotes Bywater (p. 103n.) and, asking whether Aristotle "means to exclude all others [besides pity and fear] from the emotional experience which Tragedy involves," proposes that surely Aristotle "by implication . . . does not exclude them." He elaborates briefly and concludes that "such [other] emotions are not excluded provided only that they are not incompatible with pity and fear" (pp. 103-104). Returning to Hurd's phrase about "some others, nearly allied to them," we may wonder how conscious he was of the need for his qualification, "perhaps." And we can, I think, with reasonable confidence, accept the phrase as not in conflict with Aristotle's view, or at least not necessarily so, until someone demonstrates conclusively that the minority reading of Aristotle's passage is absolutely right. Compare Father Boyd, The Function of Mimesis and Its Decline (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), who, having noted that "Bishop Hurd thought that tragedy should awaken other emotions besides pity and fear" [italics mine], decided that a comment made in another context about "indignation at prosperous vice, or the commiseration of suffering virtue" identifies what Hurd had in mind (p. 153). For "indignation . . . virtue" in its proper context, see below, p. 109n.

interesting), capable of moving us to pity and terror when contemplating it (II:34-35).[1] For the same reason, ". . . The persons, whose actions Tragedy would exhibit to us, must be of principal rank and dignity" (II:34). It is not that other sorts of persons are impossible materials for the tragic poets, Hurd hastens to add, for the fortunes of common men are surely affecting and interesting to us, who can so readily identify with them. But the "felicity and distress" of common men, though pathetic indeed, does not affect whole communities of men. Indeed, leaving reverberations aside, the "very same event" seems different in a common and

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[1]Hurd digresses briefly to question the modern use of "love subjects" as material for tragedies. His reason, ". . . the action, when stripped of its accidental ornaments and reduced to the essential fact, is nothing more than what might as well have passed in a cottage, as a king's palace" (II:34). Hurd might have assessed this as a change in the province of the form (see above, pp. 65ff.). Compare Clarence C. Green (The Neoclassic Theory of Tragedy in England During the Eighteenth Century [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934] who quotes Hurd's aside, and affirms that "straighter thinking, it might appear, would simply have inferred from this evidence that rank is unnecessary to tragedy, since love, which is common to all ranks, may be tragic. The truth was that it was impossible for men of Hurd's opinion to make such an inference, for they reasoned from definitions to characteristics" (pp. 184-85). Perhaps Green overstates the matter; from the empirical fact that love "which is common to all ranks" has been in modern times often used as material for tragedies, it does not follow that rank is unnecessary to tragedy, but only that materials in the province of the form, to use Hurd's conception, vary with changing circumstances. What the circumstances are which make love stories material for tragedy is another, and far more interesting question. It is only regrettable that Hurd didn't address himself to it, but, of course, few critics do even now, in spite of the advantage of over two hundred years' greater perspective. Pointing out the commonness of love affairs "when reduced to the essential fact" was not, I think, meant to offend anyone's democratic inclinations, but only to point out something about the nature of such materials.

an elevated life (II:36):

> The fall of a cottage, by the accidents of time and weather, is almost unheeded; while the ruin of a tower, which the neighborhood hath gazed at for ages with admiration, strikes all observers with concern.

Hurd voices his disapproval of "our passion for the familiar," which "goes so far, that we have tragedies, not only of private action, but of private persons; and so have well well nigh annihilated the noblest of the two dramas amongst us" (II:36). It is of interest that Hurd calls these misguided works tragedies; mediocre as they are, they are.

Comedy, in contrast, has no need for distinguished persons or important actions in Hurd's view. Indeed, comedy is minimally concerned with action, except as it be needful in the imitation of men "in action" for the sake of contemplating "the truth of character" that is the proper pleasure of the comic form.[1] The maker of comedies concerns himself with representing action only as it provides a probable basis for the display of his characters' diverse "manners and humours" (II:37). Again Hurd asks not to be misunderstood: ". . . the manners of men only shew themselves, or shew themselves most usually, in action. . . .

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[1] "The only pleasure, which an exposition of ordinary life affords, distinct from that we receive from a view of high life on the one hand, and ordinary life disfigured on the other [i.e. farce, see below, p113ff. ], is the satisfaction of contemplating the truth of character. However then this species of representation may be improved by incorporating other kinds of excellence with it, is not this, of pleasing by the truth of character, to be considered as the appropriate end of comedy" (II:80-81). Hurd's view of an "appropriate" end for a thing is such an end which that thing can achieve better than any other.

There is no other, or no probable way . . . [of representing manners]" (II:38). Action is simply subordinate in importance to character, given the proper pleasure of comedy.[1]

Respecting characters, and I think this term must here be understood as personages (but personages grounded on ethos or habitual predispositions), Hurd's next point in his discussion of the comic form, they "must not be of singular and illustrious note, whether for their virtues or vices." The proper pleasure of comedy is a function of "our sense of imitation" (II:40):

> . . . such pictures of eminent worth or villainy seize upon the moral sense; and by raising the strong correspondent passions of admiration and abhorrence, turn us aside from contemplating the imitation itself.

Hurd's point is that characters who are eminently good or bad are too intensely affecting, and affecting in the wrong ways. The moving but fundamentally disinterested contemplation of human activity, imitated, which is a description of the general effect of poetry as a fine art, might give way in such a context to an emotional effect more nearly rhetorical. Instead of a response such as "yes, that's the way people are," the response might become "everyone should be like that" or "no one should be like that," with

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[1]Hurd digresses again (II:39) to insert a paraphrase of Warburton's critique of "intricate Spanish plots," an example of the mistaking of action for character as the essential part of the comic form. The original comments are in Warburton's letter to Hurd of February 15, 1751 (Warburton Letters, 77-78). They seemed pertinent enough sixty years later for the Edinburgh Review (XIII [January, 1809], 364) to quote them with approbation.

echoes of thought about corrective action to be taken.[1]

Attention to the end of comedy also suggests another point, that its characters are "private and inferior persons," both for the unimportance of their actions which thus do not divert contemplation of the "truth of manners," and because "the follies and foibles of the great," though no doubt easier to make ridiculous to an average audience's mind, are mostly ridiculed improbably since such follies "in action" are usually unavailable for the contemplation of the generality (II:40-41). As with all considerations of requisite subject matter, Hurd's formulation here is related to the requirement of the form. Changing circumstances might render ridiculous leaders proper material for comedy, probable even if indecorous.

Hurd turns now to those attributes that are common to both the comic and the tragic forms; his purpose, a further characterization of each. A structured plot, an action, is essential to both forms, since tragedy achieves its pathos "by" action and comedy "through" it, its humour (II:42-43). Elsewhere Hurd refers to "the peculiar art" of the dramatist's profession, "that is, the artificial contexture of the plot" (I:354). Nevertheless, it follows from their respective ends, that ". . . a good plot is not so essential to comedy, as tragedy (II:45):

> For the pathos is the result of the entire action; that is, of all the circumstances of the story taken together, and conspiring by a probable tendency, to a completion in the event. A failure in the just arrangement and disposition of the parts may, then,

> affect what is of the essence of this [tragic] drama. On the contrary, humour, though brought out by action, is not the effect of the whole, but may be distinctly evidenced in a single scene.

Hurd instances Fletcher's plays The Little French Lawyer and The Spanish Curate to illustrate his view that the excellence of comedy is not ultimately dependent on plot. He goes on to repeat his and Warburton's judgment of the intricate Spanish plot--nice but external to the form and function of comedy. He offers a reason for its current popularity among writers: such a plot, with its "great deal of business . . . hides their inability to colour manners . . . which is . . . much harder . . . " (II:46).

Father Boyd, in his wish to read Hurd as "typically neo-classical," misrepresents his view of the reason why character is more important than plot in comedy: "the different types of character . . . are more important for our edification than is plot, for instead of viewing their disordered passions we are moved to correct our lives.[1] This is hardly what Hurd says. Father Boyd's interpretation of Hurd is vitiated here, as elsewhere,[2] by a mistaken understanding of Hurd's conception of the function of

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[1] The Function of Mimesis and its Decline (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp. 165-66.

[2] For example, he misrepresents Hurd's rationale for thinking that farce is a fundamentally rhetorical form as a belief that "the vulgar must be exposed before they amend" (ibid.). See below, p.114 for Hurd's actual views regarding the nature and purpose of farce.

poetry. I will consider that issue later in this study;[1] my concern now is with Hurd's meaning. In the quotation just given Hurd asserts simply that, to his mind, the effect of comedy does not seem as closely connected to the shape of the entire action as the effect of tragedy is connected to the shape of its action. The "soul" or animating principle of tragedy is the action; by implication, Hurd suggests the possibility that action is not the soul of comedy. It would, however, be preferable to let Hurd speak for himself, in this very complex matter.

Both tragedy and comedy require, at their most excellent, "an unity and even simplicity in the conduct of the fable." Double plots divert attention, reducing by diffusing the effectiveness of the imitation (II:42-43).[2] The plots of tragedy and comedy differ in their sources, though, for "Tragedy succeeds best, when the subject is real; comedy, when it is feigned." Actions taken from actual life tend to interest more strongly; their probability is enforced by their possibility. A writer of comedy, less wholly engaged in the imitation of an action, does best with invented plots where the distinctiveness of characters may

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[1] See below, chapter 4.

[2] See also I:41-42, 70, 354-55. Addison in Spectator 267, speaks of critics' admiration for the double plot in The Spanish Friar, or the Double Discovery, "where the two different plots look like counterplots and copies of one another." Hurd notes that "this likeness of two plots, could never have been thought a beauty, if, to have two different plots, of any kind, in the same drama, had not been a fault." (Hurd's Addison, IV,88).

be represented with ease (II:46-47). This explains "why tragedies are often formed on the most trite and vulgar [i.e. commonly known] subjects, whereas a new subject is generally demanded in the comedy." The more known the tragic story, "the fitter for the poet's purpose" (II:46-47). Hurd generally approves of "domestic subjects," whether drawn from actuality or feigned, for a similar set of reasons. More familiar, such materials seem more probable, more personally interesting, more likely, and easier for the artist to render successfully because more available to his own observation. Yet such subjects ought not to be either too recent or too far in the past; the latter are remote, the former too familiar. "There is no fixing this point with precision. In the general, that aera is the fittest for the poet's purpose, which, though fresh enough in our minds to warm and interest us in the event of the action, is yet at so great a distance from the present times, as to have lost all those mean and disparaging circumstances, which unavoidably adhere to recent deeds, and, in some measure, sink the noblest modern transactions to the level of ordinary life" (I:247-49).

The characters of comedy and tragedy also differ. "Comedy makes all its Characters general; Tragedy, particular. The Avare of Moliere is not so properly the picture of a covetous man, as of covetousness itself. Racine's Nero, on the other hand, is not a picture of cruelty, but of a cruel man" (II:48). Hurd hastens again to qualify this

distinction: particular is not meant to suggest minute peculiarity, nor is general to be confused with a staged abstract idea. The tragic character is particular in the sense of partial; character in tragedy is rendered for the sake of and in so far as the action requires. The comic character is general in the sense of typical.[1] Hurd accepts the "ruling passion-humour" view of comic character (his conception of the comic form is of a dramatic imitation guided by such a theory), but is equally concerned that this

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[1]In the ninetieth to the ninety-fifth numbers of the Hamburgische Dramaturgie (1769), Lessing discusses Hurd's view of the difference between tragic and comic characters. Particularly, he considers the question whether Hurd's distinction is contradictory to the sort of "generality" in characters which Aristotle speaks of in the Poetics [1451b8-11]. His conclusion is that Hurd's view is only apparently contradictory to Aristotle's and is, in fact, in accord with it. Lessing quotes Hurd's own qualifications and explanations to substantiate his conviction, and summarizes thus: "Hurd erklärt sich nehmlich so: der tragische Charakter müsse zwar partikular oder weniger allgemein sein, als der Komische, d. i. er müsse die Art, zu welcher er gehöre, weniger vorstellig machen; gleich wohl aber müsse das Wenige, was man von ihm zu zeigen für gut finde, nach dem Allgemeinen entworfen sein, welches Aristoteles fordere" (Sämtliche Schriften, ed. by Karl Lachmann [3rd ed., rev. and enlarged by Franz Muncker; 23 vols.; Stuttgart: G. J. Göschen'sche Verlagshandlung, 1886-1924], X, p. 186). Professor J. G. Robertson, in his Lessing's Dramatic Theory, Being an Introduction to and Commentary on His Hamburgische Dramaturgie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939; repr. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1965) summarizes the Hurd-Lessing discussion unsympathetically by remarking that "the whole argument is obviously one that has little interest for us today; no one would now seriously discriminate between tragedy and comedy in respect to the kind of character which may be introduced" (p. 410). Perhaps "no one" is a bit too inclusive.

view not be thought to sanction the "specimen of a man turned all into a single passion." "No metamorphosis," he adds, "could be more strange or incredible" (II:52-54).[1]

To summarize Hurd's conception of the nature of comedy and tragedy, the following definitions may be useful. Tragedy, in Hurd's view, is that species of dramatic poetry which imitates a known and important action that is single, complete, and unified, undertaken by particular persons of consequence whose moral qualities are those of normal men. The contemplation of the "event" of such an action and the consequent fates of such characters moves us to pity and terror, pleasing the mind.

In the eighteenth-century discussion of the "pleasures of tragedy," Hurd takes, predictably enough, a position of inclusiveness with respect to the various theories proposed to account for the pseudo-paradox that people are "pleased" by "painful" representation. Hurd rejects Hume's view ("On Tragedy," 1757) that the "pleasure" of artistry

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[1]Hurd refers the reader unable to differentiate between the typical, and the mathematical abstraction to Theophrastus, and to Charles Le Brun's extraordinary little volume, Conférences sur l'expression des différents caractères des passions (Paris, 1667; new ed. Amsterdam and Paris, 1698), which was translated into English by John Williams as A Method to Learn to Design the Passions . . . by Mr. [Charles] LeBrun, Chief Painter to the French King, Chancellor and Director of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture . . . (London: for the Author, 1734). Hurd criticizes Jonson's Every Man Out of His Humour for its "delineations of a group of simply existing passions." He praises Shakespeare's comic art; his characters are, in all their particularity, typical (II:52-54).

is quantitatively stronger than the "pain" of commiseration, hence the total of both is "pleasure." His objection is to the facts, which he believes Hume to have misrepresented. It is not the case, Hurd suggests, that "the impression of grief or terror, excited by a well-written tragedy . . . [is] weaker than that which arises from our observation of the faculties of the writer, the power of numbers, and imitation." Also, ". . . the whole effect of . . . [the "artistic" devices] is . . . to deepen the impressions of grief and terror. They are out of place, and altogether impertinent if they contribute to any other end" (I:118). He finds the views of Du Bos and Fontenelle acceptable, though partial. Regarding Du Bos's position that any emotion is more pleasing than none, Hurd notes that "it is not to be doubted but that we love to have our attention raised, and our curiosity gratified." Hurd is also sympathetic to Fontenelle's view that "the representation, however distressful, is still seen to be a representation."[1] To these, Hurd has additional comments of his own. ". . . ALL the uneasy Passions, in the very time that we are distressed by them, nay, though the occasions be instant and real, have a secret complacency mixed with them." In addition, ". . . the peculiar passions, excited by tragedy . . . must produce pleasure. For what are these, but indignation at

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[1]Du Bos, Réflexions Critiques sur la Poésie et sur la Peinture (1719) trans. by Thomas Nugent, 1748; Fontenelle, Réflexions sur la Poétique, in Oeuvres (Paris, 1818), III, 14.

prosperous vice, or the commiseration of suffering virtue?[1] And the agitation of these passions is even, in real life, accompanied with a certain delight, which was, no doubt, intended to quicken us in the exercise of those social offices." Finally, in reflecting on our emotions, we are ". . . conscious of our own humanity. . . . We understand and feel that it is right for us to be afflicted by the distresses of others. Our pain is softened by a secret exultation in the rectitude of these sympathies" (I:119-20). Hurd summarizes the partial explanations thus:

> We are occupied . . . by a great event; we are melted into tears by a distressful one; the heart is relieved by this burst of sorrow; is cheared and animated by the finest moral feelings; exults in the consciousness of its own sensibility; and finds, in conclusion, that the whole is but an illusion (I:121).

It is perhaps true that Hurd here is guilty of eclectically linking together a number of explanations for the pleasure that accompanies the contemplation of an excellent tragedy,

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[1]This is the correct context for Hurd's comment that "indignation at prosperous vice, or the commiseration of suffering virtue" are the "peculiar passions, excited by tragedy." The context is an argument in favor of the "secret complacency" mixed with the "uneasy passions" which renders them, especially as experienced by the spectator, not just painful. Surely it is unreasonable to cite this passage as representative of Hurd's theoretically considered view of the function of tragedy, especially since he is at pains, in his formal treatise on the drama to speak of "pity and fear and perhaps some others, nearly allied to them." What might more reasonably be concluded is that, in Hurd's view, "indignation at prosperous vice" and "commiseration of suffering virtue" are the peculiar "self-approving" emotions which tragedy excites, if and when it does so (compare Humphrey House, Aristotle's Poetics: A Course of Eight Lectures, revised, with a preface by Colin Hardie [London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1956], pp. 103-104).

as Earl Wasserman suggests.[1] Wasserman's article, a helpful listing of the various partial theories put forward during the "neo-classical" period, seems mistaken only in apparently insisting that they ought to be kept separate, as if either audiences or poets operate by some one mechanism which it is the proper objective of literary theory to identify. Hurd's view, albeit expressed in a sentimentalist's vocabulary, rhetorically appropriate to his mid-century audience but distasteful to us, seems accurate enough. Contemplating an excellent tragedy, we exercise a number of our human capacities for serious thought and feeling, and though catharsis is not named explicitly, it seems that something like a catharsis of emotion is implicit both in Hurd's notion of "relief" and in his strong sense of the contemplative nature of all serious poetry.

In contrast to tragedy, comedy is that species of dramatic poetry which imitates the different manners of various general types of ordinary men, whose moral qualities are neither abhorrent nor admirable, through a probable sequence of inconsequential action. The contemplation of the "truth of character" exhibited through such action is humourous, pleasing the mind.

Hurd's strongest interest in the "Dissertation on the Provinces of the Drama" is in comedy, that form which, "for want of passing through the hands of such a critic as

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[1] "The Pleasures of Tragedy," ELH, XIV (1947), 283-307.

Aristotle, has been less perfectly understood" (II:57). Hurd knew Aristotle's brief mentions of comedy in the Poetics and was aware of the possible difference between his and Aristotle's conceptions of the form. When he first mentions imitation of the "truth of character" as the purpose of the comic form, Hurd cites Aristotle's comment (1449 a31) that ". . . [comedy is] an imitation of men worse than the average" (trans. Bywater), but recognizes that Aristotle seems elsewhere to assert that action is the fundamental object of both tragic and comic imitations. He quotes the later mention of comedy made in connection with Aristotle's brief history of poetry (1448b25-27): "the graver among them would represent noble actions, and those of noble personages; and the meaner sort the actions of the ignoble" (trans. Bywater), but then adds that ". . . even here, the expression is so put, as if he had been conscious that persons, not actions, were the direct object of comedy" (II:37-38n.). In the second section of his "Dissertation on the Provinces of the Drama," however, Hurd asserts that "the idea of this drama [i.e. comedy] is much enlarged beyond what it was in Aristotle's time; who defines it to be, an imitation of light and trivial actions, provoking ridicule."[1] Hurd argues against this view of the nature of comedy, stating that it accounts only for the "state and practice of old or

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[1]Hurd's immediate opponent in this discussion is René Rapin, whose view that "Le Ridicule est ce qu'il y a de plus essentiel à la Comedie" (Réflexions sur la Poétique [Paris, 1674], p. 205) he vehemently opposes.

middle comedy" (II:65).[1] With the additional practice of new comedy and some modern comedy (Shakespeare, Beaumont and Fletcher, some of Jonson, most of Molière), the form of comedy has developed further, and an accurate description, reflecting such development, is required. Hurd's main point is that the essential subject matter (the "province") of the comic form is not coextensive with the ridiculous which is, in fact, only an accidental quality of some types of ordinary characters engaged in some sorts of ordinary actions. As a result, ridicule as an "effect" is not organically related to the form of comedy as pity and terror are to the form of tragedy. The comic effect, corresponding to tragedy's pity and terror, is "humour: or which comes to the same thing . . . that pleasure, which the truth of representation affords, in the exhibition of the private characters of life, more particularly their specific differences" (II: 57). The excellence of comedy, as comedy, is recognized by anyone who, contemplating it, can say "Yes, that's the way people are," accompanied, perhaps, with a smile, and, at

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[1]Lessing, in the ninetieth number of the Hamburgische Dramaturgie, regrets Hurd's argument that Aristotle could not have known about any other than the ridicule-provoking old comedy. He seems to have believed that Hurd's view was not really different from Aristotle's, and that Hurd's argument to account for their supposed differences was actually superfluous. Lessing writes: "Hurd hätte sie [i.e. Aristotle's view] nur recht verstehen dürfen; und er würde gar nicht nöthig gehabt haben, um seine an und für sich richtigen Begriffe von der Komödie ausser allen Streit mit den Aristotelischen zu setzen, seine Zuflucht zu der vermeintlichen Unerfahrenheit des Aristoteles zu nehmen" (Sämtliche Schriften, X, 167n.).

times, with a laugh or a sneer. Hurd does agree that some comedy exhibits ridiculous and satiric qualities. His only disagreement is with the insistence that these qualities are essential, rather than accidental to the form. Though convinced of their accidental relationship, he is quick to add that both satire and ridicule can enliven (i.e. amplify) the humour that is comedy's proper pleasure (II:64-65).

Part of the difficulty which occasions confusion about the nature of the comic form, in Hurd's view, is the tendency for comic imitation to verge on farce, ". . . that species of the drama, whose sole aim and tendency is to excite LAUGHTER" (II:30). Among so-called comedies, Hurd explains, there seem to be two types: one ". . . reflects such qualities and characters, as are common to human nature at large;" the other, ". . . represents the whims, extravagances, and caprices, which characterize the folly of particular persons or times" (II:96). And either of these types may imitate its material faithfully or may distort it. The province of the comic form, with its proper pleasure of humour, includes only the faithful imitation of "such qualities and characters as are common to human nature at large." Farce includes distorted representations of "common . . . human nature," and both distorted and faithful imitations of "partial nature," whether of historically peculiar types "of which our comedy is, in great measure, made up" or of particular actual persons "which was the distinguishing character

of the old comedy properly so called" (II:96-97).

Having located the subject matter of farce in distorted and particular character types, Hurd seems to contradict his former assertion (that the sole aim of farce is to excite laughter) when he adds that "Farce . . . professes to entertain, but this, in order more effectually to serve the interests of virtue and good sense." He adds, "its proper end and purpose (if we allow it to have any reasonable one) is, then, to INSTRUCT" (II:98). Assuming that Hurd means what he says, and means also to be faithful to the "philosophical" rigor with which he proposed to treat dramatic forms in this dissertation, his reasoning must be thought to have followed along these lines: excited laughter is not a response indicative of an intellectual pleasure accompanying contemplation, nor is distortion and particularity the sort of thing that reasonable men contemplate; therefore, if farce has a "reasonable" end, it must be to instruct by laughable example, so to speak. That is, its end must be rhetorical rather than contemplative. Hurd's reasoning on this question, aside from its own interest, suggests a reaffirmation of my view that "mere" pleasure would be an incorrect interpretation of Hurd's general statement[1] that the end of poetry, as poetry, is pleasure. Hurd did know that farce entertains.

Actually, however, Hurd's main purpose in analyzing

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[1]See above, p. 31.

the nature of farce is the further circumscription that such analysis might give to the form of comedy. In Hurd's view, then, the comic form, unlike farce, is contemplative. Its end is that sort of intellectual pleasure which accompanies insight into the "truth of character." To clarify and exemplify the distinction between comedy and farce, contemplative and rhetorical imitations of character types, Hurd offers a brief analysis of Ben Jonson"s Alchymist, from which I quote his main point (II:102):

> Had the end and purpose of the Play been to expose Alchymy, it had been . . . [a farce]. But this mode of local folly, is employed as the means only of exposing another folly, extensive as our Nature and coeval with it, namely Avarice. So that the subject [as well as its form] has all the requisites of true Comedy.

This seems a good example of the sort of consideration which probably led Hurd to his distinction between comedy and farce in the first place, as a distinction between a rhetorical and a poetic representation. A local folly can be represented, but is not universal, and therefore not properly the object of contemplation. A folly "extensive as our Nature" is both. Hurd's dissertation ends with the question whether fashionable contemporary "comedy" or Jonson's best achievements measure up most fully to the excellence of the comic form. Jonson's work, he is certain, will carry the preference of posterity.

It may be well to remark here, in concluding this discussion, that Hurd's view of the form of comedy, while

thought provoking, seems somewhat unsatisfactory. That action is less essential to comedy than to tragedy may be true,[1] but offers, in its implication, a problem which Hurd doesn't deal with. Namely, on what basis, if the imitated action is not correlative to the end effect, the dramatist, writing comedy, shapes his plot. Presumably Hurd would answer that any basis at all would do, as long as it offered a plot through which characters could be displayed and their "truth" contemplated. But, though it does seem true that humor is observably less dependent on seeing a whole action, than pity and fear, for example, are, yet surely a comedy is to be differentiated formally from a humorous sketch. But though Hurd is unsatisfying in his description of the "soul" of comedy, his questions show a kind of probing into the relationship between form and effect, and indeed (pace Trowbridge, et al.) a willingness to proceed empirically by questioning the causes of an observed effect, that is characteristically Aristotelian. The very fact that he rejects Rapin's formula for comedy suggests that to equate Hurd with a neo-classicism defined in literary theory by a preoccupation with rhetorical formulas is to miss his distinctiveness, and, I think, his intention, if not, in the case of comedy, his actual achievement.

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[1] It was echoed by Helen Gardener in a delightful essay on As You Like It: "I do not think that the plot . . . can be regarded as the 'soul' or animating force of Shakespeare's most original and characteristic comedies" ("As You Like It," in Lawrence Lerner, ed., Shakespeare's Comedies: an Anthology of Modern Criticism [London: Penguin Books, 1969], pp. 245-63).

## II. Forms of Narrative

Narrative poetry, in Hurd's view, differs from "mere" history in the same ways as does the dramatic kind (viz. in making for a greater unity and integrity, a more satisfying connexion and continuity in the imitation of human activities than is available in the record of actuality). In addition, narrative poetry offers three further advantages which were enumerated by Bacon, and which Hurd restates. The narrative imitation of action is more magnanimous, grand, and heroical than actual action appears to be. The imitation of action in narrative is more in accord with our ideas of merit, justice, and the law of providence than actual action appears to be. Finally, narrated imitations of action are filled with various and unexpected events, and are more delightful in their vicissitudes than actual action appears to be. For these reasons, especially, men write narrative poems, and delight in their reading.[1]

Although Hurd never treats narrative poetry exclusively and with the same aim of thoroughness as is found in his "Dissertation on the Provinces of the Drama," it is possible to formulate something of a description of his views on the epic and the novel by drawing together miscellaneous observations and criticisms culled from material included in writings intended for other purposes.[2]

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[1]For a fuller discussion of these points and an interpretation of Hurd's meaning in citing them, see above, pp. 25ff.

[2]The material on epic and romance included in Hurd's Letters on Chivalry and Romance (1762) is purposely excluded from this discussion. I have thought it best to postpone my discussion of these until the fifth chapter where an explication of the Letters will place them in a correct context.

In the last section of his "Discourse on Poetical Imitation" which is meant to be an apology for professed imitators, Hurd adduces the example of D'Avenant's "epic" Gondibert as a ". . . perpetual monument of the mischiefs, which must ever arise from . . . affectation of originality in lettered and polite poets" (II:235). His analysis of D'Avenant's procedure is meant to show how the author, by departing from the form of the epic in a vain attempt for uniqueness, achieved instead a sort of monstrosity.[1]

Seeking the unique, D'Avenant decided to give his narrative the tight (five-act) structure of the drama. This was a mistake, in Hurd's view (II:237):

> . . . cutting himself off, by this means, from the opportunity of digressive ornaments, which contribute so much to the pomp of the epic poetry; and, what is more essential, from the advantage of the most gradual and circumstantiated narration, which gives an air of truth and reality to the fable, he failed in accomplishing the proper end of this poem, ADMIRATION; produced by a grandeur of design and variety of important incidents, and sustained by all the energy and minute particularity of description.

Seeking to confine his story within the bounds of a more up-to-date rationalism,[2] D'Avenant chose to eliminate from his representation all the supernatural "machinery" found in earlier achievements of the

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[1]A defense of D'Avenant against Hurd's criticism was written by Dr. John Aikin in the early nineteenth century as "An Essay on the Heroic Poem of Gondibert" published in Lucy Aikin, ed., Memoir of John Aikin, M. D. . . . with a Selection of his Miscellaneous Pieces, Biographical, Moral, and Critical (2 vols.; London: for Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, 1823), I, 69-101. Not sharing Hurd's understanding of literary form, Aikin defends the poem as "the work of an elevated genius, pregnant with a rich store of free and noble sentiment, fashioned by an intimate commerce with the great world, and boldly pursuing an original but not an unskilful plan" (Ibid., p. 79).

[2]A rationalism, that is, which thought, so to speak, to buckle and bow the mind to the motions of things.

epic form. Hurd is sympathetic with D'Avenant's problem (II:238):

> These conceits, he rightly saw, had too slender a foundation in the serious belief of his age to justify a relation of them. And had he only dropped these, his conduct had been without blame.

But D'Avenant was, in a way, all too typical in his procedure: wishing to avoid one "extreme determined him to the other." Thus, to avoid the incredible, he chose to write a narration totally without "the intervention of supernatural agency." He chose to admit ". . . nothing, however well established in the general opinion, that was supernatural" (II:238-39). Strangest of all, D'Avenant, ". . . who was not to be held by the shackles of superstition, suffered himself to be entrapped in the silken net of love and honour" even as ". . . he rejected what had the truest grace in the ancient epic, a sober intermixture of religion" (II:239). Although Hurd is not explicit in drawing out the implications of this substitution, it seems as though he understood something of the way in which a narrative imitation, seeking to display the utmost significance of human action, requires--indeed, never does without--something like a redeeming principle. Why else, he might have asked, do we tell a story?

Indeed, it was in part, at least, by way of seeking an answer to that question that Hurd had introduced Bacon's comparison of history and poetry into his discussion of the "Idea of Universal Poetry." There it was asserted that epic poetry, above all, "submits the shews of things to the desires of the mind," by finding in "the shews of things" a meaning at once more magnanimous, more just, and more delightful than the chronicle of actuality appears to offer. Such, indeed, both Hurd, and Bacon, thought to be the special

purpose of epic poetry: its end, our admiration[1] moved by the contemplation of a story of human affairs grand, various, and above all, infused with our beliefs about the way things might be--informed, that is, by a meaning that arises out of, embraces, and orders the fullest complexity of our most serious endeavours. "The epic muse . . . intending . . . to astonish the imagination with whatever is most august within the compass of human thought, . . . [can not] accomplish this great end, but by the ministry of supernatural intelligences, . . . [since] the relation of man to his deity, . . . [is] essential to his nature . . ." (II:166-67).

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[1] In his 1734 translation of Le Brun's handbook on the passions (see above, p. 107n.), John Williams renders the description of admiration thus: "Admiration is the chief and most temperate of all the Passions. . . . All the effect of this Passion is an entire suspension of motion, to give the Soul Time to deliberate upon what she has to do, and attentively consider the object that presents itself to her . . ." (p. 24). The OED (I, 49) offers as its second definition the following: "Agreeable surprise, wonder mingled with reverence, esteem, approbation; hence, in late usage, pleased or gratified contemplation." Compare Hobbes's "Preface" to his translation of the Odyssey (1675): ". . . the work of an Heroique Poem is to raise Admiration, principally, for three Vertues, Valour, Beauty, and Love . . ." (Spingarn, II, 68). Father Boyd devotes some space in his study, The Function of Mimesis and Its Decline (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), to the meaning of admiration in "neo-classical" circles (pp. 168ff.). He concludes that a "basically moral or didactic . . . orientation" is suggested by the use of "admiration" as the name for the effect of epic poems. He does distinguish, however, the more rhetorical view of Hobbes, quoted above, from a later view such as that of Blair (1783) which Boyd names "the most satisfactory conception, at this time, of the function of epic" (p. 170). Blair rejected the argument that epics are read so "that, at the end, we shall be able to gather from it some commonplace morality. Its effect arises from the impression which the parts of the Poem separately, as well as the whole taken together, make upon the mind of the Reader: from the great examples which it sets before us, and the high sentiments with which it warms our hearts. The end which it proposes, is to extend our ideas of human perfection; or in other words, to excite admiration" (quoted in Boyd, pp. 170-71). Hurd would probably have found Blair's comment intelligent; the major difference between them is that Hurd would insist that epics move us to admiration not by "extend[ing] our ideas of human perfection" but rather by imitating them.

In part, then, the special excellence of epic is achieved by virtue of the freedom with which a narrated rather than an enacted action may be presented for our contemplation. What might appear fantastic on a stage can easily be included in an epic narrative.[1] As a result of this potential inherent in the narrative kind of imitation, D'Avenant's decision to eliminate supernatural agency in his poem involved a conscious failure to employ one of the available means toward the achievement of the epic form and the pleasure proper to it.

The capaciousness of the epic is another means toward its excellence as an imitation of that which "is most august within the compass of human thought." Indeed, episodes are one of the strongest means available to the epic writer. They serve ". . . to diversify and ennoble the narration by digressive, yet not unrelated, ornaments; the former circumstance relieving the simplicity of the epic fable, while the other prevents its unity from being violated" (II:185). The episode ". . . amuses . . . with something relative to the . . . design, yet not so, as to with-hold . . . principal observation from . . . the greater subject" (I:140).[2] In his decision to

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[1]Hurd contrasts, as an example of this fact, the scene in Senaca's Hippolytus (1244-1272) where Theseus tries to reassemble the mangled limbs of his son, on stage, with a parallel scene in Xenophon's Cyropaedia (7. 3. 9.) where it is told how Panthea attempts to put together the torn limbs of Abradates. The first, horrible, is enacted; in narrative a similar episode is "so contrived as to have an infinite beauty" (I:143).

[2]Hurd reveals his sense of the relationship between episode and whole by underlining Virgil's wisdom in making the story of the destruction of Troy a sort of flash-back. Had Virgil adhered to strict chronology, beginning with Book II, it would have been necessary to elaborate so fully as to render the subject of the Aeneid proper an appendix to the new poem on the fall of Troy (I:139) As an

confine the action of his poem in the tight compass appropriate to dramatic writing, D'Avenant neglected another means of achieving the excellence proper to the epic form.

By this same decision, D'Avenant also neglected a further means of sustaining the "grandeur of design and variety of important incidents" of the epic, that is, "the advantage of the most gradual and circumstantial narration" accomplished with "all the energy and minute particularity of description." The form of the epic, in Hurd's opinion (I:139):

> . . . lays the author under an obligation of shewing any event, which he formally undertakes in his own person, at full length, and with all its material circumstances. Every figure must be drawn in full proportion, and exhibited in strong, glowing colours.

D'Avenant's decision was all the more mistaken since among the advantages attending the use of such "minute particularity of description" is the "air of truth and reality" which circumstantial detail gives to the fable. Since the form of the epic poem moves men to admiration, this "air of truth and reality" is essential to it. It would seem that admiration most readily accompanies the probable rendering of action, for what man admires the improbable? Our belief in the probability of a narrated action, particularly since that action is to be of a kind that corresponds to "whatever is most august

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illustration, Hurd considers a painting, the subject of which is Aeneas, with father, son, and household gods, preparing to set sail. "Troy in flames, as a constituent part of this picture, would be manifestly absurd. It would be painting two subjects, instead of one. . . . But a distant perspective of burning Troy might be thrown into a corner of the piece, that is, episodically, with good advantage; where, instead of distracting the attention, and breaking the unity of the subject, it would concenter, as it were, with the great design, and have an effect in augmenting the distress of it" (I:141).

within the compass of human thought," is strongest when rendered, as Hurd said elsewhere, speaking of Milton's imitation of the action of fallen angels, more humano, that is, with the kind of circumstantial detail which is recognized as the rich content of normal human activity.

It seems probable that Hurd, if he had anywhere defined the epic form, would have proposed something like the following definition: the epic is an imitation, narrated rather than enacted, of a unified, integral, connected, and continuous human action that is of great seriousness, telling of characters and events in accord with our beliefs about the way men and their activities might be, at their most magnanimous, just, and various, through the means of episodes that harmonize with the whole, circumstantial descriptions, and the intervention of supernatural agency which embraces and orders the meaning of the whole (in accord with our beliefs about the nature of such agency and its purposes), the contemplation of which, moving us to admiration, pleases the mind. To this one might compare, for the sake of differentiating Hurd from earlier critics, Bossu's definition (in his Treatise of the Epic Poem, 1675): "The epic poem is a discourse invented by art to form the manners by such instructions as are disguised under the allegories of some one important action, which is related in verse after a probable, diverting, and surprising manner . . ." (trans. in Elledge and Schier, p. 308). It is evident that Hurd does not share the view that the function of epic "discourse" is "to form the manners." Nevertheless, Hurd identifies the epic effect as admiration, an identification which in the opinion of some critics, suggests a "didactic orientation." It is to this term, and its

meanings, as well as the implications of Hurd's usage here, that I must now turn.

The history of "admiration" as a technical term in literary criticism remains unwritten. Using the summaries available in Bernard Weinberg's extensive study, A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance (2 vols.; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), I hope to provide here something of a basis for discussion. The word seems to have had its origins as a technical term in Ciceronian rhetorical theory, where it is used to describe one of the orator's ends. The orator is to please, teach, and move the audience and to bring them to admiration for himself and his art, achieving thereby his fame.[1] In the Italian Renaissance, this usage was transferred to name one of the general ends of poets.[2] Tomitano's brief definition of the poet may be taken as exemplary: "an imitator of human actions who arouses admiration in the listener."[3] Critics were in some disagreement about the means for its achievement. Some believed them to be novelty and variety,[4] as, for example, did Pigna in preferring one of Ariosto's comedies to another because its devices were newer and gave the reader therefore both more pleasure and more

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[1]See Weinberg, I, 150-51.

[2]See, for examples, Weinberg's discussions of treatises by Pontano (I, 88), Giraldi (I, 106), Denores (I, 129), Scaliger (II,749), Erizzo (I, 165), Grasso (I, 177, 179), Correa (I, 185, 219), Varchi (I, 149), Patrizi (II, 775, 783), and Pellegrino (II, 1020).

[3]Trans. Weinberg, I, 384.

[4]See Weinberg's discussion of Pedemonte (I, 114), Maggi (I, 417) and, in part, Robortello (I, 67) whose list of causes includes other elements as well, such as certain kinds of episodes and variety of ornamentation. Campanella thought admiration the effect exclusively of ornamentation (II, 795).

cause for admiration.[1] Others thought the poet awakened admiration by means of his skill in imitating. The view of Ricchieri (Caelius Rhodiginus) may be taken as an example:

> That work of art arouses admiration whose portrayal seems to be coherently handled for the representation and depiction of the images of things. In the same way, indeed, we praise a lizard or a monkey depicted in conformity with the truth, not because of their beauty, which we know to be non-existent in such animals, but because of the resemblance.[2]

Toralto extends this general usage by suggesting that admiration is the result of a poem properly constructed and approved as such.[3] Minturno who thought admiration one of the five ends of poetry, combines both these causes, suggesting that it is the effect of a convincing imitation of the unreal and a general artistic excellence.[4]

A convincing imitation of the unreal points in the direction of another set of opinions among Renaissance critics regarding the cause of admiration, as does the idea of novelty, in part. Giacomini's praise of Tasso shows the direction. The poet "avoiding the commonplace, the humble, and the abject, prefers the new, the unusual, the unexpected, and the admirable, in thoughts as well as in words."[5] Robortello in the first "great commentary" on the Poetics of Aristotle (1548) noted that the three bases of pleasure in poetry were imitation itself (seeing a likeness), the poet's skill in overcoming the difficulties of his art, and admiration, caused by the unexpected, the extraordinary, and the marvelous, as found in episodes, recognitions, and reversals of fortune.[6] This view, based primarily on Aristotle's

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[1] See Weinberg, I, 451.

[2] Trans. Weinberg, I, 368.

[3] Ibid., I, 229.

[4] Ibid., II, 738-39.

[5] Trans. Weinberg, II, 1059.

[6] Ibid., I, 397-98, also 401.

discussion of the marvellous in epic, is echoed by others.[1] Talentoni, in his Discorso sopra la maraviglia (1597) notes that admiration is a passion, springing from seeing the unexpected and unknown. Reversals are the primary "cause" of the audience's admiration in comedy and tragedy. In epic it is the marvellous. Admiration is of four kinds, related to the four sorts of objects which produce it: the inanimate, the animate but non-rational, the animate and rational acting through chance, and the animate and rational acting with intent. The passion is a sort of helpless amazement.[2]

It will be seen from this brief and partial review of materials available in Weinberg's history, how the notion of admiration as an effect caused by the poem but ending with the poet (under which circumstances the poem becomes the poet's instrument to achieve admiration for himself and his art) shifts by way of the analysis of causes, to a notion of admiration as an effect caused by elements in the poem and directed toward those objects. Similarly, beginning as a generalized end, effected by all poems, admiration became in the course of the Renaissance, specific to certain forms, especially tragedy[3] and, most of all, epic.[4] It is possible, thus, to enumerate

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[1]See Weinberg's treatment of Marantola (I, 489), Pagano (I, 188), Viperano (II, 761), and Denores (II, 622).

[2]Ibid., I, 238-39.

[3]See Weinberg's discussion of Portus (I, 565) who believed the ends of tragedy to be pity and admiration, and Trissino (II, 752) who believed them to be pity and fear and admiration caused by the intervention of fate.

[4]Speroni thought tragic verse less marvellous than epic because it does not seek admiration (Ibid., II, 926); Pigna differentiated the effects of tragedy, comedy, and epic, on the basis of

four meanings of the term "admiration" as it describes the end effect of poems:

(1) General end of poetry; directed to poet.
(2) Specific end of poetry; directed to poet.
(3) General end of poetry, directed to poem.
(4) Specific end of poetry, directed to poem.

It should be clear that Hurd's usage is in the forth category: admiration is the end of the epic form and directed to the action it, specifically, imitates. It is also clear that usages (1) and (4) represent extremes. The first is a usage which is wholly rhetorical in that it pays no attention to the specific nature of poetic forms and end effects or to the poem as an end in itself. The last is a usage fundamentally Aristotelian, in that it recognizes the specific nature of poetic forms and end effects, and considers the poem as an end in itself, a thing made to be contemplated, and not, in its effects, an instrument for extrinsic purposes.

It is clear, therefore, that Hurd's conception of what it means to identify the effect of epic is fundamentally Aristotelian, and that in using the term "admiration" Hurd's view is not evidence of a "basically moral or didactic . . . orientation," as Father Boyd implies.[1] Such an opinion assumes that all uses of "admiration" are identically oriented, more or less, which is, as my brief review of sixteenth-century Italian critics' uses shows, quite clearly not the

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different objects of imitation, as horror, wit and admiration (Ibid., I, 467); and Maranta thought admiration an end appropriate to the epic because of the epic poet's special freedom to imitate marvellous objects (Ibid., I, 172).

[1] The Function of Mimesis and Its Decline (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 168.

case. Rather, the question is whether Hurd's identification of the end of epic is Aristotelian. Although the matter is far from self-evident,[1] it seems that Aristotle did believe the effect of epic was

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[1]Butcher writes "Nothing but a very dubious interpretation of Poetics XXVI 7 [i.e. 1462b12-15] supports the assumption of many commentators that epic poetry excites precisely the same emotions as tragedy" (Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art, With a Critical Text and Translation of the Poetics [London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1895; 4th ed., 1907; repr. with corrections, 1911], p. 251n.). Bywater maintains, on the contrary, that "In Aristotle's view epic poetry has the same end as Tragedy; and its immediate effect is the same in kind. . . . Aristotle's view is that the difference between them is mainly one of manner; so that apart from that they are fundamentally alike--with the same literary elements, the same canons of procedure, the same emotional effect, and the same ultimate end and justification" (Aristotle: On the Art of Poetry. A Revised Text with Critical Introduction, Translation and Commentary [Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1909], p. 359). Humphrey House, who normally estimates Bywater's opinions--and the translation which reflects them--highly, is here in disagreement. "Aristotle nowhere makes clear what he considers to be the special kind of pleasure proper to Epic" (Aristotle's Poetics: A Course of Eight Lectures, revised, with a preface by Colin Hardie [London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1956], p. 115). Gerald F. Else, in his discussion, attempts to provide as balanced a view of both positions as possible, given the fact that Aristotle's passage is "to our sorrow, not an argument but an allusion, and an unclear one at that. What is the '(previously) stated (pleasure)' which the two genres compete in producing?" The alternatives, as Else presents them, are that Aristotle was referring here (1) to pity and fear and the pleasure produced out of them or (2) to the pleasure "derived from the unity and structural perfection of the plot" in which case, at a minimum, House's view that Aristotle nowhere defines the specific proper pleasure of epic is correct (Aristotle's Poetics: The Argument [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967], p. 651). Else summarizes the arguments possible to either side of the issue. In favor of the first reading, that Aristotle refers here to the general pleasure of a well-made imitation, and does not, therefore, specify the proper pleasure of epic, are the following points: (1) neither pity nor fear is mentioned in Aristotle's discussion of the epic in Chapters 23 and 24; (2) the marvellous, discussed at length in chapter 24, is not related to feelings of pity and fear as it is said to be in connection with tragedy (52a1-4); and (3) at 52b32 "the imitation of fearful and pitiable happenings was said to be a specialty . . . of tragedy" (pp. 651-52). In favor of the second reading the following points are summarized: (1) pity and fear, though not mentioned, are implied in the discussion of epic; (2) "Aristotle's insistence that Homer anticipated all the leading traits of tragedy would lead us to suppose that he anticipated its emotional effects also;" (3) the argument in 62b12-14 is presented as additional evidence of the superiority of tragedy to epic, supplementing the

identical to that of tragedy and that the form differed from tragedy only in respect to the manner of imitation (and other relatively inconsequential matters which follow upon that difference). Hurd, in contrast, thought that the epic form had an effect different from tragedy, an effect at once less intense and more closely related to the distinctive freedoms attendant upon a narrated rather than an enacted form of poetry. I, for one, am in sympathy with Hurd's experience of epic poems, and his conclusion that their effect is different in kind from that of tragedies, and not merely less intense in degree. In any case, this is not the place to develop arguments in epic theory, for the immediate concern is an assessment of the degree to which Hurd's view may be considered Aristotelian. It may be concluded, I think, that Hurd disagrees with Aristotle's opinion (supposing that to be as Bywater represents it) regarding the identification of the epic effect, but is fundamentally in agreement with Aristotle in his approach to the question of what sort of a thing the epic effect would have to be, in its relation to the poet, the audience, and the poem.

Hurd seems to have been under no illusions, however, about the possibilities for writing epics in the modern world. The epic

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discussion of greater structural perfection; and (4) although 52b32 and 53b11-13 claim pity and fear as specific to tragedy, the text at 62b12-15 (which Else translates ". . . the two arts should produce, not any chance pleasure, but the one proper to them) "on any candid interpretation means that the two genres work--or are to work--at producing the same pleasure, but with different success." Professor Else concludes "but without insistence" that Aristotle meant to be understood as asserting that the proper pleasure of epic is "the pleasure based on pity and fear" (p. 652). What Else calls "any candid interpretation," Butcher had named "very dubious." But, after all, there are four points in favor of it, as against three, and the point about Homer and Sophocles is very strong.

form was dying out, for lack of material that fell, as Hurd would put it, within its province. D'Avenant's problem, the lack of "a foundation in the serious belief of his age" for an imitation of serious human actions whose ultimate meaning was ordered through the intervention of supernatural agency, was one that Hurd, as an Anglican divine in an "enlightened" age, understood all too well. When he heard that their mutual friend, John Browne, was engaged in writing an epic, Brutus, he wrote to Warburton that the epic, in 1752, was "a desperate undertaking."[1] Both apparently tried to discourage the venture, though Warburton's wife was enthusiastic. Her husband wrote Hurd that "she has been so long fatigued with a variety of storms or dead calms, in poems and romances, that she would give any money for a good gentle breeze."[2]

If the epic form was a "desperate undertaking," a form that was no longer actualizable, in Hurd's opinion, the same could not be said for the novel, a narrative form then in the process of development. Hurd's youthful letter to Dr. Cox Macro, an older friend, of November 7, 1742, reveals his enthusiasm for the new novel Pamela:

> I never saw Nature in such perfection before. I make no scruple to say there never were any characters more justly drawn, with greater propriety & exactness, or of a more glowing likeness to the life. The whole is literally a speaking Picture, & by reason of the several distressful Incidents, that are work'd up in it, as moving a one as ever did credit to any pencil. As a draught of Nature then I must read, love, & admire it, & stand amaz'd that any Reader

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[1]This quotation is actually Warburton's restatement of what he refers to as Hurd's view. See Warburton Letters, January 16, 1752, p. 100. Also the letters of February 10, 1750, pp. 39-40, and April 21, 1750, p. 48.

[2]Warburton Letters, p. 100.

> of Taste should hazard his reputation so much as to own a dislike of it.[1]

Along with his youthful enthusiasm for the new, Hurd's effusion suggests also an attempt to understand the kind of thing Pamela is. He will read it "as a draught of Nature." The letter continues:

> Mr. B's character is a little too engaging to make a Debauchee sufficiently distasteful to the youth of his quality & fortune; & the very nature, that strikes so much in Pamela's narrative of her own distresses is, I fear, still more dangerous to most female fancies. 'Tis hazardous, nay I'll go further, 'tis hurtful to paint Nature in such cases too faithfully. The too lively representation warms & inflames--the passions kindle at the view, & want more than the fair complainant's ejaculations & reflections to cool them again.[2]

This work is a "too lively representation" of nature, arousing but not allaying the passions of its readers, in its "too faithful" draught.

Although Hurd's comment can be read as the moralizing of an overzealous young clergyman, unable to distinguish between art and life, and hence not appropriate as literary criticism, Hurd's final comment might suggest another interpretation, one that would make him a distant prophet of more recent experts in "The Rhetoric of Fiction." This "too lively representation" of Nature that arouses but does not allay the passions of its readers is not, Hurd insists, a flaw that a more careful or responsible writer should patch up, as a contemporary observer of the phenomenon implies.[3] On the contrary, in Hurd's

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[1] Quoted in Martz dissertation, p. 79.

[2] Ibid., p. 80.

[3] I am thinking, of course, of Wayne Booth's study, The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961) and especially of the part titled "Impersonal Narration" (pp. 271-398) and including chapters on "The Uses of Authorial Silence," "The Price of Impersonal Narration," and "The Morality of Impersonal Narration."

opinion, this effect "'tis the very perfection of it."[1] The artistic excellence of Pamela, then, is to be a "too lively representation" of nature that arouses but does not allay the passions of its readers.[2]

Almost twenty-five years later, in his "Idea of Universal Poetry," Hurd again discussed modern "romances" and novels, at some length. These works, with "fables constructed on some private and familiar subject" are difficult to comprehend philosophically (II:19):

> As they propose pleasure for their end, and prosecute it, besides, in the way of fiction, though without metrical numbers, and generally, indeed, in harsh and rugged prose, one easily sees what their pretensions are, and under what idea they are ambitious to be received.

Hurd includes a discussion of them in his dissertation because of this "ambition"--"their pretensions are" to be contemplated as serious poems, the products of a fine art. It is against the standards for such things, then, that Hurd goes on to evaluate them (II:19):

> Yet, as they are wholly destitute of measured sounds (to say nothing of their other numberless defects) they can, at most, be considered but as hasty, imperfect, and abortive poems. . . .

Wellek's quotation of Hurd's views ends here, and is meant to illustrate the fact that "many [eighteenth-century critics] are definitely

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[1]Quoted in Martz dissertation, p. 79.

[2]Another letter from the same period of Hurd's life, to another older friend, Rev. John Devy, also mentions Pamela, instructing Devy to tell his wife that "I agree with her in admiring it. Some people have thought it odd in me, but I really like Pamela in low life better than in high. I have not room now, or think I could give excellent reasons for my opinion" (quoted in Kilvert, p. 15). Mrs. Martz (see her dissertation, p. 81) conjectures that these "excellent reasons" include the work's power, thus, "to arouse the reader's passions." May it not also be the case that Hurd was thinking of one of the differences between the sort of thing Pamela was and what he would later on call a "desperate undertaking," the epic?

embarrassed in dealing with it [i.e. the novel]."[1]

But, Hurd continues, the novel and modern romance may be considered as "hasty, imperfect, and abortive poems:"

> whether spawned from the dramatic or narrative species, it may be hard to say--
>
> Unfinished things, one knows not what to call
> Their generation's so equivocal.

The quotation is from the Essay on Criticism (ll. 42-43) and is part of Pope's description of those who can pass for neither critics nor poets. In contrast to Professor Wellek's view, I suggest that Hurd's "embarrassment" in not knowing what to make of the novel is rather like Pope's, who knew enough to see that "those half-learn'd witlings, num'rous in our Isle" were like "half-formed Insects on the Banks of Nile." (ll 40-41). Pope's editors[2] gloss the lines on equivocal generation by referring to Ovid:

> Nilus et antiquo sua flumina reddidit alveo
> aetherioque recens exarsit sidere limus,
> plurima cultores versis animalia glaebis
> inveniunt et in his quaedam modo coepta per ipsum
> nascendi spatium, quaedam imperfecta suisque
> trunca vident numeris, et eodem in corpore saepe
> altera pars vivit, rudis est pars altera tellus.
>
> (so when the seven-mouthed Nile has receded from the drenched fields and has returned again to its former bed, and the fresh slime has been heated by the sun's rays, farmers as they turn over the lumps of earth find many animate things;

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[1] René Wellek, A History of Modern Criticism, Vol. I: The Later Eighteenth Century (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), p. 122. Wellek's term "embarrassed" refers to the critics' incapacity, not to their recognition of the nature of the novel as it had thus far developed.

[2] E. Audra and Aubrey Williams, eds., Pastoral Poetry and an Essay on Criticism, Vol. I of The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope, ed. by John Butt (11 vols.; London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1939-71), pp. 243-44n.

> and among these some, but now begun, are upon the very verge of life, some are unfinished and lacking in their proper parts, and oft-times in the same body one part is alive and the other still nothing but raw earth)[1]

These things, the novels and modern romances, continues Hurd, "vanish as fast as they are produced, and are produced as soon as they are conceived." One supposes he knew Pope's allusion and found it apt, both in the Essay on Criticism and in his own discourse. He concludes his assessment thus:

> . . . such as they are, these novelties have been generally well received: Some, for the real merit of their execution; Others, for their amusing subjects; All of them, for the gratification they afford, or promise at least, to a vitiated, palled, and sickly imagination--that last disease of learned minds, and sure prognostic of expiring Letters (II:20).

The gratification Hurd had received as a young man reading Pamela had to do with what he thought to be the specific excellence of the work, a "too lively representation" of nature, that arouses but does not allay the passions of its readers. The criticism of twenty-five years later, in the context of an essay inquiring "philosophically" into the nature and function of serious poetry is a questioning of this gratification, based as it seemed to Hurd, on reading "unfinish'd things" that were rhetorically conceived, collections of details from common life--histories, they were often called[2]--shaped to no contemplative end with its own proper pleasure. The epic was, in Hurd's view, a "desperate undertaking" in 1751. His view of the

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[1] Metamorphosis 1. 423-429., trans. by Frank Justus Miller, (2 vols.; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1916; 2nd ed., 1921).

[2] An interesting and informative discussion of the shifting terminology applied to "novels" is provided by Keith Steward in "History, Poetry, and the Terms of Fiction in the Eighteenth Century," MP, LXVI (1968), 110-20.

novel, in 1766, seems to be that it was an undertaking of desperate men.[1] It is no wonder that he had a lifelong preference for the "dramatic kind."

## III. "Mixed" Forms

It was noted earlier in this chapter,[2] that among Hurd's purposes in the "Dissertation on the Provinces of the Drama" was the consideration of a view advanced by Fontenelle regarding the impossibility of making meaningful distinctions between the forms of various writings for the theatre. This view, in its way a precursor of a more modern theory of organic form,[3] was advanced in the "Préface generale de la tragedie et des six comedies de ce recueil" (1751) which Fontenelle prefaced to the volume of plays in the new edition of his collected works published in 1752.[4] It involves the assertion that there is a dramatic scale, running in effect from the sublime to the ridiculous, and that every drama has an effect peculiar to itself which can be located somewhere on this scale. As a result, in Fontenelle's view, no fixed demarcation between generic "forms" such as tragedy and comedy is possible, either with respect to subject matter, or to structure, or to effect. Each play is a unique thing.

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[1] Hurd wrote his friend Balguy on July 13, 1765, about Walpole's new novel, The Castle of Otranto. "The sort of composition," writes Hurd, "Even according to his own idea of it, is an absurd one. . . . Our men of taste seem to be in the condition of their famous predecessor who bade high for a new pleasure, and could not get any" (cited in Kilvert, p. 95).

[2] See above, p. 95.

[3] See above, pp. 87ff.

[4] 7 vols.; Paris: Brunet.

Fontenelle's theory is, in the main, governed by the purpose of arguing for the respectability of sentimental comedies and bourgeois tragedies. He seeks to accomplish the purpose of legitimizing these "mixed" forms, so to speak, by arguing that they are not really mixed. "Tragedy" and "comedy" are, in his view, merely sets of conventions (later theorists would call them external or mechanical forms), that have no foundation in the nature of things, and consequently in no way affect a poet who decides to work outside them. The poet is free, instead, to put together a work which effects the particular blend of emotions he has in mind. Hence sentimental comedy, bourgeois tragedy, and all other plays take their place in a democracy of unique individual things; in common they have only the fact that all are dramas. As Hurd summarizes the issue which he thinks paramount (II:81-82):

> The main question is, whether there be any foundation in nature for two distinct and separate species only of the drama; or whether, as he pretends, a certain scale, which connects by an insensible communication the several modifications of dramatic representation, unites and incorporates the two species into one.

Hurd realizes that an appeal to authority by way of answer is unacceptable on two grounds. First, Aristotle, in Hurd's opinion the best theorist of antiquity, in fact provides no direct guidance, since he had no such intermediate things as sentimental comedies and bourgeois tragedies to account for in the Poetics. The second reason, more important, is that an appeal to authority, to tradition, is precisely what an answerer of Fontenelle's notion regarding the mere conventionality of tragedy and comedy would seek most to avoid.

It will be recalled that, in Hurd's view, tragedy and comedy

differ in subject matter and in end effect, and that he approaches the definition of their forms primarily in terms of these two differentiae.[1] The subject matter of each is thought to be determinative of the form in the sense of having the potential for being made into either comedy or tragedy--that is, of being fundamentally in the "province" of one form or the other. The poet's imitation of his object is, in part, taken up with the task of shaping his material so that its potentiality for being comic or tragic is brought to life. And the end effect is thought to be determinative of the form in the sense of being that for the sake of which this potential material is shaped to achieve its nature as fully as possible, since the contemplation of this "exhibition" is thought to be accompanied by its own "proper pleasure."

Hurd begins his defense of the non-conventionality of the forms of tragedy and comedy by conceding part of what he takes to be a major argument of Fontenelle's view--that is, that the "province" of the two forms may not be as restricted as a neo-classical description would make them seem:

> . . . there are many stories in private life capable of being worked up in such a manner as to move the passions [of pity and fear, and others nearly related] strongly . . . (II:82).

In other words, there are materials in the actions of ordinary life which have a potential for being made into tragedies, because they are able to be so shaped as to achieve the proper pleasure of tragedy.

> . . . on the contrary, [there are] many subjects taken from the great world capable of diverting the spectator by a pleasant picture of the manners . . . (II:82).

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[1] See above, pp. 96ff.

That is, there are materials in the manners of persons who are engaged in actual "public" life which have the potential for being made into comedies because they are able to be so shaped as to achieve the proper pleasure of comedy.

> . . . lastly, it is also true, that both these ends may be affected together, in some degree, in either piece (II:82).

In other words, since both comedies and tragedies involve the imitations of persons in action, comedy, though in Hurd's view primarily concerned with imitating the manners of characters, shows them in action (there is no other probable way of displaying manners) and that action--especially if it were the important action of "elevated" men--could be made interesting to an audience. Similarly tragedy, though in Hurd's view concerned primarily with imitating actions, shows them through agents whose manners--especially if they are agents whose actions are rather inconsequential--could be made interesting to us.

The first two of Hurd's concessions amount to an affirmation that life is mixed, that "history," so to speak, is not as unambiguously intelligible as poetry, "feigned history," can be shaped to be. The last concession simply asserts a fact about dramatic art: it cannot work with agentless actions nor with actionless persons. In Hurd's view all three concessions speak ultimately to some of the reasons why men make and enjoy poetry. He continues the discussion by posing a rhetorical question (II:82-83):

> . . . here is the point of enquiry. Whether if the end in view be to <u>affect</u> [the passions of pity and fear], this will not be accomplished BETTER by taking a subject from the public than private fortunes of men: Or, if the End be to <u>please by the truth of character</u>, whether we are not likely to perceive this pleasure more FULLY when the story is of private, rather than of public life?

Art is not life, but an imitation of life made for a purpose. And artificial things differ from natural things because human choice is involved in the making. The artist is, of course, free to make what he will, but if he wants to make excellent dramas he will choose to make them as perfect as possible. He will therefore choose to make tragedies and comedies using materials which can be shaped to give the fullest pleasure of which either form is capable. And an audience will not wish to have its pleasures mixed if it is properly educated since, ". . . as Aristotle said finely on a like occasion, we are not to look for every sort of pleasure from tragedy [or comedy] but that which is peculiarly proper to each" (II:83).

This is not an appeal to authority for the sake of authority. Rather, it is an appeal to the nature of art as a human activity, involving choice, both for the artist and for the audience. Any artifact, or made thing, can be made well or poorly and can be used in a variety of ways. But the fact that some artifacts are poorly made and the fact that some artifacts are used to do "double duty" doesn't mean that there are no standards of excellence. The standards, which direct both maker and user, derive from the purposes for which a thing is made. In Hurd's view, an imitation of characters in action (which is the generic difference of the "dramatic kind") can be made for the sake of only two purposes: viz, seeing the truth of character (in action) or seeing the outcome of (characters in) action. Consequently, Hurd continues (II:84-85):

> If passion predominates in a picture of private life, I call it a tragedy of private story, because it produces the end which tragedy designs. If humour predominates in a draught of public life, I call it a comedy of public story, because it gives the pleasure of pure comedy. Let these then be two

> new species of the drama, if you please, and let new names be invented for them. Yet, were I a poet, I should certainly adhere to the old practice. That is, if I wanted to produce passion, I should think myself able to raise it highest on a great subject. And if I aimed to attach by humour, I should depend on catching the whole attention of the spectator more successfully on a familiar subject.

It is not, in other words, merely conventional that the form of tragedy shapes material drawn from "public life" or that comedy shapes material drawn from "private life." An artist could find the potential for tragedy in materials normally associated with comic shaping, or the other way around. Hurd's point is simply that choosing to proceed this way will require an even greater artistry to minimize the triviality of the action and maximize its seriousness in the case of the "tragedy of private story," and to minimize the weightiness of the action and maximize its humourousness in the case of a "comedy of public story."

Hurd applies these views to several of Fontenelle's own plays, for which the Préface was meant as a kind of apology. Hurd notes that the play titled Le Tyran has the effect of comedy and that, with his artist's knowledge of the form he was writing in, Fontenelle ". . . felt the necessity of unkinging . . . as far as possible . . ." to minimize the weightiness of the action and maximize its humourousness. In contrast, Fontenelle's "comedy" Lysianasse is, in Hurd's view, ". . . a tragedy in form, of that kind which hath a happy catastrophe. The persons, subject, every thing so important, and attaches the mind so intirely to the event [of the action], that nothing interests more (II:92).

Warburton wrote to Hurd on February 15, 1751 including his opinion of an early draft of the drama dissertation. He compliments

Hurd's turning "from the object to the end. This logical accuracy of method would do as much good in practical morality as in speculative criticism."[1] By turning his attention from the "decorum" of subject matter and genre to the relationship between form and end effect, Hurd was able to locate the weakness of mixed dramas--their artistic failure to achieve the fullest excellence of either comedy or tragedy --without an appeal to formulaic descriptions of genre proprieties.

Goethe, in the notes to his translation of Rameau's Nephew, wrote in retrospect that in pseudo-classicism "Man behandelte die verschiedenen Dichtungsarten wie verschiedene Sozietäten, in denen auch ein besonderes Betragen schicklich ist."[2] This was the case, Goethe might have added, because genre descriptions were not thought to have any organic relationship to the purpose of poems. When Dryden defines the drama (and he might have included the narrative easily enough) as "a just and lively image of human nature, representing the passions and humours, and the changes of fortune to which it is subject, for the delight and instruction of mankind,"[3] he provides no basis for organically conceived distinctions between forms, since all forms are subsumed under one rhetorically conceived purpose. And if the only basis for having kings and princes in tragedy is that a particular well-bred audience prefers its tragedies so, Fontenelle's view that generic distinctions are matters of fashion is correct. What Hurd brought to the discussion was another view of the function

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[1] Warburton Letters, p. 76.

[2] Quoted in Ernst Cassirer, Die Philosophie der Aufklärung (Tübingen: Verlag von J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1932), pp. 393-94.

[3] (ed. Watson), I, 25.

of poetry, one which would allow him to think of forms as moving principles which give "life" to poems made of certain materials, causing them to have the power of achieving certain effects, each of which is the "proper pleasure" that accompanies the disinterested contemplation of the organically structured whole, the animated thing, made by the poet.

When Hurd wrote that the forms of poetry (II:20):

> . . . have yet so far their foundation in nature and the reason of things, that it will not be allowed us to multiply or vary them, at pleasure . . .

it is not to convention that he made his appeal. "We may, indeed," he continues:

> mix and confound them, if we will (for there is a sort of literary luxury, which would engross all pleasures at once, even such as are contradictory to each other), or, in our rage for incessant gratification, we may take up with half-formed pleasures, such as come first to hand, and may be administered by any body: But true taste requires chaste, severe, and simple pleasures; and true genius will only be concerned in administering such (II:20-21).

Hurd's appeal is to poets and audiences, to true taste and true genius. What makes poets and audiences "true," however, is not their conformity to each others' current fashions, but the conformity of both to a correct understanding of the nature and function of poetry. It is to the latter topic, too long postponed, that I must now direct my attention, for it is with respect to his understanding of the function of poetry, in my opinion, that the claim for Hurd's recovery of a "more purely Aristotelian approach" may be made most confidently.

## CHAPTER FOUR

## HURD ON THE FUNCTION OF POETRY

In his conception of the function of poetry Hurd's position in critical thought is most readily apparent, for here he distinguishes himself clearly from the views of both earlier and later theorists. In order to view Hurd's conceptions in proper perspective, I have thought it best to provide a rough sketch of both a background and a foreground in which to place them.

At the risk of ignoring the variations of detail which make for the rich complexity of Renaissance thought on the function of poetry, it seems agreed that the groundwork of that complex of thought can be said to stem from the Roman rhetorical tradition (Horace, Cicero, and Quintilian), however much it was modified by the introduction of Platonic and Aristotelian elements in individual cases.[1] In this way, the view of Sidney may be considered representative of the Renaissance generally, and that of Dryden may be accepted as evidence of the continuation of this tradition into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Sidney writes, in An Apology for Poesy (composed ?1581-83,

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[1] I depend here largely on the studies of Professors Boyd, Crane, Herrick, Shepherd and Weinberg, as listed in the bibliography.

published 1595):

> Poesy . . . is an art of imitation, . . . that is to say, a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth--to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture--with this end, to teach and delight. . . . in moral doctrine, the chief of all knowledges he [the poet] doth not only far pass the historian, but, for instructing, is well nigh comparable to the philosopher, and, for moving, leaves him behind him . . .[1]

The peculiar rhetorical context of an apology for art does not suffice to explain Sidney's preference for a rhetorically conceived function of poetry--poets, with poems as means, teach and delight better than historians or philosophers. Parallel formulations in Dryden's essays reaffirm the fact that this conception of function is not merely the pragmatic choice of an apologist, for Dryden has no immediate need to apologize for poetry in general, and restates the same conception.

Although it is true that Dryden's views seem to vary in the collection of occasional essays written over some forty years which together constitute his "criticism," I believe it correct to affirm that in respect to the issue at hand, his opinion is the same throughout. As exemplary of an earlier view one might take this statement from the 1668 Defence of an Essay of Dramatic Poesy:

> . . . delight is the chief, if not the only end of poesy; instruction can be admitted but in the second place, for poesy only instructs as it delights.[2]

A later view repeating the same general conception is this passage from A Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire (1693):

They who will not grant me that pleasure is one of the ends

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[1](ed. Shepherd), pp. 101, 120.

[2](ed. Watson), I, 113-14.

> of poetry, but that it is only a means of compassing the only end, which is instruction, must yet allow that, without the means of pleasure, the instruction is but a bare an dry philosophy: a crude preparation of morals, which we may have from Aristotle and Epictetus, with more profit than from any poet.[1]

It is clear that Dryden's position is fundamentally at one with Sidney's in regard to this question. The separate ends, to delight and to instruct, remain conjoined. Dryden's argument, such as it is, seeks to preserve delight as one of the ends, if only as a proximate end, and in that sense a means, to the final end of instruction. Perhaps Dryden's fundamental position, as well as the assumption on which his view (and the view of the tradition out of which he speaks) is clearly evident, is best stated in his sketched-out "Heads on an Answer to Rymer" (ca. 1677):

> The chief end of the poet is to please; for his immediate reputation depends on it. The great end of the poem is to instruct, which is performed by making pleasure the vehicle of that instruction; for poetry is an art, and all arts are made to profit.[2]

"For poetry is an art, and all arts are made to profit:" the strong voice of Rome is heard clearly if distantly in Dryden's formulation, a voice which insisted proudly and unequivocally, in the words of Professor Crane, that

> the goodness of . . . arts consisted in the fact that they were thought to be peculiarly adapted to serving ends beyond themselves--ends that involved the moral nature of man

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[1](ed. Watson), II, 153.

[2](ed. Watson), I, 219.

> or his practical activities as a citizen or public servant in the Roman state.[1]

Whatever else this view implied, and its implications built empires, it is clear that any claim for the autonomy of poetry, for a function appropriate to poetry as poetry, could never be considered ultimately defensible by any who shared the assumption that "Poetry is an art, and all arts are made to profit." To recognize and accept the autonomy of poetry would require a different conception of human ends, one which would allow for the pursuit of a number of purposes, many "to profit"--for the sake of some other thing; but some for their own sake. In this matter everything depends, it seems, on the type of harmony which is thought to be most fully human, and most acceptable to the gods. The background sketch in the picture I am drawing may be thought of as a perspective on a long and elegantly well-built Roman road. There is nothing else in sight.

The foreground of the picture might be thought of as another road, leading (through chaos) to a bridge. The other side of the bridge is off the picture. The first description of this foreground that I can quote, written when Hurd was already an old man, devoted almost entirely to his vocation as Bishop of Worcester, is by the Sage of Koenigsberg, Immanuel Kant, in The Critique of Judgment

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[1] R. S. Crane, "Shifting Definitions and Evaluations of the Humanities . . .," in The Idea of the Humanities, and Other Essays Critical and Historical (2 vols.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), I, p. 156. Dryden's affiliation with the Roman tradition is discussed briefly in the last chapter of Frank Livingstone Huntley's On Dryden's Essay of Dramatic Poesy (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1951; repr. New York: Ardon Books, 1968).

(1790):

> Unter allen behauptet die Dichtkunst (die fast gänzlich dem Genie ihren Ursprung verdankt und am wenigsten durch Vorschrift, oder durch Beispiele geleitet sein will) den obersten Rang. Sie erweitert das Gemüth dadurch, dass sie die Einbildungskraft in Freiheit setzt und innerhalb den Schranken eines gegebenen Begriffs unter der unbegränzten Mannigfaltigkeit möglicher damit zusammenstimmender Formen diejenige darbietet, welche die Darstellung desselben mit einer Gedankenfülle verknüpft, der kein Sprachausdruck völlig adäquat ist, und sich also ästhetisch zu Ideen erhebt. Sie stärkt das Gemüth, indem sie es sein freies, selbstthätiges und von der Naturbestimmung unabhängiges Vermögen fühlen lässt, die Natur als Erscheinung nach Ansichten zu betrachten und zu beurtheilen, die sie nicht von selbst weder für den Sinn noch den Verstand in der Erfahrung darbietet, und sie also zum Behuf und gleichsam zum Schema des Übersinnlichen zu gebrauchen.[1]
>
> (Poetry [which owes its origin almost entirely to genius and is least willing to be led by precepts or examples] holds the first rank among all the arts. It expands the mind by giving freedom to the imagination and by offering, from among the boundless multiplicity of possible forms accordant with a given concept, to whose bounds it is restricted, that one which couples with the presentation of the concept a wealth of thought to which no verbal expression is completely adequate, and by thus rising aesthetically to ideas. It invigorates the mind by letting it feel its faculty--free, spontaneous, and independent of determination by nature--of regarding and estimating nature as a phenomenon in the light of aspects which nature of itself does not afford us in experience, either for sense or understanding, and of employing it accordingly in behalf of, and as a sort of schema for, the supersensible).[2]

In Kant's view, too, poetry's function is a means to an end outside itself. Poetry bridges the gap between the natural understanding's knowledge of nature's phenomena and man's Ideas of the noumena

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[1] Kant's Werke, ed. by the Königlich Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften (22 vols.; Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1908), V, p. 326.

[2] Trans. James Creed Meredith (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1928; new ed. 1952), pp. 191-92.

"which nature does not afford us in experience, either for sense or understanding." This means of this bridging, poems, accomplish their end not by imitating nature, as in the earlier version of a didactic view of poetry, but by employing nature (which is a conglomerate of phenomena, the final causes of which are unintellible--to the understanding) as "a sort of schema for,"--that is, as "symbolic" of--transcendental reality.

Wordsworth, poet of nature, expresses the implication of this analysis concluding his Prelude (1805-06), and affirming faith in the ministerial function, newly clarified, for Coleridge and himself:

> Prophets of Nature, we to them will speak
> A lasting inspiration, sanctified
> By reason and by truth; what we have loved,
> Others will love, and we may teach them how;
> Instruct them how the mind of man becomes
> A thousand times more beautiful than the earth
> On which he dwells, above this Frame of things
> (Which, 'mid all revolution in the hopes
> And fears of men, doth still remain unchanged)
> In beauty exalted, as it is itself
> Of substance and of fabric more divine.[1]

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[1]Book XIII, 442-452, ed. by Ernest de Selincourt; 2nd ed., rev. by Helen Darbishire (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1959), p. 506. The final version of the passage in the 1850 edition (Book XIV 444-454) is as follows (p. 507):

> "Prophets of Nature, we to them will speak
> A lasting inspiration, sanctified
> By reason, blest by faith: what we have loved,
> Others will love, and we will teach them how;
> Instruct them how the mind of man becomes
> A thousand times more beautiful than the earth
> On which he dwells, above this frame of things
> (Which, 'mid all revolution in the hopes
> And fears of men, doth still remain unchanged)
> In beauty exalted, as it is itself
> Of quality and fabric more divine."

The editor very properly draws special attention (p. 631) to the revision: :. . . sanctified / By reason, blest by faith . . . we will teach them . . . ."

Coleridge had a similar view; his formulation echoes Kant and implies the function that Wordsworth expresses: "Art," he said, "is the mediatress between, and reconciler of, nature and man."[1] In the Biographia Literaria (1817) Coleridge speaks of the poet's imagination as a "synthetic and magical power" that, confronted by a world of gaps to be bridged:

> reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities: of sameness with difference; of the general with the concrete; the idea with the image; the individual with the representative . . . .[2]

The ministerial function of poetry calls for special attention to the gifts of the poet, not in terms of his art now, as much as in terms of the special, mysterious qualities which make it possible for him to bridge the gap and, through his poems, to ". . . teach them how;/ Instruct them how." His imagination, that "synthetic and magical power," is the greatest gift. Confronted by a nature filled with "opposite or discordant qualities," the poet's imagination gives him unique powers to balance or reconcile them. The poet is far more than a maker of poems in this view, for his end, as poet, is, as I suggested earlier, off the picture.

Shelley, more enthusiastic than Coleridge about the poet's role as mediator and reconciler, bridging the gulf between man and nature, speaks in his Defense of Poetry (written 1821, published [1839] 1840) of readers as "spirits" on which poetry "falls" and who "open themselves to receive the wisdom which is mingled with

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[1](ed. Shawcross), II, 253. See above, pp. 87ff. for a further discussion of Coleridge's views in connection with the implications of this function for his conception of form.

[2](ed. Shawcross), II, 12.

its delight."[1] His conclusion to the defense, proposes functions which seem as unexplainable by the rhetorical context of a "Defense" as Sidney's seemed:

> Poets are the hierophants of an unapprehended inspiration; the mirrors of the gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present; the words which express what they understand not; the trumpets which sing to battle, and feel not what they inspire; the influence which is moved not, but moves. Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.[2]

The function of poetry in each of these instances (and for romantic theorists in general, if we ignore the complexity which led Professor Lovejoy to posit four romanticisms)[3] is equated with that of the poet who is not first and foremost thought of as a maker of poems. Poems, in this view, are the means by which the poet expresses his vision of things; lesser poems express mundane visions, excellent poems express visions of that which Kant said "nature does not afford us in experience." Poets, great poets "express what they understand not," in Shelley's terms, and like the hierophantēs, chief priest of the Eleusinian mysteries, they, too, have a purely instrumental function. In other words, for romantic theorists the poem is a means for the poet who is a priest of "higher mysteries." The function of poetry is pleasurable instruction in these "higher mysteries," the content of which is beyond the scope of this inquiry.

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[1] Ed. by John E. Jordan (New York: The Bobbs-Merril Company, Inc., 1965), p. 37.

[2] Ibid., p. 80.

[3] "On the Discrimination of Romanticisms," PMLA, XXXIX (1924), 229-253; repr. in Essays in the History of Ideas (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1948), 228-253.

## I. Hurd's View of the Function of Poetry

Bishop Hurd's understanding of the function of poets, poems, and poetry differs from the Sidney-Dryden and the Kant-Wordsworth-Coleridge-Shelley positions. In his "Dissertation on the Idea of Universal Poetry," of which some notice was given earlier,[1] Hurd compares the functions of poetry and history, a traditional comparison, but in the case of Hurd (and Bacon before him) made with a difference (II:15-16):

> History undertakes to INSTRUCT us in the transactions of past times. If it answer this purpose, it does all that is of its nature; and, if it find means to please us, besides, by the harmony of its style, and vivacity of its narration, all this is to be accounted as pure gain: if it instructed ONLY, by the truth of its reports, and the perspicuity of its method, it would fully attain its end. Poetry, on the other hand, undertakes to PLEASE. If it employ all its powers to this purpose, it effects all that is of its nature: if it serve, besides, to inform or instruct us, by the truths it conveys, and by the precepts or examples it inculcates, this service may rather be accepted, than required by us: if it pleased ONLY, by its ingenious fictions, and harmonious structure, it would discharge its office, and answer its end.

The terms used are the familiar terms of Roman, Renaissance, and Neo-classical rhetorically conceived poetic theory; the insight into the function of poetry, I hope to show, is of another sort. My argument in this section is against the conclusion reached by Father Boyd that, though Hurd's "thought seems to lead to the opposite conclusion from that of the didactic critics, the patchwork of ends unorganically conceived within the Horatian tradition is

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[1]See above, pp. 32ff.

evident."[1] Unfortunately, I cannot directly meet Father Boyd's argument, because he doesn't offer one. Instead, I can simply elaborate the facts and attempt to demonstrate a different conclusion.[2]

It would be strange, indeed, if Hurd used any other terms than these of "please" and "teach," for they were not only the heritage of his times, but also especially his, whose first essay in literary criticism was an edition with notes and commentary of Horace's Ars Poetica (1749).[3] This work, as is well known, is one of the mainstays of the Renaissance and Neo-classical tradition, though it is itself ultimately derivative, Horace's conception of the function of poetry stemming, as modern scholarship has shown, from

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[1]The Function of Mimesis and Its Decline (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 264.

[2]Compare also the unsupported pronouncment by Sailendra Kumar Sen (English Literary Criticism in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century, a Reconsideration [Calcutta: University of Calcutta Press, 1965], p. 131), "In England Warton, Hurd, Young, and Kames were not less insistently didactic than Pope, Addison and Dennis, than Dryden and Rymer." Professor Sen's book presents the novel thesis that late eighteenth-century criticism is "modern" as opposed to "neo-classical" or "romantic" in its fundamental affiliations.

[3]The edition of Horace's Epistle to the Pisos was followed in 1751 by an edition and commentary on the Epistle to Augustus. The two were combined in a second edition (1753) along with the "Discourse on Poetical Imitation" and the "Dissertation on the Provinces of the Drama." A third edition appeared in 1757, adding the "Letter to Mr. Mason on the Marks of Imitation." A fourth edition, adding "A Dissertation on the Idea of Universal Poetry" was printed in 1766. From this fourth edition, under Lessing's encouragement, and with his assistance, Johann Joachim Eschenburg published a two volume translation in German in 1772. A fifth English edition appeared in 1776, and the materials included in it, with revisions, occupy the first two volumes of the Collected Works (1811).

popular Greek tradition codified by Alexandrian rhetoricians of the Hellenistic age.[1] The passages of crucial importance in Horace's epistle are lines 333-34 and 343-44:

> Aut prodesse volunt aut delectare poetae
> aut simul et jucunda et idonea dicere vitae
> . . . . . .
> omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci
> lectorem delectando pariterque monendo.
>
> (Poets aim either to benefit, or to amuse, or to
> utter words at once both pleasing and helpful to life.
> . . . . . .
> He has won every vote who has blended profit and
> pleasure, at once delighting and instructing the
> reader [trans. Fairclough]).

Hurd's commentary on this whole passage is skewed, to a degree, by the thesis of his edition. That thesis, briefly put, is that the Ars Poetica is a unified informal epistle, critical of the Roman drama.[2] Nonetheless his paraphrase is of great interest in its tendency (I:53-54):

> . . . the double design of poetry being to instruct and please, the full aim and glory of the art cannot be attained without uniting them both: that is, instructing so as to please, and pleasing so as to instruct.
> . . . both these must concur in a just piece.

In a note to lines 333-34 only (I:265-67), Hurd asserts that these lines are of particular relevance to the drama; its "full boast and glory . . . is to delight and instruct mankind." He continues the note by explaining that:

> The latter praise was more especially due to the ancient tragic muse . . . [who] was perpetually inculcating every

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[1]See C. O. Brink, Horace on Poetry, Vol. I: Prolegomena to the Literary Epistles (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), pp. 128-29.

[2]The edition, and Hurd's thesis, are treated at length in chapter 5.

> branch of true moral in those brief sententious precepts, which inform and solemnize her page . . . .

I will return to Hurd's consideration of the moral thought in ancient drama (his [mis]interpretation of Horace's reference here) in the next section of this chapter. Hurd's note to lines 343-44 (I:267) is more to the immediate purpose:

> The unnatural separation of the DULCE ET UTILE hath done almost as much hurt in letters as that of the HONESTUM ET UTILE which Tully somewhere complains of, hath done in morals.

It is again, perhaps, somewhat mistaken of Hurd as editor to annotate Horace's mention of the poet "qui miscuit utile dulci" by a brief reference to the harm done by "unnatural separation."[1] That gloss does, however, help to underscore the thrust of his commentary, quoted above, where he speaks about "uniting them both," and using unnaturally separated terms as instruments of each other: "that is, instructing so as to please, and pleasing so as to instruct."[2] He does not speak of combining or blending, as Horace does, but of concurrence. It is for this reason that thinking of Hurd's view of the function of poetry (to please the mind) as a philistine argument for

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[1]Hurd was thoroughly aware of the possibilities for "reductive analysis" available to a thinker of, say, Mandeville's capacity, once "self-love and social" were unnaturally separated. One thinks of Pope's poetical attempts to reunite the unnaturally separated, as, for example, in the Essay on Criticism with its metaphorical reunification of wit and judgment. See E. N. Hooker, "Pope on Wit: the Essay on Criticism," in The Seventeenth Century: Studies in the History of English Thought and Literature from Bacon to Pope, by Richard Foster Jones and others writing in his honor (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1951), 225-26, esp. 237-39.

[2]Mrs. Martz (dissertation, p. 242n.) notes that in his Commonplace Book (I, 290) Hurd quotes Cicero regarding "the united Beauty and Usefulness, which appears in the Works of Nature, and also in those of Art. . . ."

"mere" pleasure would be mistaken, for it assumes that Hurd had accepted the "unnatural separation" and opted for one of the partial terms.

In the "Idea of Universal Poetry" Hurd had quoted Eratosthenes' claim, in Greek, to the effect that the poet's function is "to please, not to instruct."[1] He notes Strabo's disagreement with this claim[2] and responds to Strabo's argument as follows (II:16):

> . . . though the poets, no doubt . . . frequently instruct us by a true and faithful representation of things; yet even this instructive air is only assumed for the sake of pleasing; which, as the human mind is constituted, they could not so well do, if they did not instruct at all, that is, if truth were wholly neglected by them. So that pleasure is still the ultimate end and scope of the poet's art; and instruction itself is, in his hands only one of the means by which he would effect it.

Having argued earlier that "If one must relate the Horatian formula to the function of the probable, one may say that poetry should please by teaching" (p. 74), Father Boyd quotes part of this passage and comments that Hurd's is "a curious statement. . . . The patchwork of ends unorganically conceived . . . is evident." (p. 264). On the next page, Father Boyd celebrates Beattie, who is "more satisfying . . . [because] he returns to a more organic concept of the place of pleasure in reading poetry when he says that instruction can better be obtained elsewhere. Philosophers and historians please, the better to instruct; but poets instruct, the better to please--a claim rare in that time" (p. 265). Hurd's view is, of course, just this. Its implications are

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[1]See above,

[2]Geography, 1. 2. 3-14. The discussion has to do primarily with Homer's qualifications as founder of the science of geography see (1. 1. 2.).

worth exploring briefly. I think that Hurd, in the passage just quoted, provides the means necessary to keep his notion that pleasure is the function of poetry distinct from a more modern aestheticism. Humphrey House, in his lectures on the Poetics, asks his audience to consider this question: "Is it a fact that when a man is either writing or enjoying poetry he has, in so far as he is a poet or a reader of poetry, abrogated all other human characteristics, duties, claims and feelings?"[1] House's point is that Aristotle took a negative answer for granted. For Hurd, and for Johnson and Beattie, too, a negative answer was self-evident: "as the human mind is so constituted [poets cannot 'please many and please long'] . . . if truth were wholly neglected by them." The function of poetry is to please and its cognitive value is affirmed; what is denied is that the end of poetry is instruction.

Elsewhere, in his preface "On the Manner of Writing Dialogues," Hurd restates the essential point (III:25):

> The love of truth, they say, is so natural to the human mind, that we expect to find the appearance of it, even in our amusements. In some indeed, the slenderest shadow of it will suffice: in others, we require to have the substance presented to us. In all cases, the degree of probability [required] is to be estimated from the nature of the work.

It appears, then, that Hurd has shifted the rhetorically conceived end of instruction to make of it an element which comes into play in the interaction between the spectator, a normal man, and the poem, an imitation of human activities. Rather than an inorganically conceived end, unnaturally separated from pleasure, from the nature of

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[1] Aristotle's Poetics: A Course of Eight Lectures, revised, with a preface, by Colin Hardie (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1956), p. 21.

the poet's activity as imitator, or the poem's existence as an imitation of human activities, instruction has become that insight into the truth of things which the well-made poem, the probable fiction that is imitation, presents for our contemplation. The pleasure accompanying this contemplation is, in Hurd's view, the function of poetry. "To please by imitation," Hurd's final statement of the function of poets, poems,[1] and poetry (II:184), brings together, unites, and makes organically one, the rhetorically conceived ends of utile and dulce, renouncing their "unnatural separation" from each other and from the activity, the product, and the art whose final cause they were meant to describe.

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[1]It will be remembered, however, that in Hurd's view poems have "proper pleasures" of their own, organically related to their particular forms, and not simply to the generalized and unqualified function of pleasing the mind.

## II. Hurd on Poetry and Morals

It was noted in the last section that Hurd had misinterpreted Horace's description of the "instruction" half of poetry's dual rhetorical function as simply a reference to the presence of sententia in the ancient drama. In large part, no doubt, Hurd favored this interpretation as yet another piece of evidence on the side of his view of the purpose and scope of Horace's poem; even here, his note proclaims ". . .though these lines [333-34] have the appearance of general criticism, yet do they more especially respect the dramatic poesy" (I:265-66). I believe, however, that another, and more fundamental explanation for the misinterpretation is available. It resides in Hurd's reading into Horace his own conception of the way in which a poem, made by a poet faithful to the function of his art, may be said to have instructive value unintentionally (from the point of view of the poet), incidentally (from the point of view of the audience), and necessarily (from the point of view that sees art as imitation).[1]

One of the ways in which poems, probable fictions, can be unintentionally, incidentally, and necessarily instructive, is in the imitation of characters' thought. Hence Hurd's interpretation of Horace's line 309: "Scribendi

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[1] In his Commonplace Book (II, 382) Hurd conjectures that the presence of sententia in the works of classical poets was responsible for the Renaissance decision to take "moral instruction for the chief end of . . . poets, and so . . . to regard the observance of Decorum as little or nothing . . ." (cited in Martz dissertation, p. 235).

recte sapere est et principium et fons" (of good writing the source and fount is wisdom [trans. Fairclough]). "The boast of the poet's art," Hurd notes (I:251-52):

> is to catch every different aspect of nature, and more especially to exhibit the human character in every varying light and form, under which it presents itself. But this is not to be done without an exquisite study, and philosophical knowledge of man . . . . Hence the indispensable necessity of moral science; all poetry being, in effect, what Mr. Dryden somewhere calls comedy, THE THEFT OF POETS FROM MANKIND.

Though the poet will want to study moral science, according to Horace, Hurd is quick to point out that neither a sprinkling of textbook aphorisms nor a parable is exactly what he should aim for; his task is faithfulness to his art of imitation and to the demands of the particular form in which he is working. The danger of a too academic study of moral philosophy is that the poem might be taken over by a "moral, affectedly introduced, or indulged to excess, [which] should prejudice the natural exhibition of the characters, and so convert the image of human life into an unaffecting philosophical dialogue" (I:262),[1] or, just as dangerous, that sententia might riddle the work, taking the place of, or distorting probable characterization.

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[1]Compare Bossu's view of the poet's proper procedure: "the schoolmen content themselves with treating of virtues and vices in general. . . . But the poet has a nearer regard to his own country and the necessities of his own nation. With this design he makes choice of some piece of morality, the most proper and just he can imagine. . . ." (Treatise of the Epick Poem [1675], translated in Elledge and Schier, eds., The Continental Model: Selected French Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century, in English Translation [Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1960; rev. ed. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970], pp. 308-9).

In Hurd's Commonplace Book is a long discussion of Plutarch's "refutation" in his essay "On Exile" of a passage in Euripides.[1] "It seems strange to us," notes Hurd:

> that any casual sentence in their Poets, even the Dramatic poets, should be urged as an authority in a question of Morals, without considering that such Sentence was only given to the Speaker, as suitable to his character: And stranger still, that such a man as Plutarch should confute such sentences, in turn, & not think it sufficient to say, as we should do, that the only question was, not the moral truth of them, but their dramatic truth, or decorum [i.e. probability] in the mouths of the Speakers. . . . The reason I suppose must be, the popular admiration of their greater poets, which would not suffer the generality of readers to accept this as an answer. They seem to have been much in the case of our ignorant fanatics, who take every scrap of Scripture for an authority, considered singly & absolutely in itself, & without regarding the scope of the writer, the person who speaks, the idiom of the language, the connexion, & other such circumstances . . . .[2]

In Hurd's opinion, these moral sentences are most appropriate to their context (and thus dramatically true) in the works of the ancient Greek poets, who had the advantage of living in a polis where "Schools and pedantry,

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[1] Moralia 606-7.

[2] CPB, II, 380-82, cited in Martz dissertation, pp. 234-35. In comments such as this, one recognizes the aptness of Trowbridge's claim that Hurd was "one of those eighteenth-century divines, remote descendants of Erasmus," ("Introduction" to Augustan Reprint Society Publication Nos. 101-2, Hurd's Letters on Chivalry and Romance [Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 1963], p. i). Professor Trowbridge and I disagree only in our views of the nature and degree of that remoteness. I believe the portrait medallions of Erasmus and Hooker which Hurd had placed on the ceiling of the library at Hartlebury Castle are of more than decorative significance.

morals and austerity, were not so essentially connected, in their combinations of ideas, as they have been since; and a sensible moral truth might have fallen from any mouth, without disgracing it" (I:186-87). In contrast,

> . . . though in the age of Seneca, Sentences, we know, were very much in use, yet the cast and turn of them evidently shew them to have been the affectation of the lettered few, and not the general mode and practice of the time. For the quaintness in which Seneca's aphorisms are dressed, manifestly speaks the labour and artifice of the closet, and is just the reverse of that easy, simple expression, which cloaths them in the Greek poets, thus demonstrating their familiar currency in common life. Under any other circumstances than these, the practice, as was observed, must be unquestionably faulty . . ." (I:191).

The only exception Hurd allows to this general censure is the chorus, "it being the peculiar office and character of the chorus to moralize" (I:184). Yet, even here, it is to be observed that the morality of the chorus is "rather political and popular, than strictly legal and philosophic," since ancient theatre-goers did not require poets "to correct old errors, and instruct them in philosophic truth" (I:167). Hurd, who once planned an essay on the "benefits" of the chorus (I:148), was a staunch advocate of its reintroduction in modern drama. The chorus, a "sober reflector on the course and occurrences of the representation, clothed in poetry and inforced by the joint powers of harmony and action" (I:147), had, to Hurd's mind, a number of virtues to recommend its reintroduction. Chief among these is "the advantage of probability" which the

chorus brings to the imitation since (I:146-47):

> . . . it is necessary to the truth and decorum of characters, that the manners, bad as well as good, be drawn in strong, vivid colours, and to that end that immoral sentiments, forcibly expressed and speciously maintained, be sometimes imputed to the speakers. Hence the sound philosophy of the chorus will be constantly wanting to rectify the wrong conclusions of the audience, and prevent the ill impressions that might otherwise be made upon it.

It might seem that Hurd had thrown the moralizing function of poetry out the front door and brought it in again, with the chorus, through the back. Such appears to be the view of Clarence C. Green. He thinks of Hurd as a moralist who thought the "chorus was another means of persuading the dulce to walk amicably with the utile."[1] Yet this is, I think, an incorrect inference, for Hurd thinks of the chorus as an integral part of the dramatic action, and therefore liable to the same artistic requirements as any other part of the whole. Depending on the character of the sort of persons whom the poet chooses to imitate in his chorus, their moral rectitude, too, will vary according to the demands of probability. The chorus, in Hurd's view, normally reflects (I:157):

> . . . the common and established notions of right and wrong; which, though in essential points, for the most part, uniformly the same under all circumstances, yet will, in some particular instances, be much distorted by the corrupt principles and practices of different countries and times. Hence the moral of the stage will not be always strictly philosophical; as reflecting to us the image not of the sage's speculation, but, of the obvious sense

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[1] The Neoclassic Theory of Tragedy in England During the Eighteenth Century (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934), pp. 220-21.

of common, untutor'd minds.[1]

Choruses composed of slaves, or persons living under a tyrant, and others whose normal humanity is oppressed by circumstance, will necessarily utter distorted moral sentiments. "Nor can any objection be made, on this account, to the conduct of the poet; who keeps to nature and probability in drawing the chorus with this imperfectly moral character." If the poet has erred, it is not in his artistry, but as a man, "answerable for his ill choice of a subject, in which such a pernicious representation is required" (I:157-58).

It will be recalled that Hurd, in his "Dissertation on the Provinces of the Drama" contrasted the poetic forms of tragedy and comedy with the fundamentally rhetorical form of farce.[2] Although tragedy and comedy are not in any sense rhetorical forms, in Hurd's view, yet (II:98):

> . . . by their lively but faithful representations, [they] cannot fail to instruct. Such natural exhibitions of the human character [in action], being set before us in the clear mirror of the drama, must needs serve to the highest moral uses, in awakening that instinctive approbation, which we cannot withhold from virtue, or in provoking the not less necessary detestation of vice. But this, though it be their best use, is by no means their primary intention.

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[1]Hurd continues by suggesting that ". . . this observation . . . might . . . perhaps, be extended to the vindication of . . . [ancient choruses] . . . to which the ignorant temerity of modern criticism hath taken occasion to object" (I:157). He goes on to defend on these grounds the chorus of old men, pandering to the tyrant Creon in the Antigone (I:158-59) and the chorus of women in the Medea who act "on the received notions and practices of paganism" in aiding Medea's vengeance (I:164-67).

[2]See above, pp. 113ff.

The poet's intention, as a poet, is to make an imitation of human activities for the sake of the intellectual pleasure men receive from contemplating such things. The "poet's science in ethics," concludes Hurd, "will . . . shew itself . . . in furnishing proper matter for general reflexion on human life and conduct; and . . . in a due adjustment of the manners" (I:262). But the matter for general reflexion must always be subservient to and the result of, a "due adjustment of the manners" to the requirements of character and action in the poem. In other words, moral sentences are subservient, in the art of poetry, to artistic requirements, and not the other way around. Mrs. Martz, quoting this passage, exclaims that "certainly this is an amazing statement from a clergyman."[1] Actually, though, it seems simply intelligent; the moralist, considering poetry seriously, must regard poetry for what it is.[2] He can then

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[1]Martz dissertation, p. 236.

[2]Hurd argues similarly regarding our consideration of prophecy in his first two sermons among the twelve published as An Introduction to the Study of the Prophecies Concerning the Christian Church (1772). His texts are II Peter 1:21--"Prophecy came not in old times by the will of man: but holy men of God spake, as they were moved by the Spirit of God"--and Rev. 19:10--"The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy." The point of these two sermons: "believers and unbelievers, whether they would support or overturn, the system of prophecy, must be equally governed by the representation given of it in Scripture. The former must not presume, on any other grounds, to assert the wisdom and fitness of that system: and the latter will then take a reasonable method of discrediting, if by such means they can discredit, the pretensions of it. For, as to vindicate prophecy on any principle but its own, can do it no honour; so, to oppose it on any other, can neither prejudice the cause itself, nor serve any reasonable end of the opposer" (V:22-23).

either ban the poets entirely or accept them as poets, the makers of poems, and of use to morality, as poets, accidentally, by virtue of the clarity with which reality may be recognized in their works, in so far as it may be recognized. Of course the poet is not only a poet, nor is his audience only an audience: "the love of truth, they say," as Hurd said elsewhere, "is . . . natural to the human mind."

And Hurd is by no means unwilling to point out moral virtues and vices which he sees in the works of some poets. He notes with approbation Addison's omission of "the most obnoxious passages" in an English paraphrase of Ovid's story of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus (Metamorphosis 4. 295-388),[1] and commends Cowley's alterations in his rendition of the second Georgic, correcting the atheistic principles of Virgil.[2] He regrets poets' excessive use of the epithet god-like,[3] and commends the King's aria in praise of chastity at the end of Addison's opera Rosamund--"so careful was . . . [Addison] 'to set our passions on the side of truth,' even in his gayest and slightest compositions."[4] He regrets Sterne's habit of not "laughing in such a manner, as that priests and virgins might laugh with him,"[5] and

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[1]Hurd's Addison, I, 166n.

[2]Hurd's Cowley (Dublin ed.), II, 115-16n.

[3]Hurd's Addison, I, 54n.

[4]Ibid., I, 106n.

[5]Letter (March 18, 1761) in Warburton Letters, p. 324.

Lucian's mockery of philosophers and Zeus: "the ridicule is gross and very licentious, but not the less fitted, on that account, to the writer's purpose."[1] He is pleased with Cato's admission at the end of Addison's play, Cato, "Alas! I fear I've been too hasty," but adds that "this sentiment is not in character."[2] Of Cassandra's lines, in Beaumont and Fletcher's A Wife for a Month, "I would not for the World attempt her Chastity, / But that they may live lovingly hereafter," Hurd remarks:

> a fine picture of the corruption of human nature; which is ever so ingenious to colour over its worst actions by some appearance of virtue. Villany, ev'n in the most abandoned, could not long sustain itself without these illusions.[3]

This last comment is, I believe, precisely illustrative of Hurd's conception of the relation obtaining between poetry and morality. Beaumont and Fletcher are praised for their artistic skill--they imitate well, and the spectator sees what's what.

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[1] CPB, II, 173, quoted in Martz dissertation, p. 168. Hurd's discussion of Lucian's treatment of the philosophers is at CPB, II, 174, 177-78 (quoted in Martz dissertation, pp. 65-66); his comments on Lucian's mockery of Zeus is at CPB, II, 180-82 (quoted in Martz dissertation, p. 67).

[2] Hurd's Addison, I, 294n.

[3] MS note in The Works of Mr. F. Beaumont and Mr. J. Fletcher . . . Collected with all the former editions, and corrected, with notes . . . by . . . Mr. Theobald, Mr. Seward . . . and Mr. Sympson, etc. (10 vols.; London: for J. and R. Tonson and S. Draper, 1750), V, 317. The volumes are at Hartlebury Castle library and were inspected by Mrs. Martz, who quotes the note in her dissertation, p. 153.

## III. Hurd on Poetry and Virtuous Action

In 1776, Hurd was named Preceptor to the Prince of Wales. His responsibility: the early education of Prince George, later King George IV, "Patron of Literature."[1] In the MS "Sketch of a Plan of Studies" presented by Hurd to King George III on September 22, 1776, he outlines a program of study which assumes "a competent skill in the languages" and lists the subjects to be taken up, "in the order, which their use or dignity requires." "Polite Literature" is sixth on the list, preceded in order by "Religion," "Morals," "History," Government and Laws," and "Mathematics and Natural Philosophy." Hurd's rationale for the scheme:

> The proper learning of a Prince, is only such learning as may be applied to use or ornament in that rank and character. All the rest is for private men and professed scholars.[2]

It will be remembered that the first and second editions of Hurd's Moral and Political Dialogues were published in the guise of antiquarian documents, annotated by a modern editor. The second dialogue, "On Retirement," is between Bishop Sprat and Abraham Cowley, the former advocating an "active" life, the latter, disgusted with the city, in favor of retirement. The dialogue is cast in the form of a letter by Bishop Sprat to Viscount St. Albans, narrating a conversation between himself and Cowley and

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[1] See Joanna Richardson, "George IV: Patron of Literature," Essays by Divers Hands, XXXV (1967), 128-46.

[2] Quoted in Martz dissertation, pp. 188-89.

excusing himself to the Viscount for his failure to bring Cowley out of retirement. Sprat writes of Cowley's "peevish turn of mind that leads him to take offence at the lighter follies and almost excusable vices of the great." Hurd, as editor, annotates the "almost excusable" with irony:

> This, no doubt, will sound a little harsh to vulgar ears. But men of enlarged minds, who know the world, will see nothing in the insinuation of this virtuous divine, but what may be fairly justified. The famous FENELON had, it seems, with the spirit of our COWLEY, been pretty free in censuring the conduct of a noble Roman, in a certain delicate conjuncture, "as not consistent with rigid morality." But let us hear what a man of morals, and which is more, a professed institutor of youth, has to say to this too scrupulous casuist. "You tell us, that the conduct in question is not according to the rules of strict morality. "Perhaps it is not: but are there not some grains of allowance to be made to great men engaged in high contests for life and honour, amid the shocks of fortune, and whirls of passion, that attend them. A philosopher in his closet and a general at the head of an army, or the chief at that of a party, have very different points of view. The conduct of life in this respect resembles, methinks, that of a poem. Perhaps no poet ever composed from a system; or was worth reading, if he did. Carried along, or rather hurried away, by the fire of his fancy, and the lustre of imagery dancing before his eyes, he indulges his vein, without regarding Aristotle or Bossu. In like manner"--but we need not complete the parallel. Every one sees that, in the opinion of the Late Mr. Professor BLACKWELL, Principal of the Marishal College in the University of Aberdeen, a great man, hurried away by the fire of his Passions, and the lustre of honours or pleasures dancing before him, is not accountable for his escapes to the neglected moralist, but may freely indulge his vein in spite of what his philosophy, not to say his religion, may teach to the contrary. How liberal is the spirit of the modern Shaftsburian ethics! Ancient moralists, and even the father of this virtuous sect, were perpetually crying out on the deformity of vice; that is, of all excessive or irregular gratification of the passions; but this complacent casuist of North Britain finds a certain poetical grace in conducting the drama of life, not by strict rule, but by the sallies of imperious passion.--I should not have said

> this much on so plain a point, but for the sake of justifying Mr. Sprat, by so respectable and so recent an example. It might be added, no doubt, for the satisfaction of such as love to see a comparison run on all four, that the violation of rule in the real drama of life, is of as little consequence to him or mankind, as in the poet's fictitious scene.[1]

The inference I mean to draw from these two statements--Hurd's concept of the place of poetry (as poetry) in a prince's education, and his conviction of the inadmissibility of poetic analogies to justify life--is that Hurd's sense of the distinction between art and life is firm, and that he takes both poetry and a "life according to virtue" far too seriously to allow them to be confounded. Much of delightful dialogue on retirement turns on Sprat's conviction that Cowley retired because he mistook himself for a character in a pastoral (III:113-15). And annotating Addison's argument against Sir Richard Blackmore's view that "the finest raillery and satire . . . never reclaimed one vicious man, or made one fool depart from his folly," Hurd notes "I incline to . . . Blackmore's opinion."[2]

In spite of his inclination to Blackmore's opinion, however, Hurd adds that "such writings may prevent vice and folly, which is better than reclaiming them."[3] Hence poetry, incidentally, may be of use as a propaedeutic to virtuous life in the education of children. Those whose habits are formed may find, however, that poetry is of dubious value in

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[1] 1st ed., 1759, pp. 69-70.

[2] Hurd's Addison, VI, 208n.

[3] Ibid.

moving them to reform: in another place Hurd mentions his conviction that virtue is habitual: "sentiment is a better security [against viciousness] than speculation."[1]

My purpose in this section, and in the previous one, has been to corroborate the claim that Hurd is largely consistent in his rejection of teaching morality and moving to virtue as essential functions of poets, poems, or poetry. It would be impossible, I believe, to identify fully the considerations which might have led Hurd to this rejection. Certainly his sense of the autonomous nature of poetry, its status as a fine and not a serving art, implies this view. In addition, his sense of the peculiarity of particular audiences may well have led him to reject an attitude toward poetry which must ultimately seek its practical measure of excellence for art, artist, and work in local audience reaction. To Addison's comment in Spectator #525, that "no thought is beautiful which is not just, and no thought can be just which is not founded in truth, or at least in that which passes for such" Hurd adds a decisive note:

> This exception, which must be admitted, reduces the general rule of Bouhours and the French critics, from whom Mr. Addison took it, to just nothing: for what is that thought, which, in the hands of an able writer, may not be so turned as to pass for truth, with most readers?[2]

Hurd often blames the corruption of a particular

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[1] CPB, quoted in Kilvert, p. 276.

[2] Hurd's Addison, V, 54n.

audience for the presence of what he takes to be flaws in poets' works; such writers were too anxious to achieve fame, and made their works not according to the principles of their art, but rather in accord with their assessment of what would gain applause.[1] But in Hurd's view, fame is in any case beyond the achievement of a living poet for, if unapplauded, he lacks it, and if applauded, he will never be certain that the enthusiasm given his work is not the mistaken result of accidental circumstance (I:357). Nevertheless, the public will have its say, but not immediately:

> . . . the public voice, which is but the aggregate of . . . corrupt judgments [caused by a variety of circumstances], infinitely multiplied, is, with the wise . . . deservedly of little esteem. Yet, in a succession of such judgments, delivered at different times and by different sets of juntos of these sovereign arbiters of the fate of authors, the public opinion naturally gets clear of these accidental corruptions. Every fresh succession shakes off some; till, by degrees, the work is seen in its proper form, unsupported of every other recommendation, than what its native inherent excellence bestows upon it. Then, and not till then, the voice of the people becomes sacred; after which it soon advances into divinity, before which all ages must fall down and worship (I:356).

If this be the case, the poet is foolish who, in a bid for artistic excellence, calculates the predilections of his particular audience, like a rhetorician; for though the latter's success is achieved if he move them, the poet must look elsewhere for a proper standard to guide his art. In so far as this standard is to be found in the audience, it

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[1]See, for example, his analysis of the causes for Cowley's "false wit" (Hurd's Cowley [Dublin ed.], I, vi-vii), for "unnatural flights" (Ibid., I, 144-45), and for the "mannerism" of some painters (Ibid, I, 377).

must be in a general audience, humanity at large, for "no writer, whether philosopher or poet, ever [long] affronted the common sense or common virtue of mankind, with impunity."[1] If a writer would live for this large audience, Hurd suggests, "he should only, or chiefly, treat subjects of a general concern."[2] And this brings us back to Hurd's view that the function of poetry is to please by imitation, that is, probable fiction, and the correct measures of excellence appropriate to that contemplative end.

It would be appropriate to conclude this discussion of Hurd's relation to the Roman rhetorical tradition in literary theory as it began, with mention of another of Hurd's misinterpretations of Horace. In this case the text is again the Ars Poetica, lines 202-19, Horace's review of the history of Roman stage music:

> Tibia non, ut nunc, orichalco vincta tubaeque
> aemula, sed tenuis simplexque foramine pauco
> adspirare et adesse choris erat utilis atque
> nondum spissa ninis complere sedilia flatu;
> quo sane populus numerabilis, utpote parvus
> et frugi castusque verecundusque coibat.
> postquam coepit agros extendere victor et urbes
> latior amplecti murus, vinoque diurno
> placari Genius festis impune diebus,
> accessit numerisque modisque licentia maior.
> indoctus quid enim saperet liberque laborum
> rusticus urbano confusus, turpis honesto?
> sic priscae motumque et luxuriem addidit arti
> tibicen traxitque vagus per pulpita vestem;
> sic etiam fidibus voces crevere severis,
> et tulit eloquium insolitum facundia praeceps,
> utiliumque sagax rerum et divina futuri.
> sortilegis non discrepuit sententia Delphis.

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[1]Hurd's Cowley (Dublin ed.), II, 202n.

[2]Hurd's Addison, VI, 250n.

> (The flute--not, as now, bound with brass and a rival of the trumpet, but slight and simple, with few stops--was once of use to lead and aid the chorus and to fill with its breath benches not yet too crowded, where, to be sure, folk gathered, easy to count, because few--sober folk, too, and chaste and modest. But when a conquering race began to widen its domain, and an ampler wall embraced its cities, and when, on festal days, appeasing the Genius by daylight drinking brought no penalty, then both time and tune won greater licence. For what taste could you expect of an unlettered throng, just freed from toil, rustic mixed up with city folk, vulgar with nobly-born? So to the early art the flute-player added movement and display, and, strutting o'er the stage, trailed a robe in train. So, too, to the sober lyre new tones were given, and an impetuous style brought in an unwonted diction; and the thought full of wise saws and prophetic of the future, was attuned to the oracles of Delphi [trans. Fairclough])

Hurd's paraphrase of this passage, although somewhat lengthly, is worth quoting in full, as it not only illustrates his interpretation, but also his procedure throughout this edition of Horace's "informal epistle," to which, as he supposes, the reader must supply connexions purposely left out by the writer (I:171-72):

> The Tibia, says the poet, was at first low and simple. The first, as best agreeing to the state of the stage, which required only a soft music to go along with, and assist the chorus; there being no large and crowded theatres to fill in those days. And the latter, as suiting best to the state of the times; whose simplicity and frugal manners exacted the severest temperance, as in every thing else, so, in their dramatic ornaments and decorations. But, when conquest had enlarged the territory, and widened the walls of Rome; and, in consequence thereof, a social spirit had dispelled that severity of manners, by the introduction of frequent festival solemnities; then, as was natural to expect, a freer and more varied harmony took place. Nor let it be objected that this freer harmony was itself an abuse, a corruption of the severe and moral music of ancient times. Alas! we were not yet so wise, to see the inconveniences of this improvement. And how should we, considering the nature and end of these

> theatrical entertainments, and the sort of men of which our theatres were made up? But, leaving the Philosopher to speculate at his ease, on this matter, thus, in fact, it was, that the Tibicien, the musician who played to the declamation in the acts, instead of the rude and simpler strain of the old times, gave a richness and variety of tone; and, instead of the old inactive posture, added the grace of motion to his art. Just in the same manner, continues he, it happened to the Lyre, i.e. the music in the chorus, which originally, as that of the Tibia, was severe and simple; but, by degrees, acquired a quicker and more expressive modulation, such as corresponded to the more elevated and passionate turn of the poet's style, and the diviner enthusiasm of his sentiment.

Hurd's interpretation turns, of course, on his ironic reading of Horace's description of the audience that preferred the older, simple music of the tibia "utpote parvus / et frugi castusque verecundusque" (206-207). As with mistaken readings generally, so Hurd's interpretation here tells us more about the reader than the text. And his note to the crucial lines quoted above is even more instructive (I:173-74):

> M. Dacier finds here [i.e. in lines 206-207] four causes of the little regard the ancients had for plays (he should have said, of their being satisfied with the Tibia, all rude and simple as is here described) la premiere, que le peuple Romain étoit encore alors en petit nombre: la second, qu'il étoit sage: la troisiéme, qu'il étoit chaste, c'est à dire pieux: et la quatriéme, qu'il étoit modest. But the three last epithets are synonymous, all of them expressing what, though he took three guesses for it, he had the ill fortune to miss at last, that plainness and simplicity of character, that frugal reserve and moderation in the use of anything, which so essentially belongs to rude minds, uninstructed in the arts of life. His four causes are, in fact, then but two . . . .

Hurd is mildly contemptuous in his having unlocked the secret of this passage, and he condescends next to explain the cause which mislead former critics in their

interpretation (I:181-83):

> [This cause] . . . I suspect to have been the frequent encomiums on the severity of the ancient music, by the Greek and Latin writers. Though here they seem to have overlooked two very material considerations: 1. That the former have chiefly treated the subject in a moral or political view, and therefore preferred the ancient music only as it was conceived to influence the public manners. For this reason Plato, one of the chief of those encomiasts, applauds, as we find, the practice of AEgypt, in suffering no change of her poetry, but continuing, to his time, her fondness for the Songs of Isis . . . which just as much infers the perfection of those songs, considered in a critical view, as Rome's sticking to her Saliar verses would have shewn those poor obscure orisons to have exceeded the regular odes and artificial compositions of Horace. . . . 2. That the latter, the principal of them at least, who talk in the same strain, lived under the Emperors; in whose time, indeed, music had undergone a miserable prostitution, being broken, as one of the best of those writers complains, into an effeminate and impure delicacy.

For those anxious to associate the moral depravity of late Roman times with the over-refinement of their music, Hurd adds a finishing touch (I:183): ". . . though it [i.e. bad music] may indeed, in its turn, and doubtless does, when established, contribute much to help on the public depravity, yet that depravity itself is originally not the effect, but the cause of a bad music."

On that note, Hurd's interpretation concludes. It seems to me that the evidence speaks for itself: Hurd's conception of the function of the fine arts is as far from the single-mindedness of the Roman tradition as his reading of Horace is from the text of the Ars Poetica.

## IV. Hurd on Poetry and Religion

Richard Hurd was ordained Deacon of the Church of England on June 13, 1742, in St. Paul's Cathedral. He was ordained Priest on May 20, 1744, took the degree of Bachelor of Divinity in 1749, and was instituted Rector of Thurcaston in 1757 and Rector of Folkston in 1762. In 1767 he was named Archdeacon of Gloucester and took the degree of Doctor of Divinity at Cambridge commencement the following year. On February 12, 1775, he was consecrated Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry. Six years later he was translated to the See of Worcester. In 1783 he was invited to become Archbishop of Canterbury, a charge he declined as "unsuited to his temper and talents, and much too heavy for him to sustain, especially in these times" (I:ix-xiii). It is said that he filled his twenty-seven years as Bishop of Worcester admirably.[1]

If Hurd's view of poetry's essential autonomy as a fine art and its freedom from requirements to serve as a means to morality or virtuous action were not sufficient grounds for predicting his opinion of more modern claims for the functional equivalence of poetry and religion, poets and priests, then surely his sixty-six years of distinguished service in the church might suggest that, to

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[1]See Ernest Harold Pearce, Bishop of Worcester, Hartlebury Castle; with Some Notes on Bishops Who Lived in it . . . (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1926), pp. 276-88.

him, such an equivalence would seem mistaken, at best.

In the few discussions having to do with the relation between poetry and religion that are to be found in his literary criticism, Bishop Hurd invariably mentions religion simply as a human activity which, in the variety of its local manifestations, is part of the world available to the poet's mimetic genius.[1] As he wrote at the beginning of his "Discourse on Poetical Imitation" (II:111):

> All Poetry, to speak with Aristotle and the Greek critics . . . is, properly, imitation. It is, indeed, the noblest and most extensive of the mimetic arts; having all creation for its object, and ranging the entire circuit of universal being. In this view every wondrous original, which ages have gazed at, as the offspring of creative fancy; and of which poets themselves, to do honour to their inventions, have feigned, as of the immortal panoply of their heroes, that it came down from heaven, is itself but a copy, a transcript from some brighter page of this vast volume of the universe. Thus all is derived; all is unoriginal. And the office of genius is but to select the fairest forms of things, and to present them in due place and circumstance, and in the richest colouring of expression, to the imagination.

Although Hurd would, no doubt, agree with anyone who held that great poets are endowed with extraordinary powers,[2] he has a very specific conception of that unusual capacity and its meaning for poetry: "the office of genius is . . . to select the fairest forms of things, and to present them . . . ." The poet's genius has "all creation for

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[1]See, for example, his remarks on Horace's praise of the poet's services to religion (I:382-83) and especially his discussion of the imitation of "religious materials in the "Discourse on Poetical Imitation" (II:137-40; 164-68)

[2]See above, pp. 51-52n.

its object," including the beliefs of men about nature and purposes of the supernatural, and the forms of worship men use in accordance with those beliefs. Gifted with insight, the poet may apprehend the nature of these beliefs and forms of worship with greater clarity than is given to the average man, and the excellence of his poems may bear witness to that clarity of apprehension. But poems are imitations of human activities, in Hurd's view, and their measure of excellence is not correctly understood if they are thought to be primarily or fundamentally expressions of private visions of that which Kant said was unavailable "in experience, either for sense or understanding." Hurd knew of only one true revelation. Consequently, though poets may "do honour to their inventions" in claiming to have been possessed by the gods or their messengers, Hurd is skeptical of such claims, particularly if meant to be taken literally as a basis for reading poems, rather than as a "likely story" meant to account for the remarkable fact that those poems came to be made. His commentary on Horace's ridicule of "that false notion, into which the Romans had fallen, that poetry and possession were nearly the same thing" (I:50-51) is typical. Nonetheless, he quotes a variety of ancient texts attesting to the furor poeticus that inspires poetic genius to the achievement of its purpose (I:249-50).

Whatever the sources of the poet's power to make beautiful poems, and Hurd never for a moment questions its

wonderfulness, the function of poetry is not, in Hurd's view, to be confused with the purpose of religion. Indeed, Hurd was well aware that "nothing in this world is a substitute for anything else." In the opening and closing portions of his "Letter to Mr. Mason, On the Marks of Imitation" (1757), he tells Mason of his decision to forego future extensive work in literary criticism in favor of applying himself more strenuously to philosophy and theology, as more appropriate pursuits for someone in his middle age and of his calling. "Yet in saying this I would not be thought to assume that severe character; which, though sometimes the garb of reason, is oftner, I believe, the mask of dulness, or of something worse" (II:246). Clearly Hurd's decision was not the result of a puritanical distrust of the nature and value of poetry as a serious pursuit, but rather a choice to devote himself to other purposes; "every thing," he writes, "is beautiful in its season" (II:247).

In a letter to Thomas Gray dated January 7, 1757, Hurd replies to what must have been an angry, or at least a bluntly unsympathetic criticism of his decision. Hurd writes:

> I owe it to your frankness to tell you my sincere sentiments. I hate the hypocrisy of those men who think to cover their dulness under the mask of piety, as much as you do. I know too what is to be said for those who have not devoted themselves to a Profession: And still further for those who read the Poets, not for amusement only, but to contend with the best of them. I honour, in a word, true

> poetry and true poets as much as anybody. And I think, in particular, with you that Mr. Pope's apologies for himself were very needless. Yet still in my own case I must profess to you with sincerity, that what I say in the Letter is my real opinion. The Profession, I am of, is a Sacred one. And tho' it does not oblige me to renounce the poets, my business, I think, should lie elsewhere.[1]

Whatever else one might conclude from Hurd's apology, it seems likely enough that he would have been unsympathetic to Matthew Arnold's post-romantic claim that:

> We should conceive of poetry worthily, and more highly than it has been the custom to conceive of it. We should conceive of it as capable of higher uses, and called to higher destinies than those which in general men have assigned to it hitherto. More and more mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us. Without poetry, our science will appear incomplete; and most of what now passes with us for religion and philosophy will be replaced by peotry.[2]

Hurd's lack of sympathy with Arnold's high-mindedness would have centered on his unquestionable conviction that poetry was not up to serving such purposes. In addition, Hurd would have been quick to point out, poetry has a function of its own which it and nothing else can serve. After all, "it is the noblest and most extensive of mimetic arts; having all creation for its object, and ranging the entire circuit of universal being." It must be itself, Hurd surely thought, for nothing else will do.

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[1] Mason Letters, p. 34.

[2] From "The Study of Poetry" (1880).

# PART TWO: PRACTICE

φρονεῖν εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν

TO THINK IN ORDER TO BE

MODERATE

--The inscription of the medallion over the north portal at Hurd's Library in Hartlebury Castle

# CHAPTER FIVE

## HURD AS A PRACTICAL CRITIC

In the dedication to his commentary on Horace's Epistle to Augustus (1751), Hurd discusses the nature and function of literary criticism, and the qualities of good critics. The function of criticism--"doing justice to the merits of great writers, more especially in works of poetry and invention" (I:281)--is best served in his view by a conjunction in the critic of two gifts: a rigorously analytical intellect and a high degree of sensibility. His intellectual power gives the critic "a philosophic spirit, capable of penetrating the fundamental reasons of excellence in every different species of composition" by means of which his criticism "which were otherwise a vague and superficial thing, acquires the soundness and solidity of science" (I:281-82). A high degree of sensibility provides the critic with "a strong imagination, the parent of what we call true taste."[1] This enables the critic "to feel the full force of his author's excellence himself, and to impress a lively sense of it upon others." Through this "power of fancy" the critic's observations receive "that

[1]Elsewhere Hurd defines taste as ". . . that just perception of what is beautiful . . ." (II:159).

light and energy and spirit which are wanting to provoke the public emulation and carry the general conclusions of reason into practice" (I:282).

These two powers, thought and imagination, seemed to Hurd to provide a suitable context for discussing the history of literary criticism and for classifying the most famous of ancient and modern literary critics. In the brief sketch which he includes in this dedication to Warburton, Hurd traces the line of "imaginative" critics to the Homeric rhapsodes. The rhapsodes, in Hurd's view, were both the first literary critics and, more important, established the type of the critic of sensibility. Hurd recalls Plato's representation of Socrates' discussion with Ion, the rhapsode, in which the latter's passionate admiration of Homer's poems was called to account for itself. As Hurd puts Socrates' conclusion, the weakness of this sort of criticism is that ". . . how <u>divinely</u> soever he [the rhapsode or, in our terms, the "impressionistic" critic] might feel himself affected by the magnetic virtue of the muse, yet, as he could give no intelligible account of its subtle operations, he was assuredly no <u>Artist</u>" (I:283). "Knowing nothing," as Socrates says of Ion, the critic gifted only with sensibility can "speak many things and fine about the poet" (542a, trans. Lane Cooper). But because he knows nothing, he cannot give an account of his many and fine perceptions; or, rather, because he cannot give such an account, he knows nothing.

Aristotle, the "master of those that know" is, in Hurd's view ". . . the justest philosopher of antiquity." In his hands ". . . scientific or speculative criticism attained to perfection, at once; and appeared in all that severity of reason and accuracy of method, which Aristotle himself could bestow upon it" (I:283). But, as Hurd remarks elsewhere, Aristotle was ". . . no enthusiast in the fine arts" (I:374). Unlike a more recent commentator, G. M. A. Grube, who shares this impression of Aristotle's failing,[1] Hurd does not regret Aristotle's severity as a sign of lacking feeling (a judgment notoriously difficult to make), but rather as a limitation on the rhetorical power of Aristotle's writings. As Hurd understood it (I:283-84):

> . . . though to understand be better than to admire, yet the generality of readers cannot, or will not, understand, where there is nothing for them to admire. So that reason, for her own sake, is obliged to borrow something of the dress, and to mimic the airs, of fancy: And Aristotle's reason was too proud to submit to this management.

Aristotle's criticism, in other words, ". . . wanted to be relieved and set off to the common eye by the heightenings of eloquence (I:284).

The extremes which Hurd defines in his survey, then,

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[1] The Greek and Roman Critics (Toronto: The University of Toronto Press, 1965), pp. 91-92: ". . . it seems obvious that he [Aristotle] had very little feeling for poetry as such. . . . He analyses it unemotionally and always with a touch of the supercilious. . . . Aristotle never gets excited about poetry . . . ."

are criticism that is eloquent but thoughtless, and criticism thoughtful but not moving; the former is the work of men gifted with imagination and sensitivity, the latter the achievement of those who have a keen analytical intelligence and philosophic spirit. The Roman critics, in their characteristic achievements fall, in Hurd's view, outside the range of activity governed by these extremes and are not really part of the development of criticism as an art (I:284-85):

> The specimens we have of their ability in this way (of which the most elegant, beyond dispute, are the two epistles to Augustus and the Pisos) are slight occasional attempts; made in the negligence of common sense, and adapted to the peculiar exigencies of their own taste and learning: and not by any means the regular productions of art, professedly bending itself to this work, and ambitious to give the last finishing to the critical system.

In contrast to the Roman rhetorical theorists, however, Longinus does take a decisive place in the history of literary criticism as an art. He is, in Hurd's words, ". . . a rhetorical sophist, . . . the person, whom, of all the critics of antiquity, nature seems to have formed with the proper talents to give the last honour to his profession, and penetrate the very soul of fine writing" (I:285). Yet the exquisite sensibility with which Longinus was gifted was unmatched by sufficient philosophical rigor, in Hurd's opinion. He ". . . softened indeed the severity of Aristotle's plan; but, in doing this, had gone back again too far into the manner of the admiring Rhapsodist. . . . he now wanted, in a good degree, that precision, and depth

of thought, which had so eminently distinguished his predecessor [i.e. Aristotle]" (I:285-86).

There are several reasons why Hurd believes that the history of literary criticism from antiquity to the mid-eighteenth century may usefully be described in terms of the range defined, at one extreme, by Aristotle, and at the other, by Longinus, that most gifted of all the Greek rhapsodes. First, since criticism is a ". . . species of didactic writing . . ." (I:391), it is governed by the principles of rhetoric, the art of persuasion, which art in its perfection unites matter and manner, true insight into the subject under discussion with eloquent expression of that insight. Hence, in a sense, Aristotle's insight and Longinus' eloquence could be thought of as the extremes of excellence in things and words, the two main branches of the critic-as-rhetorician's art. Then, too, since both Aristotle and Longinus are distinguished practitioners of their respective partial excellences, they were naturally enough ". . . considered as models, in their different ways, of perfect criticism" (I:286).

Equally natural, however, was the disposition of later times to emulate the "catching enthusiasm and picturesque fancy" of Longinus in preference to the "coolness and austerity" of Aristotle. After the Renaissance of Greek and Roman letters, when ancient texts became generally available to Europe, ". . . in the last and present century, . . . a numberless tribe of commentators have

attempted, after the manner of Longinus, to flourish on the excellencies of their composition" (I:286). Impressionistic critics, the modern rhapsodes, ". . . succeeded so well in this method, that one is not to wonder it soon became the popular and only authorized form of what was reputed just Criticism." In other words, adds Hurd, ". . . of the two models, antiquity had furnished to our use, we had learned, by an awkward imitation of it, to abuse the worst"(I:286-87). Longinus' eloquence degenerated at length ". . . into the most unmeaning, frivolous, and disgustful jargon, that ever discredited polite letters" (I:287).

Although, as was mentioned, Hurd estimated Longinus' eloquence for its appropriateness to the persuasive power of criticism, a species of didactic writing, the weakness of "Longinian" criticism, in spite of its eloquence, is its failure to achieve the real purpose of all didactic writing. That purpose involves, in Hurd's words (I:390-91):

> . . . referring particular facts to general principles. General principles themselves can often be referred to others more general; and these again carried still higher, till we come to a single principle, in which all the rest are involved. When this is done, science of every kind hath attained its highest perfection.[1]

The difficulty with Longinus' criticism, and with the most

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[1]Hurd's emphasis on kinds of science in this quotation is another instance of his Aristotelianism.

popular French critic, Bouhours, and with the most popular English critic, Addison, is, in Hurd's view, the same in all three cases. When these popular critics attempt to classify their impressions, ". . . they dwell too much in generals . . ." (I:394).

This might appear to be a contradiction in Hurd's argument since he defines the purpose of all didactic writing as "referring particular facts to general principles," and then, here, regrets the criticism of Longinus, Bouhours, and Addison for its excessive generality. But the contradiction is more apparent than real, as a closer examination of his objections will show.

Longinus' observations, although they enable us "to class our perceptions of excellence," employ classes that are "much too general to convey any very distinct and useful information:"

> For to observe of any sentiment that it is grand, or pathetic, and so of the other species of sublime, is saying very little. Few readers want to be informed of this. . . . But could he have discovered and produced to observation those peculiar qualities in sentiment, which occasion the impression of grandeur, pathos, &c. this had been advancing the science of criticism very much . . . (I:394-95).

Bouhours ". . . very species are so large, as make his criticism almost wholly useless and insignificant" (I:395). Addison's observations (in so far as they are not borrowed from Aristotle or Bossu) are ". . . so general and indeterminate, as to afford but little instruction to the reader, and are, not unfrequently, altogether frivolous" (I:396).

What Hurd misses in all three popular critics is a reasoned account of the way in which particular impressions achieve the excellence named in the general term applied to them. It is not that they are unsystematic, but that they are unphilosophical. The philosophical critic also works with species and genera, but he rises from particulars to universals dialectically; unlike the impressionist he can defend his "system" and give an account of the way in which he reached both his categories and his categorical judgment. At his best, the impressionistic critic "rarely makes a wrong judgment of the passages he quotes, but does not tell us on what grounds (or at least in too general terms) that judgment was, or ought to have been founded."[1] At his worst, the rhapsode, in this case Cardinal Perron dilating on Ronsard, informs his reader, in Hurd's parody, ". . . that his Eminence was indeed very fond of his poet; and that he esteemed these several pieces to be (what with less expense of words he might, in one breath, have called them) well-turned, beautiful, excellent, admirable, marvellous, poems" (I:396-97). Hurd's friend Mason refers aptly to this degenerate form of Longinian commentary as "Lauda

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[1]This is observed of Addison's work in the critical papers of the Spectator. Hurd's note to Spectator #74 on Chevy Chase begins thus: "It may be proper to observe, once for all, that Mr. Addison's critical papers discover his own good taste; and are calculated to improve that of his reader; but otherwise have no great merit" (Hurd's Addison, III, 191n).

Bene Criticism."[1] Hurd wishes that the critic of Ronsard's poems had ". . . given us the true character of each, and . . . marked the precise degree, as well as kind, of merit in these works. . . ."(I:397). But that task would have required what both Cardinal Perron and Addison, as well as Bouhours and Longinus, lacked, ". . . that vigour of understanding . . . [and] chastised, philosoph[i]cal spirit, which are so essential . . . and which we find in hardly any of the ancients besides Aristotle, and but in a very few of the moderns" (I:395-96).

It would seem, then, that the criticism of writers such as Longinus is to be valued, in Hurd's estimation, primarily for its eloquence and the contribution which that eloquence, properly subordinated,[2] might make to the achievement of an ideal critic's purpose--"doing justice to the merits of great writers." During the Renaissance of letters, another type of criticism, with only sketchy beginnings in ancient times, began to be cultivated. This sort of criticism, "by restoring the purity, opened an easy

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[1]Letter of January 1797, in Mason Letters, p. 144, referring to Albert Schultens' work, Liber Jobi . . . (2 vols.; London, 1737).

[2]In a note appended to Addison's papers on Milton (Hurd's Addison, IV, 86n.), Hurd voices his objection to good taste and eloquence as sufficient conditions for excellence in literary criticism: "These papers on Milton, being dictated by taste, and written with elegance, were extremely well received by the public. It was taken for granted that these necessary qualities were, of themselves, sufficient to form a great critic." Hurd's point is, of course, that eloquence is a necessary but insufficient condition for perfection in the art of criticism.

way to the study of the old classics" (I:286). Practitioners of such criticism regarded ". . . only, or chiefly, the language, or words of the author criticized, whence these take the name of verbal critics . . . ."[1] The occasional references which Hurd makes to the work of philologists show him to be of the opinion that the excellence of "verbal criticism" is also subservient to what he calls "the best sort of criticism." This sort, ". . . without neglecting words, enters more deeply into the spirit, views, and scope, of the author."[2]

Almost exclusively, Hurd's consideration of textual criticism is directed to the matter of conjectural emendation. His friend Warburton's overhasty emendations of Shakespeare are notorious even today, and it might therefore be expected that Hurd, who tended to overlook his friend's failings, would be prone to an easy approval of emendatory practices. In fact, however, Warburton's readiness to emend seems to have been an embarassment to Hurd. In his Discourse by Way of Preface to the Quarto Edition of Bishop Warburton's Works, Containing Some Account of the Life, Writings, and Character of the Author (1794), Hurd mentions the widespread public criticism of the Shakespeare edition and offers an apology: "the abler the critic, the more liable he is to some extravagance of conjecture (as we see in the case of

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[1] CPB, II, 420, quoted in Martz dissertation, pp. 280-81.

[2] Ibid.

Bentley himself); it being dulness, and not judgment, that best secures him from this sort of imputation."[1] But, a few pages later, when he is reviewing Warburton's edition of Pope, we sense Hurd's relief: "as here there was no room for emendatory criticism, of all others the easiest to be misapplied or misconstrued, so the public found very little to censure on this occasion."[2] Earlier in the "Life," Hurd credits Dr. Conyers Middleton with dissuading Warburton from attempting an edition of Vellius Paterculus: "the high credit in which emendatory criticism . . . was held in the beginning of this century, occasioned by the dazzling reputation of such men as Bentley and Hare, very naturally seduced a young enterprising scholar. . . ."[3]

Bentley's textual criticism Hurd unreservedly admired; he adopted Bentley's text of Horace--". . . the best that ever was given of any classic . . ." (I:26)--for his two commentaries, and encouraged Warburton to compose a note for his Pope edition which might offset the poet's slurs, or at least place them in a context of petty rivalries between wits and scholars.[4] Hurd himself proposed a number of emendations by the way, especially in the course

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[1]Life of Warburton, pp. 44-45.

[2]Ibid., p. 58.

[3]Ibid., p. 7.

[4]See Hurd's letter to Balguy of August 18, 1749 (in Kilvert, p. 42) and the letter from Warburton to Hurd of August 19, 1749 (Warburton Letters, p. 9).

of his notes and commentary to Horace;[1] far more frequently, though, Hurd is on record with an objection to a proposed emendation. Bentley transposed lines 45 and 46 of the Ars Poetica; Hurd rejects the change as "not merely . . . without sufficient reason, but in prejudice also to the scope and tenor of the poet's sense." Only in such cases as this, adds Hurd, does he depart from Bentley's authoritative text (I:71-72). John Upton, in his 1758 edition of Spenser, suggests several emendations which Hurd rejects. For example, Upton proposes that since the witches in Macbeth turn around three times, the line should read (I, iii, 34) "thus do go, about, about, [about]." Hurd notes: "conceive the Weird Sisters acting before You on the stage. Thus do go--expresses the first about."[2]

It will be recalled that Hurd distinguished textual criticism from "the best sort of criticism . . . [which] without neglecting words, enters more deeply into the spirit,

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[1]Hurd proposes a correction of one of Warburton's emendations of Cymbeline (I, iii, 34-37) in a note to the Horace edition (I:80-82). Warburton greets it enthusiastically in a letter (Warburton Letters, p. 228) to Hurd. The latter replies "I doubt you are too indulgent to the hyper-critical emendation. It is taking an extravagant liberty with the text" (Warburton Letters, p. 230). Hurd proposes to leave it go to the printers only as it "will help to enliven a little a very dry note." Others of Hurd's suggested emendations will be found in the Horace edition (I:192-219, 341-45), and a fuller discussion of Hurd's practice will be found in Mrs. Martz's dissertation, pp. 354-60.

[2]MS note in Hurd's copy of Upton's edition (Spenser's Faerie Queene. A New Edition with a Glossary, and Notes Explanatory and Critical [2 vols.; London: J. and R. Tonson, 1758]), II, 530, quoted in Martz dissertation, p. 359.

views, and scope of the author." His rejection of an emendation is always grounded on the failure of the emendor to "enter more deeply." A contemporary Greek scholar, Jonathan Toup, receives from Hurd the praise that he has "a particle or two, discerpted from Bentley's νοῦς [nous], which I regard as the soul . . . of the critical world."[1] A few years later, he finds Toup over-ingenious, and tells Warburton that he now looks for, and rarely finds, "a man of plain common sense."[2] Similarly, Hurd finds Jeremy Markland's edition of Euripides skilful with respect to "the printing, the rhythm, and settling the reading of some inconsiderable words." The failure is in extent and depth: "when he condescends to explain a whole sentence of his author, as he does sometimes, though but rarely, he is not so happy." Hurd enumerates instances of Markland's interpretive judgments and concludes:

> Was there ever a better instance of a poor man's puzzling and confounding himself by his own obscure diligence, or a better exemplification of the old remark--noe intelligendo faciunt ut nihil intelligant? --After all, I believe the author is a very good man, and a learned; but a miserable instance of a man of slender parts and sense, besotted by a fondness for his own peculiar study, and stupefied by an intense application to the minutae of it.[3]

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[1]Letter to Warburton of February 24, 1764 (Warburton Letters, pp. 348-49). In this same letter Hurd reports that Toup plans to undertake an edition of Longinus. He adds, "I wish he had chosen some better and more useful book."

[2]Letter to Warburton, June 29, 1766 (Warburton Letters, p. 377).

[3]Letter to Warburton, February 24, 1764 (Warburton Letters, pp. 349-51).

Philology and eloquence, then, are both tools for the philosophical critic, means to his proper purpose. When they become ends in themselves, in Hurd's view, philology degenerates into pedantry as eloquence declines into meaningless jargon. Similarly, historical and biographical studies can serve the critic's purpose--"doing justice to the merits of great writers." When pursued as ends in themselves, however, such studies degenerate into mere antiquarianism. But before I consider more closely Hurd's view of the relation between historical studies and criticism, it seems appropriate to devote some attention to a more precise description of what he conceives philosophical criticism to be and to a review of his own practical criticism, since that relation is dependent on those purposes and that practice.

In January 1741, as a twenty year-old student in Emmanuel College, Cambridge, Hurd read Patrick Delaney's An Historical Account of the Life and Reign of David King of Israel (3 vols.; London: J. Osborn, 1740). He wrote to his elder friend and mentor, Dr. John Devey, on January 23, that he found Delaney's work a "charming performance."[1] Devey apparently rejected Hurd's judgment of Dr. Delaney's volumes for, on March 14th, Hurd wrote again, expressing his regret at their difference of opinion and offering grounds for his judgment:

> . . . the reason of my differing from you in this case,

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[1]Quoted in Kilvert, pp. 7-8.

> is the viewing it in a light which perhaps did not immediately present itself to you . . . . 'tis in short this: 'tis probable you might expect to find it wrote according to the strict laws of history, and therefore containing only a plain narrative of the life and actions of David, collected from sacred writ. This expectation would be in some sort confirmed by the title-page, which, as I remember, calls it the History of the Life of David. Considering it, therefore, in this light, it might well seem affected and unnatural to insert so many disquisitions and conjectures, and to run out into digressions of almost a poetical nature. But, if we look upon it (as I believe it was intended) as an essay or dissertation upon the life and actions of that hero, the particulars you blame are so far from being faults, that I dare say you'll think them beauties. This way of considering that performance will account not only for the manner but the style also in which 'tis wrote.[1]

From a further letter of May 3rd,[2] it seems that Hurd was unable to persuade Devey of the correctness of his judgment, but the method by which he seeks to demonstrate its acceptability, and the implicit conviction that the critic's business is to "do justice to the merits . . . of writers" by finding the working principle--the intention or purpose of a work--which makes most intelligible the particular elements in the work and their interrelations: these remained Hurd's persuasion of the critic's task. The philosophical critic's purpose is to discover the form of the work, that shaping principle which orders it and in the light of which its "appearances"--the particular impressions it makes--are "saved."

That this remained Hurd's view of the function of criticism may be seen repeatedly in the terms by which he justifies his interpretive judgments. Regarding his

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid., pp. 8-10.

interpretation of the history of music passage in the Ars Poetica (11. 202-219),[1] he writes: "at least, in this view the poet, . . . will be found intelligible and even elegant. Whereas, on any other supposition of his numerous commentators, I cannot see that the verses before us (as they here stand) have either propriety or common sense" (I:170). A good critic, he writes elsewhere, needs "the force of genius" in order to "disembarass an involved subject." Learning, he adds, ". . . can lend a ray to enlighten a dark one . . . (I:16). It is the "love of order" which "befits a good Critic."[2] His commentary on Horace is of that kind of criticism which is ". . . the fittest to throw light upon a difficult subject, and, above all, to convey an exact idea of the scope and order of any work" (I:26). Hurd defends his interpretation of another section of the Ars Poetica (11. 95ff.) in similar terms:

> . . . this way of understanding the passage before us, as it is more conformable to what is here shewn to be the general scope of the epistle, so doth it, in its turn, likewise countenance, or rather clearly shew, the truth and certainty of this method of interpretation (I:109).

One can turn to Hurd's treatment of virtually any work and find a similar conception of the critic's function. An unpublished manuscript draft titled "Of Greek Philosophy" contains, among other things, a discussion of Horace's sixteenth

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[1]For a discussion of this interpretation, see above, pp. 172-75.

[2]Letter to Warburton of January 22, 1757 (Warburton Letters, p. 232).

epistle of the first book, on the subject of retirement. Hurd's treatment begins thus: "In order to apprehend the full Drift & Purpose of this Epistle it seems necessary to suppose . . . ."[1]

The critic's goal of discovering the shaping principle in individual works is, according to Hurd, paralleled at a more abstract level of critical inquiry by the goal of theoretical criticism: ". . . that species of didactic writing, which refers to general rules the virtues and faults of composition." Critical theorists ". . . are employed in their proper office . . . [when they] contribute to the confirmation of rules already established, or the invention [i.e. discovery] of new ones" (I:391). Confirmation occurs by discovering further particulars that are explained by the ruling principle; rules are complex inductions from the experience of numerous individual cases (I:390): "Rules themselves are . . . nothing else but . . . conclusions drawn from a wide and general observation of the aptness . . . of certain means to produce . . . [certain] impressions."

The "rules" that Hurd has in mind as the object of critical inquiry at a theoretical level are not, I think, equivalent to codes of good behavior, so to speak, uncritically passed on from generation to generation of critics. Hurd is skeptical of convention in this regard in the same way that he seems to have rejected a conception of literary form as the equivalent of literary convention: the way

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[1]Quoted in Martz dissertation, pp. 93-94n.

certain subjects, traditionally, have been treated. Indeed, Hurd is generally distrustful of that reasoning from authority and precedent which is the usual ground supporting convention and tradition. Authorities are useful to the critic, in Hurd's estimation, if he is inquiring into either the "authenticity of a word or expression" or seeking to assess the "elegance of words or phrases." In such cases, the "best that has been . . . said" is a kind of touchstone, so to speak. Such philological and stylistic matters are "capable of being justified by authority." Unlike words, however, things ". . . must ever be what they are, in spite of it" (I:362). A poem is a thing-of-words; as a thing, it is what it is.

Instead of authority--the authority of past critics in the case of "rules," or the poet's own claims in the case of the forms of individual works--Hurd counsels reliance on individual attentiveness and thought as the best means of obtaining insight into the order of a poem or the order of a general principle of poetic excellence. As a consequence, those interested in reducing Hurd's practice to the employment of some one particular method or tool, will find themselves dissatisfied with his actual procedure, which is far from single-minded in this way. Perhaps Hurd's conception of critical "method" can best be seen by turning to his own practical criticism--the editions of Horace, Cowley, and Addison, and his most famous work, the Letters on Chivalry and Romance.

## I. Hurd's Editorial Practice

Hurd's first essay in literary criticism, his commentary and notes to Horace's Epistola ad Pisones (1749) begins with an explanation of his reasons for undertaking the edition. The Ars Poetica, he explains, continues to be cried up as a model of excellent criticism and as an authoritative guide in matters of literary judgment. For this reason, "the more unquestioned the credit of this poem is, the more it will concern the public, that it be justly and accurately understood." His aim, therefore, is ". . . to clear the sense, connect the method, and ascertain the scope and purpose, of this admired epistle" (I:13). Knowing that ". . . the Art of poetry, at large, is not the proper subject" of the poem, critics had decided that it was merely a collection of precepts, a box of critical tags (I:14). Addison's discussion in Spectator #253 may be thought of as representing the commonplace opinion: the Ars Poetica is a collection of well-said critical commonplaces--

What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed.

In contrast to this view, the thesis of Hurd's commentary is that "the proper and sole purpose of the author was, not to abridge the Greek critics, whom he probably never thought of; nor to amuse himself with composing a short critical system, for the general use of poets, which every line of it absolutely confutes; but, simply to criticize the ROMAN DRAMA" (I:15).

Perpetual misunderstanding of the author's purpose

had been, in Hurd's view, the primary source of confusion in comprehending the structure and method of Horace's poem (I:15):

> It hath occasioned a constant perplexity in defining the general method [of the poem], and in fixing the import of particular rules [enjoined in it]. . . . Its interpreters have been misemployed in picking out authorities, which were not wanted, and in producing, or, more properly, by their studied refinements in creating, conformities, which were never designed [e.g. as between Horace and Aristotle]. . . . Instead of investigating the order of the poet's own reflexions, and scrutinizing the peculiar state of the Roman stage (the methods, which common sense and common criticism would prescribe) the world hath been nauseated with insipid lectures on Aristotle and Phalereus, whose solid sense hath been so attenuated and subtilized by the delicate operation of French criticism, as hath even gone some way towards bringing the art [of criticism] itself into disrepute.

The judgment of Horace's poem against which Hurd is arguing in his commentary and notes is best summarized in a criticism by Andre Dacier which Hurd quotes at the end of his discussion (I:61-62):

> Comme il [Horace] ne travailloit pas à cela de suite et qu'il ne gardoit d'autre ordre que celui des matieres que le hazard lui donnoit à lire et à examiner, il est arrivé delà qu'IL N'Y A AUCUNE METHODE NI AUCUNE LIAISON DE PARTIES DANS CE TRAITE, qui même n'a jamais été achevé, Horace n'ayant pas eu le tems d'y mettre la derniere main, ou, ce qui est plus vraisemblable, n'ayant pas voulu s'en donner la peine.
>
> (Since he did not work on it successively, and since he didn't keep any order other than that of the materials which chance gave him to read and to examine, it has happened thus that there is neither any method nor any connection of the parts of this treatise, which indeed has never been completed, since Horace didn't have time to put the finishing touches to it or, which is more likely, he didn't want to give himself the trouble).

To this quotation Hurd adds another in reply--Dacier's

criticism of Scaliger, to be applied now to Dacier himself:

> S'IL L'AVOIT BIEN ENTENDU, IL LUI AUROIT RENDU PLUS DE JUSTICE, ET EN AUROIT PARLE PLUS MODESTEMENT.
>
> (If he had understood it rightly, he would have done it more justice, and would have spoken of it more modestly).

It was Hurd's view that, since form and function are intimately related, judgments such as Dacier's, regretting the lack of a structure and method in the poem were the direct consequence of misunderstanding Horace's purpose (I:17); his own view, in contrast, offered an hypothesis about Horace's intention which would allow a different and more sympathetic reading of the poem.[1] Expecting to find an "ars poetica," critics could see only a string of tenuously connected precepts: "not suspecting a unity of design in the subject, its interpreters never looked for, or could never find a consistency of disposition in the method" (I:16). More correctly stated, Hurd's point seems to have been that having misconceived the purpose of the work, critics found it lacking in unity since its parts did not constitute the kind of whole they anticipated; a different anticipation, Hurd's hypothesis, would enable readers to see a "design" in

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[1] It is Hurd's assumption throughout that Horace meant what he said in the Ars Poetica, line 23: "Denique sit quod vis simplex dumtaxat et unum" (In short, be the work what you will, let it at least be simple and uniform [trans. Fairclough]). A further assumption is that the critic's responsibility is "doing justice to the merits of great writers" which seems here to demand both a large measure of benevolence in the judge, and a respectful humility before his text--humility of the sort which would prefer to believe itself in error.

the interrelationship of parts in Horace's poem, parts which, seen in that light, cohered in a unity not previously apprehended.

It was, I think, as evident to Hurd as it is to us that no reader could possibly fail to notice many passages in Horace's epistle which seem to speak of matters other than the state of drama in Augustan Rome. Hurd offers arguments to meet this objection to his thesis. Horace's poem is not merely a criticism of Roman drama; it is a didactic epistle which has as its purpose such a criticism. Such a poem is characterized by requirements ". . . that there be an unity in the subject. . . . a connexion in the method: and . . . that such connexion be easy" (I:24). Hence those passages which seem to the reader not to deal directly with the drama (almost half of the poem, actually) are to be interpreted as digressive or illustrative materials appropriate to a poem whose structure is characterized by an "easy connexion." In addition, that "easy connexion" also explains the seemingly obscure connection between such digressive or illustrative materials and the purpose of the epistle. Part of the charm in such a poem, to Hurd's mind, is that the reader himself is invited to provide the connecting links, often deliberately left unexpressed or only vaguely suggested by the writer (I:22). The better part of Hurd's commentary and notes is occupied with such arguments as these directed to the explication and interconnection of individual lines or passages. The commentary concludes with

a rather self-satisfied summary: "And now, an unity of design in this epistle, and the pertinent connection of its several parts being, it is presumed, from this method of illustration, clearly and indisputably shewn . . ." (I:61); the notes conclude similarly: Horace's poem is now shown to have a "plain and simple order" (I:321).

Hurd was a rather gifted controversialist (no doubt under the auspices of his conviction that the good critic also had to be a skilful rhetorician) and in his hands what ought perhaps to have been an hypothesis tentatively put forward became a thesis to be hammered in, at all costs. Despite his insistent arguing (perhaps, indeed, because of it), Hurd's thesis was soon called in question by contemporary critics in England and in Germany. John and William Duncombe in their collection of Horace translations "with notes historical and critical,"[1] comment thus on Hurd's thesis:

> Mr. Hurd, in his Commentary on this Epistle, has endeavoured, with great Acuteness, to prove an Unity of Design throughout the Whole Piece, in Opposition to the Opinion of all the Commentators. It will at least convince the Reader of his own Learning and Ingenuity. But as to the main Question, we can only say, with one of the Interlocutors in Tully's Tusculan Disputations, Nescio quomodo, dum lego ejus eum librum, assentior; Cum posui librum, et lego Epistolam ipsam, assentio illa elabitur. Though indeed it is but Justice to own, that he has shown,

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[1]John and William Duncombe, et al., The Works of Horace in English Verse, By several hands, . . . with notes historical and critical (2 vols.; London: for Dodsley, 1757-59; 2nd ed., 4 vols.; London: for B. White, et al., 1767).

> in general, the connection and Dependence of one Part on another in a clearer Light than any other Commentator.[1]

Johann Joachim Eschenburg, in his translation of the fourth edition of Hurd's Horace, echoes Hurd's own thesis in his "Einleitung." What was for Hurd a view that needed carefully to be established became for Eschenburg a self-evident fact: "niemand werde leugnen, dass der grösste Theil dieser Epistel die Schaubühne betreffe" (No one will deny that the greatest part of this epistle concerns the stage).[2] In response to Eschenburg and to Hurd, Christoph Martin Wieland, in his 1782 translation and commentary to Horace's poem, "Über die Dichtkunst: an L. Calpurnius Piso und seine Söhne," not only questions Hurd's thesis as did Duncombe, but offers analternative hypothesis. He regrets the old title de Arte Poetica Liber (as did Hurd) because he believes it caused so much of the confusion. Without it,

> Die Ausleger, von Jason de Noves und Jacob Grifioli an bis auf die Neuesten, würden in einem Briefe,-- der nach Horazens Absicht so wenig ein Lehrbuch der Dichtkunst sein sollte, als seine erste Epistel an Mäcen eine Ethik oder die an August eine Geschichte

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[1](2nd ed., 1767) IV, 271. The Cicero misquotation is from the first Tusculan Disputation, "On the Contempt of Death," section 24. In the original it reads "sed nescio quo modo, dum lego, adsentior, cum posui librum et mecum ipse de immortalitate animorum coepi cogitare, adsensio omnis illa elabitur" (but somehow, while I am reading I agree with [Plato about the soul's immortality]; when I lay down the book and reflect in my own thoughts on the immortality of souls, all that assurance vanishes [trans. Andrew P. Peabody].

[2]Horazens Episteln an die Pisonen und an den Augustus . . . von R. Hurd. Aus dem Englischen übersetzt und mit eigenen Anmerkungen begleitet . . . (2 vols.; Leipzig: bei Engelhart Benjamin Schwickert, 1772), I, 7.

> der römischen Literatur ist,--weder eine vollständige Poetik, wie die ältern Ausleger, noch wie Batteux, eine Theorie der dramatischen Kunst gesucht, noch, wie Hurd, eine Beurteilung des römischen Dramas zum Hauptzweck desselben gemacht haben.[1]

Wieland notes that it was Eschenburg's edition of Hurd which got him thinking about an alternative hypothesis to explain the unity and order of Horace's poem. That such an hypothesis was needed Wieland did not question; but he noted his inability to verify Hurd's view with his copy of Horace's poem. Special pleading, such as is found in Hurd's notes, will not do to make Horace's text jibe with Hurd's hypothesis; the latter is unacceptable even "mit aller graziösen Nachlässigkeit, die man einer poetischen Epistel gern zugesteht."[2] Wieland's opposing hypothesis is that the poem is "eine poetische Epistel, worin er [i.e. Horace] den jungen Piso, vermöge einer mit seinem Vater genommenen Abrede, unter dem Vorwand, ihm die Geheimnisse der poetischen

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[1] Werke, ed. by Fritz Martini and Hans Werner Seiffert (5 vols.; Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1968), V, 586. See also, regarding Wieland's relation to Hurd and Eschenburg, Wolfgang Monecke, Wieland und Horaz (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1964), pp. 213-221. Monecke emphasizes the minimality of Wieland's debt to earlier commentators in the development of his translations and notes to Horace's poems. Wieland himself argues that his own view of the Ars Poetica, at least, was strongly influenced by Eschenburg and Hurd and is to be thought of as a reaction against their view. Monecke's argument is that Wieland paid little attention to the details of either Eschenburg's or Hurd's notes. It seems, then, that we are not in disagreement. Wieland was quite interested in Hurd's main point, if only to disagree with it; he had little use for Hurd's notes, logically enough, since they are devoted primarily to demonstrating a thesis he considered undemonstrable.

[2] Ibid., p. 587.

Kunst aufzuschliesen, von seiner Liebe zur Ausübung dieser Kunst abziehen will."[1] This hypothesis, according to Wieland, offers a suitable basis for solving the old problems of incompleteness in the rules provided ("Er wollte keine Poetik schreiben"), relaxation in the method followed ("Er schrieb einen Brief"), emphasis on the errors of poets ("Der junge Piso bedurfte ihrer am meisten"), and obscurity in the statement of poetic principles ("Horaz dachte an nichts weniger als den jungen Piso zu einem Dichter machen zu wollen").[2] He concludes: "nimmt man diese Hypothese . . . an; so wird . . . alles darin hell, verständig, und zweckmässig."[3] The point I wish to draw from this elaboration is that Wieland follows Hurd (Eschenburg) in seeking an ordering principle which will show the particular features of the poem, as it stands, to be intelligibly unified--"hell, verständig, . . . zweckmässig."

Interestingly enough, Wieland's reaction to the Hurd (Eschenburg) theory was paralleled almost point for point in George Colman's English translation and commentary of 1783.[4] Colman sets forth his own view in a preliminary dedication to the Warton brothers. He compliments Hurd for his distinction: his was the first discussion of

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[1] Ibid., p. 587. [2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Q. Horatii Flacci Epistola ad Pisones, De Arte Poetica. The Art of Poetry: an Epistle to the Pisos. Translated from Horace (London, 1783).

Horace's poem to read it as something other than "a loose, vague, and desultory composition; a mass of shining materials; like pearls unstrung, valuable indeed, but not displayed to advantage."[1] It was Hurd's virtue to have "sagaciously directed his researches to scrutinize the work itself; properly endeavouring to trace and investigate from the composition the end and design of the writer. . . ."[2] Colman finds Hurd's commentary "extremely seducing" but adds that it is marked, as the attentive reader will note, by "a violence and constraint offered to the composition, in order to accommodate it to the system of the commentator. . . ."[3] Colman's hypothesis, like Wieland's is that the poem is an epistle to the Pisos, father and sons; that the first (general) section of the poem (ll. 1-89) is addressed to all three recipients; the middle section (ll. 89-365, concerning the drama, more or less) to the two sons, the eldest of which may be thought to have tried his hand at tragedy; and the last section (ll. 365-end, focusing on the failures of poor poets) to the elder brother, the "inspired" young "poet" himself. The total poem, with its variety of addresses was, in Colman's view, Horace's attempt to aid the father's wish that his sons not become poets.[4] Colman hastens to add his agreement with Duncombe that Hurd had, in general, brought more clarity to the poem

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[1] Ibid, p. ii.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid., p. iv.

[4] Ibid., pp. vi-vii.

than any previous commentator; even his conclusion is properly deferential to Hurd's achievement:

> I have endeavoured, after the example of the learned author of the English Commentary, though on somewhat different principles, to prove "an unity of design in this Epistle," as well as to illustrate the "pertinent connection of its several parts." Many perhaps, like myself, will hesitate to embrace the system of that acute critic; and as many, or more, may reject my hypothesis.[1]

It appears that Colman was certain only that no one, after Hurd, could regress to the old strings-in-a-shoe-box version of the ordering principle of Horace's poem.[2] Alexander Chalmers reports in The General Biographical Dictionary that Hurd, having read Colman's account, said to Dr. Douglas, the late Bishop of Salisbury,[3] "Give my compliments to Colman, and thank him for the handsome manner in which he has treated me, and tell him that I think he is right."[4]

While it may be concluded, therefore, that Hurd's particular hypothesis is ultimately unsatisfactory and was seen to be so even by his contemporary scholars and critics, and, later, by himself, I think it reasonable to point out

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[1] Ibid., pp. lviii-lix.

[2] Colman was mistaken. William Boscawen, in The Satires, Epistles and Art of Poetry of Horace, Translated into English Verse (London: J. Stockdale, 1797), noting that in Hurd's commentary "we have more than half the work excluded from a system which professes to comprehend the whole" (p. 475), concludes that Horace's poem is a rag-bag: "amidst all his beauties, a want of method and arrangement, is our Poet's frequent defect" (p. 479).

[3] On John Douglas see above, chapter 2,

[4] (32 vols., London: J. Nichols and Son, et al., 1814), XVIII, 339n.).

that Hurd's practice in this edition does nevertheless amount to a significant advance in the criticism of Horace's text, even as his contemporaries point out. He was the first critic, to the best of my knowledge, who assumed both that the text was to be accepted as it was (allowing, of course, for minor emendations), and that Horace must have meant to make something more than a random collection of quotable tags, even if not a Poetics such as Aristotle's. Indeed, Hurd rejected the view that Horace intended a Poetics, since it was the poem's failure to live up to such expectations which caused its dismissal as a rag-bag. Those who criticized Hurd's hypothesis accepted his understanding that some such hypothesis was called for; their discussions propose alternative conceptions of the purpose of the poem; all agree with Hurd that it is well to assume Horace meant to make some thing.

The most respected modern scholar of Horace's Ars Poetica, C. O. Brink, enumerates and tells something of the history of three types of commentary on the unity and structure of Horace's poem in the Prolegomena to his still incomplete study of Horace on Poetry: (1) the transposers; (2) those who believe the poem to be a collection of tags; and (3) a group he calls properly analytic--those who "search for a principle, or principles, of arrangement, on the assumption that the sequence of verses is in the main Horatian and that the poem has got an underlying plan which

can be traced."[1] Professor Brink, on the authority of E. Norden, dates the analytic group as originating in 1867 with a paper by J. Vahlen.[2] His date is, however, somewhat over one hundred years off the mark--the analysis of Horace's text, on the assumption that it is a whole thing, the parts of which are related through a unifying purpose which it is the object of philosophically-minded criticism to discover and elucidate began, at the latest, in 1749, with the publication of Hurd's commentary and notes.

The immediate public response to Hurd's first venture in criticism was overwhelmingly encouraging. His carefully worded compliment to Warburton at the end of his introduction (I:26) brought Hurd a kind letter in return ("I think the notes one of the most masterly pieces of criticism that ever was written"),[3] and the beginning of a life-long friendship. The Monthly Review announced that Hurd had "with great judgment and accuracy cleared the sense, ascertained the scope and purpose, and pointed out the connexion of the several parts of this celebrated epistle."[4] The work went through five editions (1749, 1753, 1757, 1766, and 1776) in less than thirty years. The Critical Review went so far as to predict that "while Horace's

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[1](3 vols.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963--), I, 18.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Warburton Letters, p. 1.

[4]Vol. I (August, 1749), 277.

Art of Poetry continues to please the refined reader, it is probable that his best commentator, Mr. Hurd, will share in the applause."[1]

Hurd's next project was a commentary on Horace's Epistle to Augustus. Warburton's second letter to Hurd encouraged him to undertake the edition ("It will . . . complete what is much wanted, a sensible comment on all Horace's Critical Works").[2] Hurd declined Warburton's suggestion in a letter no longer preserved, apparently on the grounds that Pope's Imitation and Warburton's commentary on that poem had already performed the needed task. At any rate, Warburton's third letter to his new friend argues against those reasons.[3] Warburton's arguments persuaded Hurd to proceed with the project and, indeed, Warburton even sent him his own notes ("merely occasional remarks") on Pope's imitation of the poem.[4] In 1751 the edition was published; appended to it was the "Discourse on Poetical Imitation."[5] It was prefaced by the dedication to Warburton with which the early pages of this chapter were concerned. The arrangement of this new edition is virtually identical to Hurd's commentary and notes to the Ars Poetica. In Hurd's view, Horace's Epistola ad Augustum is "an apology for the poets of his own time" conducted by the method "which

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[1]Vol. XVII (April, 1764), 133.

[2]Warburton Letters, p. 3. [3]Ibid., pp. 4-5.

[4]Ibid., p. 7. [5]See above, chapter 2.

plain sense, and the subject itself, required of him" (I:291). The commentary and notes, recognizing the "easy connexion" characteristic of the didactic epistle, provide explanations of connexions between parts in accord with the informing purpose Hurd believed Horace to have been intending. The edition of the Augustus and the edition of the Ars Poetica are so similarly conceived that Hurd finds it useful to draw attention to the poems' correspondence in order to clarify his interpretation of the Augustus: "as, there, in correcting the abuses of their poetry, he [i.e. Horace] mixes, occasionally, some encomiums on poets; so, here, in pleading the cause of the poets, we find him interweaving instructions on poetry" (I:325). Clarifying the relation between such digressions and the purpose of the whole is the preoccupation of Hurd's notes to the Augustus, as it was also in the earlier work.

The edition of the Epistle to Augustus was apparently not as popular, alone, as the first edition of the Ars Poetica had been. In a letter to his printer, Bowyer, Hurd mentions his plan for a second edition of both commentaries and suggests a payment schedule that will be less demanding ("I am sensible, as you say, of the difference betwixt a piece of dry criticism and a novel").[1] The two

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[1]Letter of February 14, 1752, quoted in John Nichols, Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century (9 vols.; London: J. Nichols and Son, 1812-16), II, 230-31n.

commentaries appeared together in the second edition of 1753 and in each of the succeeding editions (1757, 1766 and 1776). Some revision was done between editions; the "Dissertation on the Provinces of the Drama" was added to the second edition;[1] the "Letter to Mr. Mason, on the Marks of Imitation" was added to the third edition;[2] and the "Dissertation on the Idea of Universal Poetry" was put at the head of the supplementary essays in the fourth edition.[3] The complete Horace volumes (consisting of both commentaries and the four critical essays) occupy the first two volumes of the 1811 Collected Works.

While Hurd's edition of the Epistle to Augustus was no new departure in his procedure as formulated and tested in the Ars Poetica commentary, his 1772 edition of Cowley was.[4] It was a unique thing, two volumes of selections meant to serve as a complete edition--that is, an edition of all of Cowley's works worth preserving. Hurd put his reason for such an undertaking somewhat differently; to him it seemed mostly a rescue-job: "Every thing he

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[1]See above, chapter 3,

[2]See above, chapter 2,

[3]See above, chapter 2,

[4]Select Works of Mr. A. Cowley; in two Volumes: with a Preface and Notes by the Editor (London: for T. Cadell, 1772). A second edition appeared in the same year along with a Dublin edition, and a third London edition appeared in 1777. Hurd's selection was reproduced in the Cowley volumes of The British Poets (Edinburgh, 1773) and his notes were reprinted in the editions published in 1809 (London: for John Sharpe) and in 1868 (London: Sampson, Low, Son and Marston).

wrote, is either so good or so bad, that, in all reason, a separation should be made; lest the latter, which unhappily, is the greater part, should, in the end, stifle and overlay the former."[1] And, indeed, Hurd's selection was the only edited publication of Cowley's works issued between the three-volume twelfth edition of the original Collected Works, published by Tonson in 1721, and Grossart's two-volume edition of 1881. What of Cowley was read between these two dates was largely determined by Hurd's choice.

To understand the significance of Hurd's selection, it is necessary to refer to the history of Cowley's reputation in England, a history by now relatively well documented.[2] The fact in that history of direct interest here is that, after some forty years of great popularity, much of Cowley's poetry came to be regarded around the turn of the century as severely limited in its durability. The note of a changed evaluation is heard in Dryden's 1700 Preface to the Fables:

> One of our late great poets is sunk in his reputation, because he could never forgive any conceit which came in his way; but swept like a drag-net, great and small. There was plenty enough, but the dishes were ill sorted; whole pyramids of sweetmeats for boys and women,

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[1] Hurd's Cowley (Dublin ed.), I, v-vi.

[2] See Jean Loiseau, Abraham Cowley's Reputation in England (Paris: Henri Didier, 1931). Also, Arthur H. Nethercot, "The Reputation of Abraham Cowley (1660-1800)," PMLA, XXXVIII (1923), 588-641. Professor Nethercot also published a two-part study of "The Reputation of the 'Metaphysical Poets' During the Age of Pope," PQ, IV (1925), 161-79, and "The Reputation of the 'Metaphysical Poets' During the Age of Johnson and the 'Romantic Revival,'" SP, XXII (1925), 81-132.

> but little of solid meat for men. All this proceeded not from any want of knowledge, but of judgment; neither did he want that in discerning the beauties and faults of other poets; but only indulged himself in the luxury of writing; and perhaps knew it was a fault, but hoped the reader would not find it. For this reason, though he must always be thought a great poet, he is no longer esteemed a good writer; and for ten impressions which his works have had in so many successive years, yet at present a hundred books are scarcely purchased once a twelfth-month; for, as my last Lord Rochester said, though somewhat profanely, Not being of God, he could not stand.[1]

By 1728, Oldmixon wrote that as a poet Cowley had "lost almost all his merit in our time."[2] Pope's Imitation of Horace's Epistle to Augustus (1737) parallels Horace's delicate mockery of Ennius, Naevius and the rest of the over-respected early Roman writers with Shakespeare, Jonson, and Cowley:

> Who now reads Cowley? if he pleases yet,
> His moral pleases, not his pointed wit;
> Forgot his Epic, nay Pindaric Art,
> But still I love the language of his Heart.[3]

Picking up Pope's suggestion and quoting his lines as epigraph, Hurd's edition displays the Cowley one still loves, the poet-moralist who "pleases yet," the writer of lines like:

> To me, the sun is more delightful far,
> And all the fair days much fairer are.
> But few, ah wondrous few there be,

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[1]Dryden (ed. Watson), II, 280.

[2]Quoted in John Butt, ed., Imitations of Horace, Vol. IV of The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope, ed. by John Butt (11 vols.; London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1939-1971), p. 290n.

[3]11. 75-78.

Who do not gold prefer, O goddess, ev'n to thee.[1]

Nethercot pronounces this selected edition "one of the most important events in the history of Cowley criticism and--in a less degree--of criticism of the Metaphysical Poets, because of the signs which it introduced of a new attitude."[2] Nethercot is thinking of "Romanticism," as is Jean Loiseau. Loiseau notes that Hurd's selection "proves that the complete works of Cowley had not longer any hopes of finding enough readers to justify a reprint."[3] On the contrary, the fact that there were not enough readers interested in the complete works implies that if any of Cowley's poetry was to live, it would live only in a selection such as Hurd's.[4] Regarding the grounds of Hurd's selection, Loiseau suggests that "the Cowley he revived . . . was a new one, discovered indeed by Pope, but now for the first time revealed fully. . . . Excluded from the realm of art, Cowley

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[1]Hurd's Cowley (Dublin ed.), I, 173. Hurd's note to the passage: "An inimitable stanza, in which the whole soul of the [lyric] poet comes out, and shines through the purest and clearest expression."

[2]"The Reputation of the 'Metaphysical Poets' During the Age of Johnson and the 'Romantic Revival,'" p. 87.

[3]Abraham Cowley's Reputation in England, p. 94.

[4]This is not to argue against the fact that Hurd's selection brought Cowley more readers than he formerly had. If the testimony of Henry Headley be accepted (Selected Beauties of Ancient English Poetry, with Remarks [2 vols.; London: for T. Cadell, 1787], I, xi) Hurd's edition, omitting the exceptionable poetry "that had operated like a millstone and sunk the rest," gave the "ancient" English poet, Cowley, "a dozen readers where before he had scarce one." My point is merely that Hurd's selection was a response to the situation and not a cause of it.

was given a renewed life on moral grounds."[1] On the contrary, it seems unreasonable to speak of Hurd, or anyone, giving Cowley--a new Cowley, at that--new life. Hurd seems to have thought he was justly preserving what of Cowley's works still had life. The dichotomy between judgments of moral soundness and artistic excellence is Loiseau's; Hurd's grounds of selection are made from a different perspective: omitted were works which seemed lifeless because written to please the particular audience of Cowley's day by an appeal to its peculiar fashion ("pointed wit"), and dead, thus, with the changing of predispositions. As Hurd explained it, "No writer, whether philosopher or poet, ever affronted the common sense, or common virtue of mankind, with impunity."[2] To Hurd's mind, Cowley's ingenious conceits were an affront to common sense, many of his writings lived partly because they did not affront common virtue and because they also did not affront common sense. The discriminations are multiple, not single-minded.

Regarding the tendency of Hurd's selection, Loiseau notes, correctly, that Hurd's

> sympathy was centered on the poet's personality, his inmost thoughts and feelings, his whole attitude towards life. He never grew weary of insisting on his sensitiveness, his refreshing delight in natural scenes, his melancholy outlook on human existence.

Loiseau concludes from this that Hurd "took, as it were, a

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[1] Abraham Cowley's Reputation in England, p. 106.

[2] Hurd's Cowley (Dublin ed.), II, 273n.

pre-romantic interest in these traits of Cowley's character, turning him into a romantic hero, whom life had grievously wounded, and who sought for a solace to his dejection in the solitary contemplation of nature."[1] Contemporary reviews of Hurd's selection disagree. The Morning Chronicle, on January 30, 1776, judged that "the learned editor has cleared the Works of Cowley from many false thoughts, from ill-placed wit, and great puerilities."[2] The reviewer goes on to regret the selection from precisely the "pre-romantic" point-of-view that Loiseau ascribes to Hurd: "Yet he certainly deprived us of many fine flights of true poetry and of some peculiar marks which distinguish Cowley from every other Poet."[3] Earlier, the Monthly Review, regretting Hurd's selection, noted that both Hurd and his epigraph writer, Pope, were incapable of recognizing the particularity of Cowley's poems:

> the real cause why they still please is what Mr. Pope [and Hurd, by implication], could not judge of, because he was a stranger to it. It is enthusiasm; the genuine spirit of enthusiasm that breathes through all those pages, where the poet is not professedly in chace of wit.[4]

It seems reasonable to infer from the reviewer's comments that, contrary to Professor Loiseau's judgment, Hurd was

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[1] Abraham Cowley's Reputation in England, pp. 106-107.

[2] Quoted in John Nichols, Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century (9 vols.; London: Nichols, 1812-16).

[3] Ibid.

[4] Vol. XLVIII (January, 1773), 13.

not "pre-romantic" enough for some of Cowley's readers. Indeed, Professor Loiseau himself seems closer to a romantic conception of the poet, when he concludes his study of Cowley's reputation with a "true explanation of the overwhelming ascendancy he gained over his contemporaries, as well as of the severity of later generations. Cowley the man was superior to Cowley the poet. . . . [His works, afer his death], offered a broken, imperfect reflection of the man's beautiful soul."[1]

If the "neo-classical" view read Cowley as an enthusiast to be relegated to the dust bin, and the "pre-romantic" read him as a unique enthusiast, to be thawed out after the neo-classical freeze, where, then, stood Hurd and his selection? Along with the "neo-classicists," he rejected Cowley's merely wit-ridden poems as fashionable pieces, dead with the passing of the fashion; along with the "pre-romantics," he appreciated Cowley's gifts as a lyric poet. Unlike the "pre-romantics," if we may take the reviewers as exemplary, Hurd did not value uniqueness (why "distinguish Cowley from every other Poet"?) or "the genuine spirit of enthusiasm" (for what?) as poetic ends in themselves.

Hurd's purpose in the Cowley edition was, plainly and simply, as he said, to separate and preserve those works which continued to "live" because they still pleased

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[1] Abraham Cowley's Reputation in England, p. 211.

from those, the "life" of which had rested upon a passing fashion. There is nothing in such a principle of selection to warrant any conclusions about Hurd's party affiliations; all that one can reasonably infer is that Hurd believed the best poetry was written for contemplative and not practical ends: ends, therefore, the achievement of which was not bounded by the appreciation of particular audiences. Since Hurd was not an antiquarian, he thought it sensible, one must suppose, to preserve those works of Cowley's which, with the passing of time, continued to please, demonstrating thus their achievement of an excellence in their specific forms, rather than merely their conformity to the fashions of a particular audience, Such inferences have the additional support of Hurd's own theory about the way in which mistaken judgments of particular audiences come to be corrected by later readers.[1]

Hurd's editions of Addison[2] and Warburton[3] are of less interest in this study. The former was the product of

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[1]See above, pp. 170-72.

[2]The Works of the Right Honourable Joseph Addison, A New Edition, with Notes by Richard Hurd, D.D., Lord Bishop of Worcester (6 vols.; London: for T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1811). An American edition was published in the same year (New York: W. Durell and Company). Hurd's notes were reprinted in the Bohn's British Classics Series (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854, 1862, and 1885), and in George Washington Greene's editions (New York: G. P. Putnam & Co., 1856; and New York: Derby and Jackson, 1858).

[3]The Works of the Right Reverend William Warburton, Lord Bishop of Gloucester (7 vols.; London: John Nichols, 1788) with a supplemental volume issued in the same year. To this was added A Discourse by Way of General Preface to

leisure hours during the period around 1770. Hurd returned to Addison in his later years, as he explained to his friend Mason, because ". . . such useful sense, in so charming words, I find not elsewhere. His taste is so pure, and his Virgilian Prose (as Dr. Young styles it) so exquisite, that I have but now found out, at the close of a critical life, the full value of his writings."[1] The edition, prepared by way of annotations made during re-readings, was published posthumously with the assistance of Hurd's nephew. Hurd intended publication, however, for his notes are written with an audience in mind, and indeed, for the most part, with a very specific audience in mind, namely young persons who wish to learn how to write classic English prose. In a September 13, 1770 letter to his friend Balguy, Hurd notes that such an edition would "not be a slight benefit to the rising generation if I should be able to give them a just value for Mr. Addison's writings."[2] Hurd's procedure is to point out defects in grammar and, occasionally, in diction, explaining to the young reader that "to be at the pains of inquiring whether such a writer have any faults, is, in

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the Quarto Edition of Warburton's Works, Containing Some Account of the Life, Writings and Character of the Author (London: John Nichols, 1794). A twelve-volume edition, including the "Life" was published in 1811 (London: for T. Cadell and W. Davies). A three-volume edition of The Divine Legation of Moses, Demonstrated (London: for Thomas Tegg, 1846) prefixes Hurd's "Life" and includes his notes.

[1]Mason Letters, p. 76.

[2]Quoted in Kilvert, pp. 107-8.

effect, to pay the highest compliment to his merit."[1]

Hurd's longest note, devoted primarily to a discussion of prose rhythm, may be taken to exemplify, in content and tone, his intention and method in this edition, and, indeed, to go beyond the typical note in approaching to a more theoretically conceived exposition:

> Fine writing . . . consists chiefly in three things. 1. In a choice of fit terms. 2. In such a construction of them, as agrees to the grammar of the language in which we write. And 3. In a pleasing order and arrangement of them. By the first of these qualities, a style becomes, what we call, elegant; by the second, exact; and, by the third, harmonious. Each of these qualities may be possessed, by itself; but they must concur, to form a finished style.
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> Mr. Addison was the first and is still, perhaps, the only English writer, in whom these three requisites are found together, in, almost, an equal degree of perfection. . . . If it be asked, whether the harmony of his prose be capable of improvement, I think we may say in general, that, with regard to this way of writing, in short essays to which Mr. Addison's style is adapted, and for which it was formed, it is not. There is, with the utmost melody, all the variety of composition . . . which the nature of these writings demands. In works of another length and texture, the harmony would be improved in various ways; and even by the very transgression of these rules.
>
> Every kind of writing has a style of its own; and a good ear formed on the several principles of numerous composition, will easily direct how, and in what manner to suit the rhythm to the subject, and the occasion. There is no doubt that, what is exquisite in one mode of writing, would be finical in another. It is enough to say, that the rhythm of these essays, called, Spectators, is wonderfully pleasing, and perhaps, perfect in its kind.[2]

When George Washington Greene, in his preface to the

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[1]Hurd's Addison, I 339n.

[2]Ibid., pp. 331-34n.

new American edition of Addison's Works,[1] apologizes for including Hurd's notes, he somewhat misrepresents the earlier editor's work as symptomatic of a failure in capacity:

> He came with the feelings of a grammarian of the old school, to weigh words, and start questions of syntax. . . . Now and then, it is true, he betrays an indistinct consciousness that there is something more in his text than mere specimens of style. . . . He ought to have taken a wider range; yet within the limits which he set himself, the task is well done, and his commentary will always find its place in a variorum.[2]

Hurd was well aware of what he was doing in this edition, and never pretended to be writing a commentary that would "find its place in a variorum." He referred to his notes, apparently, as minutae, for Warburton tells him that "Nothing is minutae to me which you write or think," and asks him to bring the Addison text and notes with him on a visit to London.[3] Indeed, Hurd pokes fun at himself in the edition itself; he annotates Addison's facetious definition of a critic in Guardian #103 ("a man who, on all occasions, is more attentive to what is wanting, than what is present. . . .") by pointing out that "this description of a critic is, I doubt, very applicable to the editor, who, in reading so fine a paper as this, is only on the catch for some little slip or inaccuracy in grammar."[4]

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[1](6 vols.; New York: G. P. Putnam & Co., 1856).

[2]Ibid., I, ix-x. [3]Warburton Letters, p. 457.

[4]Hurd's Addison, V, 222n.

Hurd's edition of Warburton's Works was prepared as the final responsibility of a literary executor. It holds little interest in a study of Hurd's literary criticism; the "Life" prefaced to it in 1794 is the homage of an intimate friend, and is also of little interest here.

It appears impossible to draw any general conclusions applicable to the three editions I have discussed at some length here. The Horace volumes are, of course, most important in assessing the significance of Hurd's editorial practice. The most important conclusion to be drawn from a consideration of that practice is that Hurd's fundamental allegiance, as editor, is to the demonstration of the unity, integrity, and wholeness of his text by means of an inference of and argument from design. The Cowley edition seems important in showing the difficulty inherent in the attempt to place Hurd in either the "neo-classical" or the "pre-romantic" camps, as these antithetical parties are usually conceived, by means of arguing from his editorial practice. This difficulty is similar to that which was noticed in evaluations of Hurd's theoretical views earlier in this study.[1] The Addison edition suggests that Hurd, like most men, was not single-minded in his conception of purposes worthy his undertaking.

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[1]See above, chapter 2, section 5 and chapter 4, introduction and section 1.

## II. The Letters on Chivalry and Romance

It was as editor of Horace, author of the Moral and Political Dialogues, Anglican divine, Warburtonian controversialist, and editor of Addison that Richard Hurd was best known to his contemporaries and to the nineteenth century. When George Birkbeck Hill, in 1887, glossed a reference to Hurd in his edition of Boswell's Life of Johnson, he mentioned the Addison edition as the best known fact by which to identify Hurd.[1] By 1934, when Powell came to revise Hill's edition, the reference had to be changed to allude to the Letters on Chivalry and Romance, which was by then Hurd's best known work.[2] The changed perspective was due, no doubt, to scholarly fascination, during the intervening years, in exploring the "origins" of Romanticism in the eighteenth century, and to the then current view that the Letters represented, astonishingly, "a pronunciamento of very advanced romantic doctrine" which had exploded in England, it was thus presumed to be shown, as early as 1762.[3] Although this interpretation of the Letters has

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[1](6 vols.; Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1887), IV, 190n.

[2](6 vols.; Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1934), IV, 190n.

[3]Henry A. Beers, A History of English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1899; repr. New York: Dover Books, 1968), p. 223. See also William Lyon Phelps, Beginnings of the English Romantic Movement (Boston: Ginn & Co., 1895), p. 115;

been disputed often during the last forty years,[1] it would, I think, be correct to affirm that Hurd's Letters on Chivalry and Romance are still considered his most important work. Indeed, it seems to me that this work offers the greatest test to any interpretation of Hurd's significance: if the interpretation can provide a satisfying explanation

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the "introduction" to Edith J. Morley's edition of Hurd's Letters on Chivalry and Romance with the Third Elizabethan Dialogue (London: H. Frowde, 1911), p.3; Clarissa Rinaker, Thomas Warton: A Biographical and Critical Study Vol. II in University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1916), pp. 56ff; Alfred E. Longueil, "The Word 'Gothic" in 18th Century Criticism," MLN, XXXVIII (1923), p. 456; and Harko Gerrit de Maar, Elizabethan Romance in the Eighteenth Century (Zalt-Bommel, Netherlands: N. V. Van de Garde & Co's Drukkerij, 1924), p. 230. One of the more amusing aspects of the "pre-romantic" reading of the Letters on Chivalry and Romance is the perplexity of commentators regarding Hurd's seeming unconsciousness about his role as a prophet (Francis Gallaway, in Reason, Rule, and Revolt in English Classicism [Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 1940], p. 103, writes that "After the Wartons and Hurd little remained to be done. The gospel of the imagination had been proclaimed. Minor disciples could spread the glad tidings [!]"). As Phelps put it (p. 115), Hurd "had no conception of the far reaching effect of his own work . . . . He did not perceive with what gigantic strides the counter-revolution was about to move." Oliver Elton in A Survey of English Literature: 1730-1780 (2 vols.; London: Edward Arnold & Co., 1928), II, 129, remarks that Hurd "doubtless . . . could not forsee the future of poetry; but he seems insensible to the movement of his own time" [italics mine].

[2]See, especially, Hoyt Trowbridge, "Bishop Hurd: A Reinterpretation," PMLA, LVIII (1943), 450-65; and the unpublished doctoral dissertation of Stephen J. Curry, "The Literary Criticism of Richard Hurd," The University of Wisconsin, 1962, chapter 5. See also John Butt's brief analysis in The Augustan Age (London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1950; repr. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1966), p. 45.

of the structure, scope, and purpose of the Letters, it is likely to be an accurate, or at least a probable interpretation.

I intend briefly to summarize the argument of the Letters, and to demonstrate that the central thrust, though not the ostensible subject of that argument, is both to affirm the existence of a form of romances (many individual poems, one form) and to essay its description.[1] In my view

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[1]The impression of commentators regarding the main purpose of Hurd's Letters is sufficiently various to make one wary of all interpretations. Phelps believed the purpose was "to vindicate Gothic Manners and to show that they were superior to the Heroic as subjects for poetry" (p. 122). Beers seems to have agreed (p. 222). Elton thought it was "to place beyond a doubt the rights of the free imagination" (II, 128). Trowbridge, who, unlike those formerly mentioned, was not disposed to consider Hurd a "pre-romantic," believed, in his 1943 article, that Hurd's aim in the Letters was "to defend the poetical value of chivalric manners and medieval superstitions as material for epic poetry; more particularly, he [sought to justify] . . . the romance element in renaissance epic"(p. 464). In 1963, Trowbridge thought the subject could be better described as "Renaissance narrative literature . . . and Hurd's purpose was to defend the romance element in that literature as conducive to the sublime" (p. iii). Arthur Johnston, in his excellent study Enchanted Ground: The Study of Medieval Romance in the Eighteenth Century (London: The Athlone Press, 1964), p. 61, believes Hurd was "indulging in special pleading on behalf of the subject-matter and form of the romances, boldly trying to reverse the judgment of the previous two centuries." Chapman (Literary Criticism in England, 1660-1800 [New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966], p. 375) proposed that "his purpose was to state a principle which Addison had not grasped, that manners in one age of history, properly imagined, may be as 'natural' as those in any other, and to defend neo-medievalism in the epic poetry of Ariosto, Tasso, and English poets under Renaissance Italian influence." In 1969, Judith Keig ("Theories of Cultural History in Eighteenth Century English Literary Criticism," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Columbia University), proposed that Hurd's purpose was to raise the reputation of medieval romances (p. 152).

all other elements in the work are subordinate to this central argument, serving either to elaborate a point in its development, or to provide an historical context, or as rhetorical flourishes aimed at provoking the reader's interest in the poems and poets mentioned, or his disdain of those who would not accord them serious consideration. What keeps this argument from being dismissed as mere special pleading for a distorted reading of the work (emphasizing supporting points, relegating others to the status of mere flourish) are three considerations: (1) Hurd's work is written in the epistolary form--self-consciously. Hurd had very precise views about the requirements which that form imposed: among them, digressions related to the whole by "easy connexion."[1] (2) Hurd himself had insisted that well-written criticism be rhetorically conceived; "enthusiasm" was the quality which Hurd thought to be the strength of Longinus' impressionistic criticism and he regretted its absence, as a subordinate but operative means of persuasion, from Aristotle's too dry Poetics.[2] One would expect Hurd to follow his own judgment in his own critical essays. (3) Those who have taken as central to Hurd's meaning passages in the Letters which I consider "flourishes" have been led to postulate a "conversion-reversion" or a "split-personality" to account for the fact that they are

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[1]See above, p. 203.

[2]See above, p. 184

contradicted in earlier and later works.[1]

The Letters are advertised as serving to amplify some comments made in the third of the Moral and Political Dialogues, "On the Golden Age of Queen Elizabeth."[2] That dialogue represents the speakers Addison and Arbuthnot arguing about a correct estimation of the Elizabethan age. Addison, preoccupied with political issues, condemns the age for its injustice and barbarity. He is a Whig historian, as Butterfield represents that theoretical position,[3] and considers the status quo of present-day England as the final cause and greatest value in English political history. The Elizabethan age is, therefore, estimated by a standard derived from the present state-of-affairs, and by an interest in its contribution to the making of the current establishment. Arbuthnot in contrast, is represented as a rather sentimental antiquarian, musing on the loveliness of by-gone days. He has little interest in political matters, especially as Addison conceives them, and speculates on the finer things, so to speak, in Elizabethan life, namely the elegant manners of Elizabeth's court and the wonderful achievements of her poets The view which Arbuthnot expounds

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[1]See above, introduction.

[2]This advertisement is not included in the first (1762) edition, but is added to all subsequent editions.

[3]Cf. Herbert Butterfield, The Whig Interpretation of History (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1931; repr. New York: W. W. Norton & Co.,Inc., 1965).

in response to Addison's mocking retorts is, for my purpose here, the most important comment in the dialogue. "I am ready to believe," Arbuthnot tells the incredulous Addison (III:191):

> . . . that what we hear censured in their writings, as false, incredible, and fantastic, was frequently but a just copy of life, and that there was more of truth and reality in their representations, than we are apt to imagine.

As the "choral" character in Hurd's dialogue puts it, Arbuthnot's aim is ". . . to represent in so fair a light [as possible] the amusements of the ruder ages" (III:206). Addison intersperses Arbuthnot's defense with occasional questions, quibbles, and jokes. Finally he objects to the whole representation as a figment of Arbuthnot's antiquarian imagination. Arbuthnot responds: ". . . what you object to is capable of a much fairer interpretation" (III: 213). As the dialogue concludes, one is left with the impression, which Hurd seems to have intended, that both Addison and Arbuthnot were correct, assessing as they did different aspects of life in the Age of Elizabeth.

Initially, Hurd meant to conclude the volume of dialogues with a dissertation on the relation of chivalry and romances.[1] The decision of the following year to withdraw the dissertation[2] was accompanied with a footnote in the first edition of the Dialogues promising a forthcoming work

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[1]See his letter to Mason of August 14, 1758, Nankivell, p. 156.

[2]See letter to Mason of May 4, 1759, Ibid.

on the subject, after the editor (Hurd's mask) "has been content to wade a little deeper into this argument."[1] The "wading" was over by May 3, 1761, when Hurd wrote Mason with news that his "trifle in 12 short Letters" was completed. The volume was published in 1762. A second edition appeared in the same year. The work was appended to the Moral and Political Dialogues and appeared with them in a third (1765), forth (1771), fifth (1776), and sixth edition (1788). Together the Dialogues and Letters comprise the third and forth volumes of the Collected Works (1811).

The first of the Letters on Chivalry and Romance begins in an off-hand way, noting that "the ages, we call barbarous, present us with many a subject of curious speculation."[2] The reader is informed early that this is to be an excursion into a dark and unfashionable past, to "the ages, we call barbarous." The purpose of the excursion: to discover the activities of actual men which are imitated in the romances. These activities, subsumed under the code-name chivalry, and imitated in the romances, are themselves the natural development, so runs Hurd's argument, of the conditions for human life imposed by the feudal system.[3]

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[1](1st ed., 1759), p. 114n.

[2]1st edition (London: for A. Millar, et al., 1762), p. 1. All references are to this edition, cited as Letters.

[3]This view of the romances as imitating the actual life of men was apparently first suggested to Hurd by Warburton. See David Nichol Smith, "Warton's History of English Poetry," Proceedings of the British Academy, XV (1929), 79.

Assumed throughout is that:

> nothing in human nature . . . is without its reasons. The modes and fashions of different times may appear, at first sight, fantastic and unaccountable. But they, who look nearly into them, discover some latent cause of their production.[1]

Perhaps the reader is a bit squeamish about the undertaking: after all, continues Hurd (the trade-name for this sleight-of-hand is prolepsis, or englished by Puttenham, "the Propounder"), "the prodigies, we are now contemplating, had their origin in the barbarous ages."[2] "Why not," asks Hurd, rhetorically (impersonating to deflate "the fastidious modern"--the Greek term is prosopopeia, Puttenham's "the Counterfeit in Personation"), "Why not resolve them at once into the usual caprice and absurdity of barbarians,"[3] In a series of turns and figures Hurd concludes the first letter noting that these "barbarities" (he doesn't need the quotation marks) charmed "the greatest geniuses of our own and foreign countries"--the list of authorities (Hurd is willing here to use their appeal, in spite of his theoretical conviction[4] that the argument is hollow--romances are things-of-words, not words) includes Ariosto, Tasso, Spenser and Milton.[5] For the reader--not a fastidious modern, he--who

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[1] Letters, pp. 1-2. [2] Ibid., p.2.

[3] Ibid.

[4] See above, p. 199.

[5] Letters, p. 4.

wishes to continue, Hurd's subsequent letters are advertised as moving, in subject, from a sketch of the "rise, progress, and genius of Gothic Chivalry," to an account of the way in which these materials, taken from actual life, were imitated in the romances, along with reasons which might make their properly formed imitation conduce to the "ends of poetry;" and finally to an explanation of the decline of both chivalry and the taste for its poetic imitation in the period intervening between "barbarous" then and "fastidious" now.[1]

The next letters provide the reader with historical information culled primarily from Sainte-Palaye[2] regarding

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[1] Ibid., pp. 4-5.

[2] La Curne de Sainte-Palaye's Mémoires sur l'ancienne Chevalerie was published in Mémoires de litterature de l'academie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, XX (Paris, 1753). For details regarding this publication and the relationship between Sainte-Palaye's study and Hurd's Letters, see Mrs. Martz's dissertation, pp. 249ff. Her summary is that Hurd borrows from Sainte-Palaye's account "only the chief qualities which prove the chivalric order to be a natural development of the warlike feudal state, and the four principle characteristics of the ideal knight" (p. 253). Sainte-Palaye refers to Jean Chapelain's essay "De la Lecture des Vieux Romans" (written circa 1646, and first published in the Continuations des mémoires de litterature et d'histoire, a supplement to the same series of publications, VI [Paris, 1726], pp. 281-342), which Hurd may have read. The similarities are traced in Victor M. Hamm's brief article "A Seventeenth-century Source for Hurd's Letters on Chivalry and Romance," PMLA, LII (1937), 820-8. Mrs. Martz doubts the possibility that Chapelain's volume is the chief source for the Letters (dissertation, p. 260), but Arthur Johnston believes that it is this "contact with an early seventeenth-century commentary which probably explains why Hurd's Letters read like a reopening of the discussion of epic and romance that had begun in Italy in the sixteenth century" (p. 61). The center of that debate was the question whether the romance had a form. Chapelain, rather like Sidney thinking about the poetic nature of the psalms ("although the rules be not yet fully found" [ed. Shepherd, p. 99]), asserts the

the nature of chivalry. Letter II seeks to secure consent to the proposition that "Chivalry was no absurd and freakish institution, but the natural and even sober effect of the feudal policy."[1] Letter III is devoted to a description of the characteristics of chivalric men-in-action, and to the natural derivation of these characteristics from the circumstances of life under the feudal constitution. Letter IV identifies the source of all this information as the old romances themselves, as studied by Sainte-Palaye. Hurd defends tacitly the procedure of inferring actual conditions from the medieval romances themselves, out of his conviction that those romances present a heightened, but not a false imitation of actual human activities. The argument, properly considered, is circular--actual chivalric life is inferred from the romances which are defended as imitations of actuality. But this, after all, is not the center of Hurd's interest. He turns in the middle of the fourth letter to a

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view that "If Aristotle were to come back and take it into his head to find the subject-matter of a poetics in Lancelot, I am sure he would succeed. . . . I can assure you of this at least, that the magic which is every where in the Lancelot would not be more difficult for him to accommodate to the rules than the divinities which Homer used so eccentrically, whatever the allegorical significance given them by his hollow commentators" (translated in Elledge and Schier, The Continental Model. Selected French Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century in English Translation [Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1960; rev. ed Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970], p. 37). If Hurd did not read Chapelain, whose essay is nowhere mentioned in his writings, published or unpublished, I do believe that his procedure in the Letters reflects a similar conviction that the romance has a form and that the function of the modern critic is to come to know it.

[1] Letters, p. 10.

comparison of the "old heroic times as painted by their great romancer [name-calling, this], Homer, and those which are represented to us in the books of modern knight-errantry."[1] What reason will account for such similarity? "The political state of Greece, in the earlier periods of its story, was similar in many respects to that of Europe, as broken by the feudal government into an infinite number of petty independent governments."[2] Were one to inquire into the parallels obtaining, results of great interest, asserts Hurd, might be forthcoming. For example, one might find similarity between the "military enthusiasm of the barons" and the "fanaticism of the Heroes." Or one might notice the similarity of Gothic giants, savages, monsters, dragons, and serpents to Homer's Laestrigons and Cyclops. Succumbing to the charms and enchantments of women, one might realize, is an eventuality shared by Ulysses and the knights-errant. And so on, to the conclusion, in Letter V, that "Jerusalem was to the European, what Troy had been to the Grecian Princes."[3]

Finally Hurd lets the reader into his confidence, at the beginning of the sixth letter. He didn't mean to dwell either on a description of the institution of chivalry, or on a rather conventional comparison of epic and

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[1] Letters, p. 26.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Letters, pp. 43-44.

romance materials. Rather "my purpose is to lead you from this forgotten chivalry to a more amusing subject, I mean the Poetry we still read and which was founded upon it."[1]

The sad fact about the chivalric age, which "we call barbarous," is that no poet like Homer "had lived amongst, and sung of, the Gothic Knights."[2] The Elizabethans were too late: "it was impossible for them to paint truly and perfectly what was no longer seen or believed,"[3] and the poets who had fashioned the old romances were mediocre, leaving only "rude sketches."[4] The absence of a great poet is all the more to be lamented because the well-formed imitation of chivalric activities might have achieved an excellence greater even than Homer achieved with his imitation of "the simple and uncontrolled barbarity" of his heroes.[5]

It will be recalled that Hurd's idea of the form of an epic poem (a serious narrative poem), in so far as it could be determined in the absence of a formal treatise, was summarized thus:

> the epic is an imitation, narrated rather than enacted, of a unified, integral, connected, and continuous human action that is of great seriousness, telling of characters and events in accord with our beliefs about the way men and their activities might be, at their most magnanimous, just, and various, through the means of episodes that harmonize with the whole, circumstantial descriptions, and the

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[1] Ibid., pp. 44-45. [2] Ibid., p. 45.

[3] Ibid., pp. 45-46. [4] Ibid., p. 46.

[5] Ibid.

> intervention of supernatural agency which embraces and orders the meaning of the whole (in accord with our beliefs about the nature of such agency and its purposes), the contemplation of which, moving us to admiration, pleases the mind.[1]

His point, in the sixth letter, is that admiration, the effect of serious narrative poetry, might have been achieved by a great poet's imitation of the activities of knights-errant. Indeed, such an imitation might have achieved a more intense effect than Homer's or Virgil's poems, given the nature of the materials being imitated.

As it was, no Homer imitated the activities of the chivalric age, in a poem remaining for our contemplation. But the Renaissance epic poets--Spenser, Tasso, Ariosto, even Milton--offer an indication of the form that such an imitation would have to take. In the seventh letter, Hurd notices the appeal that chivalric materials had for Spenser and Milton. The latter abandoned these materials in favor of Paradise Lost; the former not only chose to use the materials but, unlike Tasso, who placed "an heroic design on the exact classic model" on chivalric materials and thus "trimmed between the Gothic and Classic,"[2] Spenser decided to forego both the materials and the form of the classical epic. It is The Faerie Queene, then, that Hurd wishes to examine as the best available exemplar of the form that a long, serious narrative poem made of chivalric materials

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[1] See above, p. 123.

[2] Letters, p. 56.

and a form organic to them--a romance--takes.

The question of the form of The Faerie Queene is one which had received the attention of a number of critics before Hurd. Their views have been summarized ably in a number of studies now available.[1] Suffice it to say that the supposed formlessness of Spenser's poem was, for some, an occasion for outright condemnation. For others, it was the fact about the poem that most needed apology and that the reader of taste would have to overlook in order to avail himself of Spenser's beauties. Others attempted to fit Spenser's poem into the neo-classical formula for epic,[2]

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[1]See especially Arthur Johnston, Enchanted Ground: The Study of Medieval Romance in the Eighteenth Century (London: The Athlone Press, 1964), pp. 62-64 for a brief review, and William R. Mueller, Spenser's Critics: Changing Currents in Literary Taste (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1959), who gives a brief history of Spenser criticism (pp. 1-17), and then excerpts of critical texts from John Hughes to W. B. C. Watkins. More extensive surveys may be found in Herbert E. Cory, The Critics of Spenser, Vol. II, no. 2 of The University of California Publications in Modern Philology (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1911); Jewel Wurtsbaugh, Two Centuries of Spenserian Scholarship (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1932), and Norman Joseph Dreyfus, S. J., "Eighteenth Century Criticism of Spenser," unpublished doctoral dissertation, the Johns Hopkins University, 1938. Audley L. Smith, in his article "Richard Hurd's Letters on Chivalry and Romance," ELH, VII (1939), 51-81, devotes some attention to this matter, as does Stephen J. Curry in his unpublished doctoral dissertation, "The Literary Criticism of Richard Hurd," the University of Wisconsin, 1962, pp. 182-94.

[2]As codified, primarily by Bossu. See Curry's discussion on pp. 187-89 of his dissertation for more detailed information on the attempts by Joseph Spence (1747) and John Upton (1758) to fit The Faerie Queene into the scheme.

much as Addison sought to legitimize the Chevy Chase ballad,[1] and Blair the Ossian poems.[2]

Hurd, in contrast, will neither apologize for Spenser, nor attempt to fit The Faerie Queene into the rules traditionally prescribed (Pope's mockery was of a "recipe") for the epic genre. Picking up an earlier plea for tolerance couched in the analogy of Gothic versus Classical architecture, and the foolishness of judging the one style by rules appropriate to the other,[3] Hurd gives the comparison a twist, arguing that "the question is not, which of the two is conducted in the simplest or truest taste; but, whether there be not sense and design in both, when scrutinized by the laws on which each is projected."[4] In Hurd's hands the contrast comes to mean that there is a form of epic and a form of romance (or Gothic epic)--each is made to achieve its own end and comparisons between the two forms must be in

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[1]Spectator #74. See above, p. 189n., for Hurd's evaluation of this paper.

[2]In A Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian, the Son of Fingal (London: T. Becket & P. A. DeHondt, 1763).

[3]Addison popularized this comparison between architectural styles in Spectator #415, where preference for the classical style is represented as self-evident. In Spenser criticism, the comparison was taken up as an illustrative analogy by John Hughes in his 1715 edition. It was offered there to serve as an apology for Spenser's poem which was not written according to the "rules." Unlike Hurd, however, Hughes is not interested in knowing the form of things like "Gothic Architecture" and he makes the comparison simply to defend Spenser from being judged by Bossu's rules since, regrettably, he did not attend to them.

[4]Letters, p. 61.

terms of their respective ends, rather than in terms of the degree to which each achieves the end of one of them:

> Judge of the Faerie Queen by the classic models, and you are shocked with its disorder: consider it with an eye to its Gothic original, and you find it regular. The unity and simplicity of the former [as an achieved end] are more complete: but the latter [as an achieved end] has that sort of unity and simplicity, which results from its nature.[1]

The nature of The Faerie Queene, in Hurd's view, is that of an epic conducted on Gothic principles: that is, a well-formed romance. These principles derive from the chivalric material out of which the poem is made. Defensive, as he apparently had to be, Hurd anticipates objection after objection--"if you will say any thing against the poet's method, you must say that he should not have chosen this subject."[2] A choice of materials implied, in Hurd's view, restriction, perhaps even pre-determination of the forms in which a poet could then work; that is, of the artistic effects he could order them to achieve.[3] But even the

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[1] Ibid., pp. 61-62. [2] Ibid., p. 65.

[3] Hurd's view is that the poet actualizes a form potential to the materials he is using rather than imposing a form mechanically on them. Since materials have potential for more than one form, a one-to-one correspondence between subject matter and genre (the "decorum" of neoclassical theory in one of its applications) is not accurately descriptive of the range of possibilities. But, although a strict one-to-one correspondence between subject matter and form is not accurate, in Hurd's opinion, subject matters do determine form in the sense of having a range of potential forms "in" them. Hence choosing a subject matter does imply choosing a form, or a range of possible forms less extensive than the total of all literary forms. Hammers can be made of a number of materials, but balsa is not normally appropriate; out of balsa a number of things can be made: a hammer, given its normal function, is not among them. Hurd's analysis is, it seems, as simple as that.

impersonated objector is prejudiced, his question arising, in Hurd's view, from "your classic ideas of Unity, which have no place here."[1] On the other hand, continues Hurd, "in some reasonable sense or other, it is agreed, every work of art must be one, the very idea of a work requiring it."[2]

The Faerie Queene is, then, a made thing. As a poetic thing, a constructed entity, it has a form which unites its parts into one whole. Perhaps the most famous passage in Hurd's Collected Works is the description, which follows, of the kind of unity characteristic of a well-formed romance, exemplified (only partially, as he later contends) by The Faerie Queene:

> If you ask then, what is this Unity of Spenser's Poem? I say, It consists in the relation of its several adventures to one common original, the appointment of the Faery Queen; and to one common end, the completion of the Faery Queen's injunctions. The knights issued forth on their adventures on the breaking up of this annual feast; and the next annual feast, we are to suppose, is to bring them together again from the atchievement [sic] of their several charges.
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> This, it is true, is not the classic Unity, which consists in the representation of one entire action: but it is an Unity of another sort, an unity resulting from the respect which a number of related actions have to one common purpose. In other words, it is an unity of design, and not of action.
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> This Gothic method of design in poetry may be, in some sort, illustrated by what is called the Gothic method of design in Gardening. A wood or grove cut out into many separate avenues or glades was amongst the most favourite of the works of art, which our fathers attempted in this species of cultivation. These walks were distinct from each other, had, each, their several destination, and terminated on their own proper objects. Yet the whole was brought together and considered under one view by the relation which these various openings had, not to each other, but to their common and

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[1] Letters, p. 65.

[2] Ibid., pp. 65-66.

concurrent center.[1]

On the basis of this passage, Professor Karl L. F. Thielke infers that:

> Hier drückt Hurd mit Bezug auf Spenser einen ähnlichen Gedanken aus, wie ihn später Coleridge in seiner Shakespeare-kritik vertrat: das individuelle Kunstwerk muss nach seinen eigenen formästhetischen Gesichtspunkten betrachtet werden, ihm darf nicht eine besondere (klassische) Kunstform aufgezwungen werden.[2]

On the contrary, Hurd speaks of The Faerie Queene as an example of the form of romances; its unity is not individual but generic also: the same principle of unity would presumably characterize all well-formed romances, just as the unity of action is a generic characteristic of the generic form, epic. If the principle was not thus generic, it would have to be rejected as inadequately formulated.[3] In contrast

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[1] Ibid., pp. 66-67. Jean Hagstrum, in his study, Samuel Johnson's Literary Criticism (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1952; reissued 1967), pp. 126-27, offers an apt analogy to clarify Hurd's conception of the unity of romances: it is "not unlike the kind of unity found in that didactic poetry which presents a series of unconnected truths that open not upon one another, but upon a single assumption from which each is derived. Such a form might provide unity, it could never achieve any high degree of coherence."

[2] Literatur- und Kunstkritik in ihren Wechselbeziehungen: ein Beitrag zur Englischen Aesthetik des 18. Jahrhunderts, Vol. LXXXIV in Studien zur Englischen Philologie (Halle[Saale]: M. Niemeyer, 1935), p. 23.

[3] The Coleridgian view of organic form is much more evident in this extract from a 1797 Gentleman's Magazine (LVI, 16) review of Clara Reeve's The Progress of Romance (Colchester: for the Author, 1785), and her essay at a description of the form: "The error is in the attempt to define what will not bear to be limited. From the Aeneid, the most judicious and respectable form of the epos, to the most incredible romance, there are so many shades, differing in a manner scarcely perceptible, that we can fix at no one point." Hurd's view of this conception of poetic form

in this interpretation of Hurd's procedure, Professor John Arthos, in his study On the Poetry of Spenser and the Form of Romances, "takes up again from Bishop Hurd" in an effort to understand the form of The Faerie Queene, an understanding which will be improved "when we compare it with some other romance writing."[1] Arthos' procedure is the reverse of Hurd's in the sense that his primary concern is with The Faerie Queene; however, both Hurd and Arthos share the view that form is generic, and not particular, in the Coleridgian sense.

Professor Arthos' judgment of Hurd's discussion of the unity of The Faerie Queene is that it is "one of the most

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would not doubt have been rather similar to his disapproval of Fontenelle's virtually identical argument regarding the forms of drama (see above, chapter 3, section iii).

[1](London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1956), p. 7. In his introductory chapter, "A Brief History of Spenser Criticism," Mueller (Spenser's Critics: Changing Currents in Literary Taste [Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1959]), classifies Hurd as a "pre-romantic." His categories of critics interested in The Faerie Queene are "neoclassical," "pre-romantic," "romantic," and "modern". The "standard" neo-classicist, concerned with structure, finds Spenser's poem lacking and either condemns or apologizes for its failure to live up to the "rules." The romantic is uninterested in the question--Spenser's "spirit" is his preoccupation. The modern, in part, is again concerned with structure, picking up where Hurd left off. The basis for classifying Hurd as "pre-romantic" seems to be that he was concerned with structure (hence not "romantic"), did not define structure univocally as adherence to Bossu's rules nor saw any need to apologize for Spenser's not having followed "rules" of that kind (hence not "neoclassical") and lived in the eighteenth-century (hence not "modern"). I fail to understand what is "pre-romantic" in this position, but am sympathetic with Mueller's apparent concern to differentiate Hurd's position from both the "neo-classical" and the "romantic" categories.

fruitful that has been offered."[1] He goes on to dispute Hurd's next point about the form of the poem, however--that is, that Spenser's poem is ordered by a mixture of forms. It is a romance--"the whole brought together and considered under one view by the relation which [each episodic quest] had, not to each other, but to their common and concurrent center." But simultaneously, in Hurd's view, it is also ordered as an allegory of the progress of Prince Arthur to Gloriana, gaining its unity in this respect from the "justness of the moral."[2] Professor Arthos, taking up where Hurd left off, seeks to demonstrate "the congeniality of romance and allegory in the persuasion that Spenser in The Faerie Queene was not trying to marry two or more forms according to some interest of his judgment, and to support the idea that all was integrally conceived."[3] Hurd, unable apparently to see such integrity, finds the mixture indefensible: "from the union of the two designs there arises a perplexity and confusion, which is the proper, and only considerable, defect of this extraordinary poem."[4] This is

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[1] On the Poetry of Spenser . . ., p. 189.

[2] Letters, p. 74.

[3] On the Poetry of Spenser . . ., p. 7.

[4] Letters, p. 75. Herbert E. Cory had in 1911 objected to Hurd's view in his study, The Critics of Spenser, Vol. II, no. 2 of The University of California Publications in Modern Philology (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1911), p. 171. Unlike Arthos, however, Cory is disposed to think of Hurd as a "romantic" who was blind to the beauty of the allegory for the allure of the romance. But, as we see, Hurd did not miss the presence of the allegory;

not the place to adjudicate the issue; it is, however, important to note that Hurd was always in sympathy with those who sought an integrity in the works of great writers. One has only to think of his Ars Poetica edition. It must be concluded, I believe, that Hurd was unable to see the integrity in the case of The Faerie Queene, or that he was, in this context, insufficiently concerned with the poem for its own sake, a likely possibility, since his treatment of The Faerie Queene is meant to be exemplary of the issue he is centrally concerned with--the form of romance--and not itself his main concern in the Letters.

In the ninth Letter on Chivalry and Romance, Hurd continues his exploration of the form of romances,[1] by reminding his reader that Spenser might have chosen a different subject and written in a different form. But Spenser chose "to adorn a Gothic story, and to be consistent throughout, he chose that the form of his work should be of

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rather, he missed seeing its integration with the form of romance. Cory displays the history of Spenser criticism as moving from a neoclassical thesis (Spenser as teacher--The Faerie Queene as allegory) to a romantic antithesis (Spenser as delighter--The Faerie Queene as romance) to a modern higher synthesis (Spenser as teacher and delighter--The Faerie Queene as an allegorical romance). Hurd, as usual, seems to elude the antitheses.

[1]Regarding Hurd's argument from this point on, Mrs. Martz (dissertation, pp. 133-34) point out the possibility that the discussion was inspired by arguments advanced in the spirited defenses of Italian poetry published in England by Dr. Johnson's Italian friend, Giuseppe Baretti. For details about Baretti's publications, see Martz dissertation, pp. 128-34.

a piece with his subject."[1] Tasso, in contrast, wrote a classical epic with romantic materials. The remainder of this letter, the ninth, is concerned with a description of Tasso's procedure and the lack of favor it found in the eyes of French neo-classical critics not because form and matter were not organically related, but because the romance materials were in bad taste. The French passed their distaste on to the English, explains Hurd, in a brief history:

> Their taste of letters, with some worse things, was brought amongst us at the Restoration. Their language, their manners, nay, their very prejudices were adopted by our Frenchified King and his Royalists.[2]

Hence it was that the French neo-classical view, not only of the nature of Tasso's defect in the Gierusalemme Liberata, but of romance in general, came to dominate English thought, in all of its single-mindedness:

> The exact, but cold Boileau happened to say something of the clinquant of Tasso; and the magic of this word, like the report of Astolfo's horn in Ariosto, overturned at once the solid and well built reputation of the Italian poetry. . . . Mr. Addison, who gave the law in taste here, took it up and sent it about the kingdom in his polite and popular essays. It became a sort of watch-word among the critics; and, on the sudden, nothing was heard, on all sides, but the clinquant of Tasso.[3]

Now Hurd's point is not that Tasso is without his tinsel, but that the neo-classical critic is too single-minded: "He is perfectly enamoured of his noble antients [sic], and will fight with any man who contends, not that

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[1] Letters, pp. 75-76. [2] Ibid., p. 80. [3] Ibid., pp. 84-85.

his Lordship's mistress is not fair, but that his own is fair also."[1] The argument of the rationalists, as Hurd calls them, was that the romances consisted of incredible fictions, not fit stuff for an enlightened palate. Hurd's reply is that the poem presents a fait accompli; poetry is not concerned to represent "philosophical or historical truth: All she allows us to look for, is poetical truth." Poetical truth can be truth about something "much beyond the actual bounds and only within the conceived possibility, of nature."[2] Hurd's point is that the impossible is an acceptable object of poetical imitation, if it is rendered self-consistently, and if the poet is seeking to achieve certain kinds of effects:

> the source of bad criticism, as universally of bad philosophy, is the abuse of terms. A poet, they say, must follow Nature; and by Nature we are to suppose can only be meant the known and experienced course of affairs in this world [i.e. actuality]. Whereas the poet has a world of his own, where experience has less to do, than consistent imagination.[3]

In my view, "consistent imagination" should be read with the stress on "consistent" (but not neglecting, thereby, "imagination"). Hurd makes his point a few sentences later: "In the poet's world [when he is consistently imagining], all is marvellous and extraordinary; yet not unnatural in one sense, as it agrees [if consistently imagined] to the conceptions that are readily entertained of these magical

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[1] Ibid., pp. 82-83.

[2] Ibid., p. 92.

[3] Ibid., pp. 92-93.

and wonder-working Natures."[1] In this view, for example, "Sir Charles Grandison is a much more improbable character than Caliban. The manners of Caliban, for what we know, may be very natural for a being composed of a witch and a fiend; but we immediately know the manners of Sir Charles Grandison are perfectly unnatural in a mere man."[2] Particularly in narrative poems, where what is represented need not be enacted, but is perceived solely by the imagination (the image-making faculty) of the reader, the poet is free to imitate "a legend, a tale, a tradition, a rumor, a superstition"[3] for his aim is simply to bring his reader "to imagine the possibility of them,"[4] by imitating the impossible self-consistently and according to normal views

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[1] Ibid., p. 93.

[2] This observation is made by Henry James Pye in his commentary on the Poetics (A Commentary Illustrating the Poetic of Aristotle, by Examples Taken Chiefly from the Modern Poets to Which is Prefixed a New and Corrected Edition of the Translation of the Poetic [London: John Stockdale, 1788; rev. ed. 1792], pp. 523-24). Pye, in addition to his less auspicious tenure as Poet Laureate, was also "the first noteworthy translator of the Poetics into English" (Elder Olson, ed., Aristotle's Poetics and English Literature: A Collection of Critical Essays [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965], p. xxii). He was among those critics, whose work I discuss in the concluding chapter, who are generally credited with recovering a "more purely Aristotelian approach [to literature] than was common at mid-century." Pye's comment here is illustrative of Hurd's view, much as he illustrates points in his commentary on Aristotle by quotations from Hurd's works, and particularly from the Letters on Chivalry and Romance.

[3] Letters, p. 89.

[4] Ibid.

of the way the impossible would probably be, if it actually were the case. In the poems of Ariosto and Tasso, for example:

> it is not true that all is unnatural and monstrous, . . . because of this mixture of the wonderful. Admit, for example, Armida's marvelous conveyance to the happy island, and all the rest of the love story is as natural, that is, as suitable to our common notions of that passion, as any thing in Virgil or (if you will) Voltaire.[1]

Aristotle, in the Poetics, had proposed a series of argumentative lines which the defender of poetry might use to meet certain types of objections to an imitation:

> Speaking generally, one has to justify (1) the Impossible by reference to the requirements of poetry, or to the better, or to opinion. For the purposes of poetry a convincing impossibility is preferable to an unconvincing possibility; . . . (2) The Improbable one has to justify either by showing it to be in accordance with opinion, or by urging that at times it is not improbable; for there is a probability of things happening also against probability (1461b9-15, trans. Bywater).

Hurd's procedure as defender of the romances against charges of impossibility is to use arguments from opinion and from probability to justify the impossible. The inference that Hurd here rejected "the whole doctrine of probability" and thus anticipated "the new age that was not far off"[2] seems utterly mistaken, unless that "doctrine of probability" be taken to mean the single-minded naturalism of some neo-classicists, a rejection of which does not entail the

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[1] Ibid., p. 99.

[2] H. T. Swedenberg, Jr., The Theory of the Epic in England, 1650-1800 (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1944), p. 148.

acceptance of an expressive theory of poetry.[1]

Indeed Hurd is so far from such a view that he accepts and presents the full consequences of his analysis.

> The success of these [incredible] fictions will not be great when they have no longer any footing in the popular belief. . . . But this only shews, that some ages are not so fit to write epic poems in, as others; not, that they should be otherwise written.[2]

Since writers are best in imitating their own beliefs or the beliefs they observe others holding,

> I would advise no modern poet to revive these faery tales in an epic poem. But still this is nothing to

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[1] Similarly, although R. S. Crane's point about the conventionality of Hurd's distinctions (the "argument . . . is framed and carried out in terms of the same basic distinctions, concerning the possible relations of the marvelous and the probable in poetry as had served Rapin in his Reflexions" in "On Writing the History of Criticism in England, 1650-1800," reprinted in The Idea of the Humanities and Other Essays [2 vols.; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967], II, 169), is well taken against the perpetuation of a "romantic" reading of the Letters, it does not follow that Hurd is a "neo-classical" critic unless that term be used to cover all critics writing during a certain period of time and consequently addressing themselves to certain types of problems which seem especially pressing at that time. My view is that as a practical critic Hurd had little choice of the terms in which his argument was to be couched; his fundamental responsibility was to meet and refute mistaken current opinion on its own terms, so to speak. The common ground of both Hurd and Rapin is, indeed, Aristotle, as my quotation suggests. Their language is common, but their reading of Aristotle is at variance. Rapin reads through the eyes of Horace and the incredulus odi; Hurd does not, explaining that Horace's line cannot be taken to apply to all poetry, but only to poetry seeking to achieve certain kinds of effects, that is, poetry of certain kinds (Letters, pp. 94-97). His own theory, that Horace's Ars Poetica, and the maxims in it, apply to the drama, serves him here to make the kind of distinction which Rapin didn't make.

[2] Letters, p. 101.

> the case in hand, where we are considering the merit of epic poems, written under other circumstances.[1]

Finally,

> Without admiration (which cannot be effected but by the marvellous of celestial intervention, I mean, the agency of superior natures really existing, or by the illusion of the fancy taken to be so) no epic poem can be long-lived.[2]

Hurd's analysis is rigorously consistent: he is not writing a manifesto for the romantic age to come, nor a program for contemporary poets, but an analysis of a form which apparently was no longer actualizable. The marvellous is an essential part of the epic (and romance) in Hurd's view, related to the effect of the poems as a necessary condition of its achievement. Since the poet is an imitator and can imitate either what is, or what is said to be, or what ought to be, he has no recourse but to write other kinds of poems if the marvellous is neither said to be nor thought to be desirable. Epics excluding imitation of the marvellous cannot achieve the excellence of their form, an excellence that would make them long-lived, in Hurd's opinion. Partly for this very reason, we may suppose, Hurd is concerned to rehabilitate his public's understanding of the form in question, so that his readers, unaccustomed to contemporary epics, will not refuse "considering the merit of . . . poems written under other circumstances."[3]

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid., pp. 102-3.

[3] In his later "Dissertation on the Idea of Universal Poetry," which those who favor a "pre-romantic" interpretation of the Letters must regard as a "neo-classical"

The last two of the Letters on Chivalry and Romance are concerned to trace more fully the reasons why the romances have fallen into such disrepute. "The principal reason," suggests Hurd:

> . . . was, that the Gothic manners of Chivalry, as springing out of the feudal system, were as singular, as that system itself; so that, when that political constitution vanished out of Europe, the manners, that belonged to it, were no longer seen or understood. There was no example of any such manners remaining on the face of the Earth: And as they never did subsist but once, and are never likely to subsist again, people would be led of course to think and speak of them, as romantic, and unnatural.[1]

In the final letter, the steps by which this opinion arose are enumerated. The actual feudal system declined and Chaucer's ridicule of romance in the Rime of Sir Topaz marks, in Hurd's view, the end of the primary romance tradition, suggesting also something of the lack of skill which its poets must have had. When Spenser chose to make his romance, therefore, he "threw about it the mist of allegory: he moralized his song: and the virtues and vices lay hid under his warriors and enchanters."[2] Hurd compares this

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set-back, Hurd makes a similar point (II:10): "When the received system of manners or religion in any country, happens to be so constituted as to suit itself in some degree to this extravagant turn of the human mind [i. e. preferring "the agreeable . . . the graceful . . . the vast . . . the incredible . . . to the obvious truth and nature of things"] we may expect that poetry will seize it with avidity, will dilate upon it with pleasure, and take a pride to erect its specious wonders on so proper and convenient a ground." The poet must have beliefs to imitate. Poetic effects requiring imitation of the marvellous can only be achieved when the marvellous is available, as a belief or opinion, for imitation. In my reading, this discussion is perfectly consistent with that in the Letters.

[1] Letters, p. 109. [2] Ibid., p. 114.

allegorizing re-interpretation of the romance to the Alexandrian and early Christian allegorical readings of Homer's primary epics:

> As the times improved and would less bear his strange tales, they moralized what they could, and turn'd the rest into mysteries of natural science. And as this last contrivance was principally designed to cover the monstrous stories of the pagan Gods, so it served the lovers of Romance to palliate the no less monstrous stories of magic and enchantments.[1]

Elizabethan England's courtly fondness for dressing up in jousts, tournaments, and fairy tales, aided the perpetuation of romance in this allegorical form. But, in Hurd's view, with the rise of the new science and Cartesian rationalism, even that way of keeping the romance alive was to no avail. Hurd's summary and conclusion is eloquent; his purpose in tracing the decline is to make it seem regrettable, and in this he does succeed:

> Thus at length the magic of the old romances was perfectly dissolved. They began with reflecting an image magnified and distorted by unskilful designers. Common sense being offended with these perversions of truth and nature (still accounted the more monstrous, as the antient [sic] manners, they pretended to copy after, were now disused, and of most men forgotten) the next step was to have recourse to allegories. Under this disguise they walked the world a while; the excellence of the moral and the ingenuity of the contrivance making some amends, and being accepted as a sort of apology, for the absurdity of the literal story.
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> Under this form the tales of faery kept their ground, and even made their fortune at court; where they became for two or three reigns, the ordinary entertainments of our princes. But reason, in the end, (assisted however by party, and religious prejudices) drove them off the scene, and would endure these lying wonders, neither in their own proper shape, nor as masked in figures.
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> Henceforth, the taste of wit and poetry took a new

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[1] Ibid., p. 115.

> turn: And fancy, that had wantoned it so long in the world of fiction, was now constrained, against her will, to ally herself with strict truth, if she would gain admittance into reasonable company.
>
> What we have gotten by this revolution, you will say, is a great deal of good sense. What we have lost, is a world of fine fabling; the illusion of which is so grateful to the charmed Spirit; that, in spite of philosophy and fashion, Faery Spenser still ranks highest among Poets; I mean with all those who are either come of that house, or have any kindness for it.[1]

If my reading of Hurd's Letters is correct, much of the "enthusiasm" in this and similar passages in the work must be understood as exemplary of Hurd's view that the true critic, possessing a reasoned understanding of his text, "is [also] obliged to borrow something of the dress, and to mimic the airs of fancy" so that he will succeed in impressing his audience with the excellence of the works under discussion, in addition to informing them, by careful analysis, of the reasons for that excellence.[2] In Hurd's view, serious consideration was withheld from the romance because of two misapprehensions: first, that the romance was formless, and second, that its materials were merely fantastic. If he was not wholly successful in his description of the form (I am thinking of the difficulty he seems to have had in defining its effect and in discriminating that effect from the effect of epic, as well as his apparent unwillingness to discuss the connection between his description of the formal unity of the romance and its supposed effect), if he was not wholly successful, it still remains possible, I think, to

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[1] Ibid., pp. 118-20. [2] See above, pp. 182ff.

agree with Professor Francis Gallaway (though not for his reasons), that "Hurd made it impossible for any one after him to dismiss the romance with scorn as unworthy of serious consideration."[1] I think Hurd would have been gratified to believe his Letters--"trifles," he called them,[2]--of such importance. "Serious consideration" is, after all, the "method" of the philosophically-minded practical critic; "to do justice to the merits of great writers" is his purpose.

In this task--if I may summarize my reading of Hurd's idea (as embodied in his practice) of the function of criticism--the discovery of the author's intention, as author, that purpose which informs the order of a work and makes it intelligible, is the primary end. All other critical activities are subordinate and supportive, including enthusiastic eloquence (of the sort which many readers of the Letters understand as the main thrust of that work), philology, and historical investigations which, as pursued in the Letters, are subordinated to the purpose of discovering the intentions of romance authors for the sake of knowing more about the form they sought to achieve.

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[1] Reason, Rule, and Revolt in English Classicism (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 1940), p. 323.

[2] Letter to Balguy, December 3, 1762, quoted in Kilvert, p. 89.

# CHAPTER SIX

## CONCLUSION

During the preliminary research that led to this essay, I discovered what seemed to be an important reason for believing worthwhile an investigation of the grounds for Professor Chapman's comment that "Hurd recovered a more purely Aristotelian approach [to literature] than was common at mid-century." This was the fact that Thomas Twining and Henry James Pye, contemporaries of Hurd's, echoed that view in their important translations, with notes and commentary, of the Poetics.

This is not the place to establish the claims of Pye and Twining to be "Aristotelian" critics, a task which has been undertaken elsewhere.[1] Here I want simply to point out some of their comments on Hurd's criticism, in the belief that, as contemporaries and as students of Aristotle, they are in a favorable position to assist in comprehending

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[1]On Twining, see James Malek's excellent article, "Thomas Twining's Analysis of Poetry and Music as Imitative Arts," MP, LXVIII (1971), 260-68; and Father Boyd's several brief analyses in The Function of Mimesis and Its Decline (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp. 120-21, 154, 166, and 267-68. On both Pye and Twining see the introduction and notes in Elder Olson's edition, Aristotle's Poetics and English Literature: A Collection of Critical Essays (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965) and Marvin T. Herrick's The Poetics of Aristotle in England (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930), pp. 137-40.

the import of Hurd's writings. This is true for two reasons. First, since they are both concerned to understand the Poetics in itself and not through the glasses of earlier interpretations, their citations of Hurd are meant to suggest how a widely respected modern English critic also understands fundamental matters the way they believe Aristotle actually did, and in contrast to earlier, supposedly Aristotelian, understandings of those matters. As my aim is to establish the degree of Hurd's "Aristotelianism," their testimony, as inquirers into the meaning of Aristotle, should be given full consideration. In addition, the fact of their contemporaneity with Hurd is of significance since eighteenth-century contemporaries are not prone, as we are, to what Trowbridge describes as "the methodological bias resulting from the imposition of nineteenth-century issues and categories on eighteenth-century writings."[1]

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[1] "Introduction" to the Augustan Reprint Society publication of the Letters on Chivalry and Romance (Los Angeles: The William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 1963), p. iii. Trowbridge goes on, in this introduction, to associate Hurd with "two currents of thought in his own time:" the rise of "the historical point of view" and what Gordon McKenzie called "the psychological current in later eighteenth-century criticism." Regarding Hurd's association with the rise of "the historical point of view," see below, pp. 273ff. With respect to his association with "the psychological current," I think it correct that Hurd is mentioned in McKenzie's study (Critical Responsiveness: a Study of the Psychological Current in Later Eighteenth-Century Criticism, Vol. XX of the University of California Publications in English [Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1949]) only in a list of critics advancing "the historical method" in criticism (p. 36), in a reference to his Warburtonian attack on Hume's Natural History of Religion (p. 45), and in a list of John Gilbert Cooper's favorite critics (p. 52). Nor is Hurd mentioned in Madeline Cooney's unpublished doctoral

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Pye,[1] following Hurd, refers the reader to Bacon's discussion of the difference between history and poetry as a gloss on Aristotle's distinction:

> . . . the one describes the thing that has been, and the other a kind of thing that might be. Hence poetry is something more philosophic and of graver import than history, since its statements are of the nature rather of universals, whereas those of history are singulars (1451b4-8, trans. Bywater).

Those who interpret Bacon's view that poetry nihil est quam historiae imitatio ad placitum as, in itself, a denial of the "cognitive value" of poetry and as tending, therefore, toward a Platonic conception of mimesis, will recognize here that for Pye, as for Hurd, Bacon's discussion signified nothing of the kind. Rather, both thought of that discussion

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dissertation, "The Beauties-and-Faults Criticism in the Neoclassical Period of English Literature" (Stanford University, 1952). Hurd's absence from McKenzie's study is not because Hurd was uninterested in the psychology of the reader, I believe, but because that interest was subordinated to other matters and not the starting point, so to speak, of Hurd's thinking about literature. And he is not mentioned in Miss Cooney's study, I believe, because Hurd tended to see "beauties" and "faults" in a formal context, where the critic's sensibility is subordinated to thought about the relation of his impressions to the structure of the work and the artist's probable intentions, as they are inferable from the structured work. In support of his placement, Professor Trowbridge quotes several of Hurd's comments on the value of philosophical criticism. The question is, however, what Hurd understood to be "philosophical." For my view of Hurd's conception, see above, chapter 5, introduction.

[1] A Commentary Illustrating the Poetic of Aristotle by Examples Taken Chiefly from the Modern Poets to Which is Prefixed a New and Corrected Edition of the Translation of the Poetic (London: John Stockdale, 1792 [the translation was published originally in 1788]), pp. 185-86.

as a native English philosopher's equivalent to Aristotle's explanation of the cognitive value of poetry which, because it is not bound to the record of particular actuality (history), is able to afford the contemplating mind insight that approaches to the philosophical. This cognitive potential of poetry is for Aristotle, Hurd, and Pye, an explanation, at least partially, of our desire to make poems and our delight in contemplating them. It answers the question which, within the domain of literary theory, is as elusive as any: Why tell a story?[1]

Hurd's discussion of Bacon's views, it will be recalled, occurs in his "Dissertation on the Idea of Universal Poetry." Twining also refers the reader of his commentary on Aristotle to this treatise of Hurd's. The context is Aristotle's brief history of the general origin of poetry as the result of two causes, "each of them part of human nature:"

> Imitation is natural to man from childhood, one of his advantages over the lower animals being this, that he is the most imitative creature in the world, and learns at first by imitation. And it is also natural for all to delight in works of imitation. The truth of this second point is shown by experience: though the objects themselves may be painful to see, we delight to view the most realistic representations of them in art. . . . The explanation is to be found in a further fact: to be learning something is the greatest of pleasures not only to the philosopher but also to the rest of mankind, however small their capacity for it; the reason of the delight, in seeing the picture is that one is at the same time learning--gathering the meaning of things. . . . Imitation, then, being natural to us--as also the sense of harmony and rhythm, the metres being obviously species of rhythms--it was through

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[1]For a more complete discussion of this matter, see chapter 2, above.

> their original aptitude, and by a series of improvements for the most part gradual on their first efforts, that they created poetry out of their first improvisations (1448b4-24, trans. Bywater).

Twining writes that Hurd's discussion "of 'the origins and first application of Poetry among all nations' will furnish the best comment I can give, upon the passage. . . ."[1] It is perhaps not unreasonable to suggest that, as Twining apparently believed, Hurd's treatise "On the Idea of Universal Poetry" which has been thought to identify Hurd's "rigidly deductive" critical method, and his "stiffly formal" answer to the question "What is Poetry?"[2] is in fact partly a reworking of Aristotle's argument that poetry is the natural product of our delightful practice of imitation, harmony, and rhythm. In this view, Hurd's business in the treatise is an inference that these three natural causes for us to make and delight in poems must be also the properties of "Universal Poetry," and that "whatever deserves the name of POEM must unite these three properties; only in different degrees of each, according to its nature" (II:26).[3]

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[1]Aristotle's Treatise on Poetry Translated with Notes on the Translation, and on the Original and Two Dissertations, on Poetical, and Musical, Imitation (London: Payne & Son, et al., 1789), p. 192.

[2]Meyer Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition (London: Oxford University Press, 1953; repr. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1958), pp. 18, 23.

[3]It is, however, true that Hurd uses the term "fiction" in this treatise. A fuller discussion of his meaning will be found in chapter 2, above, where it is proposed that, in context, Hurd's term "fiction" means "a made

Perhaps the most important of all of Hurd's contributions to Twining's understanding of Aristotle is in regard to the question of the end of poetry. Twining's argument is that Aristotle does not

> anywhere, appear to me to give any countenance to an idea, which rational criticism has, now, pretty well exploded--that utility and instruction are the end of Poetry. That it may indeed be rendered, in some degree, useful and improving, few will deny; none that it ought to be made so, if it can. But that the chief end and purpose of poetry is to instruct--that Homer wrote his Iliad on purpose to teach mankind the mischiefs of discord among chiefs, and his Odyssey, to prove to them the advantage of staying at home and taking care of their families--this is so manifestly absurd, that one is really astonished to see so many writers, one after the other, discoursing gravely in defense of it. . . . The reader may see, if he has any stomach to see, the disgusting nonsense of Le Bossu upon this subject, ch. ii. iii. iv. etc. of his first book. By way of perfect contrast, he may then turn to the Dissertation On the Idea of Universal Poetry.[1]

There is no point which Twining makes more often and more vehemently than this, and, indeed, the same could be said without too much distortion to have been the main axe, so to speak, which Hurd had to grind.[2]

And indeed it is not surprising that this was the

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thing," and that what is made is an imitation of the forms of human activities, according to probability rather than actuality, which is more pleasing than history because more intelligible and hence more in accord with the "desires of the mind" for a greater degree of intelligibility than history--a chronicle of happenings--affords.

[1]Twining, pp. 561-62.

[2]See above, chapters 2 and 4, for a more complete discussion of Hurd's position regarding the function of poetry and its contrast with earlier and later views.

case for both Hurd and Twining, given the extent to which conceptions of the end of an activity affect virtually all other judgments about it. Given this view of the end of poetry, Aristotle, Hurd, and Twining are able to assert the autonomy of poetry as a fine and not primarily a practical art. And given that autonomy, united to a view of poetry as a species of imitation, all three critics are able to differentiate similarly the requirements which are central to the art of the poet from those which are less crucial.

Among those requirements none, perhaps, was as bothersome to the neo-classical critic as the matter of "credibility" and the doctrine of "verisimilitude" which was invoked to assure it. Twining gives Hurd full credit for his aid in establishing a more reasonable view of the marvellous in poetry, in a gloss to Aristotle's discussion of this matter:

> The marvellous, however, is a cause of pleasure, as is shown by the fact that we all tell a story with additions, in the belief that we are doing our hearers a pleasure. Homer more than any other has taught the rest of us the art of framing lies in the right way. I mean the use of paralogism. Whenever, if A is or happens, a consequent, B, is or happens, men's notion is that, if the B is, the A is also--but that is a false conclusion. Accordingly, if A is untrue, but there is something else, B, that on the assumption of its truth follows as its consequent, the right thing then is to add on the B. Just because we know the truth of the consequent, we are in our own minds led on to the erroneous inference of the truth of the antecedent. . . . A likely impossibility is always preferable to an unconvincing possibility (1460a17-27, trans. Bywater).

Twining notes that

> the best comment to which I can refer the reader upon

> all this part of Aristotle is to be found in the 10th of the Letters on Chivalry and Romance, in which the Italian Poets, and the privileges of genuine Poetry are vindicated, with as much solidity as eloquence, against those, whom Dryden used to call his "Prose Critics"--against that sort of criticism [in Hurd's words] "which looks like philosophy, and is not."[1]

Regarding Hurd's defense, in those Letters, Twining writes in the Preface to his commentary that Aristotle, like Hurd,

> sees fully, what the rationalists among modern critics have not always seen, the power of popular opinion and belief upon poetical credibility--that "a legend, a tale, a tradition, a rumor, a superstition--in short, any thing, is enough to be the basis of the poet's air-formed visions."[2]

Pye, in his commentary, refers to this same discussion of Hurd's, for the sake of clarifying a point about the relation of the marvellous to changing beliefs:

> The Bishop of Worcester in his Letters on Chivalry, mentions the superior horror of the gothic to the ancient superstition, and how much more we are affected by the ghosts and witches of Shakespeare, than by the Lemures of antiquity. The fact as to the ghosts, at least with regard to ourselves, is indisputable, and I think the reason of it is sufficiently obvious. The fictions of ancient mythology are only matters of amusement to us; but the gothic superstitions have, to most of us, been at one part of our lives the objects of our belief and our terror. For parental care has seldom been able entirely to guard our infancy from the impressions of the nursery.[3]

I think that Hurd would have found this a helpful clarification of his argument. And Aristotle would, I suppose, have thought this a reasonable explanation of the way changing circumstances alter the content but not the nature of the

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[1]Twining, p. 118n. [2]Ibid., p. xv.

[3]Pye, p. 275.

relation between the irrational beliefs of men and the imitative art of the successful poet, who, in making certain poems, requires the incredible for the sake of wonder.

Twining cites Hurd also in his discussion of the proper pleasures of tragedy and epic. Twining notes that:

> the peculiar end of Tragedy, he [i.e. Aristotle] has expressly told us, is to afford that pleasure, which results from fictitious terror and pity. . . . What he regarded as the peculiar end of Epic Poetry, I observe that he has no where distinctly said. But from what he has said, of the advantages which its plan affords, with respect to grandeur, and variety, and the admission of the wonderful and surprising, and also of the superior richness of its language, we may collect, that his ideas on this subject accorded with those of the best modern critics; and that he held the end of the Epic poem to be, according to the exact description of an eminent writer [Hurd, in the "Discourse on Poetical Imitation"], "admiration, produced by a grandeur of design, and variety of important incidents, and sustained by all the energy and minute particularity of description."[1]

In Twining's view, then, even in the description of the power of particular forms, Hurd and Aristotle are in accord.[2] In the case of tragedy, this seems a correct judgment. Pye, who concludes that Aristotle could not properly have compared the degree of excellence of tragedy and epic if he had not considered them to be aiming at the same end,[3] has a better grasp of what probably was Aristotle's view.

In this regard, it seems reasonable to mention the fact that Hurd and Twining are most fully Aristotelian in regard to certain basic issues. In their conception of the nature and function of poetry, and particularly of its

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[1]Twining, pp. 562-63.

[2]See above, chapter 3.

[3]Pye, p. 559.

autonomy as a contemplative rather than a practical art, they both have, indeed, "recovered a more purely Aristotelian approach than was common at mid-century." In their discussions of specific forms they are in accord with Aristotle in thinking that each form is a form because it animates the material of the poem and actualizes its potential to please us in a particular way--in other words, that form and function are organically related. But in thinking through clearly and completely the nature of the relationship between the structure of the poem and the end which it achieves, they tend to rely on separate descriptions of effects and structures. They aim at recovering an organic view of poems, but fail to show adequately how the proper function of the organism is related to and dependent on the structure of parts and their ordered relationship to each other, and to the whole which they constitute. Thus Hurd identifies admiration as the effect of The Faerie Queene and associates it with the use of marvellous materials. He identifies the form of the poem as consisting in a certain set of relations between the beginning, middle, and ends of the poem. But he doesn't show how admiration is organically related as effect to the contemplation of a structure of parts such as the one he describes. Perhaps the best explanation of this failure to be more fully "Aristotelian," is the one offered by Warburton in connection with an entirely different problem:

> The warfare of us soldiers of the Church militant

> is upon much worse terms than that of our predecessors. . . . Our predecessors had but one point to gain, which was to persuade people to save their souls. We have two: first, to persuade them that they have souls to be saved; which is so long a doing, that before we come to the second, we are ready to give place to another generation and are both on our death-beds by the time this comes in question.[1]

This is, in any case, the most charitable explanation of Hurd's difficulty: there wasn't time to do everything, and first things had to be done first. While it is entirely true that one must pay primary attention, in interpretation, to what has been achieved, it seems to me necessary, in noticing what hasn't, to discriminate between what is undone because unintended, and what is intended, but not (as yet) realized.

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It is difficult to argue from partial realizations to convincing statements of unachieved intentions. The argument, such as it is, must be indirect and circumstantial; at best it can achieve plausibility. Advanced as an hypothesis, with some initial plausibility, such an argument can be tested, to a degree at least, by its capacity to account for certain hitherto unresolved disagreements--by its usefulness, that is, in "saving appearances" more inclusively than have other competing hypotheses.

Disagreements between commentators on the significance of Richard Hurd's literary criticism, as pointed out in the introduction to this study, have centered on the

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[1]Letter to Hurd, Warburton Letters, p. 51.

questions of whether he was a member of the neo-classical or the romantic camp, and whether he did or did not have the historical method. Much, as was seen, depended on what a particular commentator considered fundamental to membership in the camps or possession of the method.

With respect to Hurd's romanticism, it seems generally agreed now that the affiliation was a matter of wishful thinking, so to speak, among certain academics of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. On the other hand, one must have sympathy for this interpretation of Hurd's significance. Given a narrow enough definition of what it means to be neoclassical, many of Hurd's pronouncements--his interest (without apology) in medieval and Elizabethan literature; his insistence on pleasure as the function of poetry, to the exclusion of teaching, teaching by delighting, delightful teaching, or even delighting by teaching; his defense of the marvellous; his citation of Bacon's comment regarding the "desires of the mind;" and his "enthusiasm"--must have seemed revolutionary to commentators in search of the origins of "the romantic movement," and what was romanticism if not that?

If one has sympathy for the romantic interpretation of Hurd's significance, one must find the neoclassical argument even more convincing, particularly given a broad enough definition of neo-classicism, one which includes, for example, the degrees of "conservative" and "liberal." "Neoclassicism" is, I think, a mare's nest, for in a sense any

revival of Greek or Roman thought is neo-classical. Even in so narrow a context as poetics, Greece and Rome present a range of ideas about literature far too broad, and in a variety far too complex to be brought within the confines of a party-line. The term "Augustan" now does service in most literary histories of England, and is an improvement in the sense that it narrows the range and simplifies the variety of what is meant. In matters of literary criticism, Augustan neo-classicism means mainly Horatian poetics, which, if the consensus of current opinion is correct, signifies a rhetorically conceived theory of poetry. It seems clear, however, that Hurd rejects such a theory, theoretically. Its mainstay is a practical, rather than a contemplative conception of the poet's art, and Hurd rejects a view of poetry which would make poems the instruments of some extrinsic utilitarian purpose. On the other hand, Hurd was the author of a commentary on the Ars Poetica, and he doesn't, in that commentary, make enough of such issues as these. But, given his view that the Epistle to the Pisos is not a poetics but a didactic epistle the purpose of which is to criticize the Roman drama, one could hardly expect him to perceive in it a theory of poetry which called for discrimination from Aristotelian poetics. He does, however, speak about "rules" as the aim of theoretical criticism, and his vocabulary is the vocabulary of Augustan poetics. Then, too, one might well look to Hurd's difficulty, from time to time, in associating specific ends of

specific forms with the structures that are to achieve them, the failure that made Hurd's Aristotelianism a partially realized intention, as was pointed out. Such a failure is characteristic of Augustan poetics in so far as they are Horatian, and in so far as current opinion is correct about the inability of a rhetorically conceived poetic theory to recognize and describe the organic unity of form and function in poems.

The problem with the "neo-classical" or, better, the Horatian interpretation of Hurd's significance is that it does leave out of account much of what the "romantic" interpretation noticed and emphasized as so distinctive in his criticism. One can hardly blame Professor Bosker for his insisting in the second edition of his history of late eighteenth-century criticism in England that he was unwilling to abandon his earlier (Hurd as a pre-romantic) interpretation in the face of the "neoclassical" argument.[1] This argument also fails to credit the judgments of contemporaries such as Twining and Pye, or even the judgment, undeveloped as it is, of the August 1762 Monthly Review:

> while the generality of writers are cautiously creeping in the track of their predecessors, without daring to think for themselves, and to venture far from the beaten paths, the ingenious author of these Letters, trusting to his own Powers, opens a new vein of criticism and entertains his readers, in a most agreeable

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[1]Aisso Bosker, Literary Criticism in the Age of Johnson (Groningen: J. B. Wolters; 2nd ed., revised, New York: Hafner, 1953), p. 274.

> manner, with a variety of remarks on a very curious subject. The ORTHODOX in Poetry will, no doubt, look upon him as a daring HERETIC, and, as such, thunder out their excommunications against him; be this, however, as it may, he will, we are persuaded, meet with a favourable reception from every reader of taste.[1]

Any one of these points, by itself, could be dismissed as a sign of nothing at all, perhaps, but the judgments of his contemporaries; the judgments of so many modern commentators; Hurd's own theoretical positions as they have been reviewed in this study; the way in which Hurd tries to identify the form of The Faerie Queene; his interest in determining the purpose of the Ars Poetica and his attempt to prove it an organic whole, unified to the achievement of that purpose--all of these argue that to place Hurd in the Horatian camp, even in a "liberal" division, does not do justice to his partial realizations, let alone his unachieved intentions.

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It is not surprising that some commentators, in the face of these difficulties, have decided that Hurd converted, or developed, or wavered between neo-classicism and romanticism. Others have left this matter of Hurd's party affiliations as hopeless, and devoted themselves instead to an exploration of his critical method. Particularly in recent years, given our age's preoccupation with operations research, this devotion to method has been embraced as a way "as it were, to out-flank the traditional critics of Hurd." Seeking to show "the underlying unity of Hurd's thought [sic]" these

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[1]Vol. XXVIII (August, 1762), 81.

commentators have "emphasized not doctrine and conclusions but a way of reasoning, a critical method."[1] As a result, Hurd's disembodied "thought" has been characterized as "a priori," "deductive," "systematic," "relativistic," and above all "historical." A method that is "a priori," "deductive," and "systematic" seems possible, and it would probably be a fair way of characterizing the way an hypothetical "conservative" neo-classical critic might, in one of his moods, proceed. A method that is "relativistic" and "historical" might be associated with a hypothetical romantic, in one of his stances. Hurd's is a "systematic relativism " in Trowbridge's conclusion, and with that, the traditional critics are "out-flanked."

The disadvantage of such schemes is that when presented in so disembodied a state, methods are hard to put your finger on. One wonders, for example, why Hurd's method is not considered a posteriori (how did he arrive at his hypothesis about the purpose of the Ars Poetica, or, better, his conception of the unity of The Faerie Queene?) Or inductive. Or a-historical. Or absolutistic (if that is the antithesis of relativistic). Hurd was, surely, systematic, but from time to time, depending on what he was trying to do, he seems to have employed whatever tools were available and appropriate to his purpose.

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[1] Hoyt Trowbridge, "Bishop Hurd: A Reinterpretation," PMLA, LVIII (1943), p. 451.

Take, for example, the much discussed historical method.[1] It had been thought that the method was an invention of the eighteenth-century. Precursors and forerunners have now been discovered, and it has been noted that Quintilian (XII. 10. 1-2.) enunciated the principle in Latin. In fact, however, it would be hard to prove that there is such a thing as the historical method. Rather, there are uses, in quite a wide variety, to which historical information can be put in talking about literature, depending on the purposes of the critic in question. Historical information can be a means of clarifying the original meaning of a word or passage. Hurd often employs his historical researches for this purpose, especially in his Horace edition. Historical information can also be used to apologize for some apparent defect in a work on the grounds that back then people liked their poems that way. Hurd has the historical method, if this use of history be its definition, when he apologizes for Cowley's false wit as a result of the peculiar taste of his times. Again, historical information can be used to issue a manifesto as Blair does in his discussion of the Ossian poems.[2] Then, too, historical information can

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[1]See the works by Baxter, Foerster, Gardner, Knoke, Lipking, Marks (Relativist and Absolutist . . .), Meineke, F. S. Miller, G. M. Miller, Rinaker, Rushton, Shephard and Wellek (The Rise . . .) in the bibliography.

[2][Hugh Blair], A Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian, the Son of Fingal (London: T. Becket & P. A. De Hondt, 1763).

be used to explore the genesis of a work. Swift mocks this very use in the "Preface" to A Tale of a Tub:

> Whatever Reader desires to have a thorow Comprehension of an Author's Thoughts, cannot take a better Method, than by putting himself into the Circumstances and Postures of Life, that the Writer was in, upon every important Passage as it flow'd from his Pen; For this will introduce a Parity and strict Correspondence of Idea's between the Reader and the Author. Now, to assist the diligent Reader in so delicate an Affair, as far as brevity will permit, I have recollected, that the shrewdest Pieces of this Treatise, were conceived in Bed, in a Garret: At other times (for a Reason best known to my self) I thought fit to sharpen my Invention with Hunger; and in general, the whole Work was begun, continued, and ended, under a long Course of Physick, and a great want of Money. Now, I do affirm, it will be absolutely impossible for the candid Peruser to go along with me in a great many bright Passages, unless upon the several Difficulties emergent, he will please to capacitate and prepare himself by these Directions. And this I lay down as my principal Postulatum.[1]

So long an extract may be considered appropriate in this place primarily because Dr. Swift, himself, was so devoted to method.

This list of uses to which history can be put, in the criticism of literature can be considerably extended. Thomas Blackwell uses historical information to propose an answer to the question why Homer has been unsurpassed in epic poetry for all these years.[2] Coleridge uses history to discover the unique form of a work, in view of his assumption that, since each work is the outgrowth of a unique set of

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[1]ed. by A. C. Guthkelch and D. Nichol Smith (2nd ed., Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1958), pp. 44-45.

[2][Thomas Blackwell], Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer (London: [ ? ], 1735).

circumstances, the history of that growth is the only way of approaching the ineffable individuality of the poem. Finally, in addition to his editorial and apologetic uses of history, Hurd's own procedure is to use history as a way of discovering the intention of an author as, for example, in his inference of Spenser's formal intention in The Faerie Queene partly on the basis of information that Sainte-Palaye gave him of the history of chivalry and of romances (the imitations of chivalric life). Such a use of historical information to discover intention and what it has meant to intend a romance, for example, provides the critic with a context which is relevant to the interpretation and evaluation of poems. Particularly in light of the fact that literary forms are artificial and not natural, studying the history of their development from rude beginnings to more perfected states is a helpful way of coming to know them.

Given this variety of uses to which historical information may be put in the criticism of literature, it is no wonder that commentators, holding special definitions of what constitutes the historical method, are in disagreement about whether Hurd has it, or not, or partly.

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Johnston's claim that "Hurd is Chapelain's returning Aristotle" and Chapman's judgment that "by disentangling poetic structure from accessory questions of utility, instruction, or historical subject-matter, Hurd recovered a more purely Aristotelian approach than was common at mid-century,"

do seem, in the light of all this disagreement over Hurd's party-line and method, worth pursuing.[1] And I think that there are reasons enough to favor such an hypothesis about Hurd's significance. This hypothesis, unlike either the "neo-classical" or the "romantic," is able to account for those elements in Hurd's criticism which one or the other party-lines excludes. It is also compatible with Hurd's particular uses of historical information in the criticism of literature, and with his purposeful use of whatever methods will serve to achieve the end he has in view. And it emphasizes what is, after all, Hurd's greatest achievement as a critic: his "disentangling poetic structure from accessory questions of utility, instruction, or historical subject-matter." Or, as Stephen J. Curry put it, his "consistent refusal to permit a clash between what is artistically effective and what is artistically regular."[2] If "liberal" neoclassicism means a neoclassicism tending toward Aristotelian views and attempting to read and understand the Poetics as something other than a commentary on Horace, "creating conformities, which were never designed" (I:15), then Hurd, as Pye and Twining believed, may be said to be a "liberal" neoclassicist who "recovered a more purely Aristotelian approach than was common at mid-century," both in his reading of Aristotle and in his own theory and practice.

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[1]Johnston, p. 66; Chapman, p. 377.

[2]"The Literary Criticism of Richard Hurd," unpublished doctoral dissertation (The University of Wisconsin, 1962), p. 28.

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