

THE EMERGING BIOGRAPHY AS A LITERARY GENRE:
A STUDY OF IZAAK WALTON'S BIOGRAPHICAL METHODS

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PREFACE

Although biography is an established genre in the twentieth century, the aim of this present study is not to give a history of biography, nor even a history of English biography. Instead, one proposes, first, to examine the standards of the classical biographer, Plutarch, in an attempt to find answers for two questions: why was biography a forgotten art for so many centuries; and why did it emerge anew in the seventeenth century? Works that helped advance a biographical concept are to be considered in English tradition. The present author, however, makes no attempt to survey all early biographical works, but has selected the most significant ones mentioned by Waldo Dunn in English Biography and Donald Stauffer in English Biography before 1700.

All critical works concerned with the history of biography refer to Izaak Walton's Lives as a great contribution to biographical literature. Many scholars since Walton's time have mentioned his art with much admiration. For example, Wordsworth in his Ecclesiastical Sonnets wrote,

There are no colours in the fairest sky
So fair as these. The feather, whence the pen

Was shaped that traced the lives of these good men
Dropped from an Angel's wing.¹

One endeavors to discover what it is that makes Walton's Lives so outstanding in the history of this literature. Thus, one examines Walton's biographical methods by means of a chronological approach to the Lives.

The word, biography, as it is used in this study is in need of definition. The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as "the history of the lives of men as a branch of literature." Nicolson further explicates the term:

- (1) A biography must be a "history" in the sense that it must be accurate and depict a person in relation to his times.
- (2) It must describe the "individual" with all the gradations of human character and not merely present a type of virtue or vice.
- (3) It must be composed as a "branch of literature" in that it must be written in grammatical English with an adequate feeling for style.²

Following these principles, a writer would produce "pure" biography. Therefore, the present author bases the organization of this study upon the criteria of truth, character, and style.

Other works particularly useful to this investigation were John Garraty's The Nature of Biography; Harold

¹William Wordsworth, The Complete Poetical Works of William Wordsworth, p. 625.

²Harold Nicolson, "The Practice of Biography," American Scholar, XXIII (1954), 152.

Nicolson's The Development of English Biography; David Novarr's The Making of Walton's 'Lives'; and John Butt's "Izaak Walton's Methods in Biography" in Essays and Studies by the Members of the English Association, 1934. Margaret Bottrall's Izaak Walton; James Lowell's chapter "Walton" in Latest Literary Essays and Addresses; and George Carver's chapter, "Izaak Walton and His Lives" in Alms for Oblivion, were valuable sources.

The author wishes to express her gratitude to Dr. Charles E. Walton whose encouragement and suggestions are deeply appreciated. The author is also indebted to Dr. June J. Morgan for her service as a second reader.

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CHAPTER I

BIOGRAPHY: AN EMERGING GENRE

Man seems quite arrogant in wanting to have his deeds, thoughts, and passions preserved. Nevertheless, since men are individuals, they have always desired to express themselves, and one of man's earliest expressions is his recording of facts about another's life. Symbols, showing the lives of Egyptian kings, are to be found in ancient tombs. The lives of many Biblical people are portrayed in the Old Testament. In books named for them, the lives of Ruth, Solomon and Joshua are revealed. Genesis tells the life and character of Joseph in an orderly manner. Similarly, the four gospels of the New Testament give the life of Jesus Christ.

Ancient biography, however, was more than just incidental writing. With Plutarch (46-120 A. D.), classical biography emerges, part of whose greatness is due to his time and part to his genius.³ A modern

³John Garraty, The Nature of Biography, p. 43.

embraces only a fragment of civilization, while Plutarch saw firsthand the records of Greece and Rome.⁴ By his time, Greek and Roman cultures had reached an apex, and his Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans is, in many ways, a summary of that ancient culture.⁵ The time was also ideal for such writing, in that before him a whole school of peripatetic writers had already made biography a popular form, portraying in most orderly form the origin, education, career, and, to some extent, the personality of man.⁶ Plutarch's genius was patterned after the standards of this school, and beyond all of his predecessors he excelled in his portrayals of character and personality.⁷ Writing his biographies in pairs, he endeavored to show, for example, how Demetrius differed from Antony.⁸ Many of his methods--his use of a variety of devices to catch his reader's interest at the beginning of a work and his utilization of popular sayings and anecdotal material with which to hold the

⁴William Thayer, The Art of Biography, p. 18.

⁵Garraty, The Nature of Biography, p. 43.

⁶Duane Stuart, Epochs of Greek and Roman Biography, p. 168.

⁷Edward H. O'Neill, A History of American Biography, p. 4.

⁸Bernadotte Perrin (tr.), Plutarch's Lives, IX, 333-343.

reader's interest--have not been excelled by modern biographers.⁹ That Plutarch himself was aware of his role as a biographer is shown in the following passage from his famous The Life of Alexander:

It is the lives of Alexander . . . and Caesar . . . that I am writing and the multitude of the deeds to be treated is so great that I must tell my readers . . . it is not Histories that I am writing but Lives; and in the most illustrious deeds there is not always a manifestation of virtue or vice, nay, a slight thing like a phrase or a jest often makes a greater revelation of character than battles where thousands fall, or the greatest armaments or sieges of cities I must be devoted to the signs of the soul in man.¹⁰

One is impressed by his lack of chronology and his stress on morals so contrary to modern standards for biography, but one admits, nevertheless, that Plutarch's writings had many of the essentials of biography.

After reaching such heights, it is curious that biography did not continue in its development in the centuries following Plutarch. As the other branches of classical culture, biography lost all originality and vitality as a great civilization crumbled. With the fall of the Roman Empire (476 A. D.), the world entered into what is commonly called the Medieval Period which lasted until around 1450. The earlier part of this period was

⁹Garraty, The Nature of Biography, p. 48.

¹⁰Bernadotte Perrin (tr.), Plutarch's Lives, VII, 225.

characterized by a lack of social and cultural progress. However, to imply that these centuries were without biographical writing would be grossly incorrect. In fact, much biography was written, but its art was static.¹¹ Advancements in life-writing were rare.

Since medieval subjects for biography came either from the church or the state, life-writings up to 1450 may be classified as either a saint's life or as a chronicle. Before the Norman Conquest, three lives of saints make a discernible contribution to the art of biography. One first recognizes man, the real germ of biography, in Adamnan's Life of St. Columba (692-697).¹² The first biographical letter was used by Eddius Stephanus in Wilfrid (710-720), however, not to interpret a man's character but to expound upon the events surrounding a man.¹³ Although known chiefly as a historian, Bede wrote a Life of St. Cuthbert (721).¹⁴ Although others before him had written lives in Latin verse, Bede, in this work, produced a successful prose

¹¹Donald Stauffer, English Biography Before 1700, p. 3.

¹²Waldo Dunn, English Biography, p. 3.

¹³Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁴Beda Venerabilis, Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation, pp. 286-348.

life.¹⁵ Later, after the Norman Conquest, authors strove for a more comprehensive portrait of man.¹⁶ Eadmer's Life of Anselm the Great (1109-1124) depicts Anselm's boyhood, a subject that earlier biographers had deemed unnecessary.¹⁷ Other saint's lives are William of Malmesbury's Life of St. Aldhelm (1125) and Adam's Magna Vita Sancti Hugonis (1212-1220).¹⁸ Although other hagiographies preceded and succeeded these, none did much to advance the art. The main purpose of all hagiographers was that of moral instruction; and from this purpose were derived their main contributions to biography. In medieval times, because a book was intended for purposes of inspiration and instruction, it was considered good.¹⁹

Few biographical chronicles appeared before 1450, and even then, they proved to be inferior in scope to the earlier saint's lives.²⁰ For example, before the Norman Conquest, Asser's Alfred the Great (893) is the

¹⁵Harold Nicolson, The Development of English Biography, p. 18.

¹⁶Garraty, The Nature of Biography, p. 12.

¹⁷Dunn, op. cit., p. 21.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 22.

¹⁹Richard Altick, Lives and Letters, p. 7.

²⁰Garraty, The Nature of Biography, p. 31.

first biography of an English layman.²¹ After the Norman Conquest, Lydgate's Fall of Princes (1431-1439), Blakman's Henry VI (1436-1448), and Capgrave's Liber de Illustribus Henricis (1446-1453) show little advancement in the art.²² Even though the chronicles do not show a very great development in biographical writing, they are, nevertheless, the true forerunners of modern biography, emphasizing straight narration rather than moral lessons.

One reason that biography advanced so little as an art was the medieval lack of consideration for truth. When writing the saint's lives, the hagiographers soon found that the miracles attributed to one saint could easily be transferred to another.²³ Later, they did not hesitate to invent a saint and give to him traditional heroic qualities and supernatural mannerisms.²⁴ As a result, most of these lives were legendary rather than reliably historical. In addition, the very nature of a saint's life does not lend itself to true biography; for a saint loses touch with reality so

²¹Nicolson, The Development of English Biography, p. 19.

²²Stauffer, op. cit., p. 374.

²³Garraty, The Nature of Biography, p. 56.

²⁴Altick, op. cit., p. 6.

completely that the word biography in reference to him has little meaning.²⁵ Furthermore, the fact that there was no printing press at this early time probably hindered the dissemination of truth in both the saint's life and in the chronicle. Hence, these lives were passed verbally from one generation to another and steadily became more like legends, even if their authors had been initially accurate. Manuscripts which did exist had to be slowly and laboriously copied. Since one copyist's error might become a next man's source, even original manuscripts could not remain accurate.²⁶ Having no printing press slowed down the development in another way, as well, since the better lives could not be studied by many others, since these documents were not widely circulated.

In addition, medieval biographers had no feeling for character. To explain why so little attention was given to man as man, one must look to the church and its teachings, the main force given to medieval biography.²⁷ The church and the subjects pertaining to it were uppermost in the minds of the medieval people. Men were

²⁵William Thayer, The Art of Biography, p. 57.

²⁶Garraty, The Nature of Biography, p. 57.

²⁷Ibid., p. 54.

supposed to merge their identity with that of the church.²⁸ Dunn explains that ". . . the church and its work were the important matters; man was only an instrument."²⁹ This dominant religious attitude restricted the development of objective, individual-centered lives. Catering to the simple tastes of an uneducated audience, the hagiographers developed a formula for biography that in experience proved to be effective. Dunn describes their style as follows:

- (1) They seize upon a few of the salient points in the lives of heroes and develop these usually with a degree of wonder.
- (2) Their purpose is to commemorate the holiness of their subjects and to entice others to discipleship.³⁰

One sees, here, that the spiritual was most important. However, it is true that the strictly spiritual purpose of these lives eventually receded into the background, and the narratives gradually became stories with which to amuse and while away the time.³¹ As they were put into the venacular and taken out of church hands, these works became very popular.

²⁸Dunn, op. cit., 16.

²⁹Loc. cit.

³⁰Ibid., p. 36.

³¹Loc. cit.

The chroniclers, on the other hand, had little feeling for character. They were content with a surface depiction of man; his inner life they considered to be relatively unimportant. Kings, generals, and other conspicuous persons were their subjects, because they believed that the biographer's most important task was that of describing external man, namely, the rank or position which he filled.³² They failed to realize that not all kings were interesting people; they did not realize that the man who is intrinsically interesting makes the best subject for narration.

Finally, there was no established biographical style in which to write. A concept of what biography should comprise is a very modern point of view.³³ Questions, such as who makes a suitable subject, what is a suitable method, and what should be done in biography, were not critically examined until the seventeenth century. In addition to not having a clearly established standard for biography, there was also no accepted prose style in which to write. Stauffer and Dunn both point out that biography is not a subject easily shadowed forth in song; the "skeletons" of biography and poetry do not complement

³²Thayer, op. cit., p. 35.

³³Dunn, op. cit., p. 242.

one another,³⁴ and ". . . the story of a life is not the story of a few great moments and the rejection of all that makes up the greater part of life."³⁵ It is clear, then, that biography could not emerge as a genre, because the English language prior to the seventeenth century had not yet shaped itself for prose.

Even though the art of biography was latent for so many years, it began to emerge as a literary genre after 1450. Even then, the process was a very slow and sporadic one. The English Renaissance was naturally the most important force, but the fact remains that biography was one of the ". . . last harvests of the seed of Renaissance humanism."³⁶ The Elizabethan age especially disappoints the scholar searching for vestiges of biographical works. Although an Elizabethan curiosity about humans is extensively exhibited in the drama, it is true that authors at this time wrote little biography. Perhaps, a lack of information is one reason. Playwrights were showered with an abundance of materials through translations, but the biographers were not yet using letters extensively, and government archives were

³⁴Stauffer, op. cit., p. 222.

³⁵Dunn, op. cit., p. 27.

³⁶Atlick, op. cit., p. 8.

neither readily accessible nor well-organized.³⁷ Moreover, it was probably dangerous to write the life of a man. Writing the life of a private man like Shakespeare would have been safe enough, no doubt, but the idea that anyone's life might be interesting had not yet developed.³⁸ Writing about the lives of public figures was a risky business because of religious unrest, plots against the Queen, and threats of foreign invasion.³⁹ Even though the Elizabethan age proves to be somewhat disappointing, one finds, however, many innovations between 1450-1700 that led to a clearer concept of biography. These innovations were developed independently in three areas of writings--in lives, histories, and compilations. The "life" was a detailed account of a particular man.⁴⁰ For example, Sir Thomas More's History of Richard III (1513), Thomas Speght's Chaucer (1598), William Roper's The Life of Sir Thomas More (1626), and George Cavendish's Life of Cardinal Wolsey (1641) are representatives of this class.⁴¹ Indeed,

³⁷Paul M. Kendall, The Art of Biography, p. 94.

³⁸F. P. Wilson, Seventeenth Century Prose, p. 46.

³⁹Kendall, op. cit., p. 95.

⁴⁰Mark Longaker, English Biography in the Eighteenth Century, p. 8.

⁴¹Stauffer, op. cit., pp. 375-377.

one suggests that if biography had developed along the patterns established by Roper and Cavendish, probably it would have emerged much sooner as a genre. In the histories, life-writing as such was only incidental.⁴² John Hayward in Henry IV (1599) and Francis Bacon in Henry VII (1622) realized history and biography should be separated, but they were not very successful in their attempts.⁴³ Furthermore, in the compilations of facts about eminent Englishmen, biographical impulses may also be seen. Leland (1533-1552), Bale (1548-1549), and Pitts (1619) were antiquarian researchers.⁴⁴ Others who produced somewhat similar collections were Thomas Fuller in The Worthies of England (1662), Edward Phillips in Theatrum Poetarum (1674), William Winstanley in Lives of English Poets (1687), Antony á Wood in Athenae Oxonienses (1691-1692), Gerard Langbaine in English Dramatic Poets (1691), and John Aubrey in Brief Lives (1669-1696).⁴⁵

Three of these collectors deserve to be examined in more detail. Fuller, like the medieval author, indulges no portrayal of character; however, he does

⁴²Longaker, op. cit., p. 8.

⁴³Dunn, op. cit., p. 68.

⁴⁴Longaker, op. cit., p. 8.

⁴⁵Stauffer, op. cit., pp. 378-379.

realize that biography should be entertaining, and he tries to be accurate.⁴⁶ Wood spent much time in research about his Oxford writers and bishops, but he fails to understand the men he wrote about.⁴⁷ Aubrey, Wood's helper and friend, collected minutes of his own and became the opposite of Wood, as the following lines from his Brief Lives on "William Shakespeare" tend to show:

This William, being inclined naturally to Poetry and acting, came to London, I guess about 18: and was an Actor at one of the Play-houses, and did acte exceedingly well: now B. Johnson was never a good Actor, but an excellent Instructor.

He began early to make essayes at Dramatique Poetry, which at that time was very lowe; and his Playes tooke well.

He was a handsome, well-shap't man: very good company, and of a very readie and pleasant smoothe Witt.⁴⁸

Even though Aubrey was very inaccurate, his style is delightful, and he uses many character-revealing details. During the seventeenth century it was perhaps too much to ask that accuracy, character and style come together in one work of art. Certainly, these collectors contributed much to the writing of dictionaries of biography,

⁴⁶John Freeman (ed.), Thomas Fuller's The Worthies of England, p. 1.

⁴⁷R. Balfour Daniels, Some Seventeenth-Century Worthies in a Twentieth Century Mirror, p. 65.

⁴⁸Oliver L. Dick (ed.), Aubrey's Brief Lives, p. 275.

still a popular form,⁴⁹ but their influence on the art of biography is mainly sporadic.

Because of a heightened interest in personalities, three other forms of life-writing--the preface, the character sketch, and the funeral sermon--were very popular during the seventeenth century. Often, an author's life sketch was prefixed to the beginning of his printed work. Stauffer explains that ". . . seventeenth century curiosity concerning the authors and the Renaissance interest in the individual caused these prefaces."⁵⁰ Later, these sketches would frequently appear separately or be collected into volumes. The influence of these lives upon the emerging biography may be stated as follows:

- (1) They caused biography to be concise.
- (2) They developed a familiarity with the biographical form.
- (3) They presented the author as a moral example.⁵¹

With the exception of the third point, the prefatory life had a positive influence upon English biography.

After Isaac Casaubon had translated the Ethical Characters of Theophrastus in 1592, two kinds of character sketches emerged.⁵² One, the generic character,

⁴⁹Dunn, op. cit., p. 57.

⁵⁰Stauffer, op. cit., p. 267.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 268.

⁵²Wendell Clausen, "The Beginnings of English

depicted a type; it moved from the specific to the general.⁵³ The other, the portrait, depicted the individual. Rather than portraying a man's life, the portrait attempted to reveal the intellectual and ethical qualities of a man.⁵⁴ The Theophrastian, or generic character, was most popular at the beginning of the seventeenth century in the hands of Joseph Hall, Sir Thomas Overbury, and John Earle.⁵⁵ Earle's Microcosmographie (1608) passed through ten editions during its author's lifetime.⁵⁶ The master of the portrait, popular during the late seventeenth century, was Clarendon.⁵⁷ The relationship of the character and biography is close; yet the two are distinct forms. Since the Theophrastian character moved from specific to general, it is the complete antithesis of biography. Since the portrait is composed of qualities, it does not picture events as does biography. Separately, these two

Character-Writing in the Early Seventeenth Century," PQ, XXV (1946), 32.

⁵³Stauffer, op. cit., p. 270.

⁵⁴David N. Smith, Characters from the Histories and Memoirs of the Seventeenth Century, p. li.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. xxviii.

⁵⁶Nicolson, The Development of English Biography, p. 41.

⁵⁷Smith, op. cit., p. xxviii.

forms had a negative influence on biography, because life-writing could not be achieved in two sections, on the one hand, a bare chronicle of facts in which the hero figures only as a name, followed, on the other hand, by a character sketch wherein his virtues and qualities are enumerated.⁵⁸ Biography becomes an art only with a blending of these two.

The funeral sermon, another popular seventeenth-century form, is described as follows:

The conventional form consisted of a formal sermon, usually accompanied by a text and stressing certain Christian virtues or dogma, followed by a brief résumé of the life of the departed.⁵⁹

To give a detailed account of the person's life before friends and relatives was unnecessary; instead, panegyric was essential. However, its influence upon biography was incidental, because it was not concerned with recording exact information and noting minute facets of personality.⁶⁰ If the prefatory sketch helped in making biography concise and familiar, and if the character helped by fostering deliberate analysis (and hindered by its separating of portrait from chronicle), the funeral sermon must be looked upon as having been entirely

⁵⁸Stauffer, op. cit., p. 271.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 276.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 278.

harmful--at the expense of the individual, it set forth the example of a good Christian. However, biography did advance as an art during the seventeenth century.

Compared with medieval writers, biographers of the seventeenth century were accurate writers. However, to be accurate was no enough: ". . . to be biography the 'life' must not be left out of the 'history' nor the 'history' out of the 'life.'"⁶¹ In biography, the times are not merely described by the subject; they must also be integrated with the subject's life.⁶² Not only must a biographer select the necessary background facts; also he must use them. "He must be a scholar in research and an artist in presentation."⁶³ By selecting, interpreting, and even imagining, the biographer approaches the sought for reality.⁶⁴ To achieve the complete balance between the subject and his times was a step that did not even concern most seventeenth century writers.

The seventeenth century achieved a greater advancement in its feeling for character. Plutarch's

⁶¹ Madeleine B. Stern, "Approaches to Biography," South Atlantic Quarterly, XXXV (1946), 362.

⁶² Andre Maurois, Aspects of Biography, p. 61.

⁶³ Stern, op. cit., p. 362.

⁶⁴ Arthur Bryant, "The Art of Biography," The London Mercury, XXX (1934), 242.

Lives were made accessible to Englishmen through North's translation in 1579.⁶⁵ Therefore, Plutarch's method, not so much his style but his way of revealing personality, could now be studied and imitated. Much more important than Plutarch was the rise of humanism. Chaucer wrote no biographies because his readers were not interested in men, but in romantic chivalry. However, with humanism, man and the small details concerning man became important. Moreover, a strong passion for the analysis of human character developed; men now delighted in introspection,⁶⁶ interested in finding out how they differed from their fellow men. Another change relating to humanism was evident, as well. No longer was only the man from higher society important; rather, the common man was now gaining an education and finding his place in society.⁶⁷

A final advancement in biographical writing in the seventeenth century was a long awaited development of style. A clearer conception of what biography should be now emerged. "For Bede biography was only history viewed more closely;"⁶⁸ but now, some authors began to

⁶⁵Stauffer, op. cit., p. 60.

⁶⁶Dunn, op. cit., p. 55.

⁶⁷Margaret Bottrall, Every Man A Phoenix, p. 143.

⁶⁸Stauffer, op. cit., p. 233.

realize that biography and history were two entirely different types. Bacon realized that there was such a difference and expressed this opinion in his Advancement of Learning (1605), in which he divided histories into three classes dealing with "a time, a person, or an action. The first he called chronicles, the second lives, and the third narrations or relations."⁶⁹ Both Hayward and Bacon tried to accomplish this separation in their works. Even though they did not completely achieve it, at least they realized that it had to occur.

Closely allied with this belief in the separation of history and biography was the actual defining of the word, biography. Fuller used the word, biographist, in 1662.⁷⁰ Later, in 1683, Dryden published his translation of Plutarch's Lives, in which he contributed a dedication and a Life of Plutarch. Furthermore, he defined the word, biographia, as had Bacon.⁷¹ Hence, a concept of biography was becoming clearer in men's thought.

In addition to achieving a clearer concept of biography, authors discovered a prose style that was functional. Prose as a literary medium began to appear

⁶⁹Joseph Devey (ed.), The Physical and Metaphysical Works of Lord Bacon, p. 88.

⁷⁰OED, I, 870.

⁷¹Dunn, op. cit., p. 77.

in the later half of the fourteenth century, but it was poor in its vocabulary.⁷² During the Renaissance, however, Cicero was widely imitated, and many Latin words were added to the language, but this prose was too complex for use by a biographer.⁷³ Bacon greatly helped seventeenth-century prose by being concise, but he was almost too elliptical. Moreover, the seventeenth-century metaphysics were too complex. Finally, the character writers, men like Overbury and Earle, pointed the way to a clear and simple expression needed by biographers.⁷⁴ Obviously, biography must express the trivial as well as the literary.

In many ways, the seventeenth century is also disappointing. All of the essentials were present; yet it was difficult to bring them together into a unified whole. Had biography early detached itself from the influences of church and state, it would have matured more quickly. Perhaps, the Puritan influence prevented it from achieving this necessary detachment. On the other hand, if seventeenth-century lives had not been

⁷²Constance Bullock, English Literary Prose in the Making, p. 11.

⁷³Ibid., p. 15.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 20.

prefixed to an author's work, they might have stood alone. If the character had not been so popular, writers might have developed real lives. If the funeral sermons had not been so plentiful, biography might have broken away sooner from moral examples. These three forms hindered the development of English biography, because they caused the real virtues of biography to be overlooked.

Thus, during the seventeenth century, biography does not emerge as a literary genre. Instead, it is a time of experience and growth. Nevertheless, if the period is disappointing in many ways, it is rewarding in another, because the seventeenth century produced Izaak Walton, a man who was equal to the great task of writing biography.

CHAPTER II

IZAACK WALTON'S BIOGRAPHICAL TECHNIQUES

Until the seventeenth century, English biography was incidental. No one before Izaak Walton had as a main interest, the writing of lives of men; yet Walton emerges as a product of his forebears and his surroundings, for he may be thought of ". . . as a bridge between the old and the new."⁷⁵ He embodied both the medieval characteristics of piety and moralizing and the modern virtues of honesty, character, and style. Thus, Walton came closer to being a professional biographer than any other writer since Plutarch.

At no one place does he formally state his theories concerning the function and methods of a biographer. These must be reconstructed from an examination of his Lives. To trace his development through the various editions of the Lives would be desirable; however, since only the 1675 collection is available, one must endeavor to show Walton's development as a biographer as revealed in this edition.

⁷⁵Garraty, The Nature of Biography, p. 75.

Even though Walton was adroit in recording the anecdotes of others, he has left little record of the details of his own life. Several writers, including Bottrall, Lowell, Keynes, Martin, Carver, and Marston, have written about him, but to date no adequate life has appeared. However, a brief account of the main facts, though few, is necessary as a setting for an investigation of the Lives.

Izaak, or (as he preferred to spell his name) Izaak, Walton was born in Stafford on August 9, 1593.⁷⁶ Research regarding his parentage has proved unsatisfactory. Of his father, Jarvis Walton, nothing is known except that he was a "substantial yeoman" who died in 1596/97.⁷⁷ His mother, remarrying in 1598, survived her husband by thirty years.⁷⁸

Of Izaak's youth, no facts are known. Nevertheless, his writings indicate that he managed somehow to obtain an education. The date at which he began to write is impossible to discern. However, one concludes that he must have shown an early interest in literature, because,

⁷⁶Sir A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller, (eds.), The Cambridge History of English Literature, VII, 250.

⁷⁷James R. Lowell, Latest Literary Essays and Addresses, VII, 61.

⁷⁸Geoffrey Keynes, "The Life of Izaak Walton" in Izaak Walton, The Compleat Angler, p. 3.

when he was only twenty-six, a poem, "The Loves of Amos and Laura," was dedicated to him.⁷⁹ In it, a certain S. P., the author of the poem, referred to Walton as "his more than thrice-beloved" friend and gave him credit for some revision work on the piece.⁸⁰ Walton's earliest published work was his elegy on Donne, included in the first edition of Donne's Poems, 1633.⁸¹ This elegy indicates that he was skilled as a poet by this time.

Walton was twice married. In 1622, Rachel Floud, great granddaughter of Archdeacon Crammer, brother to the famous archbishop became his first wife.⁸² By her (she died in 1640), he had seven children, all of whom died young.⁸³ Six years later, Ann Ken, half-sister to the Bishop of Bath and Wells, became his second wife.⁸⁴ By her he had three children--one, Izaak, who died in infancy; another, Izaak, who became Canon of Salisbury;

⁷⁹E. Marston, Thomas Ken and Izaak Walton, p. 95.

⁸⁰Lowell, op. cit., p. 63.

⁸¹Richard H. Shepherd, Waltoniana Inedited Remains in Verse and Prose of Izaak Walton. There is no pagination in Waltoniana.

⁸²Martin Stapleton, Izaak Walton and His Friends, p. 2.

⁸³Lowell, op. cit., p. 66.

⁸⁴Keynes, op. cit., p. 6.

and a third, Anne, who married William Hawkins,
 Prebendary of Winchester.⁸⁵

Of Walton's career, little is known. He came to London before 1613 and was engaged in a business in or near Chancery Lane until 1644.⁸⁶ Of the nature of his trade, there is only conjecture, some suggesting that he was a haberdasher, a sempster, a linen draper, a milliner, a merchant, an ironmonger, and even a gentleman. More important than the nature of his trade is the fact that, during these years, apparently he established many clerical friends. Samuel Johnson said, "It was wonderful that Walton, who was in a very low situation in life, should have been familiarly received by so many great men . . . and at a time when the ranks of society were kept more separate than they are now."⁸⁷ How he came into Donne's acquaintance is unknown. The mere fact of Walton's being a parishioner at St. Dunstan's where Donne was Vicar from 1624 would, in those days, hardly explain the intimacy of a tradesman and an ecclesiastic.⁸⁸

⁸⁵George Carver, Alms for Oblivion, p. 59.

⁸⁶Margaret Bottrall, Izaak Walton, p. 10.

⁸⁷George B. Hill and L. F. Powell (eds.), Boswell's Life of Johnson, II, 364.

⁸⁸Edmund Gosse, The Life and Letters of John Donne, II, 254.

However, in addition to their proximity of residence, Walton held various parochial offices at St. Dunstan's.⁸⁹ Moreover, his marriage to Rachel Floud further associated him with clerical circles. Walton knew not only John Donne, but also, Sir Henry Wotton, Dr. Henry King, afterwards Bishop of Chichester, and John Hales of Eaton.⁹⁰

By 1644, Walton was a rather wealthy man, who was forced to leave his house in Chancery Lane, because it was dangerous for a Royalist to be living there.⁹¹ In his Life of Sanderson he tells how he saw the Scotch Covenanters when, in 1644, ". . . they came marching with [the Covenant] gloriously upon their pikes and in their hats This I saw and suffered by it."⁹² Between 1644 and 1660, the location of Walton's residence is uncertain. Carver thinks that ". . . he went back to Stafford to write (having, however, published The Life of Donne in 1640 before leaving London), to read curious

⁸⁹ Bottrall, Izaak Walton, p. 10.

⁹⁰ Keynes, op. cit., p. 5.

⁹¹ Bottrall, Izaak Walton, p. 11.

⁹² Izaak Walton, The Lives of John Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Richard Hooker, George Herbert and Robert Sanderson, p. 371.

books, and to fish."⁹³ One date during this time reflects the only episode in Walton's career that has a touch of excitement in it. In 1651, one of Prince Charles' jewels was conveyed by the "trusty hands" of Izaak Walton to a royalist officer in the Tower.⁹⁴ If he were living at Stafford at this time, the publication of The Life of Sir Henry Wotton in 1651 and of The Compleat Angler in 1653 suggests that he must have traveled into London from time to time.⁹⁵

After the Restoration, Walton was appointed Steward to Dr. Morley, Bishop of Worcester from 1660-62.⁹⁶ When Morley was transferred to Winchester, Walton accompanied him.⁹⁷ Even though he, perhaps, did not remain Morley's Steward, at least he had, until his death, a constant reservation in Dr. Morley's house.⁹⁸ As he grew older, he became intimate with an increasing number of ecclesiastics, among whom were Richard Hooker,

⁹³Carver, op. cit., p. 60.

⁹⁴Bottrall, Izaak Walton, p. 11.

⁹⁵Loc. cit.

⁹⁶Keynes, op. cit., p. 10.

⁹⁷Lowell, op. cit., p. 78.

⁹⁸Marston, op. cit., p. 138.

Robert Sanderson, and Thomas Fuller.⁹⁹ He had so many distinguished friends that Lowell exclaimed:

He had a genius for friendships and an amiability of nature ample for the comfortable housing of many at a time; he had even a special genius for bishops and seems to have known nearly the whole Episcopal bench of his day.¹⁰⁰

In addition to his cleric friendships, Walton formed with Charles Cotton, the poet, one of the most famous piscatorial associations in history.¹⁰¹

Even though Walton spent his leisure visiting and fishing, he was also busy at writing. In 1665, he published his Life of Hooker; five years later, he brought out his Life of George Herbert.¹⁰² Not only did he produce two new Lives, but he was also continually revising the ones already written, adding new material, expanding old material, and even improving individual sentences.¹⁰³ His biographical writings proved to be so popular that three revisions of Donne, four of Wotton, three of Hooker, and two of Herbert were published between 1640 and 1675.¹⁰⁴ In 1670 and, again, in 1675, his four

⁹⁹Keynes, op. cit., p. 7.

¹⁰⁰Lowell, op. cit., p. 80.

¹⁰¹Keynes, op. cit., p. 7.

¹⁰²Bottrall, Izaak Walton, p. 12.

¹⁰³Carver, op. cit., p. 64.

¹⁰⁴David Novarr, The Making of Walton's 'Lives,'

Lives were issued in one volume.¹⁰⁵ In 1678, when he was eighty-five, he brought out his final work, The Life of Dr. Robert Sanderson.¹⁰⁶

Walton's later life seems serene. In Winchester, he lived with his daughter.¹⁰⁷ In his will, written when he was ninety, he carefully disposes of all of his property.¹⁰⁸ Three months later, he died on December 15, 1683, during a great frost, and his remains were buried in Winchester Cathedral.¹⁰⁹

Almost by accident, Walton wrote his first biography, The Life of Dr. John Donne (1640). He was collecting materials for Sir Henry Wotton to be used in a prefatory life to a volume of Donne's sermons, when Sir Henry died.¹¹⁰ After Wotton's death, Walton undertook the task, because, as he says, "I became like men that enter easily into a Law-suite, or a quarrel, and having begun, cannot make a fair retreat

pp. 68, 97, 110, 164, 281, and 355.

¹⁰⁵DNB, XX, 274.

¹⁰⁶Loc. cit.

¹⁰⁷Marston, op. cit., p. 64.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., pp. 181-187.

¹⁰⁹Bottrall, Izaak Walton, p. 13.

¹¹⁰Walton, The Lives of John Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Richard Hooker, George Herbert, and Robert Sanderson,

and be quiet, when they desire it" (5). Since Richard Marriot had already waited a long time to publish Donne's sermons, Walton had no further time for research.¹¹¹ In about six weeks, he arranged his material and wrote the biography.¹¹² The 1640 Life, then, is a last minute addition by an author who had known Donne well enough to be asked by Wotton to provide biographical information.

It has already been explained that no one knows how Donne and Walton met. Neither is the extent of their friendship known. At the most, Walton probably knew Donne only for seven years, since Donne died in 1631.¹¹³ Casualness in their acquaintance is suggested by the differences in their ages and their positions--Walton was a tradesman of thirty-one and Donne, at fifty-three, was the most eminent preacher in England.¹¹⁴ Walton himself suggests a casualness, speaking of himself as

p. 5. From now on, references to the Lives will be footnoted within the dissertation.

¹¹¹David Novarr, op.cit., p. 19.

¹¹²John Butt, "Izaak Walton's Methods in Biography," published in Essays and Studies by Members of the English Association, XIX, (1934), 69.

¹¹³John Butt, Biography in the Hands of Walton, Johnson, and Boswell, p. 4.

¹¹⁴Novarr, op. cit., p. 24.

"the poorest and the meanest" of all Donne's friends (21). On the other hand, Henry King, Bishop of Chichester, thought that Walton was at Donne's bedside at the time of the latter's death (15). Moreover, Wotton, in a letter to Izaak Walton, spoke of Donne as "our ever memorable friend."¹¹⁵ Walton realized that personal knowledge was important to life-writing, because he feels that Wotton was more able to undertake the job; between Wotton and Donne, "there was so mutual a knowledge and such a friendship . . . as nothing but death could force a separation (20). Even though he felt insufficient for the task, Walton undertook it. Not only did he write the Life in 1640, but he revised it in 1658, 1670, and 1675.¹¹⁶

Many of Walton's artistic techniques are present in The Life of Donne and in the following Lives. From the beginning, he realized the importance of establishing truth by means of a chronological sequence. However, since in Donne, there were few dates available to him, he dates not by the year of our Lord but by the age of Donne. Even then, he is not completely specific, for he

¹¹⁵Henry Wotton, Reliquiae Wottonianae or a Collection of Lives, Letters, Poems; with Characters of Sundry Personages: And other Incomparable Pieces of Language and Art, p. 360.

¹¹⁶Novarr, op. cit., pp. 68, 97, and 110.

states:

About the fourteenth year of his age he was transferred from Oxford to Cambridge, and about the seventeenth year of his age, he was removed to London, and then admitted into Lincoln's Inn (24).

As the narrative progresses, he abandons even his use of Donne's age, merely placing the event with some preceding one so that it becomes quite difficult for a passive reader to determine Donne's age. It is true that circumstances caused a limited number of available dates, but Walton took advantage of the fact and became more of an artist. He "wrenched the chronological proportions" to give the impression he wanted.¹¹⁷ Since Donne took his holy orders sixteen years prior to death, Walton had more than forty secular years to narrate.¹¹⁸ However, the reader is not really aware that one-half of the Life is devoted to an account of the last quarter of Donne's years, the part that Walton wanted to emphasize.

Simply because the facts were not readily available, Walton never spent much time on a subject's youth. Furthermore, as in Donne's case, the facts of youth sometimes conflicted with the over-all impression that Walton wanted to create. Nevertheless, at least in

¹¹⁷Novarr, op. cit., p. 51.

¹¹⁸Cosse, op. cit., p. 58.

eight places, Donne's earlier "infirmities" can be discovered in the narrative (48). All of these occur after the time in which he considered taking holy orders.

Dr. Morton, Bishop of Durhan, wanted Donne to become a priest, and after three days of fasting and prayer, Donne replied that he could not, because ". . . some irregularities of my life have been so visible to some men. . . ." (34). Donne felt that these irregularities had been settled between himself and God, but feared that other people might not realize this fact and, thus, censure him for it (34). In the last of these allusions, Walton had Donne resting on his deathbed as he described this one last picture of Donne's youth to show how much Donne had changed between the early and late years (79-80).

Walton excells most when he is revealing character. Even though the five men have two factors in common, they are notable for their piety and they are distinguished as literary figures, they still emerge as individuals. Most of the time Walton vividly presents his subject by making use of anecdotes, the subject's letters and works, and reports of conversations. After discussing Donne's lineage, schooling, and travels, Walton devotes much of the secular story of Donne's life to the latter's wife (27-31). When Donne was Lord Elsemore's secretary, he fell in love with the niece of Lady Elsemore and daughter of Sir

George Moor. Hearing of the affair, Sir George removed his daughter from the Elsemore home. Since their affection for one another continued, they were secretly married. When Sir George discovered the marriage, Donne was put into prison. According to Walton, it was Donne's "irresistible art" that caused Sir George later to accept Donne and even to plead secretly that Lord Elsemore re-employ him (30). Walton tells this incident in order to show Donne's winning behavior. Here was a series of non-religious events, probably told to him by Donne himself, that now contribute to Walton's impression of Donne.

Before Walton, letters were frequently affixed to a life, but Walton soon realizes their value in revealing character. In fact, he realizes their value so much that, he produced "synthetic" letters in Donne.¹¹⁹ After Donne's release from prison, the Donnes lived with Sir Francis Wolly of Pirford (31). It was during this time that Dr. Morton wanted him to accept the Benefice earlier mentioned. After Sir Francis died, Donne found a home for his wife and children in Micham, and he himself took lodgings in London (35). To describe Donne's gloom during this period, Walton uses passages from two

¹¹⁹R. E. Bennett, "Walton's Use of Donne's Letters," Philological Quarterly, XVI (1937), 30.

letters, which were not even written within this time span.¹²⁰ Furthermore, he "preverted the emphasis and sometimes the sense" of what Donne wrote.¹²¹ But it was not Walton's intention to deceive, for he introduced his paraphrases with ". . . an extract collected out of some of his many letters" and with ". . . thus in other letters" (36). Thus, the resulting portrait may be essentially true, regardless of Walton's source for the details. By this method, he was able to show Donne's grief.

Furthermore, Walton realized the value of conversation in revealing character. He imagined and shaped dialogue which he deemed suitable for the character. For example, after Donne's family had lived in Micham about two years, he moved to an apartment of Sir Robert Drewry's (38). Although his wife was with child, Donne was persuaded to go with Drewry to France. By means of an imaginary conversation, Walton shows that Donne, after being in France for two days, has the following vision:

Mr. Donne . . . did at last say, I have seen a dreadful Vision since I saw you: I have seen my dear wife pass twice by me through this room, with her hair hanging about her shoulders, and a dead

¹²⁰Loc. cit.

¹²¹Ibid., p. 33.

child in her arms: this, I have seen since I saw you.

To which, Sir Robert reply'd; Sure Sir, you have slept since I saw you; and, this is the result of some melancholy dream, which I desire you to forget, for you are now awake (40).

Thus, Walton reveals the passion of a secular man in a sympathetic light.¹²² In the last part of the secular life, he describes Donne's gaining favor with King James, an episode which leads Walton into an account of Donne's holy life.

In Donne, Walton establishes a style that remains constant in his following Lives. He knew the Bible well, because he is continually comparing his subjects with Biblical characters. He compares the incident of Donne's receiving the call to enter the ministry with the calls experienced by Paul and Moses. And the angel "wrestled and marked" Donne, as he had Jacob (46).

Transitions are a specialty of Walton's. His subjects are like puppets moving at his command.¹²³ In Donne, he uses a series of sentences beginning with the word now to show the great contrast in Donne's life after he became a priest (48). After he convinces the reader that Donne was a fine preacher ("like an angel from a cloud" 49) and that he was well-liked by all

¹²²Novarr, op. cit., p. 51.

¹²³Stauffer, op. cit., p. 115.

his friends ("his life was a shining light among his old friends" 53), he has King James make Donne, Dean of St. Paul's, and then the vicarage of St. Dunstan's falls to him. Walton was also aware that the holiness of his subjects could be best illustrated in an elaborate account of their dying and death. Consequently, he brings one to Donne on his deathbed, and, then, in a long digression, he sums up all he wants to say about Donne's life. Walton accomplishes the transition smoothly, here, as he states:

Reader, This sickness continued long, not only weakning but wearying him so much, that my desire is, he may now take some rest: and that before I speak of his death, thou wilt not think it an impertinent digression to look back with me, upon some observations of his life, which, whilst a gentle slumber gives rest to his spirits, may, I hope, not unfitly exercise thy consideration (60).

Walton's digression (as he names it) enhances the picture of Donne as no mere narrative could, for he gradually builds a concept of piety that can be exceeded only by an account of the extremely holy death.¹²⁴ With this summary out of the way, Walton, then, relates the vivid details of Donne's death, clearly implying that Donne was truly a man of God.

If one could study Walton's changes in the various editions of the work as Novarr has done, he would find

¹²⁴Novarr, op. cit., p. 53.

that Walton spent much time selecting the correct words for each of his sentences.¹²⁵ Frequently, he achieves an almost poetical style. For example, after Donne's wife has died, Walton describes the bereaved Donne in the following way: "Thus he began the day, and ended the night; ended the restless night and began the weary day in Lamentations" (52). Later, after his account of Donne's death, he sums up Donne's life for the final time, "Thus variable, thus vertuous was the Life; thus excellent, thus exemplary was the Death of this memorable man" (82).

If The Life of Donne is the most religious of Walton's Lives, The Life of Sir Henry Wotton is his most worldly. Walton's main interest was in Wotton, the Late Provost of Eaton College, because this rank he includes in the title of the book; however, one does not find a constant emphasis upon holiness of character as in Donne. In the 1672 edition, Walton gives his reason for undertaking the work:

Sir Henry Wotton . . . was so humble as to acknowledge me to be his friend and died in a belief that I was so: Since which time, I have made him the best return of my Gratitude for his condescension My other reason of this boldness, is, an encouragement (very like a command) from . . . Charles Cotton.¹²⁶

¹²⁵Ibid., p. 25.

¹²⁶Wotton, op. cit. There is no pagination in the Life.

Although Wotton had died in 1639 and Marriot had planned a commemorative volume in 1648, it was not until 1651 that Wotton's Reliquiae Wottonianae appeared along with Walton's prefatory Life.¹²⁷ One has no idea of how much of those three years Walton spent in working upon the Life. Since his wife had died during this time, he was probably detained, and these were also troubled years for England.

It is not known how Walton and Wotton met. Marston believes that it was probably through a contact with Donne.¹²⁸ If this theory is true, the meeting could not have taken place before 1624, when Donne was appointed Dean of St. Paul's. Furthermore, Wotton was made Provost of Eaton in 1624, so that, very likely, it is the elderly Provost whom Walton knew.¹²⁹ A good friendship existed between Wotton and Walton. Walton even made a character sketch of Wotton in The Compleat Angler. Before including the sketch, he wrote the following about his friend: "My next and last example shall be that of . . . Sir Henry Wotton (a man with whom I have often fish'd and convers'd.)"¹³⁰ Walton

¹²⁷Novarr, op. cit., p. 129.

¹²⁸Marston, op. cit., p. 107.

¹²⁹DNB, XXI, 969.

¹³⁰Izaak Walton, The Compleat Angler or the

must have had a good memory or have kept a diary, because it is probable that most of the anecdotes he used in the Life were derived from these conversations with Wotton. Walton's continued interest in Wotton is again revealed by the fact that he revised the Life in 1654, 1670, 1672, and 1675.¹³¹

Parallels between the Donne and Wotton Lives are too numerous to mention. It is clear, however, that Walton used the same techniques with, perhaps, a growing respect for accuracy. Since so many of Wotton's years were secular, Walton could have mishandled the information and have made Wotton consistently a pious man.¹³² Instead, he must have realized that it was politics and money that made Wotton accept the position at Eaton; since he recognized the secular motives of the man, he devised a more secularized picture. Still, he also manipulates the proportions of this Life in order to show the religious aspects of Wotton's career. Only nineteen of Wotton's seventy-one years were spent as an ambassador under King James, but Walton devotes

Contemplative Man's Recreation Being a Discourse of Rivers, Fish Ponds, Fish and Fishing, II, 57.

¹³¹Richard E. Fehner, "The Life of Sir Henry Wotton: A Study of Sources, Revisions and Chronology," Dissertation Abstracts, XXII (1961), 246.

¹³²Novarr, op. cit., p. 141.

one-fourth of the Life to them, perhaps, because Wotton himself thought his main reason for being employed abroad was one of religion.¹³³ The last one-third of the Life concerns Wotton's fifteen years as Provost.¹³⁴

It is clear that Walton undertook extensive research in preparation for his writing of Wotton's Life. For example, he spends much time in his account of Wotton's lineage, and for this information he consults Holinshed (94). Novarr suggests that Walton also made use of Camden.¹³⁵ At the beginning of his account of Wotton's ambassadorial years, Walton describes the quarrel between Pope Paul V and the Venetians that took place in the years 1603-1606 (116-120). This account advances the picture of Wotton by showing the trust placed in him by King James and the Venetian State. Thus, some rather diligent research on Walton's part produces an informative and generally authoritative account.¹³⁶ Nevertheless, it has been shown that whenever Walton relies heavily upon a source, he makes certain that every detail fits the picture which he is

¹³³Ibid., p. 140.

¹³⁴Ibid., p. 137.

¹³⁵Ibid., p. 145.

¹³⁶Ibid., p. 152.

drawing.¹³⁷ He is influenced by his sources, therefore, only when they corroborate or supplement his own views about his subject.

After describing the glory of Wotton's lineage, Walton briefly alludes to Wotton's early education (99). He fills in the picture of Wotton's college years by telling two dreams involving Wotton's father (102-104). At first, one thinks that the account of the dreams is a complete digression, but he suddenly discovers that the first is justified in that it shows the political interest of the Wottons and that the second is significantly connected with Oxford.¹³⁸ At this point, Walton begins to use anecdotes with frequency in order to reveal Wotton's character during the secular years. His account of Wotton's travels, presented in two anecdotes, reveal his fine abilities connecting him with King James (107-112). Walton tells three anecdotes in the section concerned with the ambassadorship years to show the King's high esteem for Wotton (121-122), Wotton's merciful disposition (123), and Wotton's nobleness of mind (124-125). It might, at first, appear that Walton has not spent much time on Wotton's secular

¹³⁷Ibid., p. 147.

¹³⁸Ibid., p. 155.

years. That the reverse is true is shown in contrasting his Donne and Wotton. He covers twenty-five pages in discussing Donne's secular life, and thirty-five pages in discussing Wotton's. He covers thirty-five pages in discussing Donne's religious life, and twenty-four in discussing Wotton's.

In Donne, Walton was influenced by the tradition of the Theophrastian character. After he had written the chronicle of events, he attached a written portrait (83-84). By the time of The Life of Wotton, however, he was more aware that the events and the portrait should be fused. Thus, he includes a physical description of Wotton in the narrative (107), and follows this same procedure in writing the three remaining Lives.

Walton carefully shows that wealth was an important factor in Wotton's becoming Provost of Eaton (127). After Wotton becomes Provost, Walton's treatment of the man is similar to his treatment of the religious Donne. A static picture including Wotton's devotions, his reading of the Bible, and his good neighborliness is presented (130). One difference is evident, however. Walton causes Wotton's lively wit to come to the surface by including imagined conversations that occurred in Venice. For example, he tells how a small boy delivered a message

from a priest to Wotton with the question, "'Where was your religion to be found before Luther?' Wotton answered, 'My religion was to be found then, where yours is not to be found now, in the written word of God'" (131). Later, he has Wotton say, "The farther you go from the Church of Rome, the nearer you are to God" (132). After demonstrating Wotton's wit (and Walton's sense of humor), he ends the Life with an account of a typical religious death.

Because of his overindulgence in anecdote, a slight discursiveness might be present in Walton's style exemplified in Wotton. For example, the dreams referred to do not have much purpose in the narrative, and toward the end, between his illustration of Wotton's wit and the account of his death, Walton digresses upon Sir Albert Morton, Wotton's secretary on the Italy trip, and Mr. William Bedel, Wotton's chaplain on the same journey (134-139). Simply because he includes such material in the Life shows Walton's confidence in himself, for these are incidents about which he knew.

In both Donne and Wotton, Walton shows that he has many of the talents for the writing of biography. In Wotton, though, he reveals that history and biography were not separate concepts in his mind. For example, he speaks of Wotton's intention to write a history of England

in which ". . . [Wotton] proceeded to write short Characters of a few Kings, as a foundation upon which he meant to build the [history]" (140). Walton very well subordinates some history in Wotton, but it was to give him a problem in the writing of the third Life.

Walton's biographical methods underwent a change in The Life of Mr. Hooker, the Author of Those Learned Books of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity (1665).

Walton's reason for writing this Life was different. Whereas no biographies existed of Donne and Wotton before the appearance of Walton's, Hooker was written in order to correct a previous biography. Walton explains:

But about that time [1662] Dr. Gauden publisht the Life of Mr. Hooker, (so he called it) with so many dangerous mistakes, both of him and his Books that Gilbert [Sheldon] . . . enjoined me . . . to give the world a fuller and truer account of Mr. Hooker . . . (5).

Even though Charles had been restored to the throne in 1660, many factions still existed. Since Gauden had not glorified Hooker, the champion of the Restoration Church, Sheldon, Bishop of London, desired a new representation of Hooker.¹³⁹ If Sheldon could convince Walton to do the Life, he would have a reputable biographer and someone also sympathetic with the Church of England.¹⁴⁰ Perhaps,

¹³⁹Ibid., p. 224.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., p. 226.

Walton could discredit Gauden's Life. Actually, Walton probably did not resist Sheldon's attempts as much as it might appear. He himself said that some years before, he had become a

. . . diligent Inquisitor into many things that concerned him [Hooker]; as namely of his Person, his Nature, the management of his Time, his Wife, his Family, and the Fortune of him and his (161).

Now, with Sheldon's confidence, he was able to use the material. Still, it took him some time to write the Life, because it did not appear until 1665.¹⁴¹

Walton had associated with many people who knew Hooker, namely with William Crammer, Crammer's two sisters, Dr. Usher, Dr. Morton, and John Hales (160-161), but Hooker himself had died when Walton was seven.¹⁴² As a result, Walton could not rely on a personal knowledge of the man as he had in the case of his writing Donne and Wotton. He realized the extra work that this fact would impose, for he explains:

I knew him not in his life and must therefore not only look back to his Death, now sixty-four years past: but almost fifty years beyond that, even to his Childhood and Youth (159).

Since the friends whom Hooker and Walton had in common were now dead, Walton knew that he had to rely on his

¹⁴¹Ibid., p. 232.

¹⁴²Butt, "Izaak Walton's Methods in Biography," p. 70.

"memory and diligence" (161). He might also have added that he needed to rely upon his art, for he revised Hooker in 1666, 1670 and 1675.¹⁴³

The first difference one notices when reading Hooker is the number of dates which Walton used. Not so many are given for the earlier years, but thereafter they begin to appear frequently. Walton seldom dated by the year in Donne and Wotton; however, in Hooker, he records, many times, the year, month, and even the day of an event. In a way, Gauden's Life influenced Walton by showing him what to avoid. The former work had been so vague, that Walton apparently strived to find facts so as to prove Gauden wrong.¹⁴⁴

Walton had been somewhat quiet about the conditions of the times in Donne and Wotton. In Donne, he had spoken of the common people ". . . who do not consider themselves wise unless they be busie about what they understand not and especially about Religion" (56). Similarly, in Wotton, he had mentioned that ". . . the weeds of controversie were daily growing both more numerous and more destructive to humble Piety" (143). Actually, the reader did not need to have a complete

¹⁴³Novarr, op. cit., p. 281.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., p. 249.

understanding of the times in order to understand Donne and Wotton. With Hooker, the case was different. After the Restoration, Walton no longer needed to remain silent; now, he could use some of the facts about the Elizabethan struggle against Puritanism to help his reader to an understanding of Hooker.

To use surroundings effectively in biography, one must be aware of three essential principles.¹⁴⁵ First, details should be chosen so that the subject is not overwhelmed by them. Secondly, the surroundings should be viewed through the subject's rather than the biographer's eyes. Finally, the surroundings should not be merely described as viewed by the subject; rather, they must be integrated with the episodes of his life. Since biography and history were not completely separated in his mind, Walton produced what Butt calls a "Life-and-Times biography."¹⁴⁶ A picture of Hooker emerges during the first few and the last few pages, but Hooker's (and Walton's) opinion toward Puritanism is the subject of the center of the book. In seventeen pages (181-198), Walton selects details to fit his purpose. He shows a continued mounting of confusion caused by the

¹⁴⁵Stern, op. cit., p. 370.

¹⁴⁶Butt, "Izaak Walton's Methods in Biography," p. 70.

nonconformists, before he introduces his description of Whitgift, who did much to settle the problems in favor of the Church of England. (Probably, he feels he is justified in including this material, because, later in the Life, Hooker is to carry on a book war with the nonconformists, and Whitgift is to support Hooker.) Nevertheless, the figure of Hooker is lost in the surroundings. But Walton fails on the last two points, since it appears that Walton himself is speaking, and he does not integrate the surroundings into the Life. He brings Hooker to the Temple on March, 1585, and writes, "And here I will make a stop; and that the Reader may be the better judge of what follows, give him a character of the Times and Temper of the people of this nation" (181). After he depicts the nonconformists and Whitgift, he states, "And now after this long Digression made for the Information of my Reader concerning what follows, I bring him back to venerable Mr. Hooker, where we left him in the Temple" (198). Thus, his transition is accomplished smoothly. Still, the information should be related through Hooker's eyes in the regular narrative rather than in a separate section. Even though Walton cannot be considered a "pure" biographer, he was, nonetheless, a true artist, for through Hooker he was able to give his views and help in the re-establishment of the High Church.

Walton reveals the character of Hooker somewhat differently. In Donne and Wotton, he proves a point, mainly by anecdote. In Hooker, even though he relies heavily on the device of these oral stories, he also uses records to a greater extent. In the first large section dealing with Hooker's birth and education (162-176), he stresses Hooker's scholarship and honors. Since Hooker's parents were not of royal blood, Walton wastes no time in accounting for their lineage. Nevertheless, he makes sure that the reader understands that they, imbued with virtue and honesty themselves, ". . . instilled the seeds of piety in the young Hooker's soul" (163). Respect for Hooker's learning is shown in five examples that are based both upon records and stories. For example, he observes that an early schoolmaster noted Hooker's scholarly ability and persuaded his uncle, John Hooker, to support Richard at the university (164); John Jewell, Bishop of Salisbury helped Hooker get into Oxford (166); Dr. Cole, President of Corpus Christi, made Hooker his Patron (166); and he reveals in a little story Jewell's kindness to Hooker (167). His best and last example demonstrating Hooker's learning is concerned with Edwin Sandys, who was educated at Cambridge and who sent his own son, Edwin, to Oxford to study under Hooker (168-169).

Since Cauden had not presented a very flattering picture of Hooker, Walton next relies on records to describe Hooker's honors at Oxford.¹⁴⁷ He shows that the man was admitted as one of the Scholars of the Foundation at Corpus Christi College in 1573; he was made Inceptor of Arts in 1576; he was made master of Arts in 1577; and he was admitted Fellow of the College in 1577 (170-171). In all of these cases, Walton is able to connect Hooker with other men famous for their learning. Furthermore, he speaks of Hooker's sacred friendship with two of his students, Sandys and Crammer, and of his being able to read Hebrew very well (173-174). Besides presenting the champion of the Church of England in a flattering way, Walton's emphasis upon Hooker's scholarship and honors in the first section prepares the reader for his explanation of Hooker's later being able to write the Ecclesiastical Polity in the Life. Even though he is forced to use facts in Hooker, he has done so deductively rather than inductively. Thus, Walton uses facts to bolster a preconceived impression.¹⁴⁸

Even though Walton now shows more respect for records, he does not pass up an opportunity to tell a

¹⁴⁷Novarr, op. cit., p. 224.

¹⁴⁸Ibid., p. 279.

good story in the second section (176-181). Here, again, he seems to realize that small details are often the ones that most reveal character. For example, he explains that while Hooker was still connected with the college, he took on holy orders. He spends a great amount of time in analyzing the effect of Hooker's marriage upon a career in the church.¹⁴⁹ With vivid details, he relates the story of Hooker's coming to London in 1581 to preach his first sermon. At the boarding house, Mrs. Churchman was able to cure him of distemper and a cold, enabling Hooker to make his public appearance on the scheduled day. He shows that gratitude for Mrs. Churchman's hospitality was responsible for Hooker's allowing her to choose him a wife. Of course, she selected her daughter, Joan, who brought him neither "Beauty nor Portion" (178). Because of this marriage, Hooker was drawn from the tranquility of the college to the activity of Draiton Beauchamp. A visit to this place by Crammer and Sandys shows Hooker tending sheep and rocking a cradle. The same visit results in a recommendation of Hooker as Master of the Temple. Walton makes it clear that Hooker did not want to come to the city to preach, but that he was persuaded to do so. The

¹⁴⁹Ibid., p. 237.

DNB explains that the black picture given of Mrs. Hooker is false in its many details, perhaps the result of an inherited impression and Walton's delight in appealing stories.¹⁵⁰ Since Walton has even manipulated the dates noted in Camden so as to be able to tell the story, every false detail is a tribute to his ability to ". . . construct a picture powerful in its appeal and beautifully integrated in the Life."¹⁵¹

The third section of the Life is concerned with Walton's impression of the times already mentioned (181-198). Since Hooker had done more than any other writer to decide the policy and the fate of the Church of England and since Walton had less personal memory, here, upon which to rely, he causes the figure of Hooker in this section to become synonymous with a concept of the Elizabethan struggle against Puritanism.¹⁵²

In the fourth section, Walton explains the conditions which prompted Hooker to write the Ecclesiastical Polity (198-208). Travers, lecturer at afternoon sermons at the Temple, wanted to institute the Presbyterian church government in England. Hooker, the

¹⁵⁰DNB, IX, 1184.

¹⁵¹Novarr, op. cit., p. 275.

¹⁵²Butt, "Izaak Walton's Methods in Biography," p. 70.

forenoon lecturer, favored the Church of England. Each party brought reasons to prove his adversary's opinion to be wrong. Finally, Whitgift curtailed Travers' lectures. The dissatisfied followers of Travers, next, drew up a petition for Travers' reinstatement. Walton states that Hooker provided an answer that had ". . . clear Reason, written with much Meekness and Majesty of Style," the result being that Travers was not allowed to return (201). Many of the people at the Temple were willing to go along with Hooker, now; but since others were still dissatisfied, Hooker decided to write his eight books of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity to show the reasoning of the Church of England. By relating the Hooker-Travers controversy, Walton provides an illustration showing Hooker's wisdom and meekness and clearly establishes the reason for Hooker's having written the Polity.

In the last part of the Life, Walton deals with the writing, publication, and reception of the Polity and, finally, with the details of Hooker's death (208-227). He explains that, asking for a quiet place in which to write, Hooker was assigned to Boscum in 1591. There he completed and published his first four books in 1594 and the fifty book in 1597 (210-211). At this point, Walton uses his method of giving examples, this

time based mainly upon oral impression, showing the reception accorded the publication of the Polity.

Novarr explicates these examples as follows:

Cardinal Allen and Dr. Stapleton recommended it to Pope Clement VIII, who praised its learning; King James praised it extravagantly to Whitgift; Charles I enjoined his son to read it; Camden wished that it might be translated into Latin, and Bishop Earle had just completed such a translation.¹⁵³

Hooker was presented at Bishops Borne in 1594; there, Walton describes Hooker's Christian behavior to show that this excellent country priest was an example for others (217-223). Lastly, he relates Hooker's death at Bishops Borne with artistic, as well as didactic, effect.

In many ways, Walton's style in Hooker is similar to the style employed in both the earlier and later Lives. He frequently inserts a portrait within the Life, the result being that hardly an important contemporary figure between the times of Hooker and Sanderson is omitted in these biographies.¹⁵⁴ Each of Walton's portraits might appear to be a digression, but each has a purpose. Usually, they "cast a luster" upon the main character, showing him to have enjoyed the association

¹⁵³Novarr, op. cit., p. 240.

¹⁵⁴Stauffer, op. cit., p. 111.

and respect of a great person.¹⁵⁵ One of the longest of Walton's portraits is that of Whitgift, previously mentioned (180-199).

Regarding Walton's style, one also notices differences between Hooker and the earlier Lives. Biography as a literary genre had progressed far enough by 1665 so that Hooker appeared originally as a separate volume rather than as a prefatory Life.¹⁵⁶ In addition, Walton includes some passages of literary criticism in Hooker. Since the Ecclesiastical Polity is one of the great examples of English prose, Walton speaks of its style, stating that it contained ". . . no affected language, but a grave, comprehensive, clear manifestation of Reason" (213). He feels he must treat matters of Hooker's literary quality, particularly the dispute that arose over the validity of the last three books.¹⁵⁷ Realizing that this discussion might possibly destroy the unity of his Life, Walton makes use of an appendix (228-249). Finally, Walton always makes use of the details of the subject's last will. Usually he creates what Stauffer has called "Waltonian suspense" in this

¹⁵⁵Novarr, op. cit., p. 236.

¹⁵⁶Ibid., p. 197.

¹⁵⁷Carver, op. cit., p. 72.

account.¹⁵⁸ Since he always wanted to focus on the deathbed scene as the great climax of his narrative, Walton would usually lead the reader up to the episode and then pause, while he endeavors to take care of other necessary particulars, such as the subject's will. Then, Walton is free to devote all his art to describing the subject's final days and hours. Even though he similarly relates the particulars of Hooker's death, he does not use the will in his regular narrative, but rather, in his appendix. Usually he used it to place emphasis on the holy dying, but in Hooker he uses it to show what happened to Hooker's four daughters and his wife, material which might ruin the careful structure of the Life.

Walton comes closest to the form of the panegyric when he writes The Life of Mr. George Herbert (1670) at the age of seventy-seven, not at the suggestion of others, but simply because he wanted to. He explains:

I profess it to be so far a Free-will-offering, that it was writ, chiefly to please my self; but, yet, not without some respect to posterity; for though he was not a man that the next age can forget; yet, many of his particular acts and vertues might have been neglected, or lost, if I had not collected and presented them to the Imitation of those that shall succeed us (6).

¹⁵⁸Stauffer, op. cit., p. 114.

Furthermore, he explains in his Introduction to Herbert that the character of Mary Magdalen was preserved in the gospel story, and he wishes to preserve a worthy character, as well (259).

Even though Walton had seen Herbert only once, the two men share the same friends (259). It is known that he had been interested in Herbert for a long time. The crucial moments in this Life, particularly in the second half, he explains, were related to him by Arthur Woodnot.¹⁵⁹ If Woodnot communicated these details directly to Walton, one learns that Walton was, nevertheless, at work collecting these materials twenty years before the Life was published, since Woodnot had died in 1651.¹⁶⁰ His years of research upon Herbert may even be increased to twenty-eight, since it is unlikely that Walton knew anything of Woodnot's personal activities after 1642.¹⁶¹ Walton also quotes Herbert in The Compleat Angler (1653); *i. e.*, Piscator tells what holy Mr. Herbert ". . . sayes of such dayes and flowers as these . . .", by reciting one of Herbert's

¹⁵⁹Novarr, op. cit., p. 307.

¹⁶⁰Loc. cit.

¹⁶¹Ibid., p. 332.

poems.¹⁶² Walton further reveals an affection for Herbert when he has Venator say that he believed Herbert loved the sport of angling ". . . because he had a spirit suitable to Anglers and to those primitive Christians that you love and have so much recommended."¹⁶³ Walton's continued interest in Herbert is further demonstrated in the fact that he revised the Life in 1674 and 1675.¹⁶⁴

Two accounts of Herbert, Nicholas Ferrar's biographical notice to The Temple (1633) and Barnabas Oley's "A Prefatory View of the Life" prefixed to a collected edition of Herbert's Remains in 1652, influenced Walton as Gauden's account had done so in his preparation of Hooker.¹⁶⁵ Ferrar's account was no more than an assemblage of remarks;¹⁶⁶ Oley's was a enumeration of excellences with no reliance upon dates.¹⁶⁷ If Walton's Life of Herbert were to be more valuable

¹⁶²Walton, The Compleat Angler, I, 121.

¹⁶³Loc. cit.

¹⁶⁴Novarr, op. cit., p. 355.

¹⁶⁵Butt, "Izaak Walton's Methods in Biography," p. 74.

¹⁶⁶Novarr, op. cit., p. 328.

¹⁶⁷Butt, "Izaak Walton's Methods in Biography," p. 75.

than either of these works, it was necessary for him to employ a chronological pattern with some specific detail. As in Hooker, he uses many dates. Moreover, he uses them as he had done in the previous Lives, namely, simply to achieve an approximation of truth.¹⁶⁸ Rather than searching for accurate dates, he is more interested in manipulating them so as to support his preconceived ideas. After dealing with the eminence of Herbert's family, he speaks briefly of Herbert's early education, stressing Herbert's piety (260-262). Again, Walton has been careful, here, to place the characteristic which he intended later to develop in his treatment of his subject's maturity within his description of the subject's youth. Then, before relating Herbert's years at Cambridge, he introduces a long digression concerned with Mrs. Magdalen Herbert, George's mother (263-267). One of his purposes in this digression is to show the strong friendship that developed between John Donne and Mrs. Herbert. Here, Walton records that Donne became acquainted with Mrs. Herbert when she had spent four years at Oxford with her son, Edward (264). According to Walton, George was at this time four years old, suggesting the year, 1602. The DNB records the

¹⁶⁸Novarr, op. cit., p. 355.

date of Mrs. Herbert's going to Oxford as 1598/99,¹⁶⁹ and Novarr believes that she stayed for two years, rather than four.¹⁷⁰ The DNB is somewhat in agreement, stating that Edward left in 1600.¹⁷¹ It is possible that Donne met her at Oxford around 1598/99,¹⁷² but Walton also explains that, at this time, Donne was nearly forty and had seven children (265). In 1598, Donne would have been twenty-five; and he was not married until 1600.¹⁷³ Walton offers a sonnet and a letter by Donne, both addressed to Mrs. Herbert, as proof of their friendship (265-267). It is true that Mrs. Herbert was one of Donne's strongest patronesses,¹⁷⁴ but Walton's trying to ascribe their relationship to the years, 1598-1602, is inaccurate. Vaguely, Walton probably had in mind the period of 1607, when Donne had sent his "Divine Poems" and "Holy Sonnets" to Mrs. Herbert.¹⁷⁵ Obviously, there seems to be little purpose behind Walton's digression in relation to Herbert's Life unless it shows that

¹⁶⁹DNB, IX, 624.

¹⁷⁰Novarr, op. cit., p. 337.

¹⁷¹DNB, IX, 624.

¹⁷²Novarr, op. cit., p. 337.

¹⁷³DNB, V, 1130.

¹⁷⁴DNB, V, 1132.

¹⁷⁵Loc. cit.

Mrs. Herbert was a good mother. Walton probably included the information, because of his interest in Donne and because of the fact that he possessed some of the letters that passed between the poet and Mrs. Herbert (267). Walton always delighted in telling a good story, especially when material was easily accessible.

After his long digression upon Mrs. Herbert, Walton returns to the account of George at Cambridge (269-275). He uses Herbert's college years mainly in order to demonstrate Herbert's brilliance, particularly as Orator. If Walton consulted the university records for his information, he was not very careful in his research, because not all of Walton's dates coincide with the university records. For example, Walton states that Herbert received the B. A. degree in 1611; yet, the records show 1612-13.¹⁷⁶ Walton adds that Herbert received his M. A. in 1615; yet, the records show 1616.¹⁷⁷ On the other hand, Walton's date of Herbert as Major Fellow, March 15, 1615, and his date for Herbert as Orator, 1619, agree with university records.¹⁷⁸ Walton has, again, shown that, for him, accuracy in dating is

¹⁷⁶DNB, IX, 636.

¹⁷⁷Loc. cit.

¹⁷⁸Loc. cit.

of a secondary importance.

Walton uses mainly two methods in revealing Herbert's character. First, he relies upon anecdotes as he has done previously in all of the earlier Lives. Furthermore, he makes extensive references to Herbert's works.¹⁷⁹ From the beginning, Walton was aware of the value of his subject's works as a reliable source of biographical information. Formerly, he had used the Devotions (46) and Pseudo-Martyr (25 and 45) in his The Life of Donne. Nevertheless, for the most part, he had neglected Donne's poetry, probably because he was convinced that it might reveal aspects of Donne's character which he did not wish to disclose, and probably because he was skeptical of the accuracy of detail inherent in Donne's verse.¹⁸⁰ However, since Herbert's verse so nearly reflected Walton's preconceived image of Herbert, he relied upon it extensively.

Three incidents reveal Herbert to have been a brilliant orator. In the first, King James I and William, Earl of Pembroke, commend Herbert for having written a brilliant letter to King James (270-271). As Walton employs them, the next two serve a dual purpose,

¹⁷⁹Butt, "Izaak Walton's Methods in Biography," p. 73.

¹⁸⁰Novarr, op. cit., p. 333.

since they reveal Herbert's eminence as an orator and emphasize his affection for the church. In the second, Herbert defends the established church in answering the satirical poetry of Andrew Melvin (271-272). In the last, King James asks Herbert to attend him at Royston (272-273). By means of this last incident, Walton is able to connect Herbert with Sir Francis Bacon and Dr. Andrews, Bishop of Winchester, thus showing Herbert's association with prominent figures.

Walton reveals his most significant innovation in biography in Herbert by relying upon many of Herbert's works to reveal character. He shows that since university study impaired Herbert's health, he frequently thought of leaving it (275). Quoting from the poem, "Affliction," Walton then reveals Herbert's concept of himself:¹⁸¹ ". . . He had . . . a Wit, like a Pen-knife in a narrow sheath, too sharp for his Body . . ." (275). Walton explains that Herbert's mother, however, would not allow her son to leave the university or to travel. For evidence that Herbert always submitted to her wisdom, Walton quotes from the last five stanzas of another of Herbert's poems also entitled "Affliction".¹⁸² He states that Herbert

¹⁸¹George H. Palmer, The English Works of George Herbert, III, 273.

¹⁸²Ibid., II, 343-344.

contemplated two courses of action--he could enter into court employment under James I, or take sacred orders. When James I and two of Herbert's patrons had died, he shows that Herbert, after thinking, finally decided upon entering the holy orders (276-277).

Walton's transitional section in the Life, linking the brilliant worldly courtier with the country parson, is mainly achieved by the introduction of two anecdotes (277-288). First, after being made Deacon, Herbert accepted the prebend of Layton Ecclesia. Here, Walton describes how Herbert, "with a weak body and an empty purse," rebuilt the church (279). Then, after Herbert's mother had died, Herbert announced his intention of marrying and entering the Priesthood. Here, Walton relates the story of Herbert's marriage to Jane Danvers after having known her for only three days (286).

Walton next prepares his reader by means of some "Waltonian suspense" for an almost incredible story (288). Wishing to portray Herbert as the perfect country parson, he relies, again, on Herbert's works to tell of Herbert's Induction at Bemerton. He explains that, in order to establish some rules for the management of his life, Herbert spent a longer time than usual alone in the church (289). Walton may have received this idea from Herbert's The Country Parson, wherein Herbert, in a note to the reader, explains, "I have resolved to set down

the Form and Character of a true Pastour that I may have a Mark to aim at."¹⁸³ Thus, the long speech, following the Induction, which Herbert supposedly made to Woodnot may be the result of Walton's imaginative reconstruction of the material in both "Content"¹⁸⁴ and "The Pearl".¹⁸⁵ In support of this reconstruction of details, Walton follows his account of the speech with paraphrasings of Herbert's poems, "The Odour"¹⁸⁶ and "The Pearl". Thus, his comment that Herbert "chang'd his sword and silk Cloaths into a Canonical Coat" may be a reworking of "The Priesthood".¹⁸⁷

During Ember-week, Herbert became a priest (293). To show Herbert in the pulpit, Walton takes an opportunity to explain the organization of an Anglican church service. This long digression contains no specific details, but is instead a generalized account (294-301). Here, the education of perspective parsons and layleaders is Walton's goal. To show Herbert out of the pulpit, he uses selected anecdotes. For example,

¹⁸³Ibid., I, 205.

¹⁸⁴Ibid., II, 353.

¹⁸⁵Ibid., II, 381.

¹⁸⁶Ibid., III, 23.

¹⁸⁷Ibid., II, 373.

he notes that Herbert walked twice a week to Salisbury, in order to appreciate the music in the Cathedral Church (303). Walton includes three stories, at this point, to show that Herbert, on these walks, was a good Samaritan (303-306).

Walton's use of Herbert's works results in an innovation in his biographical style in Herbert. Walton was no poet; however, his prose contains many lyrical qualities. Since Herbert's verse is used as a "hand-maiden to Walton's prose," The Life of Herbert is the most poetical of all the Lives.¹⁸⁸ This poetical charm is particularly evident in Walton's account of Herbert's Induction at Bemerton. It is again evident in his description of Herbert's death. At the beginning of the death account, Walton includes a long digression on Nicholas Farrer and John Valdesso (309-313). These accounts have no relation to the life of Herbert, but they further Walton's thesis that a life of piety can attract people from the highest positions in life.¹⁸⁹ Finally, when he relates the details of Herbert's death, his prose becomes noticeably lyrical (316-317). He shapes the first of Herbert's deathbed speeches from

¹⁸⁸Carver, op. cit., p. 74.

¹⁸⁹Novarr, op. cit., p. 325.

details contained in Herbert's poem, "The Quip".¹⁹⁰ The speech when Herbert rises from his bed on the Sunday before his death is taken partly from "The Thanksgiving".¹⁹¹ (He asked for his instrument and having tuned it, he played and sang the fifth stanza of "Sunday".¹⁹²) Walton has, again, contrived a climactic ending for the most saintly of all his characters.

The title of his fifth Life, The Life of Dr. Sanderson, Late Bishop of Lincoln To Which is Added Some Short Tracts or Cases of Conscience, Written by the Said Bishop (1678), clearly demonstrates how far Walton has developed as a biographer. Donne and Wotton appeared, first, as prefatory Lives; Hooker and Herbert appeared, first, as separate volumes. Sanderson appeared with an appendix containing the Cases of Conscience by Sanderson and a sermon by Hooker, the by-products of Walton's research.¹⁹³ If one wonders why Walton would disturb his "Writ of Ease" and undertake such a task at the age eighty-five, the answer is partly revealed in his "Preface," in which he explains that he

¹⁹⁰Palmer, op. cit., III, 33.

¹⁹¹Ibid., II, 291.

¹⁹²Ibid., II, 175.

¹⁹³Novarr, op. cit., p. 365.

thought some memorial ought to be left to this great man, noting that fifteen years had passed without anyone's attempting to achieve it (345). Furthermore, he explains that he was met with many "persuasions and willing informers" (346). Walton's words, however, are only a part of the answer, for it is likely that he had been thinking of another Life for a long time. For example, Novarr suggests that since "he had memorialized a preacher, an evangelist, a champion and a parson, . . . the life of a bishop was the logical culmination."¹⁹⁴ He could have written Bishop Morley's life, although Morley was still living. Thus, he decides that he might as well choose Morley's friend, Sanderson. Since Reason and Judgment by D. F. was such a poor memorial to Sanderson, Morley was probably one of Walton's persuaders.¹⁹⁵ Walton himself had met Sanderson; Morley, Bishop of Winchester, had introduced them almost forty years past (343). Even though Walton and Sanderson were not close friends, Walton recalls part of a conversation which he had shared with Sanderson in 1665 (393). This monstrous task of writing Sanderson's Life challenged Walton, and he

¹⁹⁴Ibid., p. 367.

¹⁹⁵Butt, "Izaak Walton's Methods in Biography," p. 74.

yielded. He even revised this Life in 1681, two years before his death.¹⁹⁶

Although Walton always preferred pleasant conversation to laborious research, he was growing increasingly aware of the importance of documentary evidence to biography. As Novarr says,

He was always ready to avail himself of such evidence when it was readily accessible, and he could see an immediate use for it that was not contradictory to the general intent of the Life he was writing.¹⁹⁷

Since he had many "willing informers," Sanderson is a greater achievement than Herbert. For, even though he like fact, Walton would not exert pressure to find it.¹⁹⁸ After an account of Sanderson's lineage, Walton includes the general details of Sanderson's youth--he was a good boy, he was intelligent, he was liked by everyone, and he went to the university at an early age (350-351). Then, either Walton examined the university records or he had someone undertake the task for him, because he details accurately Sanderson's career at Oxford.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁶Novarr, op. cit., p. 476.

¹⁹⁷Ibid., p. 440.

¹⁹⁸Ibid., p. 468.

¹⁹⁹DNB, XVII, 754.

One would think that more fact would make the biography more accurate; however, the reverse is likely to be true with Walton. The stronger the "buttress of fact," the greater liberty he would take with anecdote and opinion.²⁰⁰

In Sanderson, Walton, again, has a problem in subordinating background material (379-389). Just as Walton shows that Hooker is lost in the Puritan struggles in Elizabeth's reign, he also makes it clear that Sanderson is equally lost in the Puritan struggles in the reign of Charles I. Just as The Life of Hooker was used by Walton in an attempt to aid the re-establishment of the high church, so his Life of Sanderson was used as his attempt to retain this establishment.²⁰¹ However, there is one significant difference; namely, in Sanderson, Walton was writing from personal experience.

Gradually, through the Lives, Walton has begun to reflect himself. Donne's "quiet and meek spirit" (46) and his "most retired and solitary life" (51) are surely Walton's own traits. Wotton's habit of "obliging others rather than himself" (123) and his feeling that the

²⁰⁰Novarr, op. cit., p. 470.

²⁰¹Ibid., p. 369.

" . . . great blessing of sweet content was not to be found in multitudes of men or business" are surely traits of Walton, again (127). Walton's slight emphasis upon didacticism in Hooker (pp. 181-189) becomes an "explicit preaching" in Herbert (pp. 296-301).²⁰² Through his first four Lives, Walton managed to keep his own opinions in the background. In Sanderson, however, he readily enters into the first person: "This I saw and suffer'd by it. But when I look back upon . . . I praise God that he prevented me from being of that party which help'd to bring in this Covenant . . ." (371). Again, later, he says, "This malice and madness is scarce credible, but I saw it" (379). Until Sanderson, nevertheless, Walton had fought against this tendency to express himself openly in his Lives. As Novarr explains, "Now surer of his facts and secure in the respect accorded him, he was not afraid to direct on stage rather than in the background."²⁰³ As an artist, perhaps, Walton, here, has reached his ultimate stature. His accumulated emotions obviously had need of some form of outlet. When these emotions began to swell to the bursting point, the work

²⁰²Ibid., p. 353.

²⁰³Ibid., p. 469.

flows forth with monstrous force.²⁰⁴ On the other hand, a modern critic is probably greatly disappointed, since, for him, the first principle of a biographer is that of revealing truth. Indeed, to express some of his own feelings without misrepresenting those of his hero is an especially difficult task for a biographer.²⁰⁵

By means of anecdotes, again, Walton reveals character in Sanderson. He covers the time of Sanderson's sixteen years at Oxford mainly in an account of his one year of proctorship, there (354-361). He demonstrates Sanderson's bashfulness in an account of his not wishing to run for proctor on either the first or second time. He shows Sanderson as a master of the art of reasoning by allusions to his Logic Lectures taught in both universities by most tutors. He reveals Sanderson's humility by noting that he rarely dwelled on the many "memorable accidents" during the year described in his valedictory speech. Instead, he is concerned with his treatment of the boys during his one year as proctor. He shows Sanderson's ability to make friends by his forming a spiritual friendship with Gilbert Sheldon, Archbishop of Canterbury.

²⁰⁴Maurois, op. cit., p. 115.

²⁰⁵Ibid., p. 131.

After receiving his Bachelor of Divinity, Sanderson was quickly removed from the university to Boothby Pannel. Since Walton does not wish, again, to relate the life of a country parson, he neglects to include many details on the matter pertaining to Boothby Pannel. He does mention Sanderson's happy marriage to Anne Nelson (364). Furthermore, to emphasize Sanderson's worth as a parson, Walton tells the story of a parish member's losing his crops and Sanderson's going to the landlord to straighten out the matter (364-366). Then, he includes an account of some of Sanderson's honors--i. e., his frequently being summoned to preach visitation sermons where his invincible fear always made him read the sermon; his being made the king's chaplain in 1631, through the recommendation of Bishop Laud; his being chosen clerk of all convocations during Charles I's reign; and his being named a Doctor of Divinity (367-369).

Walton's purpose for including an historical digression in Sanderson is to show the effect of the war years on the man.²⁰⁶ (379-389). He shifts the scene, therefore, to Oxford, where Sanderson was appointed Regius Professor of Divinity in 1642. In the first part

²⁰⁶Novarr, op. cit., p. 402.

of this digression, Walton is concerned with Oxford's resistance to Parliament and Sanderson's part in the fray. However, following an account of Sanderson's expulsion in 1648, Walton turns to a consideration of national problems in general, an intensity of feeling now causing him to write not of Sanderson, but of all England. Through the next section of the digression, he attempts to chronicle Sanderson's activities at Boothby Pannel upon which he can place a justification of Sanderson's (and by implication, all High Churchmen's) beliefs (382-389).²⁰⁷ Here, in order to introduce Hammond and the Quinquarticular Crontroversie, Walton tells of Sanderson's being unable to preach successfully without reading his sermons. In addition, he points out that, between Dr. Hammond, Dr. Sanderson, and Dr. Pierce, many letters were passed concerning "God's grace and decrees," (386) because it was through these letters that Sanderson's opinion was somewhat altered. Walton feels that all mankind should, as Dr. Sanderson, ". . . not conceal the alteration of Judgment, but confess it to the honor of God and themselves" (387). Again, to prove his point, he alludes to Dr. Laud's sermon on the scaffold, wherein Laud explained that obstinacy and

²⁰⁷Ibid., p. 471.

personal bias of the nonconformists would probably help Rome and the Pope rather than hurt their cause (388). Realizing that he is digressing again, however, Walton, then, refers the reader to Boothby Pannel where one finds that Dr. Sanderson has been seized and carried prisoner to London to be held as hostage in exchange for a Puritan, Robert Clark (389). Even though an agreement concerning the release of these two men stated that neither should be bothered again by the other party, Walton observes that Sanderson ". . . was several times plundered and once wounded in three places" (390). He shows, however, that, even with great affliction, Sanderson is now content, since he is able to help many people in their struggles with their conscience.

The value of reported conversation in revealing character, one of Walton's most frequently used devices, has been overlooked. In reading the Lives, one becomes increasingly aware of the numerous individuals whom Walton quotes. However, in Sanderson, Walton has gained enough confidence in himself and his writings to admit that he has quoted these people; he explains:

. . . I desire to tell the Reader that in this Relation I have been so bold as to paraphrase and say what I think he (whom I had the happiness to know well) would have said upon the same occasions (345).

One wonders, nevertheless, if these imaginary conversations hamper the development of truth in the Lives.

Stern points out four basic differences between fictionalized and chronological biography, as follows:

- (1) In fictionalized biography one finds imaginary conversations, thoughts, and feelings; in chronological biography one finds the imaginary conversations, thoughts, and feelings used sparingly and based on fact.
- (2) In fictionalized biography, the author writes the conversations and thoughts he would have if he were the subject; in chronological biography the author writes the conversations and thoughts he knows the subject did have from evidence in the latter's journals and letters.
- (3) In fictionalized biography one occasionally finds imaginary characters while the characters in chronological biography are always true.
- (4) In fictionalized biography the part based on fact is in the background while the fact is ever before the reader in chronological biography.²⁰⁸

It may be that Walton, in reporting these conversations of numerous people, is indulging in fictionalized biography. However, if one studies Walton's sources, he concludes that Walton has given a prejudiced concept of fact. Certainly, many conversations occur in Sanderson. Walton even records two conversations which he himself had with Sanderson. In the first, he

²⁰⁸Stern, op. cit., p. 367.

relates some of Sanderson's and his own beliefs in the Liturgy, the Psalms, and the fifty-two Homilies or Sermons (393-395). In the second, he recounts their mutual beliefs in the value of the Sacrament (396-397). Then, following a character sketch of Sanderson, a few comments on his Bishopric of Lincoln, and an account of Sanderson's part in the Restoration, Walton ends the Life with his traditional particularized account of Sanderson's death.

Perhaps, with the exception of his Life of Herbert, Walton was increasingly aware of his role of biographer. In his dedication to Sanderson, he speaks of "the tedious Imployment" of collecting the materials for this poor monument (343). For him, these memoirs which lay scatter'd needed to be collected and contracted into a narrower compass (347). He does not assure the reader that he has not committed any mistakes, but none are wilful or very material (345). After he has finished relating Sanderson's life he adds a postscript.

If I had had time to have review'd this Relation, as I intended, before it went to the Press, I could have contracted some, and altered other parts of it; but 'twas hastned from me . . . If there be a second . . . I shall . . . mend any mistake or supply what may seem wanting (415).

Through the five Lives and their many revisions, Walton gradually developed a pattern of biographical writing which proved highly successful for him.

One should, once more, reflect upon the ways in which Walton may be said to be a precursor of modern biographers. Basically, he is not a forerunner, judging him on the basis of his stated purpose in writing biography, *i. e.*, ". . . 'tis an honour due to the dead, and a generous debt due to those that shall live, and succeed us" (7). The modern biographer tends to feel that this commemorative impulse causes a biographer to be overly partial toward his subject, thus evoking a sense of hero worship. Therefore, the modern writer is usually concerned with the life of a man for its own sake.²⁰⁹ On the other hand, the modern biographer need not be completely impartial. Since he himself is human, it is natural that he will be deeply moved by the life of another.²¹⁰

Perhaps, by accident, Walton represents the beginning in English biography of the realization of the value of truth through documentation. However, he is probably too much of an artist and not enough of a scientist in dealing with his facts. Paradoxically, as his Lives become more factual and specific, they also become more imaginative and dramatic. Instead of using

²⁰⁹Nicolson, The Development of English Biography, p. 10.

²¹⁰Kendall, op. cit., p. 16.

truth to present an accurate picture, he employs it to make his narrative credible in all details.²¹¹

Walton is a forerunner of modern biographers in his realization that biography should be a means of literary expression. Still, he was not careful in making certain that he was never defacing the truth. The modern biographer chooses a subject's life which coincides with his own. Walton, on the other hand, found and emphasized his values in the lives of his subjects. The result is that all five of his Lives reveal similarities in construction. His narrow outlook, along with his artistry, causes him to shape his Lives into the form which he knew best--his personal knowledge of himself.²¹²

Walton is definitely a forerunner of modern biography in his portrayal of personality by means of the anecdote, of evidence taken from the subject's works, and of reported conversations. Others before him had used these devices, however, not as extensively. The seventeenth-century influence of the Theophrastian character is clearly evident continually within the Lives; yet Walton knows the difference between a character

²¹¹Novarr, op. cit., p. 490.

²¹²Ibid., p. 487.

and biography. He was much aware, particularly in Hooker and Sanderson, that one of the main problems of the biographer is to relieve the reader of the burden of useless material. At the same time, he was conscious that smallest details are often the most effective keys to personality. He was able ". . . to lower a little bucket instead of trying to swallow the great ocean of material."²¹³ Even though his characters have been constructed according to his own necessities and desire, they emerge, nevertheless, as living beings.

Finally, Walton is a forerunner of modern biography in the matters of style. He does not belong to the Ciceronian school, nor does he belong to Bacon's very elliptical school. Following the patterns established by the character writers, he fashions his own method of clear and simple expression suitable to the writing of biography. Lowell uses one word in describing Walton's style--"innocency".²¹⁴ He charms with his writing without exactly knowing how he manages to do so. Although Walton is not original, however, in the sense that he opens ". . . new paths to thought or

²¹³Durling, Dwight, and William Watt, Biography Varieties and Parallels, p. 1.

²¹⁴Lowell, op. cit., p. 91.

new vistas to imagination,"²¹⁵ nonetheless, he is able to suffuse whatever enters his mind so that it emerges as a very definite part of himself.²¹⁶

²¹⁵Ibid., p. 92.

²¹⁶Loc. cit.

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