WHITE, Maurice Deane, 1937-

JOHN DRYDEN'S POETRY OF PRAISE: THE QUESTION OF IRONY.

The Ohio State University, Ph.D., 1971
Language and Literature, general

University Microfilms, A XEROX Company, Ann Arbor, Michigan
JOHN DRYDEN'S POETRY OF PRAISE: THE QUESTION OF IRONY

DISSERTATION
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

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Major Field: English Literature

Restoration (John Dryden): Professor A.E. Wallace Maurer.
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INTRODUCTION

My purpose in this dissertation is to refute critical charges that John Dryden used irony inappropriately in his poems of praise. In order to correct this critical misjudgment, one must first clearly understand the tradition Dryden was working in, namely the classical epideictic tradition of praise and blame. Second, one must know whether irony played a part in the epideictic tradition. Third, one must understand what irony did and did not mean to Dryden. Consequently, the dissertation organizes itself into five chapters, as follows.

Chapter I defines epideictic literature, shows what role irony played in it, and determines Dryden's place in the tradition. To accomplish the last of these, the chapter shows how Dryden's education contributed to his awareness of the tradition and how Dryden's own remarks prove that awareness.

Chapter II contrasts twentieth-century definitions of irony with those of the Restoration in order to show that what recent critics are calling irony in Dryden's poems of praise is not what Dryden understood irony to be.

Chapter III applies the findings of the first two chapters to seven of Dryden's poems of praise. It thereby
illustrates the unjustness of the charges of inappropriate irony in Dryden's panegyrics. It also demonstrates the variety of genres Dryden used to praise human subjects and, more importantly, establishes the reliability of my own critical method.

Chapter IV looks closely at the Killigrew poem, the proper interpretation of which is the main reason for this dissertation. As corroboration for my reading of this poem, I deal briefly with Eleonora, which is in many ways similar to the Killigrew poem, but which generally escapes charges of irony. This chapter insists that the Killigrew poem is not ironic, though several critics have charged that it is.

Chapter V briefly summarizes my conclusions. One conclusion is that an awareness of the epideictic tradition in which Dryden wrote his poetry of praise reduces, if not eliminates, critical charges of inappropriate irony. Another is that most, if not all, of the irony found today in Dryden's poems of praise is the product of modern criticism, not the result of Dryden's intention.
CHAPTER I
DRYDEN AND THE EPIDEICTIC TRADITION

The purpose of this chapter is to establish Dryden's position in the epideictic tradition of praise and blame. The chapter, therefore, must do three things: first, present a basic definition of epideictic literature and show whether irony played any part in that tradition; second, illustrate the extent to which Dryden's education made him aware of the tradition and equipped him to use it; and third, show how Dryden's own remarks prove his awareness of the tradition in his poetry of praise. My major concern in the definition is the poetry of praise, rather than that of censure or blame, because it is Dryden's poetry of praise that we shall be dealing with later on.

A definition of a tradition as important as the epideictic must both provide a concise, theoretical description and then show what the tradition did and did not involve. Aristotle defines epideictic rhetoric as "panegyrical or declamatory speeches, in the nature of an exhibition or display, eulogies—in general, speeches of praise and blame."¹ This general definition is subscribed to throughout literary history² by all literary theorists and epideictic poets, regardless of the terms used to
signify epideictic—occasional rhetoric, demonstrative rhetoric, ceremonial discourse, and the oratory of display. While it is true that Aristotle's definition pertained specifically to oratory, it is also true that early Greek oratory had a very close relationship with poetry. At times orators even quoted or used poetry as the basis for orations. No noticeable or important barriers separated the spoken and written forms of praise, and thus we are justified in using the terms oratory and poetry interchangeably in discussing the epideictic tradition.

Like almost any mode of rhetorical endeavor, epideictic literature fulfilled certain purposes and adhered to rather strict prescriptions for both content and form. Our definition must account for each of these in its turn, first the purposes and then the conventions of the tradition.

The basic purpose of epideictic literature is stated by Aristotle: "to make manifest the greatness of a virtue." The basis for proclaiming honor or dishonor was moral, not legal. Purposes range from pure embellishment and amplification of a theme to practical applications. Among the latter are the creation of a desire to imitate virtue by illustrating noble deeds of a deceased person or sometimes by depicting generalizations or a few representative examples showing particular rewards of virtue, the arousing of patriotism, the stimulation of interest in
specific institutions or events, the teaching of admiration for a particular ruler, and the demonstration of the existence of virtue in the poet's own society. Thus, praise or blame was expressed at times for its own sake, primarily to please the audience and glorify the subject, and at other times for more practical purposes.

Certain conventions were determined by tradition also. Included were the topics considered appropriate for praise or blame, the genres proper for the various types of praise or blame, the intended effect upon the audience, the relationship between praise or blame and truth, the style, and the structure. We will first consider what subjects were deemed worthy of praise. Approved subjects included the gods, human beings, inanimate things, and even, at times, insignificant animals. The broad topics were virtue and vice, the noble and the base. For instance, in praising human subjects, the poet could choose from topics such as courage, temperance, justice, liberality, prudence, or gentleness; or he could choose a converse quality for censure. Other topics of a more specific nature include physical attributes (agility, strength, beauty, or health); external circumstances (family background, education, economic status, or political, social and religious affiliations); actions and achievements; noteworthy sayings; and the testimony of others.

Once a poet had chosen his subject and the topics he
wished to develop about his subject, he also needed to de-
cide upon the most appropriate genre for the occasion.
Even from the earliest days of epideictic oratory, the list
of genres was quite large, ensuring a specialized genre for
each kind of praise or blame. For the most part, the se-
lection was made on the basis of the subject being praised.
In general, praise included hymns and panegyrics, heroic
poetry, epic, and tragedy; blame included invective, comic
epic, satire, and comedy. \(^{15}\) Lists of even more specific
epideictic genres abound from antiquity through the Resto-
ration. To mention all of the types would be excessive,
but an idea of the range of types is illustrated below.
Menander defined nine varieties of hymns: those based on
myths, invocation of the deity's presence, address to a
departing god, description of the physical qualities of a
god, description of the god's ancestry and descendants,
ictions based on myths, precative and deprecatory hymns,
and combinations of two or more of the above. Occasional
types, which celebrated human beings and inanimate things,
numbered nearly triple the types of hymns available and
included praise of the following: a country, a city, a
harbor or a bay, an acropolis, a ruler. They also may be
classified according to the occasion being celebrated,
such as birthdays, marriages, welcomes, farewells, and
funerals. \(^{16}\)

The intended effect upon the audience is certainly
involved with both choice of subject and purpose. However, we need to see that the orator or poet was conscious of the specific audience (the addressee, providing he were alive to hear the praise or blame) and also the broader, more public audience. Cicero believed that "epideictic ... should deal especially in those virtues thought beneficial 'not so much to their possessors as to mankind in general.'" Aristotle says, "In the proem of an epideictic speech we should make the hearer feel that our note of praise includes him, and applies either to himself, or his family, or his manner of life—or somehow touches him." Longinus tells us that "great writing does not persuade; it takes the reader out of himself"; in other words, the poet seeks to enthrall, to master the hearer rather than to persuade him. Cicero places the responsibility of arousing the audience squarely on the shoulders of the orator: "Orators must have a scent for an audience, for what people are feeling, thinking, waiting for, wishing." Other theorists stress the author's need for delicacy and tact and advise that the challenge to the reader "be worthy of the tone in which he is addressed," especially in congratulatory poems.

Also involved in this matter of artist-audience interaction are the three different relations between the epigram and the persons concerned with it. These are especially pertinent to our discussion since the epigram is
clearly a form of epideictic poetry and is very similar to many of Dryden's poems of praise. According to Tommaso Correa, the Italian Renaissance literary critic, the three relationships include bringing praise and glory to the poet, influencing in some way the persons at whom its praise or blame is directed (that is, providing both pleasure and instruction), and producing an effect of pleasure, wonder, admiration or joy in its general audience, those who merely read or hear about the actions of others but are not directly involved in them.23

The final characteristic of content in epideictic poetry is the relationship between the content itself and actual truth. No theorists insist on strict historical veracity in epideictic poetry. Aristotle reveals the orator's liberty in choosing epideictic content in the following statement:

For the purposes of praise or blame, the speaker may identify a man's actual qualities with qualities bordering on them. Thus a cautious man may be represented as cold and designing, a simpleton as good-natured, a callous man as easy-going. And so in each case we may substitute one of the collateral terms, always leaning toward the best; terming the choleric and passionate man, for instance, a plain dealer, and the arrogant man superb and dignified. And men whose bad qualities are on the side of excess may be represented as possessed of the corresponding virtues.24

This does not mean that normal practice of praise and blame used outright falsehoods or deceit, however. What the epideictic poet really did was heighten the praise or
intensify the censure by accepted artifice within the tradition. An even more definite statement of how content and truth were not expected to coincide perfectly is that of Epicurus, who believed that "those who listen to displays and panegyrics, and the like, are not under any oath or in any hazard, and do not consider their truth or falsehood, but are charmed by the ὥκος ἑχος and beauty of style . . . ."25 This acceptance of deviation from solid truth carries through all major statements on panegyric. Theodore Burgess summarizes the matter this way:

Since the appeal of epideictic is to the emotions more than to the intellect, form is of greater importance than subject-matter. A tendency to ornament of every kind is fostered, and there is too little regard as to whether it be legitimate or not. Even truth may be disregarded in the interests of eloquence.26

In general, however, the major theorists simply accepted the fact that epideictic poetry allowed, indeed insisted upon, elaboration, amplification, or heightening. Therefore, the disparity between the praise or censure and the truth did not become a real problem to them, as it seems to have become to modern critics. Burgess's phrase "too little regard," in the quotation above, indicates the general modern insistence on historical accuracy (legitimacy) in poetry of praise.

Burgess also says form, or style, became of greater importance than subject-matter; but his statement does not apply equally to all epideictic poetry. It applies
primarily to the hollow rhetoric of the sophists. There is no denying that style is important in epideictic works. Therefore, we must see what part style actually played in the tradition as a whole. O.B. Hardison states very accurately that "all rhetoricians agreed that the epideictic orator should cultivate an ornate style." Quintilian considers amplification and embellishment of themes as part of the purpose of epideictic, but rules out the oration of mere ostentation. Aristotle says, "Considered generally, of the devices common to all speeches, magnifying is best suited to the epideictic, since the actions are taken for granted, and it only remains to invest them with magnitude and beauty." Cicero also noted the high position of amplification in epideictic: "the highest distinction of eloquence consists in amplification by means of ornament, which can be used to make one's speech not only increase the importance of a subject and raise it to a higher level, but also to diminish and disparage it."

That certain accepted methods of amplification were widely recognized seems evident from statements of both Quintilian and Longinus. Quintilian discusses four principal methods of amplification: augmentation (rising to a climax), comparison (rising from less to greater), reasoning (deriving its effect from inferences from the facts), and accumulation (piling up of words identical in meaning). Longinus adds that "amplification consists
of the development of commonplaces, emotional intensification, emphasis on facts, stylistic elaborations, the rearrangement of subject matter, or emotional appeals.\textsuperscript{32}

The following definition of Thomas Blount provides further evidence of what amplification really meant, and also demonstrates the historical consistency of interpretations of the practice of amplification:

\begin{quote}
To Amplifie and Illustrate, are two of the principal Ornaments of Eloquence, and gain mens mindes to the chiefest advantage, Admiration and Belief; For how can you commend any thing more acceptable to our Attention, then by telling us it is extraordinary, and by demonstrating it to be evident. We love to look upon a Comet above all Stars, for these two excellencies, its Greatness and its Clearness; such in speech is Amplification and Illustration. We amplifie five ways, by Comparison, Division, Accumulation, Intimation, and Progression.\textsuperscript{32}
\end{quote}

One must be aware that, although amplification was very important, the "doctrine of superficial ornamentalism" did not occupy a central position in epideictic poetry.\textsuperscript{34}

The other formal characteristic that must be discussed is structure. Many formulae and variations of those formulae existed for the different types of epideictic oratory and poetry. The following outline of the structure of the encomium should suffice to show that the tradition did set up formulae which were generally adhered to, though with some room for variation. Burgess says, "No single term represents the aim and scope of epideictic literature so completely as the word εὐκράτειαν // encomium//\textsuperscript{7}
... a presentation, with more or less extravagant praise, of the good qualities of a person or thing. Using the encomium as a representative epideictic genre, we can get a good idea of the importance of structure in the tradition. Burgess delineates the essential components of the ordinary encomium of persons as follows: prooimion, in which the orator admits that the subject is too great for words, or that the writer is inadequate to do justice to his topic, or that he was rushed so much that he failed to praise adequately; genos, the subject's ancestry; genesis, mention of any omen or dream accompanying the subject's birth; anatrophe, the circumstances of his youth; epitedeumata, deeds implying choice and so revealing character (comes to mean broadly one's profession); praxeis, deeds of war and of peace (the chief topic of encomia); synchresis (comparison); epilogos, a summary which may end with a prayer. Such a plan could, of course, be altered to suit the subject.

As we have seen from a study of the conventions of the epideictic tradition, then, the tradition did allow for a certain amount of freedom of choice in matters of form and content, but the tradition was not merely a catch-all for any speeches which do not closely fit into the deliberative or forensic branches of oratory. Instead, topics, genres, formulae, all combined to make the epideictic oration (or poem) the standard means of praising
or censuring people or things in a very public way.

Two other important general observations must be made before we conclude our discussion of the tradition. First, careful study reveals a strong continuity of theory and practice in the tradition. The basic elements held constant all the way from the Ancients to Dryden. Second, and crucial to a study of tone in epideictic poetry, not one of the theorists studied in my research associated irony with epideictic. Instead, they all dealt with heightened praise or intensified blame. **Ironia** is listed as a figure in some of the rhetorics, as a matter of course, since it was employed in some types of writing. It was definitely used to some extent in the other two branches of rhetoric and perhaps to some extent in blame, but it is never mentioned as an inherent component in poetry of praise. No direct reference to mockery or derision is found in epideictic poetry with the possible exception of the minor form, the paradoxical encomium. And even though one might expect some irony in the major forms of blame—inventive, comic epic, satire, and comedy—no theorist deems its usage important enough to mention it. Thus if Dryden's poems of praise are truly epideictic, and there is overwhelming evidence—his choice of genres, titles of poems, topics, methods of amplification, and conventional structure—to support the claim, we can logically assume that Dryden adhered also to general practice in the tone
Having seen what epideictic literature involves by way of purpose, topic, form, structure, and tone, we must proceed to the next step, which is to establish Dryden's position in the epideictic tradition. That step involves ascertaining the type of rhetorical education Dryden received and studying his remarks about poetry of praise to see how aware of the tradition he really was.

We shall begin with his education. What is known of Dryden's education in particular is not very extensive, but that knowledge together with the information available on seventeenth-century education in general provides clear evidence that Dryden had full knowledge of the tradition of classical rhetoric and would naturally lead us to conclude that Dryden knew and used the tradition of praise and blame which he inherited. From the biographies we learn only the bare facts about Dryden's attendance at Westminster under the famous master Dr. Busby and his years at Trinity College, Cambridge, from 1650 to 1654. Dryden inevitably read the poetry of the Ancients, a practice which was characteristic of English education of the seventeenth century, learning his Latin grammar from Lily and his Greek probably from Busby's own grammar published in 1647. In his own words Dryden tells us that he learned to write English and Latin verse under Busby:
I remember I translated this satire \textit{Persius's Third Satire} when I was a king's scholar at Westminster School, for a Thursday-night's exercise; and believe that it, and many other of my exercises of this nature in English verse, are still in the hands of my learned master, the Rev. Dr. Busby.\footnote{1}

From \textit{A New Discovery in the Old Art of Teaching School} by Charles Hoole, we learn about the school texts used in Dryden's time. For each form Hoole lists both classical and subsidiary texts. Lily's Grammar appears in all forms after the first; Camden's Greek grammar appears in the fourth, fifth, and sixth forms. Among the suggested classical writers are Ovid, Virgil, Chapman's Homer, Horace, Juvenal, Isocrates, Cicero, and Quintilian, the last three of whom are mentioned in almost every discussion of classical training in the seventeenth century. In the column of subsidiary works appear carryovers from the Renaissance, such as the construing book and the commonplace book.\footnote{42}

The practice of writing verses of many kinds was part of Dryden's schooling at Westminster, much as it was of Milton's at St. Paul's. These exercises—composing Latin epistles after Cicero, writing verses, writing prose themes, keeping commonplace books, learning the places of invention, and studying the progymnasmata\footnote{43}—followed the basic training of the lower forms: prelection (lectures and explanations), memorizing, translation and paraphrase.\footnote{44} Dryden's education was probably influenced significantly by Aphthonius's \textit{Progymnasmata}, the standard model for theme-writing.
for a century and a half after its publication in 1546. In Aphthonius are examples of epideictic rhetoric—encomium, vituperation, impersonation, and comparison. From studying such texts, Dryden learned conventions of form and content. James R. Sutherland is convinced of Dryden's thorough education in the epideictic tradition early in life. He says, "Poetry for Dr. Busby and for Dryden was how you said it, what you put into it, how you ornamented and gilded the bare statement." Dryden's university training also followed classical guidelines. According to William T. Costello, the university employed the scholastic lecture, disputation, and the declamation. In the undergraduate arts program at Cambridge, Dryden studied logic, rhetoric, and ethics. It was in the university that the student concentrated on verse-making in the learned languages and wrote verses to celebrate state occasions and academic functions. Dryden's first published poem, "Upon the Death of the Lord Hastings," was an academic exercise of a similar type, though of less import.

Other discussions of seventeenth-century education provide very helpful insight into the type of education Dryden probably received. After summarizing the contributions to humanistic education which linked poetry and oratory very closely (for example, the rhetorics of Cox, Wilson, Rainolde, Smith, and Blount), Kenneth G. Hamilton
Even from this brief survey it becomes obvious that for poets such as Milton or Dryden who experienced it, the seventeenth-century rhetorical education could not have failed to influence them toward a view of poetry as differing from prose only by virtue of its different way of manipulating or organizing words. Within this educational system poetry tended to be reduced to elocutio, the art of clothing thoughts and feelings in language that is correct, appropriate, and pleasing, which had a common reference to both poetry and prose. At the same time it was an education wholly rhetorical in emphasis, its aim being the training of the whole man for public affairs; and in this aim poetry was seen as playing its part, receiving inevitably in return a strong rhetorical colouring.  

Donald L. Clark concludes his discussion of the English rhetorics of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries with this statement: "Not until the seventeenth century . . . did rhetoric in England come again to mean what it had in classical antiquity." This statement has great importance for our study, because it supports the view that Dryden was steeped in classical rhetoric and, therefore, very likely followed the conventions of classical epideictic oratory in his panegyric poetry.

Perhaps one of the most concentrated studies of Dryden's classical ties is Lillian Feder's unpublished dissertation, entitled "John Dryden's Interpretation and Use of Latin Poetry and Rhetoric." Some of her conclusions about Dryden's poetic practice are central to our argument. For instance, Miss Feder states, "He [Dryden] knew their [classical Romans'] work directly, but it must be remem-
bered that the whole tradition of their influence in English Literature was part of his training." But even more crucial to our argument is the statement that

it was not the influence of medieval or Renaissance rhetoric which inspired a revival of ancient rhetoric in seventeenth century England, but rather a renewed dependence upon the ancients themselves, and a faithful adherence to their principles.

In other words, Dryden's classicism was based almost exclusively upon the Ancients themselves, and thus his concept of epideictic would be close to, if not identical with, theirs. Feder stresses the fusion of theory and practice, poetry and oratory, in Dryden's works:

For the first time since Cicero's De Oratore interpreted his own practice in the Forum, ancient rhetorical theory was united with oratorical expression in the writings of John Dryden to produce works of lasting aesthetic value.

Miss Feder's comments about Dryden's classicism in criticism and poetic theory apply just as accurately to his actual practice in creating poetical works, at least with the poems of praise with which we are concerned.

A few final comments will illustrate the range and congruence of critical assessments of the thoroughness of Dryden's rhetorical education. Dennis Davison writes,

There is something inbred about Dryden's work, which is partly due to the common classical education he could assume in his readers, and partly due to his intimate circle of friends with whom he shared his literary pleasures.

Louis Bredvold concurs: "In this old humanistic tradition
of the Renaissance, which required the man of genius to acquire learning and judgment, Dryden had been educated, and he was never able to unlearn the lesson."

From his education, Dryden naturally imbibed the classical principles which made him closely resemble "the grave orator, the restrained and public-minded poet, and the disciplined citizen" of ancient Rome or Greece.

Therefore, no matter what the immediate source of his epideictic training—ancient, medieval, or Renaissance—Dryden was thoroughly steeped in classical rhetoric through his formal education. This classical influence can perhaps be best illustrated by Dryden's own words concerning poetic theory and practice, the next step in establishing his place in the epideictic tradition.

Dryden actually makes very few statements about epideictic poetry in its strictest sense of praise and blame. Instead, most of his longer essays deal with the heroic or dramatic genres. However, since praise in its broadest sense includes, in addition to hymns and panegyrics, heroic poetry, epic, and tragedy, we will from time to time draw from Dryden's remarks concerning any of those genres, as well as his remarks about poems obviously written to praise. In any case, the few remarks he does make specifically about the poetry of praise are quite helpful in establishing his place in the epideictic tradition.

First, we must understand Dryden's views on the pur-
poses of poetry and see how they compare with those of epideictic poetry discussed earlier. Following classical and Renaissance ideas, Dryden stresses both delight and instruction as ends of poetry. In "A Defence of An Essay of Dramatic Poesy," he says, "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.\textsuperscript{59} In the same essay, he applies this principle directly to his own poetic practice; "For I confess my chief endeavors are to delight the age in which I live."\textsuperscript{60} Elsewhere Dryden states that "the boldest strokes of poetry, when they are managed artfully, are those which delight the reader."\textsuperscript{61} In "Heads of an Answer to Rymer," he writes:

> 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.\textsuperscript{62}

These general comments are sufficient to demonstrate the similarities between Dryden's views of poetry and those associated with the epideictic tradition. More central to our discussion of the purposes of praise, however, are the following comments by Dryden.

In the preface to \textit{Eleonora}, Dryden says his purpose is to instruct by providing an example. He states that he "followed in his (Donne's) footsteps in the design of the panegyric, which was to raise an emulation in the living to copy out the example of the dead."\textsuperscript{63} Here we have the
traditional concept of praise to show what man ought to be, and in this case not only to show reverence for the departed one, but more importantly to appeal to the conduct of the audience. One other example, found in the dedication of the Life of St. Francis Xavier to Queen Mary, resembles that above. Assuaging the fears of the royal couple concerning praise, which carried hidden political danger at that time, Dryden says, "All other panegyrics I purposely omit; but those of Christianity are such, that neither your Majesty, nor my royal master, need be ashamed of them, because their commemoration is instructive to your subjects." Thus we see perfect agreement between Dryden and the epideictic tradition. Both stress the purposes of instruction, delight, and advice.

From Dryden's statements about the purposes of epideictic literature, we must move to his comments on the conventions associated with it. Although only passing remarks are made concerning two of the conventions—genres and the role of the audience—and no space is given to the matter of structure, the other major conventions are treated. Those which are slighted in this chapter will, however, be dealt with at length as they apply to Dryden's poems of praise discussed in later chapters. The conventions which will be discussed are topics, verisimilitude, and amplification, in that order.

Dryden, like the Ancients, was well aware that sub-
jects for panegyrical poems vary in virtue and worth. And like most theorists on epideictic, he does not attempt to praise subjects unworthy of his praise. Dryden comments on the excellency of his subject in the preface to *Eleonora*, even though he had never seen the Countess of Abingdon. In "An Account of the Ensuing Poem" prefixed to *Annum Mirabilis*, he similarly praises the subjects of his poem. In this case, he was perhaps trying to avoid charges of undue heightening or fulsome praise:

> And I am well satisfied that, as they [York and Albemarle] are incomparably the best subject I have ever had, excepting only the Royal Family; so also, that this I have written of them is much better than what I have performed on any other. I have been forced to help out other arguments, but this has been bountiful to me; they have been low and barren of praise, and I have exalted them, and made them fruitful... 65

Dryden does not go into the lists of topics acceptable to poetry of praise, but his poetic practice bears out a close adherence to the epideictic tradition, as will be seen in later chapters.

Regarding the question of verisimilitude in his poetry, Dryden states in the "dedication of the *Indian Emperor* that it is "not the business of a poet to represent historical truth, but probability." In the *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, Lisideius is heard to say,

> For the spirit of man cannot be satisfied but with truth, or at least verisimilitude; and a poem is to contain, if not τὰ ἀληθεία [the truth], yet ἑπιμολέσιν [the likeness of truth], as one of the Greek poets [Hesiod] has expressed it.
In "A Defence of An Essay of Dramatic Poesy," Dryden says, "poesy must resemble natural truth, but it must be ethical. Indeed the poet dresses truth, and adorns nature, but does not alter them." Dryden seems to feel that, although actual historical truth is not required and "dressing" truth through amplification is allowed, if not indeed expected, a complete divergence from the truth is not permitted. Keeping in mind his audience (as apparently he always did), Dryden advises in "The Author's Apology for Heroic Poetry and Poetic License": "You are not obliged, as in history, to a literal belief of what the poet says; but you are pleased with the image, without being cozened by the fiction." In relation to historical veracity, he says in the same apology, "And poets may be allowed the like liberty for describing things which really exist not, if they are founded on popular belief." Thus we see that on this point Dryden echoes the classical and Renaissance theorists very closely.

Amplification, the last convention to be discussed here, receives significant attention from Dryden. He describes "elocution, or the art of clothing and adorning that thought so found and varied, in apt significant, and sounding words" as the third "happiness of the poet's imagination." He considers imagery "the very height and life of poetry," and admits that the poet must heighten "with all the arts and ornaments of poesy." Combining ideas
on both verisimilitude and heightening, Dryden states in "A Parallel Betwixt Poetry and Painting":

What he [du Fresnoy] says of face-painting, or the portrait of any one particular person, concerning the likeness, is also applicable to poetry. In the character of an hero, as well as in an inferior figure, there is a better or worse likeness to be taken: the better is a panegyric, if it be not false, and the worse is a libel.75

Perhaps the one most important statement concerning amplification comes in the "Dedication of The Spanish Friar":

But as in a room contrived for state, the height of the roof should bear a proportion to the area; so, in the heightenings of poetry, the strength and vehemence of figures should be suited to the occasion, the subject, and the person. All beyond this is monstrous: 'tis out of nature, 'tis an excrescence, and not a living part of poetry.76

As has been demonstrated, then, Dryden's views on amplification coincide with those of the epideictic theorists. Dryden knew the importance of amplification, but he also showed an awareness of the dangers of bad taste in the use of it.

Some of the dangers and great problems involved in writing panegyrics must be considered from Dryden's own viewpoint. In the "Dedication of The Spanish Friar," Dryden says to Lord Haughton:

and truly it was thus far my design that I might entertain you with somewhat in my own art which might be more worthy of a noble mind than the stale, exploded trick of fulsome panegyrics. 'Tis difficult to write justly on anything, but almost impossible in praise.77

Further statements along the same line are found in "The
Dedication of Aureng-Zebe," where Dryden addresses the Earl of Mulgrave: "This, my lord, is the character of a courtier without wit; and therefore that which is a satire to other men, must be a panegyric to your lordship, who are master of it." In "The Dedication of Don Sebastian," addressed to the Earl of Leicester, Dryden says, "There are few in any age who can bear the load of a dedication; for where praise is undeserved, it is satire . . . ." These statements bring us back to the conventional topic of epideictic poetry, the insistence on the worth of a topic to be praised.

In addition to showing his awareness of the dangers in writing panegyrics, Dryden publicly states his own ethical standards in praising individuals. For example, in "The Dedication of Aureng-Zebe" he says, "the lowness of my fortune has not yet brought me to flatter vice; and it is my duty to give testimony to virtue." He also attests to his ethics of praise in two letters. In writing to Charles Montague in October 1699/7, he states,

For it were to want Common sense, to desire your patronage, & resolve to disoblige you: and as I will not hazard my hopes of your protection by refusing to obey you in any thing, which I can perform with my conscience, or my honour; So I am very confident you will never impose any other terms on me.

He makes the same kind of reference to his conscience and his honor in a letter to Mrs. Steward, November 7, 1699/7: "for I can never go an Inch beyond my Conscience
& my Honour." To what extent we can trust these statements is only conjectural, but I believe that they are an index to the general views Dryden possessed of his private and poetic obligations in panegyrical poetry. His references to "fulsome Panegyrick" and the use of the phrase "without poetry" to indicate complete sincerity suggest that he considers delight, instruction, and beauty more important in poetry than historical veracity. Therefore, what modern critics call irony in Dryden's poetry of praise may well result from their failure to understand the tradition and frame of thought within which Dryden worked.

If any doubt of Dryden's own awareness of the epideictic tradition should still exist in anyone's mind, certainly the following statement by Dryden will dispel it. In "To the Right Honourable the Earl of Abingdon," prefixed to Eleonora, Dryden shows his reverence for the Ancients and his recognition of their rhetorical prescriptions in panegyric, a major form of epideictic literature and one which Dryden used considerably. His statement reads,

It was intended, as your Lordship sees in the title, not for an elegy but a panegyric. A kind of apotheosis, indeed; if a heathen word may be applied to a Christian use. And on all occasions of praise, if we take the Ancients for our patterns, we are bound by prescription to employ the magnificence of words, and the force of figures, to adorn the sublimity of thoughts. Isocrates amongst the Grecian orators, and Cicero, and the younger Pliny amongst the Romans, have left us their precedents for our security: for I think I need not mention the inimitable Pindar, who stretches on these pinions out of sight, and is carried upward, as it were into another world.
It is very apparent that in writing Eleonora, at least, Dryden considered himself in the tradition of the Ancients, and it seems logical that this awareness of the tradition influenced all of his poems of praise.

In this chapter we have demonstrated that Dryden definitely considered himself within the epideictic tradition in one poem, at least. And further we have seen how his interpretation of the purposes and conventions of the classical epideictic tradition correlates very closely with that of the other theorists. The fact that Dryden's education and his own critical statements about poetry of praise place Dryden squarely in the epideictic tradition brings us a long distance toward being able to read his poetry of praise without distortion. The only thing left to do before we may begin interpreting the poems of praise in light of the epideictic tradition is to demonstrate what irony was and was not to Dryden. That is the task assigned to the next chapter.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER I


2. See, for example, Cicero's De Oratore; De Partitio Oratoria; and Ad C. Herennium Libri IV De Ratione Dicendi; Quintilian, Institutio Oratoria; and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, The Three Literary Letters.


5. Baldwin, p. 15n: Baldwin considers this too narrow a term.


7. Rhetoric, p. 52 (1.9).


9. Quintilian, Institutio Oratoria, trans. H.E. Butler (London, 1920-22), I, 467 (III.vii.6); see Kenneth Burke, Rhetoric of Motives (New York, 1950), p. 66 for comments on the quantity of purely ornamental oratory. He claims that it made up only a small portion of the total epideictic corpus and stresses the fundamental urgency behind the great majority of the devices of ornamentation.

10. See Isocrates' "Panegyricus," trans. George Norlin (Cambridge, Mass., 1954), sec. 4: "... I have singled out as the highest kind of oratory that which deals with the greatest affairs, and while best displaying the ability of those who speak, brings most profit to those who hear..." See also James Kinsley, "Dryden and the Art of Praise," English Studies, XXXIV (1953), 62-63; note the following passage from Thomas Wilson, The Arte of Rhetorique (1560), ed. G.H. Mair (Oxford, 1909), p. 63: "Praisesing is either of the man, or of some deede done. Wee shall exhort men to do the thing, if we shewe them that it is a worthie attempt, a godly enterprise, and such as fewe men hetherto have adventured. In praising a man, wee shall exhort him to goe forward, considering it agreeith with his wonted manhood, and that hetherto he hath not slacked to hazard boldly upon the best and
worthiest deedes, requiring him to make his ende answerable to his most worthie beginnنغes, that he may ende with honor, which hath so long continued in such renowne. For it were a foule shame to lose honour through follie, which have been got through vertue, and to appeare most slacke in keeping it, then [sic] he seemed carefull at the first to attaine it."

10 O.B. Hardison, The Enduring Monument (Chapel Hill, 1962), p. 137; see also Lester K. Born, "The Perfect Prince According to the Latin Panegyrists," American Journal of Philology, LV (1934), 20; compare with Quintilian, I, 395, 397 (III.iv.14-15): "... panegyrics are advisory in form and frequently discuss the interests of Greece"; and Julius Caesar Scaliger, Select Translations from Scaliger's Poetics, ed. Frederick Morgan Padelford (New York, 1905), p. 5; note also Angel Day, The English Secretary (1586), ed. R.C. Alston (Menston, England, 1967), p. 84; in regard to the prose epistle, Day states, "The Efficacie of praise is no doubt, of rare and singular force, to exhort and stirre up to well doing"; see also Francis Bacon, "Of Praise," in The Essays or Counsels, Civil and Moral (Mount Vernon, N.Y., 1942?), p. 203: "Some praises come of good wishes and respects, which is a form due, in civility, to kings and great persons, laudando praecipere, when by telling men what they are, they represent to them, what they should be."

12 Hardison, p. 108.

13 Aristotle, Rhetoric, p. 46.

14 Corbett, pp. 140-141; see Quintilian, I, 469-470 (III.vii.11-12); and Cicero, De Partitio Oratoria (xxiii. 82): "Consequently all the resources of panegyric and reprehension will be adopted from these divisions of the virtues and vices; but in the whole fabric of the speech the greatest attention is to be focussed on the quality of a person's breeding and upbringing and education and character; and on any important or startling occurrence that a man has encountered, especially if this can appear to be due to the intervention of providence; and then each individual's opinions and utterances and actions will be drawn on to supply the causes and results and consequences of things. Nor yet will it be proper to pass over in silence the death of those persons whose life is going to be praised, in case of there being something noticeable either in the nature of their death itself or in the events that follow after death." Hardison, p. 30, summarizes the three divisions of later authorities as goods of nature, goods of fortune, and goods of character,
broadly corresponding to the categories of the Ancients.

15 Hardison, p. 28.

16 Based on Menander's Peri Epideiktikon, as summarized in Burgess, pp. 110-111, 174; see also a list of occasional types in George Puttenham, The Art of English Poesie, ed. Edward Arber (London, 1869), passim.

17 See James R. Sutherland, English Literature of the Late Seventeenth Century (New York, 1969), p. 156, where it is remarked concerning Restoration panegyrics: "It was public poetry, intended to make a dignified impression, to gratify and magnify the recipient; the poet therefore composed his piece in the manner of a public orator, conscious not only of the distinguished person who was being addressed, but of the audience which was listening." See also the introduction to volume I of Poems on the Affairs of State: Augustan Satirical Verse, 1660-1714, ed. George deF. Lord (New Haven, 1963), and p. viii of the Preface; along this same line, Samuel Holt Monk, "Dryden the Craftsman," Sewanee Review, LIV (1946), 720-727 states (p. 725): "Whether addressing a patron in what seems today to be outlandish flattery, or satirizing Shadwell or Shaftesbury, or discussing a religious or philosophical problem or retelling the Aeneid, Dryden is the orator, sure of a public that will not only understand what is said, but will admire how it is said."

18 De Oratore, II.lxxiv.344.

19 Rhetoric, p. 225 (3.14).


21 De Oratore, II.xlv.190, as freely summarized by Baldwin, p. 52.


23 De toto eo poematis genere, quod epigramma vulgo dicitur Libellus (1569), as cited in Bernard Weinberg, A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance
(Chicago, 1961), I, 185; see also Puttenham, ch. 28, which has this to say concerning the epitaph, and in turn relates that genre to epigram and elegy in a meaningful way: "An Epitaph is but a kind of Epigram only applied to the report of the dead persons estate and degree, or of his other good or bad partes, to his commendation or reproch, and is an inscription such as a man may commodiously write or engrave upon a tombe in a few verses, pithie, quicke, and sententious, for the passer-by to peruse and judge upon without any long tariaunce. So as if it exceede the measure of an Epigram, it is then (if the verse be corresp­ondent) rather an Elegie then an Epitaph, which errour many of those bastard rimers commit, because they be not learned . . . ."

24 Rhetoric, p. 50 (1.9); Corbett, p. 211, remarks, "the success of this kind of discourse /epideictic oratory/ depends mainly on the truth or credibility of what is said. This is an interesting modern comment in light of what the classical authors and orators themselves said about the purposes of it.

25 Burgess, p. 94.

26 Ibid.; see also Quintilian, I, 477 (III.vii.25): "Aristotle also urges a point . . . to the effect that, since the boundary between vice and virtue is often ill-defined, it is desirable to use words that swerve a little from the actual truth, calling a rash man brave, a prodigal generous, a mean man thrifty; or the process may, if necessary, be reversed. But this the ideal orator, that is to say a good man will never do, unless perhaps he is led to do so by consideration for the public interest."

27 The Enduring Monument, p. 31.

28 Institutio Oratoria, I, 467 (III.vii.6).

29 Rhetoric, p. 54 (1.9).

30 De Oratore, III.xxvi.104.

31 Institutio Oratoria, III, 263-277 (VIII.iv.3-27).


33 The Academie of Eloquence (T6547) (Ann Arbor, n.d.), p. 11; for a list of amplification devices, see Hardison, p. 31: repetition, periphrasis, comparison, apostrophe, prosopopoeia, digression, description, affirmation by negation.


36. See mention of the inexpressibility conceit in Chapter II, p. 50, and accompanying note 48.

37. *Epideictic Literature*, pp. 122–126; Hardison, p. 113, comments on the three sections of the classical funeral elegy: epainos (praise of an individual), threnos (song of lament), and paramuthia (consolation).

38. See Quintilian for a thorough treatment of irony III, 399–407 (IX.ii.44–53); one passage is especially appropriate to our argument here: "Such kinds of irony may even be sustained at times through whole sections of our argument, as, for instance, where Cicero says, 'If I were to plead on this point as though there were some real charge to refute, I should speak at greater length.'" John F. Dobson, *The Greek Orators* (New York, 1919), pp. 294–295 mentions sarcasm and irony as being used in defenses or in offensives.


45 See Johnson article in note 43.

46 John Dryden: The Poet as Orator (Glasgow, 1963), p. 13; Sutherland says in English Literature of the Late Seventeenth Century, p. 156, concerning Restoration panegyrics: "It was public poetry, intended to make a dignified impression, to gratify and magnify the recipient; the poet therefore composed his piece in the manner of a public orator, conscious not only of the distinguished person who was being addressed, but of the audience which was listening."

47 The Scholastic Curriculum at Early Seventeenth-Century Cambridge (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), pp. 146-147; both Brinsley, op. cit., p. 189 and Clark, op. cit., p. 129 state that the declamation was reserved primarily for university curricula.

48 Martin L. Clarke, Classical Education in Britain, 1500-1900 (Cambridge, 1959), p. 66; on the same page Clarke states that between 1660 and 1700 twelve volumes of poems celebrating state occasions and academic functions were published at Oxford and ten volumes at Cambridge. See George Shuster, The English Ode from Milton to Keats (New York, 1940), p. 58: encomiastic verse was fostered primarily by the universities.

49 See Sargeaunt, op. cit.; Reginald Airy, Westminster (London, 1902); and Christopher Wordsworth, Scholae Academicae (Cambridge, 1910) for further details on classical education during Dryden's time.


52 "John Dryden's Interpretation and Use of Latin Poetry and Rhetoric," p. 5.

53 Ibid., p. 18; for a contrasting view, see Marvin T. Herrick, The Poetics of Aristotle in England (New Haven, 1930), p. 52, where he states that Dryden followed the French neo-classicists, rather than the ancients or even the Italians.

54 Feder, p. 19.


57 Feder, p. 30.

58 See p. 6 above for broad categories of praise. We will not deal with blame—invective, comic epic, satire, and comedy—here.

59 George Watson, ed., John Dryden "Of Dramatic Poesy" and Other Critical Essays, 2 vols. (London, 1962), hereafter referred to as Watson, I, 113-114. In II, 162, "To the Right Honourable My Lord Radcliffe" prefixed to Examen Poeticum, Dryden says in relation to drama, "we are bound to please those whom we pretend to entertain; and that at any price, religion and good manners excepted." Compare to Horace Ars Poetica, lines 333-334, 341-343, in Albert S. Cook, The Art of Poetry (Boston, 1892), p. 25:

To teach— to please— comprise the poet's views,
Or else at once to profit and amuse.

But he who precept with amusement blends,
And charms the fancy while the heart he mends,
Wins every suffrage.

60 Watson, II, 116.

61 The Author's Apology for Heroic Poetry and Poetic License," prefixed to The State of Innocence, Watson, I, 200.

62 Watson, I, 219; see also 138-139, and 245.

63 Watson, II, 62.

64 Scott-Saintsbury, XVI, 4.
Some, who have seen a paper of verses which I wrote last year to her Highness the Duchess, have accused them of that only thing I could defend in them. They have said I did humi serpere, that I wanted not only height of fancy, but dignity of words to set it off. I might well answer with that of Horace, nunc non erat his locus, I knew I addressed them to a lady, and accordingly I affected the softness of expression, and the smoothness of measure, rather than the height of thought; and in what I did endeavour, it is no vanity to say I have succeeded.


"The Author's Apology for Heroic Poetry . . . ." Watson, I, 203.


Watson, I, 278; see also Burke, The Rhetoric of Motives, pp. 43-63, where he discusses the reasons implied in the following passage from page 66: "The rhetorical devices can become obtrusive, sheer decadent decoration (as during the era of the 'second sophistic' in Rome); but we have offered reasons for believing that even the most ostentatious of them arose out of great functional urgency." His reasons include the use of rhetoric of Identification (in matters of socialization and faction), the nature of rhetoric as addressed to audiences of first, second, or third persons, and rhetoric as the art of persuasion (implying competitive stress which affects both the reasons and the emotions of the audience. He says on p. 47 "the more urgent the oratory, the greater the profusion and vitality of the formal devices. So they must be functional, and not mere 'embellishments.'"
Watson, I, 279; note also the dangers of panegyric outlined by Warren A. Cherniak, "Waller's Panegyric to My Lord Protector and the Poetry of Praise," p. 124: the dangers of panegyric are "the problem of truth, limitations imposed by the unchanging necessities of praise, support of the status quo, inflation and simplification of the dubious and problematical."

Scott-Saintsbury, V, 190.

Scott-Saintsbury, VII, 305; see also Kathryn Montgomery Harris, "John Dryden: Augustan Satirist," Diss. Emory University 1968, 6-7 for a discussion of panegyric as the obverse of satire. Although none of the critics who see satire, or ironic blame-by-praise, in Dryden's poems of praise use this quotation as evidence, the idea that because some of Dryden's praise seems undeserved and is thus satiric can be found in many of their interpretations. Of course, the crucial problem centers in the word undeserved. What Dryden and the classical panegyrists considered topics worthy of praise in its various degrees of amplification and embellishment modern critics, with their insistence on historical factuality in praise, often do not.

Scott-Saintsbury, V, 190.

Charles E. Ward, ed., The Letters of John Dryden (Durham, N.C., 1942), No. 65, p. 121.

Ibid., No. 67, p. 123.

Ibid., No. 45, p. 91 contains a statement that Dryden wrote "as being from the bottom of my heart, and without poetry"; No. 53, p. 103: "I assure you I write this without poetry."

Watson, II, 61; also 74, 95-96; see also I, 115, where Dryden appeals to the authority of the Ancients in preference to contemporary critics in "A Defence of An Essay of Dramatic Poesy." For the balance between Dryden's use of classical and native English traditions in his criticism, see Herrick, Fusion of Horatian and Aristotelian Literary Criticism, 1531-1555 (Urbana, 1946), p. 83.
CHAPTER II

IRONY AND DRYDEN'S POETRY OF PRAISE

The purpose of this chapter is to define what irony meant to Dryden in order that, with that definition and the conclusions of Chapter I, we may provide a perspective within which Dryden's poems of praise can be read without the distortion created by the application of modern concepts of irony to poetry in the epideictic tradition. Because we in the twentieth century are so heavily imbued with a sense of irony, it is necessary to perceive the main conclusions of these discussions in order to rid our thinking of what irony to Dryden was not and to help us see what it was. We first will see what twentieth-century critics and literary handbooks say about irony. Then to provide some sort of context for Restoration definitions, we will discuss major critical definitions of the term in both the ancient and Renaissance times. Next will be a discussion of the Restoration concept of irony, followed by a general discussion of the clues for detecting irony in a literary work. Dryden's own comments concerning irony will follow. And, finally, we will discuss a representative sampling of modern charges of irony in Dryden's poetry, primarily in his poems of praise.
Defining a term like irony is not simple. Irony has travelled a very tortuous and ever-widening path in English literary criticism from a simple rhetorical figure to a broad, almost unlimited, philosophical concept. Modern critics generally agree that irony is one term, like realism or romanticism, whose meaning is always in a state of flux. Twentieth-century definitions of irony run from the purely philosophical to the purely technical. However, recent trends exclude the purely technical, as will be seen in some of the passages to follow. Perhaps the most generalized kind of definition can be illustrated by the following statements by Randolph S. Bourne: "irony is a life rather than a method"; "irony is a sort of spiritual massage, rubbing the souls of men"; "things as they ought to be,--this is the ironist's vision"; and, finally, "irony is essential to any real honesty." A counter to this correlation of irony and honesty is made by Peter Thorpe, who states, "the present age is in love with irony. To fail to be ironic is, it seems, somehow to fail to be honest or at least fashionable." This same sentiment is expressed by May Sarton:

It is not strange since, as we are constantly reminded, this is an age of criticism, that irony should become one of the canons in literary appraisal and that a work lacking in this quality seems to us to lack seriousness.

She deplores the use of irony as a shield used by irresponsible authors who wish to spare themselves.
Cleanth Brooks states in *The Well Wrought Urn* that irony, for most readers of poetry, is associated with satire, *vers de société*, and other "intellectual" poeties. Yet the necessity for some such term ought to be apparent; and irony is the most general term that we have for the kind of qualification which the various elements in a context receive from the context. This kind of qualification, as we have seen, is of tremendous importance in any poem. Moreover, irony is our most general term for indicating that recognition of incongruities—which, again, pervades all poetry to a degree far beyond what our conventional criticism has been heretofore willing to allow.

This definition, if it may be called one, is so general that it means almost nothing. Nor does the following definition from the same book mean much: "irony, [is] a device for definition of attitudes by qualification." Of course, Brooks must be given credit for being aware that any present definition of irony is inadequate, but it seems that from such an awareness should come greater efforts to clarify rather than muddle the issue. Perhaps he was trying to clarify his definition in an article published a year after his book. In the article he states that, in addition to having a wide variety of "tones," irony is the "obvious warping or modification of a statement by the context." The emphasis on the word *obvious* in itself open to all kinds of personal interpretations, seems to be an attempt to make the definition more meaningful.

Other modern definitions or interpretations of irony
are not much more helpful than Brooks's. Eleanor N. Hutchens calls irony a "deliberately deceptive act which suggests a conclusion opposite to the real one . . . ." Thus far, her definition closely parallels the classical and Restoration meanings, but she goes on to say,

Irony, though it may be directed toward an end, is in itself a sport—a sport the neat trickiness of which is felt to be enjoyed by the ironist for its own sake, quite apart from his purpose in employing it. . . . the sport of bringing about a conclusion by indicating its opposite.**

Here, of course, the emphasis is primarily on the act, and only secondarily on the purpose or effect. And, as in the definitions of Brooks, no concrete methods of "indicating its opposite" are given. David Worcester says, "Irony complicates the structure of a work of art, increases the reader's participation, and introduces universal principles." Like Hutchens, he too emphasizes not what irony is, but what it does. Worcester then attempts to categorize verbal irony, irony of manner, irony of fact (dramatic irony), and cosmic irony.

It should not be surprising that as the versatility of the operations of irony has expanded, the terms have proliferated. Douglas Muecke, writing as an ironologist (his term for a student of irony as irony), lists some of the many terms assigned to what he calls the "ironies of ironic situations" as found in the late eighteenth and following centuries: Sophoclean irony, tragic irony,
dramatic irony, irony of things, irony of fate, irony of chance, irony of life, irony of circumstances, cosmic irony, irony of events, and irony of character. Each label assigned is determined by the way the irony is presented or by the way we look at it as observers, not as ironists. It is plain to see that although no accurate definition of irony has yet been formulated, the kinds of irony have continued to increase numerically at a very rapid pace in recent years.

Unfortunately, there is no guarantee that the list has been completed. I would imagine that as long as the application of the concept of irony is expanded, the list of terms applying to it will continue to grow. Muecke says somewhat resignedly, "Perhaps all good poetry is to some extent ironical, in that it is more complex and paradoxical than mere statements can be." This, however, would bring us right back to Brooks. In the final analysis, perhaps we will have to agree with Joseph Maltby that, at least on the modern literary scene, "irony, like symbolism, is one of those indispensable verbal resources that elude definition." And we may be tempted to close a discussion of modern concepts of irony with two statements from Holbrook Jackson: "the irony of irony is that it generally misses its point" and "the irony of ironies is that man will abandon everything but his illusions and the last illusion of the ironist is that he is disillusioned."
However, such a futile stance would hardly be justifiable since we do have a more sure basis for defining irony. That basis is a contrast or an incongruity between reality and appearance, what is and what ought to be, jest and earnest. The range of incongruities may include direct opposites or varying degrees of contrasting meanings. Broadly speaking, irony is "the art of saying something without really saying it," which is really no definition at all. But it is an important statement in modern criticism because it raises the problem of whether tone may be detected by comparing the content of a poem to actual truth. Modern critics evidently think so, but in dealing with epideictic poetry, they often fail to realize that actual truth need not be adhered to in order for irony to be avoided.

If one wishes to find a more solid basis for defining irony, he may consult current literary handbooks and dictionaries. However, they will not afford much help, either. A Handbook to Literature, a widely used literary handbook among college students, describes irony as follows:

a figure of speech in which the actual intent is expressed in words which carry the opposite meaning. Characteristically it speaks words of praise to imply blame and words of blame to imply praise, though its inherent critical quality makes the first type much more common than the second. The great effectiveness of irony as a literary device is the impression it gives of great restraint. Irony applies not only to statement but also
to event, situation, and structure. . . . In contemporary criticism, irony is used to describe a poet's "recognition of incongruities" and his controlled acceptance of them. Among the devices by which irony is achieved are hyperbole, understatement, and sarcasm. 19

The larger share of space is devoted to the discussion of contraries or incongruities. Even so, to provide a balanced view, the authors have included at least a suggestion of the modern expansion of the meaning of irony. A Dictionary of Literary Terms discusses major categories of irony—Socratic, verbal, dramatic, romantic, and irony of fate—the first two of which are considered ironic treatments, the others ironic content. 20 A Modern Lexicon of Literary Terms, briefly summarizes irony in general—encompassing the classical, rhetorical definition and some of the more recent ramifications—as "the existence of a second perspective on a statement or action, of which the reader is made aware." 21 It is all too obvious that these statements, like many other modern definitions of irony, are vague and over-comprehensive.

Since we have established in Chapter I that Dryden was greatly conditioned by the classical epideictic tradition of oratory in his panegyric poems, it seems natural that his conception of irony would have been influenced by that found in Aristotle, Quintilian, and Cicero and accepted by the Renaissance and Restoration rhetoricians who derived their definitions mainly from the Ancients. Therefore, a brief summary of the meaning of irony which
Dryden's predecessors used may shed some light on Dryden's own concept of irony. We will begin with the classical period and move to the Renaissance. In Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, the emphasis is on the implication of contempt associated with ironical responses to earnest statements. This connotation of contempt, however, has disappeared in modern drama, according to G.G. Sedgewick, and I think it would be safe to say that it is not of major importance in Dryden's panegyrical works, although naturally we would expect it to be present in his satires. Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* mentions the elements of Socratic irony—understatement and self-depreciation. Cicero recognized an irony of "saying one thing and meaning another," in the senses of both exact and inexact contraries, "when the whole tenor of your speech shows you to be solemnly jesting, what you think differing continuously from what you say . . . ." Perhaps this is the forerunner of the modern irony of attitude, or cosmic irony. Irony for Quintilian is "the term which is applied to words which mean something other than they seem to express." There is thus a fair amount of agreement existing among ancient definitions of irony.

Likewise, we will find a large degree of agreement among Renaissance concepts of irony. According to Lee A. Sonnino, Renaissance irony was confined to contraries, and a study of the major rhetorics of the Renaissance shows
this to be true. Agreement on this term is not too surprising, though. No matter whether a rhetorician belonged to the traditional, figurist, or Ramist camps, he would have been at base an Aristotelian. Both Dudley Fenner and Abraham Fraunce concentrate on only two parts of rhetoric—elocution and pronunciation—in other words, style. They define irony as contraries and note, as did Aristotle and Quintilian, the ways in which the author hints to his audience that he is speaking ironically. In addition to the trope of contraries used in “jesting and merie conceived speeches,” Fraunce mentions “a kind of pretended omitting or letting slip of that which indeed wee elegantly note out in the verie shew of praetermission, as when we say; I let this passe; / I passe it over with silence.” Hoskins and Blount essentially say the same thing about irony. Vida has this to say about it:

Sometimes they speak one thing, but leave behind
Another secret meaning in the mind;
A fair expression artfully dispense,
But use a word that clashes with the sense:
Thus pious Helen stole the faithful sword,
While Troy was flaming, from her sleeping lord. . . .

John Smith’s entry which follows represents the content of most of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English definitions:

Ironia is taken for dissimulation, whereby one thing is thought and another spoken; it signifies also taunting speeches, or a speaking by contraries; as if we should say black is white. It is called the mocking Trop, whereby in derision we speak contrary to what we think or mean, or when one contrary is signified by
Another;

This trope is not so well received by the words, as either by the contrariety of the matter; or the manner of utterance, or both.

Antiphrasis and this are of very nigh affinity, only differing in this, that Antiphrasis consists in the contrary sense of a word, and Ironia of a sentence.33

Although the mocking or jesting characteristic is recognized by the rhetoricians of the Renaissance and that meaning continued on into Dryden's time, it seems that, if indeed Dryden used irony in his panegyrical poetry, he employed a straight irony of contraries (blame by praise), not a malicious or taunting kind.34 Thus we have completed our survey of Renaissance concepts of irony and must now move on to the Restoration.

The best modern treatment of the word irony in Dryden's time is Norman Knox's The Word "Irony" and Its Context, 1500-1755. In his preface, Knox admits that there is "some question as to whether irony really did convey certain peripheral meanings during the English classical period."35 He also states that "for the English classical age the central and dominant referent of irony was the rhetorical device of attacking someone or something from behind—or through—a mask of ostensible praise."36

The word remained essentially the same from the time of Quintilian until its appearance in the English language. Although traditional rhetorics categorized irony as a form of allegory, even up through the Renaissance, irony
as allegory fell into disuse in the seventeenth century. The most common meaning at that time was "saying the contrary"; the kind of irony used most often was the blame-by-praise variety. Knox notes that there were four stock definitions of irony which "were the starting points for thought about irony until well into the eighteenth century": saying the contrary of what one means, saying something other than what one means, censuring with counterfeited praise and praising under a pretence of blame, and mocking or scoffing regardless of the rhetorical structure. The first three of these stock definitions have been discussed in some detail earlier. Since all four are narrower in scope than many modern definitions, and since the mocking or scoffing is closer to satire than to panegyric, we will have now to decide if possible what meanings irony might have had for Dryden. We can readily see how Dryden used mocking or scoffing in his satirical portraits, but we are now dealing with panegyrics. Knox states about the stock definition of mocking and scoffing that "the English seem to have slipped into giving the word a more general definition than it had traditionally had." In fact, this meaning seems to be largely subsumed under the blame-by-praise type.

In the section entitled "The Dictionary," Knox discusses ten categories of irony ranging from irony as pretense and deception to dramatic irony. For our purposes,
we will concentrate on the methods of blame-by-praise associated with irony, which was used two thirds of the time in the period from 1500 to 1755 and to which Knox devotes an entire chapter. He lists the following categories under the heading blame-by-praise: Socratic self-depreciation (a pose of pretended ignorance by a genuinely wise and capable person), direct praise (for what the object of praise is not or what it is, in a mocking way), simple concession (holding an opponent's views up to a clear light by echoing them with mock approval), ironic advice (recommendation of the continued pursuit of precisely those foolish, vicious, or vulgar courses already embarked upon), ironic defense (defense of something baffling to one's opponent, as in the story of Elijah and the prophets of Baal, in a mocking manner), a fallacious argument, burlesque, and the fictitious character (such as Swift's Gulliver). But it is quite noteworthy that not once does Dryden's name appear in relation to this type of irony or any other kind. Knox makes the point early in his book that the "great" writers of the age contributed relatively little to the development of the meaning of irony. Dryden, for example, uses the term only once in all of his critical works.

To leave the subject here would be somewhat less than just, since it is true that Dryden is known more for his satires than for his panegyrics and naturally one would
expect critics to associate him with satire and its techniques of ridicule and raillery, rather than with irony.

Knox does discuss Dryden in regard to raillery, quoting the famous passage from "The Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire":

Let the chastisements of Juvenal be never so necessary for his new kind of satire; let him disclaim as wittily and sharply as he pleases: yet still the nicest and most delicate touches of satire consist in fine raillery. This, my Lord [Dorset], is your particular talent, to which even Juvenal could not arrive. 'Tis not reading, 'tis not imitation of an author, which can produce this fineness: it must be inborn; it must proceed from a genius, and particular way of thinking, which is not to be taught; and therefore not to be imitated by him who has it not from nature. How easy is it to call rogue and villain, and that wittily! But how hard to make a man appear a fool, a blockhead, or a knave, without using any of those opprobrious terms! To spare the grossness of the names, and to do the thing yet more severely, is to draw a full face, and to make the nose and cheeks stand out, and yet not to employ any depth of shadowing. This is the mystery of that noble trade, which yet no master can teach to his apprentice: he may give the rules, but the scholar is never the nearer in his practice. Neither is it true that this fineness of raillery is offensive. A witty man is tickled while he is hurt in this manner, and a fool feels it not . . . . yet there is still a vast difference betwixt the slovenly butchering of a man, and fineness of a stroke that separates the head from the body, and leaves it standing in its place. . . . The character of Zimri in my Absalom is, in my opinion, worth the whole poem: 'tis not bloody, but 'tis ridiculous enough. 45

Here Knox sees what probably comes closest to what Dryden may have considered irony, as compared to the stock definitions of his time. However, that there occurred
quite commonly an alternating of the terms irony and rail-
illery on the basis of similarities in methods of delivery
does not really concern us here, since in the discussion
of raillery and banter Knox is actually concentrating on
satire.\textsuperscript{46} From his discussion, he concludes that "ironies
were used more frequently by the Augustans for the purpose
of ridicule than for any other"; in other words, the irony
of blame by praise was the dominant brand of irony in the
seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.\textsuperscript{47} As blame by praise
is not a common device of the tradition of praise, though
it may have been employed in poetry of blame, we would not
expect Dryden to use it to any significant degree in his
panegyrics.

Knox bears this out. From his treatment of the kinds
of irony included under the heading blame by praise, we
can conclude that Dryden probably did not use in his panegyr-
ics techniques of ironic advice, burlesque, and fictitious
character—all of which are found more widely after Dryden's
death than before it. Pope and Swift employed these tech-
niques extensively in their satires. It is also question-
able whether Dryden used irony of direct praise, simple
concession, or fallacious argument in his poems of praise.
And if he employed the Socratic self-depreciation, he did
not use it to create ironic overtones, but instead only
in the sense of the inexpressibility conceit described by
Burgess and Hardison. This conceit regarded the attitude
an author might take toward the subject of his praise. However, we are not certain that the two are synonymous. Whether any of the techniques can be ruled out completely from Dryden's panegyrics is difficult to say, but judging from the dates of the majority of the examples for each category discussed in Knox, and noting what purposes the authors used them for, one may properly conclude that Dryden did not use irony in his panegyrics to any significant extent. As Knox points out, irony so named became a literary mode of critical importance in the second quarter of the eighteenth century, and not before. Therefore, it is quite possible that a conscious use of some of the "peripheral meanings" was much less frequent than hindsight makes them seem.

Knox admits that most of the Augustan techniques of irony can be closely correlated with those of classical and Renaissance times, but he also points out the danger of accepting as full definitions the descriptions, usually very derivative and abstract, found in the rhetorics of the time. It would be a mistake, then, for a critic of Augustan literature to impose on all literature between 1500 and 1755 those connotations of a term such as irony which really became crystallized and possibly only began to be used consciously to any degree as late as the 1730's. Knox says, in reminding us that no complete critical treatment of irony was attempted before the second quarter of
the eighteenth century, "Out of the practice were slowly evolved certain standards and principles which we now take for granted—they seem utterly obvious. But we should remember that they were not obvious then." Whether the degree of consciousness is a valid criterion in establishing a writer's use of a particular technique is a difficult problem, which we will not deal with here. However, it would be a mistake to deny Dryden's awareness and use of ironic devices in his satirical works.

Both Allison and Muecke stress, as does Knox, that only after the first third of the eighteenth century or so, did irony begin to take on quite new meanings from those rhetorical definitions we have already discussed. This fact, together with the strong classical bent of Dryden's education, would tend to minimize any conscious use of the "newer" forms of irony in Dryden's poetry. Furthermore, this limitation of the definitions of irony would apply more to the panegyrics, which obviously follow closely the epideictic tradition, and less to Dryden's satires which employ in practice, if not in name, some of the techniques coming into use in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

Although the Ancients give clues for detecting irony and Knox discusses the topic in more detail, it still seems that interpretation is at the mercy of personal whim and attitude more than we would like it to be.
Douglas Muecke goes so far as to say that "irony, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder and is not a quality inherent in any remark, event, or situation." Too often the material being judged is overlooked or used only superficially by one who wishes to see irony in the passage or who lacks sufficient background in a particular body of knowledge to make a valid judgment. For instance, in our day much of what was taken by Dryden or Milton as common knowledge concerning the Bible and theology cannot any longer be taken for granted. And one becomes weary with the many commentaries which see irony in passages of *Paradise Lost* where none was likely to be intended by Milton. Such unfamiliarity with the Bible also appears painfully evident in discussions of the rapture image in the last few lines of Dryden's *Anne Killigrew* ode. From a strictly secular view, such an image seems grotesque and out of keeping with the remainder of the poem, but to one who knows the Biblical accounts of the resurrection of the saints, the image seems appropriately used in the ode. As it is in fields of theology and religion, so it often happens in other areas of human activity. An unfamiliarity with the basics being written about may easily call up pronouncements of irony in an age of irony, but it is our responsibility to attempt to see the work in its proper perspective. That is what I am trying to do by reading Dryden in the light of the epideictic tradition.
and with the assumption that, as he was strongly guided by
the Ancients in other matters, more than likely he was a-
ware of irony primarily in its rhetorical stock definitions.
Like any other great author, of course, Dryden did not
allow any tradition or set of conventions to bind him un-
necessarily. But as I have already stated, it seems that,
if he used the developing senses of irony, he used them in
his satires, not in his panegyrics.
A problem crucial to the proper reading of Dryden's
poems of praise is the recognition of the potential elusive-
ess of tone, particularly of irony. Quintilian suggested
the following ways in which irony is made evident to the
understanding of the audience: "by the delivery, the char-
acter of the speaker or the nature of the subject. For if
any one of these is out of keeping with the words, it at
once becomes clear that the intention of the speaker is
other than what he actually says." Muecke on the other
hand says, "irony . . . is in the eye of the beholder."
If, as Muecke contends, one of the formal requirements of
irony is an observer with a sense of irony, we could easily
find ourselves in a never-ending circle of perplexity. I do not deny that an audience acquainted with the ways of
irony would be a help to an author of ironic literature,
but just how does one define the "sense of irony"? Before
seeing what Knox says about clues to irony, we should note
what Haakon Chevalier says:
The incongruity which is the quarry of the Ironist must exist in the material. It is not brought about by the arbitrary transposition of values. The Ironist uses ordinary human eyes to see with, but they roam at will in time and space.\textsuperscript{59}

Knox presents several clues for the detection of irony in the following passage:

The Augustan age, then, gave some critical notice to a number of the ways in which their irony revealed itself: the tone of voice, the validity of praise, the likely motives of the speaker, and any internal inconsistencies in what was said: an honest opinion set cheek-by-jowl with an ironic one, the picture of a ridiculous object set in a frame of ironic approval, suspiciously fulsome praises, caricature of the thing being praised.\textsuperscript{60}

The last two especially have been used by critics to justify their finding irony in some of Dryden's panegyrics. However, Dryden's name is conspicuously absent from the authors cited by Knox. The problem with interpreting the praise of Dryden as ironic is that the epideictic tradition normally used ornamentation and heightening of the subject to enhance praise. Therefore, it will be necessary at times to distinguish, if possible, between passages of irony and of straight panegyric. With the conclusions of Chapter I in mind concerning the avowed purposes of epideictic oratory and its attitudes toward factuality and amplification, we should be able to make a more satisfactory interpretation of the panegyrics than has heretofore been made. Further aid should come from the logical conclusion that Dryden most likely subscribed to the general
methods of hinting to the audience when his tone was not to be taken seriously, since he repeatedly stresses propriety, basing his ideas on Aristotle.

It seems only logical that a discussion of what irony meant to Dryden should consider his own comments on the term. His only critical use of irony is found in the following:

If wit consists in the propriety of thoughts and words (which I had imagined I had first found out; but since am pleasingly convinced that Aristotle has made the same definition in other terms), then Lucian's thoughts and words are always proper to his characters and to his subject. If the pleasure arising from comedy and satire be either laughter, or some nobler sort of delight which is above it, no man is so great a master of irony as our author. That figure is not only a keen, but a shining weapon in his hand; it glitters in the eyes of those it kills; his own gods, his greatest enemies, are not butchered by him but fairly slain; they must acknowledge the hero in the stroke, and take the comfort which Virgil gives to a dying captain: Aeneae magni dextra cadis.61

Dryden uses the term irony only once in his critical writings. But the fact that he used closely aligned words such as ridicule, raillery, and railing shows that he was not ignorant of the element of irony in the literature of his day. However, it seems quite doubtful that he would have condoned the numerous modern critical treatments of his panegyrical poetry which concentrate on the irony therein. James Sutherland says, "the strange idea that poetry ought to be 'tough,' that the poem should carry within itself some ironical prophylactic to the laughter of irreverent readers is one that had never, I imagine, occurred
to anyone until the present century." This same sentiment, I suggest, holds true for modern criticism of Dryden's panegyrics. I believe, along with Peter Thorpe, that "modern readers still shy away from reading the Augustan poets in and for themselves and on their own terms."  

To show the extent of twentieth-century criticism which finds irony in Dryden's panegyrics, I will cite some examples. My purpose at the moment is not to refute these pronouncements, but to show the wide range of comments concerning irony in Dryden's poetry. The refutation will come in the following chapters. Critics are far from agreement on just where Dryden is being ironic in his poetry of praise, if indeed he is being ironic at all. Before we discuss criticism of the panegyrics, a look at critical commentary which has been evoked by the opening lines of Absalom and Achitophel will serve to illustrate critical disagreement concerning tone. Since the passage is not included in our definition of panegyric, we will not attempt to treat it thoroughly. Kenneth G. Hamilton asks whether the opening lines are ironic, but seems in a later statement to express doubt that they are: "Dryden usually means first and foremost what he says directly . . . ."  

David Wykes flatly declares that the opening lines of Absalom and Achitophel are ironic. Earl Miner, though, says that in this passage "irony is the solvent of opposed attitudes"—praise and blame. Miner feels that Dryden's thought proceeds
from praise to blame and back to praise again. 66

To show even more graphically the varying conclusions that criticism of one passage can arrive at, we need examine only one more passage from Absalom and Achitophel. For lines 545-546 describing Zimri, Wallace C. Brown sees possible two different readings. The lines read

A man so various, that he seem'd to be
Not one, but all mankind's epitome.

Brown says the lines could be read as either "serious sympathetic tribute" or "pure irony." 67 It seems to me that critical confusion such as this could well be avoided, at least in Dryden's decidedly panegyrical poems, if critics considered the tradition in which they were written.

Some examples from Dryden's panegyrical poems show a similar kind of critical confusion. George Soule sees an "ironic mixture of value and disvalue" in poems such as "Heroic Stanzas" and portions of Annus Mirabilis. 68 Kathryn Harris, who sees in Dryden's later elegies and epistles the praise of a satirist, comments on an "ironic awareness" in the Anne Killigrew ode. 69 Joining in the criticism of the Killigrew ode are David M. Vieth, who sees irony as "merely an added dimension that enriches the poem," 70 and A.D. Hope, who says that the seriousness of the poem depends on a "strain of humorous irony." 71 Earl Miner, too, sees "some ironic qualification" in this poem: "the praise is either too simple or not simple enough." He says,
I do not wish to overstress the ironic under tones, which act more to control than to qualify; but they must be admitted on principle, just as we must see that Anne Killigrew's position at the end of the poem is more human, less ideal, than it is at the beginning.72

As a partial answer, we may quote Paul Ramsey, who says concerning the Killigrew ode, "Value is real; therefore fit praise may be fully and richly expressed, and made without apology or ironic reserve."73 Other comments could be cited, and will be in Chapters III and IV, but these give a sufficient idea of what is being done in criticism concerning irony in Dryden's poetry of praise.

To repudiate all of the above charges of irony in Dryden's poetry may not be possible, but most of them will be shown to be inaccurate or unjustifiable once we begin to analyze Dryden's poems of praise in the light of the classical epideictic tradition. As this chapter points out, Dryden apparently wrote his poems of praise with no intent to treat his subjects with irony, certainly with no intent to use the kinds of irony twentieth-century critics are dealing with. Under the assumption, therefore, that these critics fail to see Dryden's praise in the tradition of epideictic poetry, fail to see the conventions Dryden was working with, and thus miss his intention, we will proceed to analyze some of the poetry in the next two chapters.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER IX


6Compare Worcester, p. 107: "But the irony of the modern hero serves no ulterior purpose and reveals no creative thought. It is irony for its own sake; a manner worn as a protective garment by a dissociated and neurotic personality."


9Cleanth Brooks, "Irony and 'Ironic' Poetry," *College English*, IX (1948), 232-233; see also Edgar V. Roberts,
Writing Themes about Literature, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1969), pp. 115-116; and Gilbert Highet, The Anatomy of Satire (Princeton, 1962), p. 47: "In general usage the word 'sarcasm' means irony whose true underlying meaning is both so obvious that it cannot be misunderstood and so wounding that it cannot be dismissed with a smile."


12 Worcester, p. 75.

13 The Compass of Irony (London, 1969), p. 99: "Men practised irony . . . and ironic situations were appreciated long before either kind was called irony. But . . . the ironies of ironic situations are, lexicologically speaking, very recent arrivals . . . " See also G.G. Sedgewick, Of Irony: Especially in Drama (Toronto, 1948), p. 26.

14 Muecke, p. 11; see also Jack C. Gray, "Irony: A Practical Definition," College English, XXI (1960), 221: Irony is an "indispensable device to all literature . . . ."


16 "The Irony of Irony," Golden Galleon, II (1925), 36, 40.


18 Muecke, p. 5.


21 M.M. Liberman and Edward E. Foster, A Modern Lexicon


23 Sedgewick, p. 13.


28 See, for example, Sister Miriam Joseph, Shakespeare's Use of the Arts of Language (New York, 1947), p. 325.


30 Fraunce, Bk. I, Ch. 6.


34 David Wykes, p. 18, correctly concludes that "where
invective takes over, irony ceases." See also Warren A. Cherniak, "The Heroic Occasional Poem: Panegyric and Satire in the Restoration," MLQ, XXVI (1965), 528; and Swabey, p. 59, which states that irony is not a species of satire.

35 Knox, p. viii.
36 Ibid., p. ix.
37 Ibid., p. 10.
38 Ibid., p. 30.
39 Ibid., p. 34.
40 Ibid.

41 Ibid., pp. 38-98: Irony as pretense and deception; as limited deception; as blame-by-praise and praise-by-blame; as saying the contrary of what one means for emphasis, being neither false praise nor false blame; as understatement; as indirection; as the grave elaboration of a fiction for the purpose of casual satire or aimless mystification; as any discourse not meant to be taken seriously; as any kind of derisive attack; dramatic irony.

42 Ibid., p. 58.

43 Ibid., pp. 99-140; see also p. 155: "The burlesque of ideas accepts its object's point of view and then, with apparent approval, carries it to a ridiculous extreme; or as 'low' burlesque, it accepts the character of its object and then, with approval implied in the very fact of imitation, degrades its object into caricature; or as 'high' burlesque, it often describes exaggeratedly degraded people and actions in elevated language. This language and its associations keep constantly before the audience the atmosphere of praise, but like low burlesque high burlesque too offers an exaggerated version of what the object really is. In the fictitious character the ironist can represent in summary and often exaggerated from what his object is, at the same time projecting ironic approval through his role as creator of that character. Even the direct value judgment can be used to say, quite simply, that it is a fine thing to be a thief—not, it is a fine thing to be so honest."

44 Ibid., p. 8, note 9.

Knox, pp. 164 and 208.


Theodore C. Burgess, Epideictic Literature (Chicago, 1902), p. 122; and O.B. Hardison, The Enduring Monument (Chapel Hill, 1962), p. 154. This term is Hardison's. He says, "Along with conventional professions of inadequacy there are other, more radical uses of the inexpressibility conceit that tend to transform it from a correlative of despair into an affirmation," p. 154.

Knox, p. 185; see also Muecke, p. 11.

Knox, p. 99.

Ibid., p. 141; see also Chevalier, p. 226, on drama.


I Thessalonians iv. 16-18; and Ezekiel xxxvii. 7.

See John C. Sherwood, "Precept and Practice in Dryden's Criticism" JEGP, LXVIII (1969), 432-440: "It was Dryden's greatness that he could use a theory without being dominated by it" (p. 440).

Institutio Oratoria, III, 333 (VIII. vi. 54); see note 9 above.


Chevalier, p. 37; contrast Muecke, p. 63.

Knox, p. 154; see also Quintilian, III, 333 (VIII. vi. 54); and Kernan, p. 82: "But irony always involves two
things in opposition, and the major differences in the kinds of irony turn around the way in which the writer makes it clear that the opposite of the obvious or literal is true. Overstatement and understatement appear to be the two principal methods."

61. The Life of Lucian, Watson, II, 210-211.
65. Wykes, p. 24; see also Maltby, op. cit.
67. The Triumph of Form, pp. 27, 41.
70. "Irony in Dryden's Ode to Anne Killigrew," SP, LXII (1965), 92.
72. Dryden's Poetry (Bloomington, Indiana, 1967), p. 257, commenting on lines 71-76, 81-87; Miner sees irony also in lines 12-14 of "To the Memory of Mr. Oldham."
CHAPTER III
ANALYSES OF SELECTED POEMS OF PRAISE

This chapter will analyze from the viewpoint of the epideictic tradition of praise several poems by Dryden in the order of their composition, beginning with the Hastings elegy, written when Dryden was only eighteen years old. Each analysis will discuss, where appropriate and where critical commentary warrants, those components of a poem—genre, purpose, intention, tone, subject of the praise, structure, and other formal devices—pertinent to discovering tone, particularly with the intent of showing the absence of irony. I will concentrate on critical charges of irony and will refute them or show the tenuousness of such interpretations by considering each claim in the light of epideictic tradition of praise.

"Upon the Death of the Lord Hastings"

Denounced by Mark Van Doren as Dryden's worst poem,¹ and summarily dismissed by some critics as an expression in the metaphysical tradition at its worst,² the Hastings poem nevertheless deserves attention as one written in the epideictic tradition³ and consequently as praise without intended irony. To deny the presence of metaphysical
elements in the poem would be foolish, but to dismiss it because of its metaphysical excesses would be to fail to recognize Dryden's strong sense of rhetorical tradition and his conscious effort to compose this poem within it. Ruth Wallerstein stresses the tradition in which the various poems in the Lachrymae Musarum, including the Hastings poem, were written and comments on the Roman influence upon them. Placing this poem squarely in the epideictic tradition, she points out that Dryden here combines three elements—classical lament, theological elegy, and praise of character—the last of which, obviously, is the one most pertinent to our discussion of the poem as it reflects the epideictic tradition. She continues to discuss the work in relation to its structure—a factor useful in showing the place of a poem within the rhetorical tradition. According to Miss Wallerstein, "the most notable aspect of the poem ... is its fine ordonnance." She sees four rational classical parts in its design: "a lament for the particular death [1-47]; a questioning of the nature of life [5-147]; an expression of grief, including a lament for the state of the world [49-927]; a consolation [93-1087]." Thus, the structure places the poem unquestionably within the epideictic tradition.

Also conventional are the topics of praise in the piece. Again, Miss Wallerstein's assessment is helpful. She states that Dryden formulated the poem "by aggregation
of a selection of motives from a common store of themes suitable to one's subject." 7 Most obviously epideictic of the topics is the personal praise of Hastings—his beauty and learning (3, 32, 28) and his linguistic gifts (15 ff.)—or in other words his goods of nature (25, 33, 47), of fortune, and of character (28). 8 Slight but significant reference is made to Lord Hastings' family in line 2 and to his father in line 95 (corresponding roughly to the genos in encomium structure). Hastings' character is captured in the word noble in line 1. Unlike the usual encomium, however, this poem includes little praise of the subject's accomplishments (praxeis). 9 This omission would be necessarily expected, though, because of Hastings' premature death which prevented more noteworthy deeds from being carried out. Dryden does at least imply that Hastings had made commendable progress in linguistics in his short lifetime. So, the structure certainly harkens back to tradition.

So far, I have agreed with Wallerstein's interpretation and have leaned heavily upon it. However, at one point I must differ with it; that is concerning Dryden's sincerity or lack of it in the poem. Actually I merely question the appropriateness of judging sincerity in poems of praise, since nowhere in the tradition is sincerity a criterion for judgment. Other critics, though, just as strongly as Wallerstein declared Dryden's sincerity,
contend that the praise here is insincere. Theodore Spencer comments that Dryden’s "intellectual extravagance on Lord Hastings is quite without any emotional content...

Similarly, Earl Daniels comments:

> it is impossible to avoid feeling the writer is here showing off, inviting attention to his own smartness, away from the poem where it ought exclusively to be directed. It is impossible to believe in any genuine feeling or emotion, no matter how much analysis is brought to bear. The figure is "phony," the conceit is bad; so the poem is bad."

Granted, the metaphysical imagery, not even good metaphysical imagery for the most part, is distasteful to many modern readers, but contributing largely to such distaste as Earl Daniels expresses is the failure to understand correctly the process of amplification, or heightening, of praise Dryden is using.

Having some part in amplification are the metaphysical conceits Daniels objects to, for example the orb, the general images from astronomy, and the vivid description of the smallpox. But the major device of amplification used in this poem is what Quintilian termed comparison. In line 17 Dryden compares Hastings to Alexander the Great. In lines 30 and 39, he says that Hastings' greatness is too great to be measured by Archimedes or Ptolemy. Dryden even compares Hastings to Seneca, Cato, Numa, and Caesar (70-74) and to Ganymede and the phoenix for their respective intellectual beauty and uniqueness (52, 80).
It is the type of evidence presented above which suggests Dryden's conscious use of the tradition and which should guide the reader in his interpretation of the tone of the poem. Most critics would agree that Dryden was probably influenced directly and greatly by some of the poems included in Lachrymae Musarum written by maturer poets, or by school exercises and models in similar poems of praise. And yet the final responsibility of organization and choice of images to be included in the poem was Dryden's alone. Miss Wallerstein makes very clear her conviction that the Hastings poem and the Killigrew poem (to be discussed in Chapter IV) are "bound together by their relation to a tradition . . . ." It is my contention that Dryden likewise consciously used the epideictic tradition, to an even greater degree than in the Hastings poem, in his more successful poems of praise. Of these, the earliest is "Heroic Stanzas Consecrated to the Glorious Memory of His Most Serene and Renown'd Highness Oliver, Late Lord Protector of this Commonwealth, &c. Written After the Celebration of His Funeral."

"Heroic Stanzas"

Written in honor of Oliver Cromwell, "Heroic Stanzas" has met with widely diverse reactions from the critics. Paul Ramsey considers it "Dryden's first good poem," though "stiffjointed" and "uneven." He calls the structure of
the poem "sound, if a little dull." Lillian Feder concentrates on the metaphysical influences in the poem and the use of classical allusions to intensify the emotional effect. John W. Draper considers the poem a "Renaissance military eulogy replete with Roman allusions recently gleaned in the schoolroom . . . ." Perhaps the most frequent adverse criticism deals not with the poem itself but with the charge of inconsistency in Dryden, since he praises Cromwell so grandly here and then two years later praises Charles II just as unreservedly. The California editors dispose of the many critical arguments based on Dryden's own political beliefs by saying that there can be no certainty about Dryden's views on Commonwealth governmental principles. That explanation, along with the standard argument that epideictic poetry need neither testify as if upon oath nor hold to verifiable historical fact, but that it should heighten praise, seems adequate to dispel charges of inconsistency, insincerity, or vacillation on Dryden's part. Even Cromwell's enemies seem to admit that at his passing England had lost a great man. At least, an honest observer would admit that Cromwell had established some degree of order and stability in England and had made great achievements in foreign policy.

The question of Dryden's purpose and the identity of the intended object of his praise have been given attention from the critics, who are far from agreeing on the two
issues. George Wasserman contends that "the praise of the man is tantamount to an endorsement of his politics." He makes a distinction between this poem and three others which he feels do not intend to praise primarily their human subjects. Even so, he seems to weaken his own statement concerning the real purpose and intended object of the praise in his very next sentence: "In theme and structure, the poems themselves \textit{To His Sacred Majesty, Astraea Redux, and To My Lord Chancellor} demonstrate the poet's commitment to the principle of monarchy as an all-inclusive value and order." In so saying, he seems to imply that none of the four poems under discussion is written primarily to praise a human subject, but rather an idea. Allan Bevan's comment illustrates the diversity of opinions on this poem's intended object of praise: "The poems to Cromwell, to Charles II, and to Clarendon are less concerned with political issues than with personalities and the desire to capitalize on an event of national interest . . . ." This question of the intended object of praise is crucial to the interpretation of any poem of praise. An excellent discussion of the problem and a valid interpretation, I feel, is found in O.B. Hardison's chapter on Donne's \textit{Anniversaries}. Hardison insists that the intended object of Donne's praise in both of the \textit{Anniversaries} is primarily the person Elizabeth Drury, not some concept or idea. I hold likewise that Dryden's poems of praise addressed to
persons in either the title or the text should be interpreted primarily as praise of the person named, and only secondarily as treatises on ideas, politics, and the like. I shall be confronting this problem more thoroughly in Chapter IV in relation to the Killigrew ode and Eleonora. For now, let me say only that I subscribe to the ideas presented by Hardison concerning the actual object of praise in panegyrics.

Tone has not been noticed and commented upon as much as we might expect. Two of the most important statements regarding it, however, come from H.T. Swedenberg and George Soule. Swedenberg sees frequent "ironic barbs" accompanying an alleged pun on Alexander in stanza XXX, most likely the result of his misreading of the poem or his failure to acknowledge the poem's place in the epideictic tradition as evidenced by Dryden's thoroughly conventional use of epideictic components, which will be discussed later. Soule also finds himself fascinated, if somewhat baffled, by Dryden's tone. He states in relation to Dryden's early poetry in general and Heroic Stanzas in particular:

One of the greatest obstacles to a satisfactory reading of Dryden's early poems is a misunderstanding of their tone. Most of his lines seem easy enough to understand, yet often the tone—that is, the ultimate meaning—is elusive and deceptive. The young Dryden was a master of the wide-eyed and innocent stare, a master of an irony so bland that insensitive and hostile readers—and Dryden has had more than his share of these—can completely miss the point.
More to the point of our discussion is Soule's assertion that "... although Dryden extolls Cromwell highly, he also qualifies his praise," or in other words, "balances his praise of Cromwell with disvalue." He sees a detached attitude in the speaker of this poem and feels that Dryden departs from epideictic procedure in praising Cromwell's reputation, not Cromwell the man, and in failing to praise his successor. Scott also observed this failure, but evidently praise of a successor was not compulsory in encomia. At least, Burgess makes no mention of it. In reply to the neglect of praising the man himself, I should think it would be obvious enough that, in encomia, praise of a person's deeds or his reputation was tantamount to praise of the person himself. The best way to refute both charges of irony—Swedenberg's and Soule's—is to look closely at the components of the poem which place the poem firmly in the epideictic tradition.

We will begin with the topics of praise, discussing simultaneously how topics and structural division work inseparably to produce the effect Dryden intended. After Dryden's comment on the timing of the appearance of his poem as compared to the inappropriate timing of some of the earlier tributes, we find what in encomia is called the prooimion, or in Hardison's discussion of the theory of praise, "inexpressibility conceit." In stanzas II-IV Dryden expresses the conventional inadequacy of language
to praise the subject of his tribute. Even while he is expressing this inadequacy of language and of the liberal arts in general, however, Dryden seems to be capitalizing to a certain extent on what the writers of epigrams were aware of—bringing praise and glory to themselves at the same time that they were praising someone else. Such two-fold purpose is at least hinted at in stanza III, particularly in the last two lines:

Tho' in his praise no arts can liberal be,  
Since they whose Muses have the highest flown,  
Add not to his immortal memory,  
But do an act of friendship to their own.

This same idea has been faintly suggested already in stanza II. Even though Dryden accepts his own inadequacy, he determines to do his best out of a sense of duty to Cromwell and in his own best interests:

Yet 't is our duty, and our interest too,  
Such monuments as we can build, to raise;  
Lest all the world prevent what we should do,  
And claim a title in him by their praise. (IV)

The inexpressibility conceit is re-echoed in stanza XXXIII:

Such was our prince; yet own'd a soul above  
The highest acts it could produce to show:  
Thus poor mechanic arts in public move,  
Whilst the deep secrets beyond practice go.

Other epideictic topics are introduced as the poem unfolds. Stanza V talks about Cromwell's all-encompassing fame, a fame which, by the way, was historically verified. Stanza VI describes his grandeur which, to human eyes, was achieved by his success in wars, but which Dryden attri-
butes to heaven alone. The early virtue unstained by inordinate ambitions toward a crown, the topic of stanza VII, corresponds to the anatrophe of classical orations (a description of the circumstances of one's youth). Stanzas IX and X describe Cromwell's careful observation of other rulers, an education which he drew upon when the time came for him to lead his nation, and insist upon his freedom from undue ambition which his enemies charged him with. These stanzas correspond to the epideumata of classical encomia (the delineation of deeds implying choice, thus revealing character). The next several stanzas (XIV-XXXI), corresponding to the praxeis, praise Cromwell's deeds of conquest and colonization, and more importantly his effecting peace as the result of war. Stanzas XXXII through XXXVII serve as the epilogos, a summary of what has preceded. What better words could begin a summary than those of line 125: "Such was our prince"? Here Dryden briefly recapitulates "the highest acts" and then comments on the circumstances of Cromwell's death. Cromwell died not after his fame had subsided, "But when fresh laurels courted him to live" (130). The last two stanzas bring the praise to a fitting and exalted conclusion: although Cromwell is dead, the effects of his piety and valor go on.

Dryden very clearly has used traditional topics and structure of praise. In addition, he employed standard epideictic devices to amplify his praise: comparison and
reasoning. We will concentrate on the amplification in stanzas VIII and XI-XIII. Comparison, as a device of amplification is "a figure in which the subject of the oration is compared to paragons of the past," the point being that the orator's subject surpasses the paragon. Here, although in one way the stanza may seem to say that Cromwell got off to a slow start, in the more likely intended meaning it causes the reader to transfer Pompey's glory to Cromwell and then to add to it because even at a comparatively late age he accomplished so much for his country. Quintilian calls this kind of inference reasoning (ratio-cinatio), the magnifying of one thing by allusion to another. Stanzas XI through XIII return to comparison to amplify the praise of Cromwell. The first two stanzas compare him as decidedly superior to the "former chiefs" of England steeped in their partisanship and warlike ways. The last of the three compares him, not to something decidedly inferior, but to Alexander the Great, whose leadership and martial prowess were very great. In these examples of amplification, then, we have seen praise achieved by both negative and positive comparisons and the inferences (reasoning) drawn from these comparisons. Another obvious method Dryden uses to amplify, though not always agreeable to modern readers, is the heroic imagery found throughout the poem.

Having now considered intention, object, tone, topics,
structure, and amplification, we must make only a few remarks about the genre, which should be fairly clear from what we have said about conventions already. Lillian Feder feels that Dryden rises above the epideictic to deliberative oratory in this poem. Both Soule and Feder argue that Dryden moves from strict praise or blame to a kind of argumentative discourse, what Aristotle called deliberative oratory, the oratory of a statesman debating communal interests. Considering the type of public career Cromwell had, it would not be surprising to see some marks of state oratory enter Dryden's praise in the poem. 

Charles Ward comments:

Using Davenant's *Gondibert* quatrain, Dryden composed thirty-seven stanzas, strung like beads on a string and unified by the controlling theme of Cromwell the heroic Englishman who had brought order and stability out of a domestic chaos, who by his military victories abroad had forced respect and had left England internationally stronger than she had been for half a century. It is a patriotic tribute to the heroic spirit.

Even without reference to the epideictic tradition, the California editors state that the poem is not a work of partisanship. Instead, they call it a panegyric possessing the dignity and elevation that it as a species of heroic poetry ought to possess. They praise it for its well-sustained tone, "characterized by strength and dignity, and a cool, impersonal stateliness." Whether Dryden actually is impersonal and detached is not directly relevant to our interpretation of the poem. Whatever the
case, in that respect, Dryden has written a poem about a person, not a mere abstraction. This fact, combined with a great number of similarities with the encomium, places the poem in the epideictic tradition, without question, and warrants a non-ironic reading of the poem. Although this poem has not incurred as many critical charges of irony and blame by praise as other of Dryden's poems, it is useful to illustrate Dryden's awareness of the tradition in which he was writing. It also is important as a comparison to our next poem, "To His Sacred Majesty," which employs many of the same elements in similar ways.

"To His Sacred Majesty"

"To His Sacred Majesty" is a poem praising Charles II on his coronation day. The very word panegyric, which occurs in the subtitle, signifies at least something of Dryden's intentions in the poem. One can infer from the way Dryden handles details of Charles's good past (74) that the praise has a dual purpose: to express the conventional approval of and praise for the king's past actions and, perhaps more important, to indicate what should be his behavior in the future. Here Dryden approaches the technique of telling what ought to be, often used in epideictic poetry. This reading seems to me more satisfactory than George Wasserman's which holds that Dryden's conventional, formal compliment involves an endorsement of
Charles's politics. Knowing what we do about Dryden's insistence on order and his fear of civil disorders, we can simply expect the reaction expressed here—whether he is openly endorsing Charles's politics or not. After all, no one could have been absolutely certain of what would happen in Charles's reign. Dryden's respect for authority, both civil and ecclesiastical, determines the choice of words he applies to the occasion and to the king himself. Words like sacred, hallowed, blessing, and perfection abound. However, there is no reason to accuse Dryden of being deliberately insincere or ironic in such lofty praise. He is clearly following established precedent in amplification, which will be discussed later.

Written in a journalistic manner for the most part, the poem never lets us forget its occasional character. This strong sense of occasion appears in images throughout the poem—for instance, year in lines 10, 19, and 32; day in lines 31 and 40; season and spring in lines 26 and 29; and months in line 18; as well as the images of space found in the descriptions of the procession on April 22 and of the coronation, or anointing, on the 23rd. Never for an instant does Dryden allow separation of time from event nor the obscuring of the king's greatness as it bears on the entire proceedings. However, one senses that the passages which praise the king's achievements, his great virtues, and his future queen are more important than
all of the pageantry accompanying the coronation.

Even so, a brief look at Dryden's amplification of praise in the poem should be made. Although one might well argue that to a modern mind the general praise of Charles in lines 1 through 70 is grossly overdone, to the Restoration mind such praise was expected. Dryden knew how to heighten praise very effectively. Perhaps the best examples appear fairly early in the poem. The first forty-four lines contain Biblical references to the flood of Noah's time and an analogy of the king as the sun whose warmth dried up the flood waters. Dryden uses these images to heighten praise of Charles's success in calming the rebellious spirit in England. Adding to the general atmosphere of extravagance are the descriptions of the elaborately decked cavalcade of April 22, 1661, and the events of April 23. From the foregoing discussion, then, we see that Dryden's subtitle, the occasional nature of the poem, and the amplification of praise all justify a reading of this poem in the epideictic tradition.

Close reading will show that the poem is essentially an encomium, even though Dryden treats the topics of encomium in the freedom allowed in the epideictic tradition and therefore has felt free to omit certain elements. Those omitted include genos, genesis, anatrophe, and epitome. Dryden has also rearranged the general order so that the prooimion (inexpressibility conceit) comes later
in the poem than is customary. In lines 105-106 Dryden says:

More I could sing, but fear my numbers stays;
No loyal subject dares that courage praise.

He clearly calls attention to the great courage Charles possesses by showing his own poetic inability to praise it adequately. He further suggests that a poet who would presume to praise the king adequately would be less wise than ambitious. Lines 67 through 70 anticipate these sentiments of inadequacy:

We add not to your glory, but employ
Our time, like angels, in expressing joy.
Nor is it duty, or our hopes alone,
Create that joy, but full fruition.

Although no genus as such can be found in the poem, to the English even the mention of restoration (restor'd, line 48) was enough to call up memories of their previous king, Charles I. To the strongly royalist subjects, any king was to be much preferred to a Cromwell. What Dryden meant by lines 71 and 72 we can only attempt to infer:

We know those blessings, which we must possess,
And judge of future by past happiness.

It is probably that his major intention is to call up the good deeds and accomplishments of Charles II in the year which has passed between his restoration and his coronation. But it does not seem to be a distortion to see here an indirect compliment to Charles I. Actually I must admit that there is no treatment of the subject's ancestry comparable to that found in classical epideictic oratory. On the other hand, Dryden does appear deliberately to
develop the classical praxeis, the discussion of deeds of war and peace, which was after all the chief topic of encomia. Lines 79-117 depict the great accomplishments of Charles II in quenching sedition's brand (79), and developing his natural talents and hobbies for the general good of the nation. Charles's strong mechanical genius, apparent in his keen interest in shipbuilding, comes in for Dryden's praise; so also do his domestic accomplishments in improving St. James's Park. Unlike the classical encomium, this poem seems deliberately to avoid praising feats of war. The most likely explanation would be that Dryden feels England has had enough of wars, and to stress military feats would detract from his praise of Charles as the bringer of security. The comparisons of Charles to Caesar fulfill the topic called synchresis, or comparison. Examples occur in lines 86 and 104. The praise of Charles, then, includes his courage, his "martial mind," and the love for his kingdom—all of which assure the subjects that their new king will bring them protection and security (110, 116, 133-136).

The only mention of "family" in this poem is that of the still unannounced choice of a queen for Charles. Critical comments regarding the chaste womb of the queen, the source of future kings, are irrelevant since the poet does not attempt to be a seer and foretell specific events to come. The important fact is that Dryden took the opportunity to add to his praise of the king by mentioning his
future queen. The technique of praising a person by mentioning his family is common in epideictic poetry. A further item which enhances the praise accorded Charles is the miraculous preservation in the oak tree after the battle at Worcester. Such details help fill the gap left by the absence of a conventional *genesis*. And, finally, the one remaining epideictic element of this poem can be found in the last two lines. Here Dryden supplies a kind of prayer, or plea, to Charles, which in this sense serves as a kind of *epilogos*.

Even though it lacks some of the conventional elements of encomia, this poem exhibits enough of the epideictic influence to make our reading justifiable and helpful. In the light of the tradition, the few charges of irony in the poem—especially the charge that Dryden is being ironic in mentioning the chaste womb of the future queen—can quite easily be refuted.

As in "Heroic Stanzas," so here we have found strong epideictic influences—especially topics and structure—which would militate against an ironic reading of the poem.

"To My Honor'd Friend, Dr. Charleton"

"To My Honor'd Friend, Dr. Charleton," unlike "To His Sacred Majesty," seems to have escaped charges of fulsome flattery or hollow compliment. Instead, the critics have been fairly busy trying to decide whether or not the intent is largely to praise the progress made by English scien-
tists, to present an analysis of some of the political results of the Restoration of Charles II, or to praise Dr. Charleton himself.\textsuperscript{42} Earl Wasserman, who considers the poem a "congratulatory epistle," as do Phillip Harth and others, puts major emphasis on the poem as a panegyric on the king and minor emphasis on its purpose of praising Charleton. Wasserman states that the ultimate objective of the poem is "to celebrate the Stuart reign in so far as it is confirmed by the providential correspondence of political developments and the progress of the new science."\textsuperscript{43} He later says, "Therefore, it is less important to Dryden's purpose to praise Charleton than it is to show that all things testify to the glory of the crown."\textsuperscript{44}

Harth, on the other hand, stressing the immediacy of Dryden's occasional poems, likes to view the poem as a commendatory verse epistle, a panegyric on Dr. Charleton, containing an encomiastic analogy between Charleton and Charles II. And although we may never be able to decide on the proper balance of praise accorded the suggested recipients, we can agree that in mixing his praise or in including numerous names worthy or praise—indeed, the roll call of English scientists must not be left out completely—Dryden once again applies the technique of transfer or of using praise for one person to reinforce, or amplify, praise for other persons considered in the same poetical context. Just as in "To His Sacred Majesty,"
both Charles II and his future queen were individually praised with the understanding on Dryden's part that his readers would probably make the proper associations and thereby transfer praise from one to the other and back again, so in this poem Charleton benefits from being placed in the illustrious company of Bacon, the Boyles, Harvey, Ent, and even Columbus, on the one hand, and of King Charles II on the other.

Judging from the oft-quoted passage found in Charleton's dedication to the King, one might conclude that the real panegyric to Charles is found in *Chorea Gigantum*, and that Charleton is, after all, the major human topic of praise in Dryden's poem. S.A. Golden takes the matter one step further. He places the Charleton poem in the "general technical framework of Dryden's panegyrics such as those addressed to Cromwell, Anne Killigrew, John Driden, the Countess of Abingdon and others, in which the subject honored becomes less important than the ideas discussed . . . ." Although I see some value in his analysis, I think he has reduced the importance of the human subjects too much. He does build a credible case for the style of the poem to coincide with his over-all interpretation of it, though. Golden says that the Charleton poem is "stripped clean of all decorative devices, free of all mythical allusions, extramundane imagery and epical references . . . and that Dryden blends the order and tone
of his poem with the scientific interests of his human sub-
ject." Thus he sees the poem as praising Charleton, but
only in the greater interests of scientific truth and prog-
ress. It is obvious that one can hardly read the poem
through without noticing the many politically charged words.
So to rule out a political reading would not be very wise.
However, in our consideration of the handling of Dryden's
praise for Charleton, the epideictic influences are so per-
vasive that there is no demand to defend their presence in
the poem. It has been pointed out by the California edi-
tors that lines 33-36 are not empty compliment: 48

Nor are you, learned friend, the least renown'd
Whose fame, not circumscrib'd with English ground,
Flies like the nimble journeys of the light;
And is, like that, unspent too in its flight.

Charleton's fame had spread to other countries. Even so,
the epideictic tradition would not have insisted on factu-
ality.

If one accepts Joseph Mullin's reading of this poem,
Dryden was not interested in Charles beyond his station as
king; and instead the poem is primarily concerned with
"what Chorea Gigantum is about." 49 It is, Mullin con-
tinues, "primarily a poem in praise of Charleton's intel-
lectual accomplishments." 50 This interpretation coincides
better than any other with the epideictic tradition. In
approaching his main topic—praise of Charleton's accom-
plishments—Dryden must first show Charleton's learning,
fame, and worth. Instead of presenting family history and virtues unrelated to Charleton's intellectual accomplishments, Dryden places Charleton within the proper intellectual perspective. The poem, then, breaks into four major sections: lines 1-20, the shaking of Aristotle's long tyranny; lines 21-32, praise for British scientists; lines 33-48, praise of Dr. Charleton; lines 49-58, praise of King Charles II. Assuming, I think not naively, that Dr. Charleton, as the addressee of the poem, is the intended recipient of Dryden's praise, we see the first two sections and the final section as bearing on Charleton himself, in the manner of transfer and cross-association already mentioned, which is implied in the method of amplification called comparison. Charleton's accomplishments are presented in a way similar to those in epideictic oratory. A man was often praised for doing something before anyone else did or for performing a remarkable feat against overwhelming odds or for repeating a worthy action many times. That Charleton is building a case against Inigo Jones and other thinkers may place him in the second of these categories. However, even though not much of a case need be made for direct epideictic influences on the tone of this particular poem, the fact remains that Dryden's praise, whether historically verifiable or not, still is not to be considered insincere or inappropriately extravagant.
"To the Memory of Mr. Oldham"

We now move from a poem which has not received a great deal of critical attention to one which has. In the next poem, that addressed to John Oldham, there seems to be no problem about the proper recipient of the praise offered, but the critics have had plenty to discuss because both Dryden and Oldham were writers. For some reason artists like to probe into what other artists say about their contemporary fellows.

Of all of Dryden's poems of praise, "To the Memory of Mr. Oldham" has received more critical attention than any other poem of so few lines. And, for the most part, the critics have praised the poem—some for its sincerity, some for its perfection, and some for its "quality of polished fineness." Wallace Cable Brown calls this elegy "Dryden's most successful lyric in toto." In his praise of Oldham, Dryden also brings praise to himself by drawing an analogy between himself and Oldham. After all, both men were satirists and consequently possessed certain interests and talents in common. In a sense, Dryden's praise in the Oldham poem differs from that found in "To His Sacred Majesty" and "To My Honor'd Friend, Dr. Charleton"; yet the principle of transfer of praise and greatness by association is employed. Such practice of transferring praise accompanies naturally the classical epigram
and in turn its close relative, the elegy.\textsuperscript{56} As mentioned in Chapter I, the three relationships between the epigram and the persons concerned with it were to bring praise and glory to the poet, to influence the subject (not applicable here, of course, since Oldham is already dead), and to produce the effect of pleasure, wonder, and admiration in the general audience.\textsuperscript{57} Dryden concentrates largely on the first of these three in this poem.

Common to the analyses of this poem are remarks having to do with classical restraint\textsuperscript{58} and elevation or amplification. Such terms show, in their very use, a relation of this elegy to the epideictic tradition. Rachel Trickett sees Dryden elevating the trivial and putting event in historical perspective.\textsuperscript{59} Arthur Hoffman feels that Dryden elevates, but does not translate the human figure of Oldham.\textsuperscript{60} Especially does Hoffman have in mind the images of Nisus, and of the tree (fruit), and the allusion to Marcellus. Of course, the allusion is intended to bring greater glory to Oldham, not to declare absolute parallels between him and Dryden. The analogy functions in a way similar to the Charles-Caesar metaphor in "To His Sacred Majesty." The context of Hoffman's remarks serves to contrast the elevation of Oldham with what he sees as the creation of an apotheosized figure in the Killigrew ode. For the most part, the Oldham poem uses what Hoffman calls "the spare and intensive use of imagery in the rhetoric of
praise." 61 It uses "restrained and limited elegiac compliment," 62 what K.G. Hamilton describes as "an unobtrusive kind of amplification." 63

The brevity of the Oldham poem almost precludes any such flights of imagery as the Killigrew poem allows for. Even so, the elegy has been accused of being ironic in lines 11-14: 64

O early ripe! to thy abundant store
What could advancing age have added more?
It might (what nature never gives the young)
Have taught the numbers of thy native tongue.

If indeed the intent of these lines is blame by praise, the presence of irony of a type which Dryden understood could be admitted. However, what seems more reasonable is that the critics who tend to see these lines as back-handed compliment misread the word numbers in line fourteen. George McFadden has summed up the meaning of the term quite well, as "well-sounding speech, suited to the things that are signified." 65 It is true that some of Dryden's editors have objected to the alteration of numbers to smoothness in some reprints of the poem, but they do not give their reasons. 66 However, if one were to accept McFadden's account of what the term probably meant to Dryden, he would see that Dryden might well be serious in what he is saying. According to McFadden, "In general, the term rhythmos or numerus is appropriate in connection with a continuously constructed pattern of sound characterized by the resolu-
tion of diversity into unity." This includes variety, continuity, and entirety. It is thus true that age might have taught Oldham more about numbers in his native tongue.

From a study of Oldham's satires, we find that his style was abrupt and coarse, his invective unremitting. Christie comments: "Wanting Dryden's polish, he sometimes even exceeds Dryden in strength as a satirist." Therefore, whatever else might be said about Oldham's merit need not govern Dryden's assessment of his accomplishments. In fact, Dryden's praise is limited to Oldham's satires—a genre in which even Dryden allowed for less polish.

Lines 15 and 16—"But satire needs not those \[\text{numbers}\], and wit will shine/ Thro' the harsh cadence of a rugged line"—are not merely a lame excuse for Oldham's abrupt style. Just as genre determined subject matter, so did it influence style and numbers.

Mixed indeed are the comments about Oldham's poetry. R.G. Peterson says, "The sad truth is that the achievement of John Oldham, Dryden's poetic brother, was not great enough to make him immortal." Donald Mell agrees: "Dryden faced the problem of celebrating a friend inferior in intellectual gifts and less talented in poetry." Likewise, Charles Previté-Orton says that Oldham's satires "have great merits of declamation and studied rhetoric. They are the works of a scholar and a man of pronounced talent, but after all they do not show any specially
poetical qualities." He further points out Oldham's poor ear for verse, his lack of free play of imagination, and his use of heavy melodrama. A.D. Hope, whose evaluation of the Killigrew ode we shall see in Chapter IV, says Dryden "turns the fault [Oldham's roughness] to a compliment, calling it 'A Noble Error.'" It would seem, however, that Mark Van Doren sums up the relationship between Dryden and Oldham more accurately than some of the other critics. Van Doren says, "Dryden had owed him no trifling literary debts." Nevertheless, I contend it is to Dryden's credit that in praising his poetic brother he praises himself. A study of Dryden's epistles clearly shows Dryden's tendency to praise himself by associating himself intimately—either artistically or socially—with the object of his praise. In fact, Alan Roper considers the Oldham poem to be "in the form of a rhetorical epistle in which the relationship between writer and recipient gives significant shape to the work." I agree with him, and also with his following statement: "the relationship is accorded explicit expression in the first five couplets, after which the poem concentrates upon the literary achievement of Oldham through four couplets and a triplet before discharging the valediction in the two concluding couplets." 

The rest of the figures and images in the poem are tastefully chosen from classical literature, the famous Nisus passage, the Marcellus metaphor, and the ivy and the
laurels. If anything in the poem might seem to be ironic in a modern sense, it would be lines 17 and 18:

A noble error, and but seldom made,
When poets are by too much force betrayed.

Here Dryden seems to be admitting a sort of in-group problem of the poet's trade, which Oldham would have understood completely. He might even be laughing at himself, but I rather think he means this in the sense of amplification of an idea in the mode of the epideictic tradition.

This elegy, then, has the following classical elements which would be in some way related to the epideictic funeral oration: compression and economy of simile and allusion development; elevated but restrained diction; classical allusion; echoes of Virgil (Nisus, farewell); "extended, cool, balanced appraisal of Oldham's achievement." For a detailed analysis of the structure and lyrical movement, one may consult commentaries by W.C. Brown and Earl Miner. A few of William Piper's observations, concentrating on Dryden's use of the heroic couplet, support the interpretation of this poem in the epideictic tradition. Piper sees the poem in two sections (1-10 and 11-21) and points out how Dryden defines his and Oldham's similarities a couplet at a time. The first section praises Oldham and allies him with Dryden by use of three figures--their poetic mold, their common note on the poetic lyre, and the same goal in their studies of satire. Section two, according to Piper,
is "devoted to establishing the validity of Dryden's praise." This validity, of course, need not be established in epideictic poetry, and is not accepted as such by some modern critics.

A recent article which I find enlightening as well as agreeable to my own interpretation of the Oldham poem is that of R.G. Peterson. His article concentrates on this poem not primarily as an elegy, which he admits it is, but on the more limited conventional form, the Roman novissima verba (parting words). That particular form seems to correspond closely to a combination of Menander's occasional types: the farewell speech, in particular, as well as the elegy, the consolation and the plaint. Also involved is the panegyric, a type not mentioned by Menander, but by Dionysius of Halicarnassus. Like other critics, Peterson divides the poem into two major sections—lines 1-10, "a declaration of poetic kinship" and lines 11-21, "a reflection . . . on the quality of Oldham's talent . . . concluding with the conclamatio," the farewell, in lines 22-25. He then insists, and I think correctly, on the propriety and conventionality of the poem. Not only does Dryden establish his right to praise Oldham, as a poet whose soul was near allied, but as Peterson states: "Less praise from Dryden would have seemed mean spirited; more would have undermined both the sincerity of Dryden's own poem and the genuine virtues of Oldham's works."
Although Peterson does not use the words *amplification* or *heightening*, the concept is strongly implied in the above passage and elsewhere in the article. The importance of Peterson's analysis to my case is that he has arrived at the same over-all interpretation—non-ironic—that I have, even though he never mentions the word epideictic. His insistence on the Roman convention of a funeral farewell clearly gives support to my interpretation, and serves as support to my reading of Dryden within the classical tradition.

We now move from a poem which has received much critical comment and which falls very neatly within the epideictic tradition of praise to two lesser-known poems, our last examples in this chapter. The purpose of this entire chapter, one must remember, has been to demonstrate clearly that Dryden's poems of praise are governed by the epideictic tradition and therefore are not intended as ironic statements.

Two later poems not only illustrate the range of epideictic conventions but also show that Dryden adhered quite closely to the classical epideictic tradition in all of his poems of praise, no matter when he wrote them.

"Threnodia Augustalis"

Critics have either condemned or ignored "Threnodia Augustalis." Ruth Wallerstein asserts that the poem
"though it includes the elements of an elegy within it, is for many reasons a state poem on a quite different scale from the Hastings and Killigrew poems." Van Doren says the poem "lies loosely about for want of any sincere motive that can knit it together." And Samuel Johnson comments that Dryden "seems to look around him for images which he cannot find, and what he has he distorts by endeavoring to enlarge them . . . . There is, throughout the composition, a desire of splendor without wealth."

I think much of the confusion about tone and the intent of the poem could be cleared up by reading the poem in light of the epideictic tradition. This may not clear up all points, but it certainly would eliminate charges of insincerity or unjustified extravagance in praise. Not all critics have either ignored or condemned the work, however. George Wasserman is one of the few who attempt to analyze the poem instead of merely dismissing it. He sees it in three parts, arranged roughly chronologically: the events leading up to the death of Charles II (I-VI); the elegy to Charles (VII-XIV), "consisting chiefly of a catalog of Charles's blessings"; and the welcome of the new king (XV-XVIII). Within the second major section are the mention of the talents of Charles (X-XIII) and the questioning of Providence (XIV). John Draper comments on the almost equal division of praise between eulogy for Charles and congratulations of James, a valid observation, I think, especially
since the poem is obviously not about only one of the brothers.

Besides the general statements about the tone of this poem, Earl Miner in the California edition points out a few examples of what he considers to be irony in the poem. If, as he suggests the poem is a funeral panegyric on the King's Two Bodies—the body natural and the body politic—he sees occasional ironic twists in Dryden's use of the idea, for instance in lines 61-62 and 135-138. However, if one reads these as examples of heightened rhetoric proper to epideictic poetry, he is struck not by irony but by an almost overwhelming amplification of feeling. The one other instance of irony, according to the California edition, occurs in lines 97-104:

With him th' innumerable crowd
Of armed prayers
Knock'd at the gates of heav'n, and knock'd aloud;
The first, well-meaning, rude petitioners.
All for his life assail'd the throne,
All would have brib'd the skies by off'ring up their own.
So great a throng not heav'n itself could bar;
'T was almost borne by force, as in the giants' war.

Although it may be true that petitioners in the political sense meant the Whig party, it does not seem likely that only the one level of meaning need have been intended. A thorough knowledge of Biblical teaching on prayer would eliminate any need to see irony here. I cannot see why we need to look for satire in the combination of first, well-meaning, and rude as modifiers of petitioners.
can the three not be merely adjectives in series, all modifying in significant and parallel ways the noun? Certainly the political would not have been far from Dryden's mind, but must we concentrate on only that level? I admit that this matter has little to do directly with the epideictic tradition, but it seems that most of the conjecturing associated with this passage could be cleared up if the poem were read as a poem of praise primarily, and not as a political tract. Knowledge of the issues of the day is important, but along with this must be a responsible awareness of the conventional images of the time also.

"Britannia Rediviva"

The second poem, an official panegyric written in haste following the birth of a son to James II, is doubtless not as great a poem as most of those discussed so far. I do not intend to make any analysis of this piece; however, I do think that most of the critical comments mentioned below could find some satisfaction in an approach to the poem which takes into account the epideictic tradition. Obvious are the multiple objects of Dryden's praise in this poem—the newborn child, the queen, and the king. As in "Threnodia Augustalis," Dryden uses one occasion to praise both the dead king and his successor, so here we find not so much praise for the child as for his parents, especially the king. Richard Garnett says of the poem: "Literature
has perhaps no more signal instance of adulation wasted and
prediction falsified. Many lines are spirited, but others
betray Dryden's fatal insensibility to the ridiculous in
his own person . . . . "95 Samuel Johnson says, "nothing
is very remarkable but the exorbitant adulation, and that
insensibility of the precipice on which the king was then
standing, which the laureate apparently shared with the
rest of the courtiers."96 Other critics have their say,
but to top them off Kenneth Young says this is the "least
successful of all his poems . . . . "97

With so many formidable critics saying such harsh
things about the poem, it would be foolhardy of me to try
to answer all of their charges, especially since I do not
claim to have all the answers. Furthermore, I would not
say that all of these critical remarks are wrong. This
poem is definitely not among Dryden's greatest poems.
However, I feel strongly that many of the harsh comments
assume incorrectly a lack of awareness on Dryden's part
of the precarious position of James II at the very time
his son was born.98 But it was not the poet's responsibil-
ity to do more than praise the event at hand in the most
heightened manner he could and any other significant
people or things related closely to the primary object of
the praise. To the extent that the poem is removed from
the hard realities of the kingdom in its seemingly optim-
istic outlook on the future, it is artificial. But is
not that kind of artificiality really a characteristic of occasional poetry of praise in general? Dryden did not profess to be a prophet, as we have already seen in his treatment of the impending choice of a queen for Charles in "To His Sacred Majesty." Even more explicit is his statement in "Britannia Rediviva," lines 71 and 72:

Tho' poets are not prophets, to foreknow
What plants will take the blight, and what will grow.

Although Van Doren's comment on Dryden's use of images may be true—a "fatal want of tact and subtlety in the use of figures"—part of the reason could be the haste in which Dryden evidently composed the poem. Even so, the images used are for the most part conventional ones.

The California editor, Earl Miner, feels it is curious that in lines 333-336 Dryden suggests power rather than wisdom is James's essential character and that justice rather than mercy is his darling attribute. He continues, "Since earthly kings, and indeed all men, should mirror the divine King, whose essence is reason and whose prime attribute is mercy, it is clear that, however obliquely and theologically, Dryden criticizes James." Such an interpretation seems to be the result of what I have mentioned several times earlier. No source is given--whether theological or traditional--for the statement that God's prime attribute is mercy. The poem does not bear out the conclusion. Why could not God's justice, just as well as any
of his other attributes, be the prime one? Granted, mercy is one of the great attributes of God, but so are omniscience; benevolence, which includes mercy, holiness, justice, love, and truth; and omnipotence. It seems fairly clear to me that we moderns are guilty of reading Dryden outside the tradition in which he consciously wrote his poetry of praise. Furthermore, we impose our hindsight upon what Dryden wrote, in such a way that we feel we must twist or interpret some things as ironic rather than as legitimate praise because of events subsequent to that being praised. In discussing "Britannia Rediviva," for instance, critics seize upon the sudden fall of James from his throne and the lack of opportunity of his son's fulfilling the wishful thinking Dryden included in the poem as evidence of irony in the poem. Such critical method can hardly be justified.

So much, then, for these poems spanning the range of time from Dryden's first poem to "Britannia Rediviva" in 1688.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER III


3See Ruth Wallerstein, "'On the Death of Mrs. Killigrew': the Perfecting of a Genre," SE, XLIV (1947), 519-528 for a discussion of the structure of the Hastings poem; Lillian Feder, "John Dryden's Use of Classical Rhetoric," PMLA, LXIX (1954), 1271 discusses it as declamation, the oratory of display; Charles E. Ward, The Life of John Dryden (Chapel Hill, 1961), p. 12, calls this poem "highly derivative and imitative" and comments that "the conventional elements of the elegiac form are here and await only practice and maturity to give them finished treatment."


5"'On the Death of Mrs. Killigrew' . . .," p. 523.

6Ibid., p. 522.

7Ibid., p. 521.

8See note 14 for Chapter I (p. 29 above).

9See Wallerstein, Studies in Seventeenth-Century Poetic, p. 132: "Dryden's grasp of the great themes of his elegy is necessarily limited. But if we read the poem in the light of his prescribed task, as he conceived it, we will be struck, I think, by his sincerity and by his sheer power of making, at least as much as by his inadequacy. The description of Hastings' actual virtue and learning is naively but honestly confined to a schoolboy's point of view. When Dryden passes from the account of Hastings' attainments to the more universal definition of his virtue, he is clearly thinking not of the real Hastings but of a patter of virtuous youth, and the portrait becomes accordingly unreal and exaggerated." See also Bacon reference in note 11 of Chapter I.

10"Antaeus or Poetic Language and the Actual World," ELH, X (1943), 183.
12See Wallerstein, "'On the Death of Mrs. Killigrew' ...", p. 523.
13Ibid.
15Feder, p. 1273.
18See, for example, stanzas XXI-XXII on fame and XXII-XXXI on military greatness; see also Jackson I. Cope, "Science, Christ, and Cromwell in Dryden's Heroic Stanzas," MLN, LXXI (1956), 484.
19John Dryden (New York, 1964), p. 18; see also Ward, p. 19: "In 'Heroique Stanzas' we meet some of the characteristics that will mark in individualized and finished form a great deal of his future poetry: enthusiasm, generosity and assurance of statement; extreme vigor and strength; suppleness; variety of texture and tone; well-freighted lines that move nimbly despite their weight; prosodic and verbal experiments; and above all a feeling for the value, the importance, and the dignity of verse."
20John Dryden, p. 18.
25Ibid., p. 222.
26Ibid., p. 223; see also California edition, I, 190.

28The *Enduring Monument*, p. 154; see also Isocrates' "Panegyricus," in *Isocrates*, trans. George Norlin (Cambridge, Mass., 1928), I, 127: "For I observe that the other orators in their introductions seek to conciliate their hearers and make excuses for the speeches which they are about to deliver, sometimes alleging that their preparation has been on the spur of the moment, sometimes urging that it is difficult to find words to match the greatness of their theme."

29Hardison, p. 31.


33The *Life of John Dryden*, p. 19.

34California edition, I, 189-190.


36See Earl Miner, *Dryden's Poetry* (Bloomington, Ind., 1967), p. 255, for a comment concerning certain poems by Dryden which "deal with the career of the person dead"; this comment seems to me to apply appropriately to *Heroic Stanzas*, as well.

37*John Dryden*, p. 18; see note 19 above.

38Kathryn Montgomery Harris, "John Dryden: Augustan Satirist," Diss Emory University 1968, p. 46, refers to the description of the cavalcade as a "progress piece"; Soule, p. 202, sees this as "glossing over of unpleasant by-gones . . . . offered with the idea of dissipating blame for the rebellion . . . ."

is a "piece of hyperbolical flattery." Rather than only flatter the king, Dryden may have been offering suggestions for future conduct, along with praise. One need not insist that the analogy holds true on all points. Certainly if King-Sun-God can be conceived of as analogous, Charles II and Caesar as heads of their governments and militarily minded leaders may be compared without hyperbolical flattery.

40 See p. 101 above.


43 Earl Wasserman, The Subtler Language (Baltimore, 1959), pp. 15-33; Phillip Harth, Contexts of Dryden's Thought (Chicago, 1968), pp. 21-25; see also Earl Miner, Selected Poetry and Prose of John Dryden (New York, 1969), p. 22, for note that the poem possesses "little personal relevance other than excitement with ideas."

44 The Subtler Language, p. 30.


46 "Dryden's Praise of Dr. Charleton," Hermathena, CIII (1966), 59: Golden's summary of Earl Wasserman's view in The Subtler Language, pp. 32-33, with which he concurs. See also note 36 above.

47 "Dryden's Praise of Dr. Charleton," pp. 60-61.


49 "John Dryden's 'To My Honour'd Friend, Dr. Charleton,' Restored to its True Meaning," M.A. Thesis The Ohio State University 1963, pp. 21, 34.

50 Ibid., p. 38; see also Van Doren, p. 115.

51 See Quintilian, I, 471-473 (III.vii.16).

T.S. Eliot, "John Dryden," in Selected Essays, 1917-1932 (New York, 1932), p. 274: "From the perfection of such an elegy we cannot detract; the lack of suggestiveness is compensated by the satisfying completeness of statement." See also Aldine edition, II, 278: "most harmonious."


The Triumph of Form (Chapel Hill, 1948), p. 23.

Hardison, p. 11; see also R.G. Peterson, "The Unavailing Gift: Dryden's Roman Farewell to Mr. Oldham," MP, LXVI (1969), 233, which contends that the Oldham poem is an epigram by ancient standards.

See Chapter I, p. 8 above.


The Honest Muse, p. 35.

John Dryden's Imagery, p. 93; see also John R. Clark, "To the Memory of Mr. Oldham: Dryden's Disquieting Lines," Concerning Poetry, III (1970), 43-49, for contrasting view of the subject of the poem as death and the speaker as "Dryden," rather than Oldham.

Hoffman, p. 97.

Ibid., p. xi.

John Dryden and the Poetry of Statement, p. 131.

See Miner, Dryden's Poetry, p. 249.


See Christie, p. 337: "The word numbers in this line is unwarrantably changed into smoothness in the reprints.
of the poem prefixed to the editions of Oldham's Works, 1722 and 1770."


68 Christie, p. 337.

69 Not all critics admitted to a roughness in Oldham's lines; see, for example, Scott-Saintsbury, XI, 99.

70 "The Unavailing Gift . . .," p. 232.


73 Ibid.

74 "Anne Killigrew or the Art of Modulating," Southern Review, I (1963), 8.

75 John Dryden: A Study of His Poetry, p. 124.

76 Dryden's Poetic Kingdoms (London, 1965), p. 44.

77 Ibid.

78 King, "'Lycidas' and 'Oldham,'" p. 63.


81 "The Unavailing Gift . . .," pp. 232-236; see also Van Doren, p. 125 and Mell, p. 36, for similar views.

82 Hardison, p. 196.

83 Ibid.

84 Peterson, p. 234.

85 Ibid.
opSamuel Johnson, Lives of the English Poets, ed. George Birkbeck Hill (Oxford, 1905), I, 438; both Miner, Dryden's Poetry, p. 232, and George Shuster, The English Ode from Milton to Keats (New York, 1940), p. 136, note that "Threnodia Augustalis" is Dryden's first original poem in pindarics and stress the biographical or historical content. Young, p. 143, dismisses the poem as "not a good poem" and gives as his reasons Dryden's own distraction and the shortness of time. Verrall, p. 186, says the poem is "more curious than beautiful, but contains a most interesting passage on the literary fertility and importance of the reign of Charles II ...." He condemns section XIII as "perhaps the only instance of thought confused to the point of unintelligibility which can be found in Dryden's works." John Henneman, "Dryden after Two Centuries (1700-1900)," Sewanee Review, IX (1901), 57-72, on p. 70, dismisses the entire poem as artificial. Sutherland, p. 155, comments on lines 381-382 as ambivalent, maybe sarcastic, "but it is more likely that Dryden intended a sincere compliment."

90John Dryden, p. 136.
91Draper, p. 126.
92California edition, III, 302; Poems on Affairs of State: Augustan Satirical Verse, 1660-1714 (New Haven, 1963-1968), III, 1682-1685, p. 583: "... Threnodia Augustalis must also be read as a political poem, an elegy on the old regime and a statement on the new. For his framework, Dryden follows the chronology of the fatal illness from the first attack on Monday until the King's death on Friday, interweaving the principal motifs of Charles' reign with which James was connected, until, in the final stanzas, the emphasis subtly shifts to James, suggesting at once a continuity with the past and a new order for the future."

94Sutherland, p. 192.

John Dryden: A Critical Biography, p. 159; Jean Hagstrum, The Sister Arts (Chicago, 1958), pp. 202-203, comments on the "many lines of dull compliment and exaggerated conceit," yet he does recognize "occasional moments of poetic intensity." Remarking about the conceits and images, he says the poem has "the mood of the religious baroque," dealing with Jesuitical zeal, fasts, and feasts and having a "tendency to see natural events as supernatural epiphanies." Scott, X, 287, has this to say about the poem: "Dryden, who knew how to assume every style that fitted the occasion, writes here in the character of a devout and grateful Catholic, with much of the unction which marks the hymns of the Roman church. In English poetry, we have hardly another example of the peculiar tone which the invocation of saints, and the enthusiastic faith in the mystic doctrines of the Catholic faith, can give to poetry."

See California edition, III, 473-474, for the view that "Dryden, as usual, is intimately acquainted with events . . . ."


California edition, III, 483.

Ibid.

George P. Pardington, Outline Studies in Christian Doctrine (Harrisburg, Pa., 1926), pp. 78-84; see also Catholic sources such as Father Connell's The New Baltimore Catechism, No. 3 (New York, 1954), pp. 9-13.
CHAPTER IV

DRYDEN'S ODE TO ANNE KILLIGREW

It was the charges of irony in the Killigrew ode which were largely responsible for this study in the first place, and it seems only fitting that we bring our study to a close with that ode and Eleonora. The study of the epideictic tradition evident in both poems and a comparison of the critical commentary on them naturally follow what has been established in the first two chapters above and what has been illustrated in the poems of Dryden in Chapter III. Obviously the refutation of irony in those poems should lend critical weight to a non-ironic reading of the Killigrew ode and Eleonora, since all of Dryden's poetry of praise subscribes to the same general prescriptions of epideictic poetry.

"Eleanora"

It is surprising, therefore, that critics do not apply the same critical principles to both the Killigrew poem and Eleonora. After all, Dryden knew neither the Countess of Abingdon nor Anne Killigrew personally, and his connections with the Killigrew family were not very close, judging from what information we have. Therefore, why
would he be negatively ironic in one treatment and not in the other? I do not mean to imply that a poet cannot use different modes in his poetic career. However, being fully aware of the high public esteem both ladies acquired in their brief lifetimes, Dryden should be expected not to treat the two so differently as many modern critics feel he does. I suppose the cynical answer to the question raised by critical conclusions that Dryden's tone differs markedly in the two poems is that Dryden was well paid for writing *Eleonora* and perhaps not at all for the other poem. According to the principle set down by Correa—that a poet may praise in order to receive praise transferred from the object of his praise to himself—¹ one may well wonder why critics see irony in the Killigrew poem and not in *Eleonora*, where the topic of the arts plays no important part. Yet David M. Vieth, in commenting on irony in the Killigrew ode, states that he finds "no irony of this kind in Dryden's *Eleonora*, which is otherwise roughly similar in technique."² Although the reason for this difference is difficult to see from a study of the situations surrounding the poems, a close reading of *Eleonora* proves Vieth right about the similarities of the poems. One only wonders why he could not see that perhaps the Killigrew poem, too, did not contain the kind of irony he finds in it.

Both poems admittedly contain much amplification or heightening of praise, using conventional topics of praise.
Yet the Killigrew poem has for some reason attracted much more critical attention than has Eleonora. Even so, the following critical comments demonstrate the range of general impressions created by the poem. Samuel Johnson, besides acknowledging Dryden's skill in elegy in this poem, points out what he considers the major fault of the poem, the fact that there "is so much likeness in the initial comparison to the death of a king that there is no illustration." He deplores the fact that Dryden did not know the Countess of Abingdon, for to Johnson, "Knowledge of the subject is to the poet what durable materials are to the architect." K.G. Hamilton expresses a thought similar to Johnson's about the comparison's lending itself to little real content. He says: "In writing Eleonora Dryden had nothing to say, and he tries to raise a poetic structure with no basis at all." Hamilton sees Eleonora as Dryden's dullest poem," consisting of "continuous series of hyperboles and conceits, that never get off the ground ...." He may well be echoing an earlier critic and editor, Sir Walter Scott, who called the poem "totally deficient in interest, for the character has no peculiarity of features ...." Patrick Cruttwell sees the poem as "nothing but a recital of the lady's virtues, with appropriate morals extracted therefrom." And James Kinsley says nearly the same thing: "the Countess of Abingdon, although never seen by the poet, and praised 'for a fat fee,' embodies as Eleonora all the
sweetness, charity, and grace of ideal womanhood." James Sutherland sees *Eleonora* as the elaboration of a bare circumstance, whereas Earl Miner, speaking about as explicitly of the poem as anyone does, states, "But we cannot believe that he felt the loss of Eleonora deeply, because he does not make us feel it deeply." Thus we can see an insistence on truth and personal involvement in panegyric here, as we shall see in connection with the Killigrew ode later. Miner reiterates his earlier point later on: "No one will deny that Dryden speaks very well in poetry, even in *Eleonora*. What we can deny the poem has, for all its 'pindaric' gestures and Donnean metaphors, is the power to capture our feelings with a true poetic music," whatever that may be. Dennis Davison, who comes closest to seeing irony in the poem, adds this opinion: "*Eleonora* . . . has been equally widely condemned as has the Oldham poem." He continues, "If we take the poem in this way as a eulogy of ideal Christian virtues remembering also the contemporary fondness for wit, we shall not be surprised at the seemingly comic exaggerations with which he describes her charity . . . ." Mark Van Doren feels the poem suffers from a "threadbare piety" and is nothing more than a "catalogue of female Christian virtues, virtues which Dryden was not much moved by." And Ruth Wallerstein merely comments in passing that *Eleonora* is in the tradition of the didactic funeral sermon. So we can see that
the poem receives no outstanding commendation and that readers tend to approach it with preconceived ideas of what they are to find in it. Some approach it with seemingly no knowledge of the conventions Dryden was working with; others like Wallerstein, see very clearly what he is doing and respond accordingly.

Unlike the intent in some of the poems discussed in Chapter III, Dryden's intent in writing this poem has not really provoked any real controversy. Dryden's declaration of his intent to write not an elegy, but a panegyric, seems to be almost universally accepted. The problem most often confronted by the critics involves, instead, the success with which Dryden carried out his intent. Some also question the worthwhileness of the effort. Others, however, question the sincerity of Dryden because to them the amplification of praise carries a false ring. As mentioned earlier, though, charges of irony are just not to be found. In fact, Earl Miner sums up the tone in this poem as "a tone eschewing the elegiac," but mentions nothing more about tone. He states that Dryden is even able to mourn Eleonora to some extent sincerely. Again, however, the question of sincerity is really irrelevant in panegyric. But no better tribute can be made by a modern critic of seventeenth-century poetry of praise, I suppose.

Naturally, much could be said concerning Dryden's use of heightening or amplification, his use of metaphysical
imagery, and his borrowing from Donne and other sources, but none of these factors really apply directly to the question of irony in Eleonora. Furthermore, most of these topics have been discussed satisfactorily by other critics and need no further mention here. The fact that Eleonora is written in the traditional epideictic strain and that critics of note have remarked on its similarity of method to that of the Killigrew poem and other of Dryden's poems of praise are enough to suggest strongly that as Eleonora is taken to be non-ironic, though at times exaggerated or hyperbolical praise, so ought the Killigrew poem to be read with the inescapable possibility of a similar absence of irony until there is irrefutable substantial evidence to the contrary. I feel that we very well can and should agree with Arthur Hoffman that Dryden's remarks in his preface to Eleonora "give some idea of the principles of his practice in poems like the ode To Anne Killigrew."  

"To the Pious Memory of the Accomplish'd Young Lady, Mrs. Anne Killigrew, Excellent in the Two Sister-Arts of Poesie, and Painting, An Ode"

Called by Dr. Johnson "undoubtedly the noblest ode that our language ever has produced," the poem to Anne Killigrew has presented problems and evoked varying criticism from the standpoint of genre, verisimilitude, its intended purpose and the object of its praise, tone, structure, and amplification. These topics will be dis-
cussed in this order. Let us begin with the question of genre. Because of the importance of seeing the relationship between the Killigrew poem and the epideictic tradition, we must look closely at genre. If the poem is an ode, as indicated by its title and by many critics, certain qualities and conventions are to be expected; yet the poem seems to be a combination of many things—funerary ode, dedicatory poem, preface—what Donald Well aptly describes as a "poem in the high baroque tradition of the public ceremonial." Earl Miner, in the California edition, states the situation perhaps most clearly:

Dryden's ode, which appeared at the front of the slim volume of Anne Killigrew's Poems, brings together numerous features from his earlier poetry and from other seventeenth-century poetry. The elegy, the poem to or on a writer (or other artists), the loose pindaric ode, the assessment of achievement, the personal statement of faith in art, and the panegyric—familiar elements in Dryden's poetry—are combined to confer immortality on Anne Killigrew and the arts she practiced. What is familiar is given new significance by being brought together in a coherent whole, and is given life by the irrepressible lyricism and fervent conviction. The vision of the immortality of art enlivens such traditional rhetorical "places" of panegyric as worthy origins or ancestry (st. ii), superiority to one's fellows (st. iv), striking achievements (sts. vi and vii), comparison with great predecessors (ll. 29-33, 162-164), manner of death (ll. 149-161), and apotheosis (st. x). . . . the traditional is made to rise from ascertainable truth, however glorified in art, and what comes from observation of truth and tradition alike is made to serve Dryden's personal requirements.

Earl Miner goes on briefly to discuss Dryden's use of the conventions in a manner to fit his own literary require-
ments, noting especially the heightening of praise, which historical fact could not fully support.\textsuperscript{25}

This type of summary is fairly representative of most recent criticism, and although Miner recognizes Dryden's combination of tradition and truth, his insistence on observable truth as a basis for panegyric is a modern requirement, not one understood in Dryden's time. It is because of this insistence on absolute truthfulness in this poem and other poems of praise that critics have found it easy to dismiss as ironic passages which to Dryden's mind were neither ironic nor full of hollow, exaggerated rhetoric.\textsuperscript{26} Keeping the epideictic tradition in plain view, one really finds that the problems involving verisimilitude can take care of themselves. One could argue, for instance, about the poetic stature of Anne Killigrew. According to Miner, "Dryden well knew that her poetic stature was inconsiderable."\textsuperscript{27} Yet a close study of the volume of her poems to which Dryden's poem was prefixed reveals a poetry that is not as poor as many critics imply. Richard Morton states in the introduction to his edition of Anne Killigrew's poems:

Dryden's piece is not a generalized encomium; obviously he had read the verses, and his analysis of her art is firmly based . . . . Her verses deserve attention on their own merits--Dryden may well be thought more gallant than scrupulous, but undeniably the poems have an appealing wit, a picturesque imagination and a touching personal candour.\textsuperscript{28}

I strongly agree with Morton.
Modern critics are also occupied with further matters of verisimilitude in the Killigrew poem, for instance Dryden's actual relationship with Anne and her family. Charles Ward tells us that Dr. Henry Killigrew, Anne's father, was probably an old friend of Dryden and that he asked Dryden to write the poem to be placed in the front of the volume of Anne's poetry. As pointed out in Chapter I, it really matters little the actual worth of the object of praise. What Dryden says regarding Eleonora seems also applicable to the Killigrew poem, in principle:

We, who are priests of Apollo, have not the inspiration when we please; but must wait till the god comes rushing on us, and invades us with a fury which we are not able to resist: which gives us double strength while the fit continues, and leaves us languishing and spent, at its departure. Let me not seem to boast, my Lord, for I have really felt it on this occasion, and prophesied beyond my natural power. Let me add, and hope to be believ'd, that the excellency of the subject contributed much to the happiness of the execution;

And on all occasions of praise, if we take the ancients for our patterns, we are bound by prescription to employ the magnificence of words, and the force of figures, to adorn the sublimity of thoughts.

But our primary concern is not whether the praise was deserved; instead, we are concerned primarily with the question of tone—the presence or absence of irony in Dryden's praise of Anne Killigrew. Crucial to the problem of tone in this poem, as in almost any poem of praise, are two intricately related factors: the poet's pur-
pose in praising and the object of his praise. If these can be satisfactorily settled upon, the questions of modern insistence on truth, the role of conventions, and the proper interpretation of certain questionable passages in this poem may then be answered.

If we believe the author's own suggestion of intent in the selection of the title for his poem, we may note that apparently Dryden is seeking to praise publicly the memory of a young artist who participated with at least some success in the twin arts of poetry and painting. In that sense, the poem may be read within the framework of occasional, ceremonial, epideictic literature. Concerning the second factor—the object of praise—in this poem, the same problem which we met with the poems discussed in Chapter III arises. As with the Charleton poem, for instance, so here the most sensible thing would be to accept the poem as a tribute to the person named in the title. Having done that, we might also admit that Dryden probably intended as a secondary theme a commentary on the arts of poetry and painting, as the critics have been so ready to point out. As Donald Mell states, the poem contains "implications of Anne Killigrew's death in terms of art and society." Others have seen elaborations on several themes, including the celebration of poetry, and a discussion of poetry, heaven, and earth. I think, however, we would be wise to see the person of Anne Killigrew as the primary object
of praise. The principles underlying O.B. Hardison's discussion of Donne's *Anniversaries* as primarily praise of a person, and only secondarily praise of an idea, apply well to both the Killigrew poem and *Eleonora*.\textsuperscript{34}

Adhering to the theories of epideictic poetry of praise and Restoration decorum, we can build a stronger case for the ode's praise of Anne Killigrew herself than many critics have been able or willing to see. Such an interpretation could be used to reduce the practicality of such approaches to the poem as A.D. Hope's, which stresses the theme of the celebration of poetry as more important than any praise attributed to Anne Killigrew, and which in turn builds its whole case on a modulation of tone—an interesting, but hardly consistent, reading of the poem considered as epideictic literature.\textsuperscript{35}

The purpose of the poem and the object of the praise are almost inseparable. Praise of something or someone, however, seems to be agreed upon by all critics, even though the particulars cause much disagreement. The very fact that the poem is both a funeral ode and a dedicatory poem, among other things, relates it directly to the epideictic tradition outlined in Chapter I. One must remember that the epideictic tradition did not demand strict adherence to historical fact and that it did employ many conventions, some of which seem to cause the modern reader to look beneath the surface for a basic insincerity on the
part of the panegyrist.

It is interesting that only in the last ten years have we had any amount of significant criticism which found irony in this poem. Two such critical analyses are those of A.D. Hope and David Vieth. Hope says, "If we take the matter of the poem seriously it seems to be little more than a piece of complimentary nonsense." He also states that "the seriousness of the ode . . . includes and, in fact, depends on a strain of humorous irony which runs all through it." Vieth, on the other hand, views the poem primarily as "a product of the Augustan sensibility," but then proceeds to discuss irony in the poem. James Kinsley would object to such a coupling of Augustan ideals and irony; he states that

The Augustan interest in men and manners, the concern for civilised virtues, and the predilection for reflection and didactic comment, encouraged the poet to celebrate public characters and occasions, personal gain apart, and to raise these themes imaginatively to an ideal level without any fundamental insincerity.

In order to be fair to Vieth, however, I must mention that he, along with Earl Miner, admits that the importance of irony in the Killigrew poem should not be overemphasized. Vieth says that irony "remains always secondary to the ritual celebration of Anne's personal and artistic merits." He sees the irony in the poem as "part of the 'limiting frame.'" However, with all of his caution, Vieth is guilty of making too strong a case for his thesis.
by following a piecemeal analysis rather than attempting to see the poem as a whole. Hope and Vieth, and to a lesser extent Arthur W. Hoffman, have approached the poem not from its position in a poetic tradition, but from a "modern," more-or-less impressionistic or psychological viewpoint and have thus read into the poem an irony which is not there, or at least was not intended by Dryden nor understood to be there by his readers.

So far we have discussed genre, verisimilitude, and the purpose and recipient of the praise. We shall next see how the structural conventions in the Killigrew poem show Dryden's great dependence on the epideictic tradition. This analysis will help us discern the tone of the poem, as we have done in Chapter III with some of his other poems.

Ruth Wallerstein points out the following components of the classical elegy found in the Killigrew poem:

the statement of the theme of death, here an address to the dead; the praise of the dead; a lament for the times (stanza IV); the admission of the ineluctable claims of fate, closing with a reference to an earlier poetess; the lament of the mourners (stanza VIII); the consolation. One may also see rough correspondences to the elements of the encomium. Stanza I (lines 16-17) comes closest to the prooimion or the inexpressibility conceit, but only in the sense that it contrasts the heavenly to the mortal Muse, who in "no ignoble verse" intends to sing Anne's praise. Stanza II corresponds to the genos; III the genesis; IV a
digression; V-VII the praxeis or a combination of epithe-déumata and praxeis; VIII synchresis, the comparison to Orinda. No parallels to anatophe or epilogos are apparent here. However, the presence of so many specific elements of the epideictic encomium serves mainly to put the poem in the classical tradition, and in no way is meant to suggest that the poem is actually an encomium in its strictest sense. Instead, their presence suggests that in addition to the purposes of the classical elegy a primary purpose of the poem is to praise in the manner of the public ceremonial verse, or panegyric.

As already established in Chapters I and II, epideictic poetry did not abound in what modern critics readily call irony. Instead of an insistence on historical truth, the poets felt free to embellish their topics in standard rhetorical ways. Ruth Wallerstein sums up this convention of amplification in the Killigrew poem, as follows:

Since the lament is a ritual, these are the stanzas I,III,IX which in Dryden's view, as we may surmise, needed most amplification to sustain their passion and to elevate it to the level of the thought of death. Dryden, therefore, replaces the natural description which he has discarded by imagery drawn from elementary science and cosmic lore. I accept this reading, and feel that a similar treatment of the entire poem—where amplification is obviously used—would be helpful in discerning the tone Dryden intends.

I must admit that there is much in the poem that could be read by the modern reader as fanciful rhetoric, but that
does not mean Dryden is being insincere in the praise so offered. Mell sums up the problem briefly, by describing the poem as "a conventional extravaganza." That it is, but the element of convention lifts the poem out of the reach of modern charges of irony. E.M.W. Tillyard's comment also seems valid:

His extravagances of expression are subordinate to his formal solidity and correct sentiments and in this subordination serve to heighten the very things they may appear to contradict.

Again, we are reminded of the important role played by amplification, a role somewhat confusing to the modern mind unacquainted with epideictic poetry.

Perhaps the most outspoken critic on irony in the Killigrew poem is Dennis Davison, who says: "The opening stanza is a subtle blend of joyous Christian assurance, praise, and warning smiles—'Don't take me too seriously!' Dryden whispers to us . . . ." He continues: "Surely nobody could take any of this seriously. It is fanciful compliment, beloved of the age." He also says, in a manner which vividly represents modern insistence on truth and sincerity in panegyrical poetry: "In one sense the whole business is a form of social hypocrisy, the artificial cultivation of what today has become known as the 'public image.'" A comparison of Davison's views with those of earlier critics whose comments he very obviously takes into account and adapts to his own purposes reveals
a common base from which these modern critics who see insincerity or irony approach the Killigrew poem.

Merely asserting that the poem contains no possibility of irony since it fits the epideictic tradition is not the point I am trying to make. But the manner in which Dryden uses epideictic conventions in this poem would strongly suggest that the over-all effect was intended as open compliment, rather than left-handed blame by praise. In that sense, we may justly dismiss the readings which see the poem as predominantly ironic, and concentrate only on a few of the passages often pointed out as containing irony.

Both Hope and Vieth single out the phrase "no ignoble verse" in line 17 as being ironic. However, rather than being smug about his own poetic ability or looking at Anne Killigrew's accomplishments in an ironic manner, Dryden seems to be attempting to praise her poetry and at the same time his own. The way he accomplishes this is to contrast the immortal poetess with the mortal poet who is setting out to praise her. If we consider lines 16 and 17 as a type of inexpressibility conceit and a natural element of the epigram, we may rightly consider charges of playfulness or irony unjustifiable. The comparison is obviously being made between the speaker's poetry and Anne Killigrew's mentioned in line 18 ("But such as thy own voice did practice here").

Another passage which is the target for charges of
Although critics disagree strongly on the best interpretation of the passage, the very fact that these lines have been commented on by major critics requires a close look at them. Vieth disapproves of Arthur Hoffman's dismissal of lines 75 and 76 as possibly appearing inverted to the modern eye. Instead, Vieth sees irony lurking therein. He sees "ironic qualification" in lines 71-72 and 75-76, both passages containing syntactical ambiguity which allows for both an unfavorable and a favorable sense. This ambiguity, he says, creates deliberate irony. It seems to me that Vieth is acting with typical modern uneasiness in the presence of classical panegyric, the type of uneasiness evident in the following statement by Earl Miner concerning the Killigrew poem:

> Artistic quality is merged with ethical quality. Having established her ethical superiority, he sweeps us on with the presumption of artistic superiority. Or so it seems. As in the Oldham, however, there is some ironic qualification. We need not think that anything so rough as satire is directed at Anne Killigrew, but the praise is either too simple or not simple enough.

This kind of interpretation seems very tenuous when we compare it to what may be deduced from reading the poem in the light of the epideictic tradition. It seems strange that
even Earl Miner, who does not want to stress unduly the "ironic undertones" should be content to base his interpretation on so unsubstantial a foundation. Miner answers part of his own perplexity, however, in his notes in the California edition, where he renders the passage in a non-ironic sense as follows: "As Art is inferior to Nature, so are acquired Stores to personal Treasures; and thus her Vigour is only born in her by Nature, rather than borrow'd by Art." I much prefer this interpretation and can see no reason why Dryden need have meant otherwise.

Critical opinion is similarly divided on lines 108-122:

The sylvan scenes of herds and flocks,
And fruitful plains and barren rocks,
Of shallow brooks that flow'd so clear
The bottom did the top appear;
Of deeper too and ampler floods,
Which, as in mirrors, shew'd the woods;
Of lofty trees, with sacred shades,
And perspectives of pleasant glades,
Where nymphs of brightest form appear,
And shaggy satyrs standing near,
Which them at once admire and fear:
The ruins too of some majestic piece,
Boasting the pow'r of ancient Rome, or Greece,
Whose statues, friezes, columns broken lie,
And, tho' defac'd, the wonder of the eye.

One of the most solid interpretations is supplied in a lengthy note in the California edition, which begins with this statement—"Anne Killigrew's various styles of painting are set forth as a contrast between landscapes and portraiture, with the latter preferred"—and ends with the following:

The entire passage demonstrates, in a complex political-painting contrast, Dryden's knowledge
of the chief landscape and portrait styles known in England at his time, his familiarity with the paintings of Anne Killigrew, and his abiding conviction of the superiority of man to external nature, England to France, and poetry to painting.  

Like Miner, Tillyard also seems largely to ignore tone in this passage. He simply calls the lines "purely descriptive and ornamental." Not all critics, however, are so silent about the tone in this passage. Vieth sees in the two lines preceding the above passage a "hostile question" and finds in lines 108-122 Dryden's "ironic point . . . that her [Anne Killigrew's] efforts were conventional and derivative . . . ." Hope's interpretation of lines 106 and 107 is the same as Vieth's. He then comments that "The tone and movement of the verse with its jog-trot of octosyllabic couplets is one of tolerant amusement." I do not think such a tone is necessarily present. I do have to agree, however, at least partly, with Hope's view that "this poem descends to parody, though parody of the gentlest kind," for Anne Killigrew did write some poems in octosyllabic couplets, though not as many as Hope implies. Even so, parody of this kind does not need to be derogatory. Instead it could be meant to flatter in true epideictic fashion. Or instead of parodying at all, Dryden could be showing that he thought enough of the poet he was praising that he would imitate a form she had found successful.

Stanza VII, especially line 146, has incurred some of the strongest charges of irony. Moderns do not quite know
what to make of the line—"What next she had design'd, Heaven only knows." Without offering further explanation of what he means, Arthur Hoffman states, "The hyperbole, however, is not simply downright but skillfully edged by the phrasing with a playful tone." I infer from this statement that he means something close to irony, though I cannot be certain. Hope, on the other hand, is more explicit in his comment. He says, "The irony here is hardly disguised at all . . .," and he makes no further comment. Evidently he expects his theory of tonal modulation to lend this specific interpretation weight. As might be expected, Vieth considers the tone of this line to be ironic and expresses disappointment in Hoffman and Tillyard whose interpretations seem to play down in one way or another the ironic content of this line and of the poem in general. Vieth particularly disagrees with Tillyard's comment, which in my estimation offers a valid interpretation in line with the epideictic tradition in which Dryden was writing. Tillyard says, line 146 "is not impressive in sound even if we can forget the absurdity which a modern does, and a contemporary did not, find in it." To this Tillyard adds a footnote: "Heaven only knows means in the context that heaven, having heard her songs there, does know, as mortals cannot, what her next artistic efforts would have been, had she survived." We are thus right back to the crucial point of Dryden's relationship to the epideictic tradition in his poetry of
praise. It is very obvious by now that hyperbole, exaggeration, overstatement, amplification—whatever one wishes to call it—makes the modern reader suspect something sinister where the seventeenth-century poet, trained in rhetoric as was Dryden, did not at all intend it.

These passages, then, together with a few scattered single lines, are those most commonly isolated as ironic. As a result of applying the principles of epideictic literature to the poem, I feel the readings which either isolate certain passages as ironic or consider the whole poem to a degree ironic miss the true meaning of praise for Anne Killigrew that Dryden was deliberately attempting.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER IV

1 See Chapter I, p. 8 above; Tommaso Correa, De Toto eo vulgo dicitur Libellus (1569), as cited in Bernard Weinberg, A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance (Chicago, 1961), I, 185.

2 "Irony in Dryden's Ode to Anne Killigrew," SP, LXII (1965), 92.


4 Ibid., p. 442.


6 Ibid.

7 Scott-Saintsbury, XI, 120.


9 "Dryden and the Art of Praise," English Studies, XXXIV (1953), 63.


11 Dryden's Poetry (Bloomington, Ind., 1967), p. 206; see also p. 253 for comment on the genuineness of Dryden's feeling in this poem.

12 Ibid., p. 227.


14 Ibid., pp. 82-83.


17 Dryden's Poetry, p. 216.

18 Ibid., p. 253.


23 Mail, p. 7; see also Jean H. Hagstrum, The Sister Arts (Chicago, 1958), pp. 201, 208 for discussion of the poem as baroque.


26 For example, I.A. Richards, "The Interactions of Words," in Allen Tate ed., The Language of Poetry (Princeton, 1942), p. 78: "Public declamation—the style of reading which the Ode suggests as right—does not invite close attention to the meaning"; Davison, Dryden, p. 90; Gilbert Highet, The Classical Tradition (New York, 1949), pp. 243-244: "It has been called 'the finest biographical ode in the language'; but it contains so much verbal cleverness that Dryden clearly either did not feel deeply about the girl's death, or was unwilling to give his emotions free expression"; Paul Ramsey, The Lively and the Just (Tuscaloosa, 1962), p. 65, calls the praise sincere; Tillyard, p. 64, reads as follows: "Appearances were at the time unusually important. Even if the reality behind the appearance is defective, the appearance is better than nothing and must be maintained."

27 California edition, III, 318; see also Arthur W. Verrall, Lectures on Dryden (Cambridge, 1914), p. 188; Theophilus Cibber, The Lives of Poets of Great Britain and Ireland, to the Time of Dean Swift (London, 1753), II, 224: "Mr. Dryden is quite lavish in her praise; and we are assured by other contemporary writers of good probity, that he has done no violence to truth in the most

28 Poems (1686) by Mrs. Anne Killigrew, ed. Richard Morton (Gainesville, Florida, 1967), p. V; see also A.D. Hope, "Anne Killigrew or The Art of Modulating," Southern Review, I (1963), 7, for comments on the poetry of Anne Killigrew. Hope admits that a poem of praise in Dryden's time was allowed "a certain conventional exaggeration."

29 Ward, p. 216.


31 Mell, p. 8; see also California edition, III, 318.

32 Hope, pp. 6-7.

33 Tillyard, p. 51; see also Kinsley, "Dryden and the Art of Praise," p. 63.

34 The Enduring Monument (Chapel Hill, 1962), p. 168. If we accept Hardison's definition of poetry of praise, we see that Dryden's Killigrew poem belongs. Even so, Hardison seems to feel that Anne Killigrew is not primarily about the lady herself but about "feminine virtue" (p. 102).

35 Hope, p. 6: "... what is important is that art is important; and because Anne Killigrew had her modest share in its world she is entitled to a share in its praise."

36 Hope, pp. 4-14; Vieth, pp. 91-100.


38 Hope, p. 6.

39 Vieth, p. 91.

40 "Dryden and the Art of Praise," p. 63.
Vieth, p. 92; Earl Miner, *Dryden's Poetics*, pp. 98-128.

Ibid., p. 93.

John Dryden's Imagery, pp. 98-128.

"On the Death of Mrs. Killigrew": the Poet as a Genre," *SP*, XLIV (1947), 525.


"On the Death of Mrs. Killigrew"...


I object to Vieth's equating the generalizations with "frigid exercise" (p. 99). This is the legitimate view of Dryden's use of conventional praise.

Tillyard, p. 108; on page 65 Tillyard makes the following comment: "Luckily Dryden's Cde on [his] escapes the offensiveness of some heroic writing: claims for his heroine are so patently ridiculous that they do not take them seriously, and they are conveyed in extravagant rather than thrasonic" (italics added).

Davison, p. 86.

Ibid., p. 87.

Ibid., p. 90; see also Vieth, p. 92.

Hope, p. 9; Vieth, p. 99; see also Tillyard.

See Chapter III, pp. 89-90 above for similar concemring the Oldham poem.


Vieth, p. 94.


Mell, p. 7; see also Jean H. Hagstrum, *The Sister Arts* (Chicago, 1958), pp. 201, 208 for discussion of the poem as baroque.


26 For example, I.A. Richards, "The Interactions of Words," in Allen Tate ed., *The Language of Poetry* (Princeton, 1942), p. 78: "Public declamation—the style of reading which the Ode suggests as right—does not invite close attention to the meaning"; Davison, *Dryden*, p. 90; Gilbert Highet, *The Classical Tradition* (New York, 1949), pp. 243-244: "It has been called 'the finest biographical ode in the language'; but it contains so much verbal cleverness that Dryden clearly either did not feel deeply about the girl's death, or was unwilling to give his emotions free expression"; Paul Ramsey, *The Lively and the Just* (Tuscaloosa, 1962), p. 65, calls the praise sincere; Tillyard, p. 64, reads as follows: "Appearances were at the time unusually important. Even if the reality behind the appearance is defective, the appearance is better than nothing and must be maintained."

27 California edition, III, 318; see also Arthur W. Verrall, *Lectures on Dryden* (Cambridge, 1914), p. 188; Theophilus Cibber, *The Lives of Poets of Great Britain and Ireland, to the Time of Dean Swift* (London, 1753), II, 224: "Mr. Dryden is quite lavish in her praise; and we are assured by other contemporary writers of good probity, that he has done no violence to truth in the most

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Ward, p. 216.

"To the Right Honorable the Earl of Abingdon . . . ." prefixed to Eleonora in George R. Noyes, ed., The Poetical Works of Dryden, Cambridge edition new and revised (Boston, 1950), pp. 269-270; see also Dryden's words in his preface to Annus Mirabilis, cited in Chapter I, p. 22.

Mell, p. 8; see also California edition, III, 318.

Hope, pp. 6-7.

Tillyard, p. 51; see also Kinsley, "Dryden and the Art of Praise," p. 63.

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Hope, p. 6.

Vieth, p. 91.

"Dryden and the Art of Praise," p. 63.
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^Vieth, p. 92; Earl Miner, Dryden's Poetry, p. 257.

^Vieth, p. 92.

^Ibid., p. 93.

^John Dryden's Imagery, pp. 98-128.

"On the Death of Mrs. Killigrew": the Perfecting of a Genre," SP, XLIV (1947), 525.

See discussion of the elements of encomia in Chapter I, p. 12 above; see the following for discussions on the appropriateness of the parallels between Anne Killigrew and Katherine Philips: James Kinsley, ed., The Poems of John Dryden (Oxford, 1958), VI, 1966; and California edition, III, 325.

"On the Death of Mrs. Killigrew . . .," p. 527.


I object to Vieth's equating the general use of conventions with "frigid exercise" (p. 99). This is hardly a legitimate view of Dryden's use of conventions in his poetry of praise.

Tillyard, p. 108; on page 65 Tillyard makes the following comment: "Luckily Dryden's Ode on Anne Killigrew escapes the offensiveness of some heroic writing. Dryden's claims for his heroine are so patently ridiculous that we do not take them seriously, and they are conventionally extravagant rather than thrasonical" (italics mine).

Davison, p. 86.

^Ibid., p. 87.

^Ibid., p. 90; see also Vieth, p. 92.

Hope, p. 9; Vieth, p. 99; see also Tillyard, p. 58.

See Chapter III, pp. 89-90 above for similar comments concerning the Oldham poem.


Vieth, p. 94.
58*Dryden's Poery, p. 256.


60*Ibid., pp. 321-322; see also comment on p. 322 concerning line 107: "It is difficult to say whether the line implies praise for Anne Killigrew's talents in painting, which enabled her to surpass her imagination with her pencil, or criticism of that Mind, so highly praised in ll. 23 ff."

61*Tillyard, p. 55; for further comment, see Davison, p. 89; Emerson R. Marks, The Poetics of Reason (New York, 1968), p. 35; and David Nicoll Smith, John Dryden (Cambridge, 1950), p. 78.

62*Vieth, p. 97.

63*Hope, p. 11.

64*Ibid.; the number of Anne Killigrew's poems in octosyllabic couplets is five out of a total of thirty-three.

65*Hoffman, p. 114.

66*Hope, p. 12.

67*Tillyard, p. 50.


69*See Vieth, p. 95, on "lambent flame" in line 84; p. 94 on line 70. Several critics mention degrees of the grotesque in the resurrection passage in lines 178-195, but none sees the meaning as specifically ironical.

70*Concrete statements from Dryden's contemporaries giving their reactions to the poems upon their earliest publication would provide conclusive proof of whether indeed the Killigrew poem and other Dryden poems of praise were actually intended to be ironic or not. The Cibber reference in note 27 above indicates that there may have been contemporary comment; however, a preliminary search by me has turned up no concrete evidence one way or the other. I have searched many sources which logically should lead to or contain comments about contemporary reactions, but to no avail. Included in those sources are the following: DNB; Poems on Affairs of State, ed. George deF. Lord; Wood's Athenae Oxonienses; Granger's A Biographical History of England; Horace Walpole's Anecdotes of Painting in England; various MSS collections; diaries; available editions of Dryden.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

A careful consideration of the epideictic tradition and a close analysis of John Dryden's poems of praise—whether epistle, epigram, epitaph, or elegy—point strongly to the conclusion that Dryden worked within the epideictic tradition in his poems of praise. Chapter I has shown, among other things, the rhetorical basis of Dryden's education. Whether Dryden was conditioned directly by classical Greek and Roman theories of epideictic oratory or by Renaissance and Restoration interpretations of those theories really makes little difference. In any case, the conventions of epideictic poetry are so numerous in Dryden's poems of praise and are followed so closely in certain instances that no one can doubt their presence.

Especially clear is the reliance on formal tradition in Dryden's earliest poem, the Hastings ode. In that poem, as in all of his panegyrics, Dryden emphasized specific persons and their accomplishments—literary, artistic, political, or social. In certain poems, most notably those addressed to Anne Killigrew and Eleonora, nevertheless, he did praise abstract, universal concepts or qualities,
but only as topics secondary to the persons being praised.

Mark Van Doren aptly summarizes as follows:

Persons he treated from a variety of motives, but always with honest delight. He celebrated public heroes real or supposed, sketched the characters of men in high places and in low, addressed elaborate compliments to benefactors or friends, described minds and actions both in fact and in fable with an endless relish. Books he treated from a single motive, admiration for them and their makers. Dryden was above all things a literary man. His mind could best be energized by contact with other minds; he himself could become occupied most easily with other poets. He sat down with indubitable pleasure to write his addresses to Howard, to Roscommon, to Lee, to Motteux, his laments for Oldham and Anne Killigrew . . . ."2

What is often called insincerity, encomiastic mendacity, venality, or hollow eloquence by modern critics does not really belong in any of those categories. Instead, Dryden follows a tradition which allows, indeed requires, amplification and embellishment. James Kinsley puts it this way: "Dryden's exaggerations have a strict poetic function—they are part of the 'propriety' of panegyric . . . ."3 Even so, Kinsley, along with many other modern critics, demands more adherence to actual truth in panegyric than the tradition expected. Other modern critics see such heightened praise, say of Anne Killigrew's artistic accomplishments, as undeserved praise and therefore satiric or ironic in intent. In reality, however, the modern critics' insistence on irony in Dryden's poetry of praise stems from the failure to apply the principles of genre criticism
(especially the principle that genre determines the mode) to works written in an age highly conscious of genres, of their individual requirements, of prescriptions, and of conventions. As a result, modern critics tend to make unjustified demands on the panegyrics. They forget that although Dryden may be best remembered for his satires, which drew heavily on irony for effect, he was also capable of writing genuine epideictic poetry.

In other words, I believe that most, if not all, of the irony found today in Dryden's poems of praise is largely the product of modern criticism, not the result of Dryden's intention nor an inherent quality of the contents of the poems themselves. What Paul Ramsey says concerning propriety in the Killigrew poem applies, I feel, to all of Dryden's poems of praise: "Value is real; therefore, fit praise may be fully and richly expressed, and made without apology or ironic reserve." This view of Dryden's propriety in praise justifies his choice of subjects and allows him to select the most appropriate genre to serve his purpose and to choose the methods of amplification which he found in classical epideictic oratory and put to such effective use in his poems of praise.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER V

1Dennis Davison, *Dryden* (London, 1968), p. 25: "Nearly all of his original poems celebrated a friend or patron (ranging from King Charles to the composer Purcell), a score of epistles are addressed to personal friends, and most of the elegies and epitaphs are on people he knew."


3"Dryden and the Art of Praise," *English Studies*, XXXIV (1953), 63. See also Rachel Trickett, *The Honest Muse* (Oxford, 1967), p. 39: "He loved to praise, but his praise, however rapturous, is related deliberately to fact and detail, and set against a background of commonly accepted truth."

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