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### ***BEN JONSON'S "TO PENSHURST": THE ARTIFACT OF A DIVIDED MIND***

**Abstract:** *Though often mentioned yet never explored is Ben Jonson's use of satire in his panegyric country house poem "To Penshurst." The contradiction of Jonson as an often imprisoned satirist and a courtier poet, whose career was secured by a courtly patronage for several years, is manifest in this poem. By looking closely at the allusions to classical and mythological figures, its frame, progression, and the assertion of the Great Chain of Being, I will explain how this poem is an excellent example of Jonson's life-long endeavor to both praise and critique the people on whom he was dependent. Although David Riggs calls the poem an example of laudando praecipere (to teach by praising), "To Penshurst" turns out to be more than that. The relationship between the poet Jonson, who saw himself as a teacher of morality by "faining a Commonwealth," and the passionate man who killed a fellow actor in a duel and remained true to his chosen faith, whether it was Catholicism or Anglicism and politically helpful or not, will be illuminated in order to understand Jonson's duality. Unlike Don E. Wayne and others, I see the poem's complexity as an artifact that has the panegyric and critical satire entwined in order to serve one purpose: Jonson's attempt to adhere to his personal ideal of integrity. It is by depicting the ideal that he asks nobility and by striking a covertly satirical tone that he allows himself to stay true to oneself as well as to the highest ideal, God.*