

Dryden's Dramatic Essay

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SINCE its appearance in 1668, John Dryden's *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* has invited questions which continue to perplex us. Even the most elementary matters remain vague. No one from Edmund Malone, Dryden's first "editor," to the present has satisfactorily identified the four people who rented a barge on June 3, 1665, oared down to Greenwich, talked about various subjects concerning drama, returned to London, and went their several ways. Indeed, no one knows whether the characters of the *Essay* were modelled on real people, though we are tempted to think they were. Yet even more distressing than the uncertainty over the identities of the characters is the disagreement over the impulse for and ultimate significance of this important critical piece. To date there has been no satisfactory account for the dramatic quality of the essay. Instead some scholars have chosen to regard it as a manifestation of Dryden's quarrel with Sir Robert Howard over the propriety of rhyme in drama;¹ another has seen it as a response to recent French criticism of English drama;² and finally, one critic, minimizing its appeal as literary criticism, has suggested that the work is a "conversation piece."³

In a way this radical disagreement stems from the essay itself, from what has been called its "skepticism."⁴ Indicative of Dryden's method, the dedication to Charles Sackville, Lord Buckhurst, informs us that the author's purpose is not to "reconcile" the various views in the piece but simply "to relate" them.⁵ The poet absolves himself of authorial responsibility for vindicating any one of the positions over the others. Instead, this task is left "to your

Lordship to decide it in favor of which part you shall judge most reasonable . . ." (I, 16). This may strike us as a conventional compliment to Buckhurst's "understanding," but it also honestly expresses Dryden's reluctance, for whatever reason, to assert didactically the priority of any particular opinion. Thus, while the progression of the essay is argumentative, its ultimate effect is not directly polemic.

Put in other terms, the essay's impact goes beyond that of a conversational set-piece, but falls somewhat short of a formal essay. Dryden's so-called skepticism, expressed both in his dedication to Buckhurst and in the dramatic technique where each actor must defend his own position in the dispute, seems at first to resist resolution; yet we can discover in the essay's method both the reasons for disagreement over its meaning and significance, as well as a possible solution to the confusion. My purpose, then, shall be to attempt a partial reclamation of the spirit in which Dryden wrote *Of Dramatic Poesy*, and to account for the essay's technique.

Although modern readers may be initially confused by Dryden's authorial neutrality in presenting the views of his four disputants, we cannot imagine that Lord Buckhurst had much difficulty sorting out the positions assumed by Crites, Lisideius, Eugenius, and Neander. The attentive reader, however, can detect the superiority of the view espoused by Neander to those of Eugenius, Crites, and Lisideius. Then as now the absence of any pointed conclusions forces the reader, if he is to grasp Dryden's argument, to exercise wit and understanding, to sift the specious from the sound. To accomplish this there is little point in trying to identify the speakers in the essay, then judge whom Dryden disliked or quarrelled with, and finally whose arguments he would most likely distort and weaken. Instead, let me suggest that we regard the *Essay* as a dramatized debate in which the disputants are drawn from another popular literary form in the seventeenth

century: the Theophrastan "Character." Once we recognize the four participants as dramatic realizations of Characters we can begin to penetrate the essay's "skepticism" and learn from it as its contemporaries did.

Sir Thomas Overbury (1581-1613) defined the English Character, in distinction to its Theophrastan original, as "a picture (reall or personall) quaintly drawne, in various colours, all of them heightened by one shadowing."⁶ The chief difference between the Classical source and its English version is one of emphasis. Theophrastus presents moral categories of behavior through insinuation and implication, though he does not comment directly or draw conclusions.⁷ English Character writers, following Joseph Hall (1574-1656) and Sir Thomas Overbury, tend rather to include authorial judgment in their portraits, to delight in their own powers of observation and witty description. Emphasizing the heightening which Character description uses, Overbury's definition bears directly on Dryden's characterizations of the four disputants, because each is drawn with attention to general modes of thought and behavior but beyond this there appears to be little particularization of the individual. The implication of this similarity is clear: the characters in the *Essay* have cousins among the portraits in Overbury, John Earle, and perhaps others. Both Overbury's *Characters* (1623) and John Earle's *Micro-Cosmographie* (1628)⁸ continued to be popular and to exert influence on subsequent collections well into the 1660's when Dryden composed his essay.⁹ In the *Characters* of Overbury and Earle the majority present negative pictures of specific social, physical, economic, spiritual, and mental types. Thus we have "A Physician," "An Antiquary," "A Flatterer," "A Young Gentleman," "A Rash Man," and so on. There are very few complimentary portraits since this tradition held ridicule a stronger inducement for proper conduct and right reason than praise. At any rate, each "Character" gives a forthright though designedly narrow view of an individual with special emphasis on the shadow-

ing which makes a man behave or think in a peculiar way. In Ben Jonson this shadowing was called "humour" as in Pope it developed into the "ruling passion." But we must hasten to add that the seventeenth-century Character writer was not so much interested in providing psychological insights as in showing off his talent for caricatures that were both succinct and comprehensive.

As we shall see, Dryden uses only some elements of character writing and those with considerable finesse since his purpose is different from that of Overbury and Earle. He wishes to show four types of thinker contesting over issues relating to "dramatic poesie." He organizes the essay as an informal debate, and by using types he hopes to show not only how each class of thinker handles the problem, but to indicate also the pre-eminence of a particular argument through indirection.

This indirection or reliance on implication rather than authorial intrusion to make the *Essay's* meaning clear has confused and misled critics. The tendency has been either to minimize or exaggerate its seriousness in order to explain it. So on the one hand we have Donald Davie's notion that Dryden presented the controversies "in a way that drained them of . . . vitality" or that they "are unavoidably inconclusive, because they are so nebulous."¹⁰ To reason thus leads to Mr. Davie's conclusion that the essay is a pleasant "conversation piece," designed to provide mild entertainment for the educated reader. On the other hand F. L. Huntley sees the essay as an intricate web of critical arguments woven to achieve a common goal.¹¹ But as an "essay" it is too episodic, too disjointed, to permit such an interpretation. Moreover, the range of subjects which are either taken up or alluded to, *e.g.*, the Dutch war, verse in general, Ancients *versus* Moderns, the Royal Society, etc., suggests that Dryden set out following no particular "argument" but rather treating in turn various issues which were of concern to him.

From the first the *Essay* commands our attention by its characterizations and specificity of detail. With the

instinct of a dramatist Dryden informs us of the date, time of day, location of action, and movement of the characters. From the moment they step on the barge to the time they debark we are told their every word and significant act. Their names, Crites, Lisideius, Eugenius, and Neander, are in the tradition of Restoration drama. Each implies a characterization: not only the essential humour of the character, but also a motive for his behavior in the dialogue. Avoiding the temptation to read autobiographical significance into Dryden's choice of names, we can still appreciate the suggestiveness of their Greek and Latin origins. Frank L. Huntley has incidentally observed that Crites "is as much a character in a play as he is a portrait"¹² and that his nature leans heavily toward conservatism which exhibits itself by instinctual and vociferous criticism of newfangledness.¹³ Indeed, Crites maligns the Moderns, and defends the Ancients in language garnished with snatches of Latin, Greek, and French. In some ways Crites stands as the most vivid character in the scenario, and his dramatic importance is especially helpful to us if we are to understand the *Essay* as a dramatized debate.

Dryden introduces Crites equivocally as "a person of sharp judgment, and somewhat too delicate taste in wit, which the world have mistaken in him for ill-nature" (I, 19). Indeed, this apparent ill-nature shows itself soon after the four men start down the Thames. Contemplating the spate of poetry the battle that day will occasion, Crites rails at the "bad" verse to be written, comparing inferior poets to "seditious Preachers," implying, of course, that they ought to be prohibited by law from publishing their works (I, 20). Absurd as it seems, the desire to legislate against poor poetry falls a bit short of out-and-out "ill-nature" though it cannot be justified as a "too delicate taste in wit." Just such a paradox, however, typifies Crites' behavior throughout the *Essay*, and it is this combination of human foible ("too delicate") with mali-

sciousness ("ill-nature") which provides the key to his character.

This same nastiness of temperament shows up at other points as Crites addresses his acquaintances on the subject of poetic excellence and its proper reward. He complains that in the modern age inferior poetry flourishes because unlike ancient times "the Rewards of Honour are taken away" (I, 26). These are contradictory words from the mouth of one who earlier could only think of treating bad poets like "seditious Preachers." By his very nature Crites repeatedly undercuts the efficacy of his arguments through similar thoughtless contradictions. In fact, his own words are turned against him by Neander who patriotically upholds the superiority of modern English dramatic verse against Crites' espousal of the Ancients. Speaking specifically of rhyme in drama, Neander observes of his opponent's position "that some of his arguments against rhyme reach no farther than from the faults or defects of ill rhyme, [in order] to conclude against the use of it in general" (I, 81). If Crites were a physician, his strong purgatives would invariably kill the patient.

There is in this outline of Crites' personality a reminder of Characters in both Overbury and Earle. He is similar to Overbury's "A Pedant," and Earle's "A Pretender to Learning" and "A Criticke." Overbury's description of "A Pedant" is brief enough to quote in full:

Hee treads in a rule, and one hand scannes verses, and the other holds his sceptor. Hee does not thinke a thought, that the nominative case governs not the verbe; and he never had meaning in his life, for he travelled only for words. His ambition is *criticisme*, and his example *Tully*. He values phrases, and elects them by the sound, and the eight parts of speech are his servants. To bee briefe, he is *heteroclite*, for hee wants the plural number, having only the singular quality of words.¹⁴

Earle's "A Criticke" agrees with Overbury's pedant on two points: his excessive attention to ancient authors ("Hee is the Surgeon of old Authors, and heales the wounds of dust and ignorance.") and attention to gram-

mar ("Hee writes Omneis at length, and quidquid, and his Gerund is most incomformable").¹⁵ Although Crites is heteroclitite in his personality, I have found no evidence of grammatical irregularities in his speech, though he shows a preference for the first person pronoun and speaks in phrases rather than smooth, continuous periods. As for his devotion to the "Ancients" there is abundant evidence, previously noted, of this literary sensibility.

Perhaps this comparison, resisting an exact correspondence but nevertheless showing certain gross congruencies, is a warning that we ought not think of Dryden as a disguised character writer. He was not. Yet there are enough piece-meal connections between Crites' personality and kindred character descriptions to suggest that one of Dryden's techniques in his essay for helping us see beyond the superficial "skepticism" is his creation of modified Characters as spokesmen for stereotypical arguments.

Another type of character which is reflected in *Overbury* is "An Affectate Traveller," one who "disdains all things above his reach, and preferreth all countries before his owne. . . . In a word, his religion is fashion, and both body and soule are governed by fame: he loves most voyages above truth."¹⁶ Likewise Dryden's second speaker on the barge has been called his "French spokesman."¹⁷

As with Crites, *Lisideius* exhibits a certain bigotry and simple-mindedness in his advocacy of "truth" and "verisimilitude" in drama. On the one hand he condemns Shakespeare's history plays as an example of viewing Nature "through the wrong end of a Perspective" (I, 47) because of their concentration of forty years into two and a half hours of stage action, while on the other hand he cites with approval French dramatic conventions which depend on an elaborate and artificial set of rules to achieve a highly stylized "verisimilitude." We learn quickly that when *Lisideius* refers to "truth" he does not have "nature" in mind but rather an ordering of experi-

ence that is consistent with the laws of French drama. While Shakespeare's telescoped time disturbs his sensibilities, Lisideius advises Restoration playwrights to "so interweave Truth with probable Fiction, that [it] puts a pleasing Fallacy upon us; mends the intrigues of Fate, and dispenses with severity of History, to reward that Virtue which has been rendered to us unfortunate" (I, 47). No statement could better describe Shakespeare's technique in his history plays, especially those which follow Hall and Holinshed closely.

In criticizing Shakespeare and his contemporary playwrights and praising Corneille and the French school, Lisideius indulges in a bit of Restoration modishness inspired by the court of Charles II. Returning from his "travels" in 1660, Charles brought with him men and manners adopted in France and Holland. Culturally, France was the hub of the universe, and French taste in art, literature, and drama became the cry of the recently emancipated Cavaliers, who quickly affected Continental fads. Lisideius falls into this group, as his speeches indicate, for they are spangled with borrowings from French. He introduces "*mal a propos*," "*a propos*," "*embarrass*," "*protasis*," and "*duped*." Neander uses French terms also in referring to "*ballett*" and "*examen*." The heavy concentration of borrowings in Lisideius' speeches conforms to his Francophiliac tendencies and is integral with his character as realized by Dryden. Neander, on the contrary, uses a word for which there is no English equivalent (*ballett*), and one which had been used in English as early as 1607 and expressed perfectly the import of his analysis of *The Silent Woman*.

Lisideius' choices of foreign words cannot be so readily expained, and reflect instead his readiness to appropriate terms from a fashionable language to express his admiration for its culture. But this attitude must have been short-sighted to Dryden who had no sympathy for factions and the blind devotion they encouraged. To champion the French on the very day England was establishing herself

in "command of the Greater half of the Globe" (I, 18) called Lisideius' nationalism and good judgment into serious question. Likewise Crites' thoughtless respect for aesthetic *dicta* of the Ancients and his distrust of modern norms in poetry, neither of which he fully comprehends, make him as prejudiced and unreasonable. Each in his own way is a literary fop, adorned with silly notions, mouthing doctrines, and striking attitudes which he comprehends only slightly and which have not yet been assimilated.

Contrasted to the affectations and false learning of Crites and Lisideius is Eugenius, the well-born man, who represents Dryden's educated gentleman. Through good breeding, Eugenius has absorbed a taste for modern literature and its superiority over the Ancients, but his reasons are, perhaps, just as inadequate as the sort offered by his adversaries. His are inadequate because of diffuseness.

Eugenius cannot develop a train of thought and follow it through to its logical conclusion. For instance, in criticizing Crites and Lisideius for their approval of the French and Ancients, he begins by pointing out that the Ancients did not, in fact, adhere to their own rules, but then he moves quickly to their consequent failure to either delight or instruct an audience. In his view the Ancients "failed both in laying of their Plots, and meaning of them, swerving from the Rules of Their own Art, by mis-representing Nature to us, in which they have ill satisfied one intention of a Play, which was delight, so in the instructive part They have err'd worse: Instead of punishing Vice and rewarding Virtue, they have often shown a Prosperous Wickedness, and an Unhappy Piety." (I, 38) This sweeping indictment, besides being inconsistent with his stated advocacy for the rules of Nature in drama, fails utterly to provide a considered and systematic rejoinder to his didactic opponents.¹⁸ Making matters worse, Eugenius proceeds next to a rather pointless discussion of wit as it applies to the Ancients and the Moderns. Perhaps in this digression Eugenius' good breed-

ing directs his discourse, for as a gentleman of some learning he takes pride in his own wit. It is he, for example, who compares the predictability of Greek plots to Italian houses by remarking "you see through them all at once" (I, 35).

Dryden's picture of Eugenius whose mind superficially darts from subject to subject reminds us of Earle's "A Mere Empty Wit":

The rest of him are bubbles and flashes, darted out on the sudden, which if you take them while they are warme, may be laught at; if they coole, are nothing. He speaks best on the present apprehension, for Meditation stupifies him, and the more he is in travell, the lesse he brings forth.¹⁹

The lambent quality of Eugenius' well-intentioned though hollow observations is succinctly expressed by Earle.

Failings aside, though, Eugenius comes closest to the position which Neander will later take, and at the end of his discourse on wit, the *Essay's* narrator observes that Eugenius "seem'd" to have the better part of the argument with Crites and Lisideius. The qualification here is important, for it remains Neander's task to demonstrate conclusively the narrowness of Crites' and Lisideius' position.

According to Huntley, Neander's name is an amalgam of "neo" and "andros" — new man.²⁰ He presents Dryden's own ideal on the superiority of English drama to French and Classical norms, and the appropriateness of rhyme to dramatic dialogue. Whereas the argument on the barge is begun by Crites, the traditionalist, it is concluded by Neander, who sums up the positions of the other three disputants and makes eminently valid assertions on the issues. Everything he has to say is marked by reasonableness and good sense; his words are a tonic and fitting conclusion to the sometimes jarring debate that has gone before.

In general, elements of Neander's personality and temperament can be seen in Overbury's "A Wise Man," who "is the truth of the true definition of man, that is, a rea-

sonable creature."²¹ The measure of his reasonableness is his equanimity in the face of controversy and factiousness. "He endures the faults of all men silently, except his friends, and to them hee is the mirrour of their actions"²² As we shall see, Neander's rebuttal of Crites' arguments on rhyme in drama is expressed with benevolent firmness as he tries to expose the excesses of his friend's remarks and show up their ridiculousness.

It is not inaccurate to consider Neander's remarks as the conclusion or dénouement to this drama of critics and criticism. In the first place, the participants themselves are quite aware of the dramatic potential of their situation and topic. They enter and leave the argument as characters on the stage. Each in turn furthers the action of the piece, and retires to the wings to return when called upon. The characters' self-consciousness of function in the *Essay* is revealed shortly after the lines are drawn between Crites and Lisideius on one side and Eugenius and Neander on the other. Withdrawing from the stage to make way for his opponents, Lisideius briefly returns to interrupt Eugenius but checks himself, observing, "There is no reason that Crites and I, who have now left the stage, should re-enter so suddenly upon it, which is against the laws of Comedy" (I, 43-4). Lisideius' self-conscious joke goes unchallenged by the other three, suggesting that all of them accept the implied theatricality of their situation. Each accepts his role, playing it in accordance with the rules of genteel conversation and dramatic propriety. Secondly, Dryden reinforces the impression that he is presenting a dramatized debate by interposing occasional stage directions, e.g., "said he, (turning toward Neander)" (I, 44). Finally, in seeing his characters riding down the Thames toward Greenwich, returning to the city, ascending Somerset stairs, passing through the group of French revelers, and separating to go their several ways, we are reminded of the playwright's desire to render the situation as if it were a "closet drama."²³

Maintaining the dramatic design of the *Essay*, Neander closes the discussion with a series of *Peripetia* growing out of Crites' own thoughtless assertions. The subject at hand is specifically rhyme in drama which Crites has criticized as unnatural and unprecedented, although he exempts blank verse from this injunction. Neander first shows the inconsistency of Crites' position, but continues to drive home his point by reminding Crites that Greek and Latin drama both used meter and rhyme. Neander's entire strategy for refuting Crites' assertions depends upon making the pedant argue against himself by exposing the contradictions which had gone unchallenged before. Point by point, Neander takes on Crites' absurdities: the best authors of the previous age wrote in blank verse or prose and are to be emulated; dramatic dialogue represents "sudden thought" and thus admits of no rhyme. Neander can tolerate neither irrational devotion to the past nor unthinking generalizations about what is "natural," but above all he shows a distinct intolerance for the fuzzy opinions on drama which are given by Crites as *dicta ex cathedra* simply because they adhere to aesthetic conservatism.

The closure of the *Essay*, accomplished by Neander's thorough rebuttal to Crites, is conscious and complete; all the loose ends are brought together and the trip ends at the foot of Somerset stairs. As we read Neander's enthusiastic defense of Restoration dramatic conventions we can no longer believe that Dryden lacked enough critical assurance to assert unqualified support for his own age against the attacks of Crites and Lisideius. His reason for writing the *Essay* in this manner lies rather in a desire to bring the issues alive, to let typical spokesmen voice various points of view on a range of subjects pertaining to drama, and to resolve the controversy in his favor without appearing grossly unfair to his opponents. Obviously this strategy is slightly disingenuous, since Dryden creates antagonists whose arguments are apt to be self-defeating and a protagonist who is particularly adept at discovering the weaknesses of his opponents. Never-

theless, the illusion of objectivity is achieved, and we, like Lord Buckhurst, are left to sift the evidence, agreeing finally with the efficacy of Neander's position.

Frank L. Huntley has stated that the method of the *Essay* is sceptical but this judgment mistakes Dryden's philosophic method.²⁴ Of course, if we wait for Dryden to tell us who has the upper hand we are likely to be disappointed since he assumes we can decide this matter for ourselves. Thus an interplay is set up in which the work's meaning emerges from the conflict between the values ostensibly held by the author or his spokesman on the one hand and the ethical standards held by the reader on the other. I should like to call this process (for want of a more descriptive term) "non-didactic," meaning that the technique is heruistic, rather than authoritarian. Satire is in this sense "non-didactic" since it provides the reader with the wherewithal for learning though it does not teach *per se*. A clear example of "teaching" might be the *Tatler* and *Spectator* papers of Joseph Addison; certainly these are closer to our modern understanding of the word "essay."

In earlier usage an "essay" was an attempt at analysis which remained unfinished and tentative. By definition it was skeptical (in the sense the Royal Society understood the term) insofar as it investigated a question "in an open and unbiased manner . . . letting the reader make up his mind for himself."²⁵ As we have suggested, Dryden's samples of opinion on dramatic poesy are not arbitrarily drawn but compiled and presented with care so as to make them as representative as possible. For this he resorted in part to the technique of the character writers whose genius for observation and classification lent itself to "scientific" inquiry. So the views on dramatic poesy are not simply those of four men brought together by an accident of history, but rather specifically those of a pedant, an *à la mode* worldling, a wit, and a wise man, who represented respectively the position of the Ancients,

the modish Francophile, the well-born gentleman, and the reasonable, dispassionate thinker.

In this *Essay*, however, Dryden's attention is fixed not on the characters themselves but on the process of rational inquiry. It is here that the reader enters in to learn from the author's clues how to judge the matter for himself.

By examining not only what the characters say but also who says it, we can perceive the relative strength and weakness of Neander's and Crites' respective positions, and accordingly place Eugenius and Lisideius somewhere along the continuum of right reason. But we must draw the appropriate conclusion from the hints Dryden supplies, otherwise our failure to do so constitutes an affront to his talent.

NOTES

- 1A. W. Ward, "Age of Dryden" in *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1907-16), VII, 23.
- 2George Williamson, "The Occasion of An Essay of Dramatic Poesy," *MP*, 44, (August, 1946), 1-9. Williamson also relates the *Essay* to the "battle of the books" and "Ancients versus Moderns."
- 3Donald A. Davie, "Dramatic Poetry: Dryden's Conversation Piece," *Cambridge Journal*, 5, (1952), 553-561.
- 4This philosophical mode of thought in Dryden's criticism and poetry is misconstrued by Louis I. Bredvold in *The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1934), and explained by Phillip Harth in *Contexts of Dryden's Thought*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968).
- 5*Of Dramatic Poesy and Other Critical Essays*, ed. George Watson, (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1962), I, 16. Hereafter page references will appear in the text.
- 6*The Miscellaneous Works . . . of Sir Thomas Overbury, knt.*, ed. Edward F. Rimbault (London: John Russell Smith, 1856), p. 169.
- 7Benjamin Boyce, *The Theophrastan Character in England to 1642* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1947), pp. 6-7.
- 8*Micro-Cosmographie*, printed from the 6th ed. of 1633, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903).

- ⁹The 17th ed. of Overbury's *Characters* was issued in 1664; Earle's collection reached its 9th ed. in 1669, according to Anna J. DeArmond in "Some Aspects of Character Writing in The Period of The Restoration," *Delaware Notes*, 16th Series (1943), 57.
- ¹⁰Davie, V, 553.
- ¹¹Frank L. Huntley, *The Unity of John Dryden's Dramatic Criticism 1664-1681* (Chicago, 1942), unpublished doctoral dissertation. Chap. IV, *passim*.
- ¹²Frank L. Huntley, *On Dryden's Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1951), p. 9.
- ¹³His name suggests *criticus*, L. for "critic."
- ¹⁴Overbury, p. 69.
- ¹⁵Earle, pp. 120-1.
- ¹⁶Overbury, p. 59.
- ¹⁷Frank L. Huntley, "On the Persons in Dryden's *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*," *MLN*, 62, (1948), 93.
- ¹⁸Huntley observes similar defects in Eugenius' argument in his dissertation *The Unity of John Dryden's Dramatic Criticism*, referred to previously. In addition to using flawed logic, Eugenius promises but fails to show that contemporary English drama surpasses that of Italy, France, and Spain. He also fails to explain his preference for modern works over those of the Ancients.
- ¹⁹Earle, p. 12.
- ²⁰Huntley, *MLN*, p. 94.
- ²¹Overbury, p. 60.
- ²²*Ibid.*, p. 60.
- ²³I am using this term here to imply that the *Essay* is very "dramatic" in its conception and execution, though it obviously was never meant for the stage.
- ²⁴Huntley, *On Dryden's Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, p. 17.
- ²⁵Phillip Harth, *Contexts of Dryden's Thought*, p. 6.