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## Marvell's "The Garden" as metamorphosis

Suzanne Teasdale Budel

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MARVELL'S "THE GARDEN" AS METAMORPHOSIS

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A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Graduate Division

University of Omaha

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

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by

Suzanne Teasdale Büdel

August 1959

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## THE GARDEN

How vainly men themselves amaze  
To win the palm, the oak, or bays;  
And their incessant labours see  
Crowned from some single herb, or tree,  
Whose short and narrow-verged shade  
Does prudently their toils upbraid;  
While all flowers and all trees do close  
To weave the garlands of repose!

Fair Quiet, have I found thee here,  
And Innocence, thy sister dear!  
Mistaken long, I sought you then  
In busy companies of men.  
Your sacred plants, if here below,  
Only among the plants will grow;  
Society is all but rude  
To this delicious solitude.

No white nor red was ever seen  
So amorous as this lovely green.  
Fond lovers, cruel as their flame,  
Cut in these trees their mistress' name:  
Little, alas! they know or heed  
How far these beauties hers exceed!  
Fair trees! wheres'e'er your barks I wound  
No name shall but your own be found.

When we have run our passion's heat,  
Love hither makes his best retreat.  
The gods, that mortal beauty chase,  
Still in a tree did end their race;  
Apollo hunted Daphne so,  
Only that she might laurel grow;  
And Pan did after Syrinx speed,  
Not as a nymph, but for a reed.

What wondrous life is this I lead!  
Ripe apples drop about my head;  
The luscious clusters of the vine  
Upon my mouth do crush their wine;  
The nectarine, and curious peach,  
Into my hands themselves do reach;  
Stumbling on melons, as I pass,  
Ensnared with flowers, I fall on grass.

Meanwhile, the mind, from pleasure less,  
Withdraws into its happiness:  
The mind, that ocean where each kind  
Does straight its own resemblance find;  
Yet it creates, transcending these,  
Far other worlds, and other seas;  
Annihilating all that's made  
To a green thought in a green shade.

Here at the fountain's sliding foot,  
Or at some fruit-tree's mossy root,  
Casting the body's vest aside,  
My soul into the boughs does glide:  
There like a bird it sits, and sings,  
Then whets and combs its silver wings;  
And, till prepared for longer flight  
Waves in its plumes the various light.

Such was that happy garden-state,  
While man there walked without a mate:  
After a place so pure and sweet,  
What other help could yet be meet?  
But 'twas beyond a mortal's share  
To wander solitary there:  
Two paradises 'twere in one,  
To live in paradise alone.

How well the skillful gardener drew  
Of flowers, and herbs, this dial new;  
Where, from above, the milder sun  
Does through a fragrant zodiac run;

And, as it works, the industrious bee  
Computes its time as well as we.  
How could such sweet and wholesome hours  
Be reckoned but with herbs and flowers!

Andrew Marvell

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
Biography . . . . .	2
II. BEGINNINGS . . . . .	12
III. PASTORAL . . . . .	18
IV. PAGAN . . . . .	43
V. RELIGIOUS . . . . .	68
VI. "THE GARDEN" . . . . .	88
VII. CONCLUSION . . . . .	142
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	147

# MARVELL'S "THE GARDEN" AS METAMORPHOSIS

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Each poem may be regarded as a metamorphosis, a transformation, whether because it brings the disconnected elements of life into form, or because it brings new life to old forms. And both of these changes may occur in one poem which will contain, then, something new and something old, whether the old be the reflection of a tradition, or simply a fixed attitude of the poet.

There is another way in which a poem may be thought of as a metamorphosis, and that is in its action on the poet as he writes. That is, the maker is affected by what he makes, and is changed by it. The subtle relationship between the artist and his creation, the truth of the story of Pygmalion, is one whereby each in some way changes the other. When the poet is experiencing what will be the "story" of his poem, he is feeling. But when his reflective and creative parts begin to work, a change comes about, not because of the experience, but because of what that experience is now doing to him and what he is now doing to it. He is reflecting, ordering, making whole what was not, and this process in turn directs his further

reflecting, ordering and making whole until the work seems to take on a "life of its own," dictating its own terms to the poet.

Thus, there are three senses in which a poem may be called a metamorphosis, and Marvell's "The Garden" is such in all three: It is a metamorphosis of traditions; a metamorphosis of raw experience into living art; and a metamorphosis of the poet. If we ask whether the last causes the first two, or the reverse, it must be said that these also are in interrelationship, with no one being the cause or the effect.

"Metamorphosis" has been chosen because it implies both a change and, at the same time, a remaining the same; as the nymphs who became trees also mysteriously retain their human natures. Metamorphosis is a paradox.

### Biography

Some biographical information and some general criticism of Marvell may be a good place to begin. I suppose the most fascinating question to the biographer is why Marvell wrote so well so few lyrics (scarcely 2,000 lines) and then in 1659 turned to politics never to write a lyric again. There is no internal or external evidence in the lyrics as to their dates, but it is usually agreed that they were probably written from about the time of his stay as tutor at Appleton House (1651-52) to a few years afterwards.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Bradbrook and Thomas, Andrew Marvell, p. 9.



Marvell was born in Winestead-in-Holderness, after three sisters, on March 31st in 1621, the son of Rev. Marvell and his wife, Anne Pease. A younger brother, born in 1623, died the next year.<sup>2</sup> In 1624 the family moved to Hull where the father became head of the grammar school.<sup>3</sup> In December, 1633 Marvell matriculated at Trinity College, Cambridge. He was younger than his colleagues, but precocious.<sup>4</sup> Legouis states that Marvell was a latitudinarian "proches de celles des platoniciens de Cambridge."<sup>5</sup> In 1637 some of his Latin and Greek verses appeared in Musa Cantabrigiensis.<sup>6</sup> He was, apparently, converted briefly to Catholicism about 1639,<sup>7</sup> and left Cambridge about 1641 after having received the bachelor of arts in 1638-39. The years after his father's death in 1641 are particularly unknown.<sup>8</sup> Milton says he spent four years abroad, in Holland, France, Italy and Spain, and learned the languages of these countries.<sup>9</sup> He had returned to London by 1649, probably at the end of 1646. Legouis surmises that the funds for this grand tour came from being a tutor, probably to Edward Skinner.<sup>10</sup> Marvell probably owed to Milton his introduction to Cromwell and

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<sup>2</sup>Legouis, André Marvell: Poète, Puritain, Patriote, 1621-1678, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 5.    <sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 7.    <sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 11

<sup>6</sup>Sackville-West, Andrew Marvell, p. 13.

<sup>7</sup>Legouis, op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 20.    <sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 20.    <sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

was probably introduced to Milton by Cyriack Skinner.<sup>11</sup> In 1649, with some thirteen other poets, he introduced the first edition of Lovelace's Lucasta. This is the same year as his poem, "Upon the Death of Lord Hastings."<sup>12</sup> From 1651-52 he was tutor to Lord Fairfax's daughter at Nun Appleton House in Yorkshire "where much of his best poetry was presumably written."<sup>13</sup> In 1653 he was tutor to Cromwell's ward at Eton, and in 1657 he became assistant in the Latin secretaryship to Milton. Phillips credits him with saving Milton during the Restoration. He was member for Hull from 1659 until his death in 1678. None of his important early poems was printed in his lifetime, the first collection being published by his supposed widow in 1681.<sup>14</sup> She turns out to have been only his housekeeper.<sup>15</sup>

The question of Marvell's allegiance has also been a vexed one. On his return from Europe he seems to have been "moderately Royalist." Later he came to admire Cromwell, but the issues were extremely involved and many men were perplexed

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<sup>11</sup>Margoliouth, The Poems and Letters of Andrew Marvell, Vol. II, p. 349.

<sup>12</sup>Sackville-West, op. cit., p. 16.

<sup>13</sup>Bush, English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century: 1600-1660, p. 158.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., pp. 158-59.

<sup>15</sup>Tupper, "Mary Palmer, Alias Mrs. Andrew Marvell," PMLA LIII, pp. 367-92.

about their party.<sup>16</sup> The "Horatian Ode" and much in the "Appleton House" show the distance he could preserve while being quite involved in the questions of the day. He thought the war brutal and believed more in England than he did in either party.<sup>17</sup> Some accused him of being a coward, of switching allegiance with the wind. But in the later years, the writing of his satires on the royal family and the leaders of the government, though anonymous, display his courage.

He is supposed to have had a sharp temper combined with moderation in matters of belief.<sup>18</sup> He defended the right of Charles and James to their own religious convictions. He could speak "with the tongue of a bargee," and with the "unpremeditated fervour of the uneducated."<sup>19</sup> He once fought in the House of Commons, and insulted the Speaker,<sup>20</sup> but was known generally for his "sanity and the generosity of his judgment upon matters of principle."<sup>21</sup> Aubrey says, "and though he loved wine he would never drinke hard in company."<sup>22</sup> He drank alone to "refresh his spirits, and exalt his Muse."<sup>23</sup> "He had

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<sup>16</sup>Bradbrook and Thomas, op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 4.    <sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 13.    <sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 12.    <sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>22</sup>Clark, 'Brief Lives, chiefly of Contemporaries, set down by John Aubrey, between the Years 1669 and 1696, p. 53.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 54.

not a general acquaintance."<sup>24</sup> "He was a great master of the Latin tongue; an excellent poet in Latin and English: for Latin verses there was no man could come into competition with him."<sup>25</sup> A contemporary, Richard Leigh (in Gregory Father Graybeard), criticized Marvell's fashionable manners, his use of Gallicisms like taunt, remark, repartee, and called him Virtuoso, Ingenioso, Politico.<sup>26</sup> His wearing of a fashionable full-bottomed wig was seen as an equal crime. This man accused both Milton and Marvell of homosexuality, and Marvell also of impotence.<sup>27</sup>

In general, modern criticism of Marvell is favorable.

Seul parmi les disciples de Donne il présente une personnalité comparable pour la variété et la force à celle du maître et dans ses meilleures pièces il atteint une humanité, une cordialité, il exprime de façon largement accessible et en même temps artistique des sentiments universels, qui n'apparaissent chez Donne qu'exceptionnellement.<sup>28</sup>

Bradbrook and Thomas credit him with "subtlety and straight forwardness;" he can be "delicate and austere," and has the "clarity, unimpoverished frugality which is the source and mark of tenacious vigour."<sup>29</sup> Grierson says, "The strongest personality of all is Andrew Marvell. Apart from Milton he is the

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 54.    <sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>26</sup>Bradbrook and Thomas, op. cit., p. 20.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>28</sup>Legouis, op. cit., p. 171.

<sup>29</sup>Bradbrook and Thomas, op. cit., p. 23.

most interesting personality between Donne and Dryden, and at his very best a finer poet than either."<sup>30</sup> Douglas Bush says he was "the finest flower of secular and serious metaphysical poetry . . . ." <sup>31</sup> Further:

Mervell united in himself with an independent moderation of his own, a fresh, muscular, agile, and subtle metaphysical wit and the rationality, clarity, economy, and structural sense of a genuine classic, the cultured, negligent grace of a cavalier and something of the religious and ethical seriousness of a Puritan Platonist. To this rare combination of gifts were added, moreover, a feeling for nature at once particular and general, earthly and unearthly, and an individual sensitivity and suppleness of rhythm.<sup>32</sup>

There are some negative opinions. V. Sackville-West says:

He was a man with a genuine but shallow vein of inspiration out of which he extracted the maximum yield of riches before he turned to the more mundane activities which satisfied the other side of his temperament. Here was no wastage to deplore.<sup>33</sup>

She also considers, not that he combined successfully several modes, but that since Nature and John Donne were "the fashion of the day," the "contradiction tore him asunder from the start."<sup>34</sup> She says that his real mood was of feeling

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<sup>30</sup>Grierson, Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century; Donne to Butler, p. xxxvii.

<sup>31</sup>Bush, English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century: 1600-1660, p. 158.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 159.

<sup>33</sup>Sackville-West, op. cit., p. 10. <sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

and seeing, as in the nature poems. When conceits appear they are an "ornament--or shall I say a disfigurement."<sup>35</sup> Finally, "he is not often perplexed by the problems of morality,"<sup>36</sup> and:

it must be admitted that in the hale sanity of Marvell's mind very little room could be found for those underlying doubts and perplexities which are implicit in all poetry of the noblest order . . . . The very peg upon which he hung his imagination in itself gives proof of a tame, somewhat smug, material outlook. Order, safety, gardens; . . . his was no uneasy soul.<sup>37</sup>

It is hoped that this paper, if it does nothing else, may demonstrate the shallowness of such criticism.

A few remarks about the temper of Marvell's time may be in order here. The seventeenth century was the recipient of several traditions, which gave a vast opportunity for wit, for beauty, but also for confusion. It was confronted with the problem of bringing unity from diversity to an extraordinary degree, Donne's "calls all in doubt" being but one expression of the unsureness of the time. The cracking of the seemingly permanent world-view of the Middle Ages by the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, was only one of the disturbances. The Renaissance, among other things, had rediscovered the classics, and more important, their tone, which was often in contradiction to the ideas of the Church. The Renaissance had also brought the center of interest in the universe down to man, and it was seen that man, through his

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 33.    <sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 60.    <sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 62.

choices, had a hand in shaping his own destiny. In fact, he was expected to mold himself, to offer some resistance to Fortune, as is shown by the difference between Renaissance tragedy and the Medieval concept. Man was forced to take more responsibility for himself than was perhaps comfortable. Finally, the "new science" brought new methods of procedure; no longer could one reason from accepted principles, but one was lost in a series of phenomena which might lead anywhere, Bacon's "submit your mind to things" being inconceivable in an earlier age.

The seventeenth century love of paradox is perhaps a result of the clash between the old and the new in each of these areas, the problem becoming acute not only because the "new" emphasized uncertainty, but also because its opposition to the old added confusion to that uncertainty. Ever larger horizons were scanned in hopes of reaching again the principles of harmony and unity. Somewhere in the heavens those principles still ruled, but it was necessary to reach for them, to make the effort of comprehending them. The ways of God must now be explained to men, and there must be faith that under the appearance of irrationalism there was, in the universe, an order. Thus, along with the new emphasis on man and his capabilities, there was the contrary one on largeness of view. The poetry of Donne, for example, is full of images of tremendous scope, the sun and the heavens, as well as the most particular feelings of one person. Paradox was, then, a

favorite method of expressing such a whole which was not a whole, of several contradictory but not mutually exclusive ways of viewing. One might not be sure of the Truth, but one was quite sure there were many truths, and by paradox, ambiguity, irony and puns a writer might express his realization that there is more than one way of looking at a question.

Although the use of these devices was common in the seventeenth century, usually one view of the matter was presented as the better, this being almost a necessity when one proceeds to form a work of art. It seems that Marvell alone was willing to allow a paradox to remain one, and frequently in his poetry a problem is as unresolved at the end as it was at the beginning; we have simply been allowed to investigate. The poems are researches rather than philosophies. For him, the ability to see many sides seemed almost to stifle decision, but to encourage creation. The metamorphosis in his poem, "The Garden" is one which leads finally away from the static pose of paradox to a new knowledge and decision. If one knew its date it might also prove to be a metamorphosis away from the writing of lyric poetry.

The traditions to which Marvell is heir are the pastoral, the religious and the pagan. Because there is more than one, he is able to play them against one another, sometimes undermining, sometimes exaggerating to investigate where the real solidity of an idea lies, and sometimes taking them



simply as they are. He may turn a highly artificial pastoral poem into one of simple religious mysticism, or a poem of love into an elegant exhibition of witty renunciation. The deftness with which he handles his traditions accounts for his poise as well as his apparent lack of firm conviction, by which some critics have felt unnerved. It is in "The Garden" that Marvell has most successfully mixed and played with the traditions and has thereby arrived at a conclusion which is personal and solid. The poem is a sort of summation of his lyric gifts, complex, poised, and finally self-knowing. It is in "The Garden" also that Marvell's style exhibits fully the mixing of the three traditions. There is urbane Roman wit, pastoral artificiality and grace, and an essentially religious outlook. He combines the perspicacity of Donne and the sensuousness of Spenser in a simple stanzaic form which belies its poise and polish.

This paper will discuss the traditions in Marvell in relation to his poetry and finally in relation to "The Garden," where their metamorphosis and that of the poet is most interesting. There is a section entitled Pastoral, one entitled Religious, and one Pagan. There is also an initial section, Beginnings, which points out the kinds of problems in which Marvell was interested, although he did not necessarily think of them in the terms used here.

## CHAPTER II

### BEGINNINGS

This chapter will set forth the themes with which Marvel is primarily concerned, and also attempt to give some indication of their background. They can be grouped under the heading of the problem of estrangement, a philosophical-theological term for the expression of the felt condition of man in the universe, but which in various symbol systems seems to have appeared in his myths and stories of explanation of himself from the beginning. In Christian terms the separation from the original Good is referred to as the Fall; in literary terms the Age of Iron is opposed to the lost Golden Age; Plato describes (in Politicus, 269ff) the age of Cronos when the trees gave their fruit and men had neither wives nor children; in Isaiah 11:6,8, 65:25 the notion of previous goodness appears.<sup>38</sup> These are but a few examples. The fragment of Anaximander (611-547 B.C.) goes further to state that everything that individually exists came to life by separation from the common ground and must return to its origin "as is ordained; for they make reparation and satisfaction to one another for their injustice."<sup>39</sup> This can only be interpreted

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<sup>38</sup>Eliade, The Myth of the Eternal Return, p. 121.

<sup>39</sup>Burnet, Greek Philosophy, Part I, Thales to Plato, p. 50.

as an uncalled-for differentiation from the original One. From early times, then, the feeling of estrangement is accompanied by the notion of guilt, and man constantly strives to comprehend the nature of his guilt, to expiate it, and to reunite with Being. That is, he strives for a metamorphosis into his best self (although the concept of this varies) capable of achieving a guiltless and therefore free state of Being, whether it be seen in terms of the Garden of Eden, the Golden Age, reidentification with the One, or unity in Christ. In any case, the achievement involves relief from the sense of estrangement.

The pressure of the idea of estrangement becomes apparent in the study of the primitive attempts at Return. Archaic man saw his separation as a fall into history, duration, and Return to him meant achieving that time when all men were equal, before time, space and history, for there he felt he should find Being, the opposite of individuality.<sup>40</sup> The primitive

sees himself as real only to the extent that he ceases to be himself (for the modern observer) and is satisfied with imitating and repeating the gestures of another. In other words, he sees himself as real, i.e., as 'truly himself' only, and precisely, insofar as he ceases to be so.<sup>41</sup>

By ritual, by reproducing the exemplary gesture or the archetypal gesture he is transported back into that mythical time where accident, time, space, history and his own individuality were abolished. Time, which is only perceptible "because of

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<sup>40</sup>Eliade, op. cit., p. 158.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

man's sins, i.e., when man departs from the archetype and falls into duration" is the force which carries him ever farther from that perfect time, so he seeks to annul it by symbolic acts of Return, thus to escape history and self.<sup>42</sup> This sense of life is midway between self-conscious awareness and non-existence, a sort of plant-like life, and is recalled in Marvell's reiteration of the word 'green.'

Eric Fromm and Johann Jakob Bachofen (1815-1887), from whom he quotes, describe mythic times in terms of matriarchal and patriarchal values, the former being characterized by an emphasis on ties of blood, ties to the soil, and a passive acceptance of all natural phenomena, that is, a state of harmony between human life and the life of nature.<sup>43</sup> Patriarchal society, in contrast, is characterized by respect for man-made law, by a predominance of rational thought, and by man's effort to change natural phenomena.

In the matriarchal concept all men are equal, since they are all the children of mothers, and each one a child of Mother Earth. A mother loves all her children alike and without conditions, since her love is based on the fact that they are her children and not on any particular merit or achievement; the aim of life is the happiness of men, and there is nothing more important than human existence and life. The patriarchal system on the other hand, considers obedience to authority to

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., pp. 85-88.

<sup>43</sup>Fromm, The Forgotten Language: An introduction to the understanding of dreams, fairy tales, and myths, pp. 207-08.

to be the main virtue. Instead of the principle of equality, we find the concept of the favorite son and a hierarchical order in society.<sup>44</sup>

The patriarchal outlook values the power of thought and word (logos) as opposed to the concept of common humanity and equality.

These "matriarchal" values form another scheme for stating the primitive notion of Return described above, and the patriarchal values demonstrate <sup>still</sup> another. As the matriarchal attempts an escape from history and from individuality, i.e., the self, so the patriarchal, conceding consciousness and difference between individuals, still seeks to escape the responsibility of consciousness through the abdication of personal choice--before the authority of fate, a hierarchy of society, or a concept of Reason. This is more sophisticated than the matriarchal attempt at simple Return, nevertheless it still involves an unwillingness to accept the responsibility of the human state on this earth. Indirectly it is still an attempt to return to the original state, now conceived of as identification with or imitation of the hierarchical and eminently rational. This is not an escape from duration and history, but it is still an escape from self-conscious and self-responsible individuality.

The characters in Greek literature are like Greek statues in which the face is no more significant than

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 208.

any other part of the body. For, like an animal, their nature is completely expressed in their actions; nothing is left to the imagination because there is nothing to leave; there is no inner life of possibilities.<sup>45</sup>

A man is what he is, he exists without Becoming. Such an attitude towards existence, the subjection to fate or larger forces appears frequently in Marvell, for example, his references to fate and the "opposition of the stars" in "Definition of Love."

The third way of escape from estrangement is that of the mystical escape into the future, whether this involve denying the body, visions of future happiness and Oneness, medieval contemptus mundi, or actual longing for death. At any rate, although this attempt accepts the responsibilities of the human predicament, it always makes the same choice, to escape from the present guilt of estrangement into the hoped for Oneness of the future. This solution to the problem of existence appears in Marvell's religious poetry and even in some of the pastoral poetry.

These three methods of overcoming estrangement and achieving the unity of Being appear in the poetry of Andrew Marvell, and at the failure of each, he is tempted to withdraw into passivity and to abandon the struggle. But he is so deeply committed to his search for Being that he is forced on in spite of failure, and ultimately this mere going on

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<sup>45</sup>Auden, "The Dyer's Hand: Poetry and the Poetic Process," The Anchor Review, 255-301.

brings him to a realization of self, the first step in transforming one's relation to the world and to existence. In "The Garden" these three varieties of escape from estrangement are dealt with, and finally rejected, for a fourth which involves acceptance rather than rejection as its conclusion.

## CHAPTER III

### PASTORAL

Marvell, as we have said, is sentiently, intellectually and imaginatively involved in the search for Being. Because of his sensuous character and his spontaneous love of nature, his initial response to life is the biological, primitive one of identification with nature (the fertility rites and orgies, the acting out and imitation of the rhythms of nature) and expresses the desire to "get back," to "return," to that time when man and nature were in sympathy, when the universe was truly One. Since Marvell is no primitive, biological imitation becomes rather a sensuous identification with nature, "that deeply-felt relationship of plant destiny and human destiny which is an eternal theme of all lyrical poetry,"<sup>46</sup> and the feeling for plants and flowers is expressed in almost all Marvell's lyric poetry. The pastoral world is the counterpart of that lost world to which our poet wants to Return, and so we may say that his initial response to life appears in poetry as a pastoral one.

Marvell has been considered by some as a nature poet, a sort of romantic out of his proper time, but this is a mis-

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<sup>46</sup>Spengler, Decline of the West, Vol. I, p. 26.



understanding. There is little acute observation of nature in his poetry, the "thrastle's shining eye" ("Appleton House," I, 531-32) being only much cited rather than typical. The pathetic fallacy is an instrument deftly played upon by Marvell rather than the expression of his own personal woe. In Marvell's poetry the relationship between man and nature is not only assumed but felt; it is the quality which is investigated. Here is no terrible alienation from the universe we inhabit, but an effort to see what man's place is in it. The old hierarchy, the fixed positions of the neo-Platonic chain of being, had crumbled and in the Baroque times man had to realize his place anew; hence the typical imagery which comprehends the universe and shocks with exaggeration in order to discover essence. In the poetry of Marvell the shock value is not so apparent as in Donne (he is more related to Spenser) but the precision and control of his form also prove he is no romantic. He usually writes in couplets and simple stanzaic forms. If there is grief at alienation from nature it in no way overwhelms to make us believe that a feeling controlled the poet rather than that a poet wrote of a feeling.

His favorite color, green, which appears twenty-five times in his lyric poetry, is his symbol for the meaning of nature. It is the color of all things in their primordial state, the age of innocence, but also it is the color of fecundity (the opposite of the ashes and dust of "Coy Mistress")

as well as of grass, which conveys the idea of humble origin and constancy. Green is connected both with man's original blessed state, the garden state, and with his childhood; it includes the happiness of youth and hope, and also conveys unhappiness, since we are fallen, and since youth is followed by growing up, by knowledge and by sensuality. There is some melancholy connected with the word 'green,' written by a man who remembers and observes, but no longer possesses its joys:

My mind was once the true survey  
Of all these Meadows fresh and gay;  
And in the greenness of the Grass  
Did see its Hopes as in a Glass;                   (Mower's Song)

Whole fair Blossoms are too green  
Yet for Lust, but not for Love . . . (Young Love)

One might say that the Golden Age is rather a Green Age for Marvell, signifying the joy of that time of innocence and harmony with nature. It is never depicted as actually existing for him except in the fairy tale of the "Bermudas" and another kind of fairy tale of the 'green thought in a green shade.' It is perhaps indicative that the word 'green' does not appear in the poems of frustrated love, "Coy Mistress," "Daphnis and Chloe," "Definition of Love" and "Unfortunate Lover." These poems have a setting far from the green world. In the pastoral poems of frustrated love green does appear, but only to point up the central irony of being close to the green world yet of not being part of it.

Many have accused pastoral poetry of being "escape" literature, but there are other viewpoints which consider that a strict portrayal of the dead level of normal existence may not even be properly called literature; that only a highly formalized genre can concern itself with the eternal problems since it is not obliged to represent a mass of "realistic" data which forces its insight to dissolve into fragments. The fact that the style of pastoral is rather rigid gives opportunity for a playing with expectations, whereas a freer style, which depends on surprise and newness, must spend much of its energy explaining what it means, and so lose many chances at innuendo, at subtlety, and in the end, at depths which can only be seen murky and through suggestion anyway.

William Empson believes that the pastoral is a process from the complex, through the simple, to the universal;<sup>47</sup> Miss Shackford that it is a type of religious vision, "a picture of life as the human spirit wishes it to be,"<sup>48</sup> and that to read it is to be purified by sympathy and joy.<sup>49</sup> Love, death, man's relation to his world are its concerns. It undertakes to answer the questions of what is the good life, and its answer is always: seek simplicity, be as "natural," as much like

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<sup>47</sup>Empson, Some Versions of Pastoral, p. 23.

<sup>48</sup>Shackford, "A Definition of the Pastoral Idyll," PMLA, XIX, p. 587.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 592.

nature and in tune with her, as possible. Ironically, this ideal is often expressed in highly artificial or formal language, so that one may know, perhaps, that only sophisticated or complex men have simplicity as their ideal. Marvell appears at the end of the pastoral tradition, when pastoral poetry was self consciously aware of its two selves, the "natural" and the artificial, and he is able to play one against the other to achieve his fine poise. A short history of this tradition may be useful.

Theocritus (born Syracuse about 310 B.C.) is counted the first poet of pastoral. He wrote of the Sicilian landscape, and only slightly idealized his rustic shepherds,<sup>50</sup> writing in a naturalistic rather than an artificial vein. According to E. K. Chambers, the traditional forms of the pastoral come from him: such things as the singing match for a rustic wager, a soft white lamb, a carved drinking bowl, the bantering between two rival swains, the sad lament of a lover for unrequited or deceived love, and the dirge of his fellows around the tomb of some dead shepherd.<sup>51</sup> Bion (second century B.C.) with his "Lament for Adonis," and Moschus (date uncertain) author of "Lament for Bion," were the next two important pastoral writers

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<sup>50</sup>Congleton, Theories of Pastoral Poetry in England, 1664-1798, p. 5.

<sup>51</sup>Chambers, English Pastorals, pp. xxii-xxiii.

before Virgil (70-19 B.C.) who used Theocritus' Sicilian landscape, and thus, foreign scenery became a convention; he introduced pagan mythological figures, and "he is no doubt to a great extent responsible for the freedom with which the pathetic fallacy has been used."<sup>52</sup> His most important contribution, however, is the adding of the Golden Age idea (4th eclogue) and the developing of the allegorical eclogue.<sup>53</sup> Virgil partly follows Hesiod in accepting the Golden Age as a former age, carefree and happy, but Hesiod regards the passing of the Golden Age as punishment of the gods for Prometheus' theft, while Virgil's concept is more of this world, emphasizing the strengthening power of tribulation and the necessity of continual labor.<sup>54</sup> The idea of the Golden Age is a common one in pastoral poetry.

Townsmen and rustic alike may consider the idea that at a remote period in history nature gave forth her fruits without the aid of man's labour and worship. Perhaps, somewhere, she still does so. This idea that the world has been a better place and that men have degenerated is remarkably widespread, and a regular feature of pastoral poetry. We are therefore steadily deteriorating so that our only hope is for a fresh start, after some kind of redemption. The restoration of the Golden Age is a theme of Virgilian Pastoral, and was naturally taken over in the Pastoral of the Christian era. All such ideas are more ancient than the pastoral convention, but they naturally become attached to it in the course of time.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>Congleton, op. cit., p. 5.   <sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>54</sup>Lilly, The Georgic: A Contribution to the Study of the Vergilian Type of Didactic Poetry, pp. 13-14, footnote.

<sup>55</sup>Kermode, English Pastoral Poetry from the Beginnings to Marvell, p. 14.

The theme of the Golden Age appears in Ovid, Seneca, Juvenal, Boethius, Tibullus, Dante, Jean de Meung, Chaucer, Tasso, Cervantes and Browne, to name just a few.<sup>56</sup> The similarity with the primitive idea of Return already discussed is apparent.

After Virgil, the pastoral, intermingling with Christianity, becomes more complex. The traditions of Virgil's godlike Caesar merge with the Messianic eclogue, and literary barriers are broken until the image of the earthly paradise and the Golden Age of Saturn are both absorbed by the pastoral,<sup>57</sup> and the swain of the pastoral may be taken as an allegory for the Good Shepherd. Finally, in the Renaissance, things are so intermixed that the shepherds often find themselves in the company of the gods, goddesses, nymphs and satyrs of pagan mythology. "But they are distinctly less at home with the spirits of another sort, the elves and fairies of Celtic, Teutonic folklore, with whom they are sometimes, as in Drayton's Muses Elizium, called upon to appear."<sup>58</sup> By this time, too, the terms idyll, pastoral, eclogue and bucolic are synonymous and interchangeable.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>Moorman, William Browne: His Britannia's Pastorals and the Pastoral Poetry of the Elizabethan Age, pp. 156-57.

<sup>57</sup>Harrison, The Pastoral Elegy: An Anthology, p. 7.

<sup>58</sup>Chambers, op. cit., p. xxxi.

<sup>59</sup>Congleton, op. cit., pp. 6-7.

Love was always a theme of pastoral, and Virgil added an exalted homosexual love.<sup>60</sup> In the Middle Ages, with the growth of courtly love and the idea that physical love can figure forth spiritual love, as in the interpretation of the Song of Songs, as well as the promulgation of the neo-Platonic teaching of the relationship between spiritual love and physical love and beauty, there was an increasing emphasis on sensuous language and subject matter, even when the purpose was to allegorize the soul's love for God. This concern with love helped to foster a new facet of pastoral, called the *pastourelle*, a satirical genre involving a saucy love encounter between a rustic and a courtier or sometimes a cleric. The "indecent" 27th Idyll of Theocritus resembles the *pastourelle* and has been called the model for the medieval form.<sup>61</sup> The *pastourelle* seems to be an expression of reaction against the complications and formality of the love ritual of the later Middle Ages.<sup>62</sup> The typical *pastourelle* concerns a man of noble birth and a peasant girl to whom he makes love, sometimes successfully and sometimes not, sometimes by force (Chaucer, *Wife of Bath's Tale*) and sometimes easily. The form probably originated with the rustics, and as this version remains, the rustic is the triumphant one, by a trick or in debate. The knight is ridiculed for consorting with members

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<sup>60</sup>Kermode, op. cit., p. 25.      <sup>61</sup>Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>62</sup>Jackson, "The Medieval *Pastourelle* as a Satirical Genre," Philological Quarterly, XXI, p. 156.

of a despised class in order to gratify sensual desires, and for his quick satiety, far from the spiritual ecstasies of the courtly lover.<sup>63</sup> "The court poet appreciated the latent indecencies in the form, and exploited it with the defeat of the courtier transformed into a victory."<sup>64</sup> Finally under the influence of classical pastoral the genre melts back into the traditional form, and the pastourelle becomes a game of wits between two virtual equals.<sup>65</sup>

The satirical element of the pastoral was strengthened also from another source. The "pervasive pastoral language of the Gospels . . . early led to the use of the Eclogue as a means of criticizing the administration of the church,"<sup>66</sup> and such a method appears in Petrarch, Boccaccio, Mantuan, Spenser and Milton, to name a few.

In the Renaissance there appears a long list of writers and critics of pastoral. In Italy there are Poliziano, a Mantuan (Baptista Spagnuoli), Sannazaro, who established the vernacular pastoral and restored the Arcadia of Virgil as a setting,<sup>67</sup> Vida, who praises the elegance and polish of Virgil,<sup>68</sup> and Scaliger, whose Ars Poetica (1561) contains the

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<sup>63</sup>Ibid., p. 156.    <sup>64</sup>Kermode, op. cit., p. 33.

<sup>65</sup>Jackson, op. cit., p. 170.    <sup>66</sup>Kermode, op. cit., p. 36.

<sup>67</sup>Harrison, op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>68</sup>Congleton, op. cit., pp. 16-17.



most important criticism of the pastoral in Italy. To him pastoral poetry should seem as if written by shepherds who "based their poetry on imitation," and he recommends that the pastoral not be put to any satirical or allegorical use.<sup>69</sup> Consciousness of pastoral as a genre brings arguments as to what is or is not appropriate to it, and questions such as Greek informality versus Roman elegance, whether characters should speak as ignorant rustics or in sophisticated rhyme, were long debated.<sup>70</sup>

In France the genre became extremely formal. Sebillet in L'Art poétique francoys, 1548, introduced the doctrine of decorum;<sup>71</sup> the Pléiade criticisms tended in the direction of formality, and by the turn of the century an artificial form of the pastoral, sometimes called the galante pastoral, had been established. Artificial pastoral appeared in prose, in verse, mixed verse and prose, and in drama. It was the "heyday of the artificial pastoral."<sup>72</sup>

English criticism of the pastoral before the Restoration is more informal and fragmentary than that of France and Italy,<sup>73</sup> but the pastoral form was used to express much the same sentiments as it was in France and Italy. It was sometimes satirical: "In the heyday of English pastoral the satirist with Juvenal never far from his thoughts, is always

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<sup>69</sup>Ibid., pp. 17-18.    <sup>70</sup>Ibid., pp. 20-21.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., p. 25.    <sup>72</sup>Ibid., pp. 27-34.    <sup>73</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

at hand."<sup>74</sup> Nostalgia for the Golden Age echoes throughout Elizabethan pastoral in Fletcher, Chapman, Daniel, to name just a few.<sup>75</sup> It was conscious of high purpose, as, for example, Puttenham's remarks in Arte of English Poesie, 1589, that the purpose of pastoral is not

to counterfeit or represent the rustically manner of loves and communication; but under the veile of homely persons, and in rude speeches to insinuate and glaunce at greater matters, and such as perchance had not bene safe to have disclosed in any other sort. . . .<sup>76</sup>

Alex Barclay, in "Prologue" to Certayne Egiogs, 1514 c., also emphasizes the moral purpose and considers the allegory more important than the imitation of rural life as do E. K. and Sidney, who states that the value of a pastoral "depends on its allegorical and moral content."<sup>77</sup> The subject of love is all-pervasive. E. K. is emphatic in his denunciation of 'paederastice' and discusses the difference between friendship and 'disorderly love' in the 'Glosse' to 'Aegloga prima.' Webbe also defends Spenser against the charge of 'unsavory love,' which is not fit for English ears and had best be left to the Italian "defenders of loathsome beastliness."<sup>78</sup> Love according to nearly all the critics is the most appropriate subject for the pastoral.<sup>79</sup> Pastoral became the rage

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<sup>74</sup>Kermode, op. cit., p. 15.    <sup>75</sup>Ibid., pp. 29-30.

<sup>76</sup>Congleton, op. cit., p. 43.

<sup>77</sup>Kermode, op. cit., p. 38.

<sup>78</sup>Congleton, op. cit., p. 43.    <sup>79</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

in England. It

became the normal mode alike for panegyric and erotic verse. Every branch of literature, lyric and sonnet, elegy and romance, comedy and masque, bears its marks of the prevailing fashion. The rich contents of the great miscellanies, above all, those of the England's Helicon of 1600, are but garlands woven from the finest blossoms of bucolic song.<sup>80</sup>

Towards the end of the century the lighter aspects of pastoral became more pronounced, though development in this direction in England never equaled the extravagant proportions reached in France,<sup>81</sup> and later a feeling for more realism began to develop. Drayton's Shepherds Garland Fashioned in nine Eglogs, 1593, states that he will be more realistic, that he "deales more plainly, omitting moral and allegorical consideration;"<sup>82</sup> Jonson complains against using foreign models, and recommends the appeal of English rusticity and charm; and Hobbes states that the pastoral is vital because it imitates rural life, and regards not the ancients but common sense.<sup>83</sup>

Throughout this complicated development certain elements remain constant, as subheadings under the larger theme of the country and the simplicity of life one may achieve there, whether this straightforwardness implies simply unencumbered love-making or speaking out against the corruptions of the church. These constant elements are: simplicity of manners, love, delight in natural beauty, and a feeling for melancholy

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<sup>80</sup>Chambers, op. cit., p. xix.

<sup>81</sup>Congleton, op. cit., pp. 45-46. <sup>82</sup>Ibid., pp. 45-46.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., p. 50.

and death.<sup>84</sup> These may be another way of expressing the eternal themes, outlined in the beginning of this paper, which have to do with a restoration of the original simplicity and harmony, even unity, between man and nature. In this sense of pastoral, Marvell's "Horatian Ode Upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland" also is related to the tradition through the imagery which pictures Cromwell as the three-forked lightning:

'Tis madness to resist or blame  
 The force of angry heavens' flame;  
 So much one man can do  
 That does both act and know.  
 But thou, the war's and fortune's son, . . .

This is the very expression of a man who is in tune with and the expression of the will of nature.

The theme of love may be taken as the fulfillment of the self in the "other" self, a restoring of the primordial union of all things before estrangement. Delight in natural beauty is a feeling of sympathy with the nature which we no longer identify with but of which we instinctively feel a part. The pathetic fallacy enters pastoral poetry early; nature weeps as the shepherds weep for their dead companion in Theocritus' Idyll I. Such a belief harks back to a time "when the death was that of nature, not humanity. Thus, what was once the source of sorrow--the withering vegetation--becomes the mourner."<sup>85</sup> That is, the pathetic fallacy is a

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<sup>84</sup>Chambers, op. cit., pp. xxxix-xliii.

<sup>85</sup>Harrison, op. cit., p. 1.

reflection of that feeling of identity between man and nature. (The pathetic part of the fallacy occurs when it is no longer believed in, when nature is seen to be oblivious to the sufferings of man, and the fact cannot be accepted without a feeling of loss.) The feeling for melancholy and death may be understood both as our reaction to our alienation and as the only method of achieving the Return to nature. These themes, then, have to do with the sense of estrangement which we have discussed, and so account for "that melancholy mood which runs throughout the pastoral poetry of all countries."<sup>86</sup> To Chambers' four categories, I should like to add a fifth, the human attempt to communicate through language, in pastoral poetry; that is, through dialogue. One-third of Theocritus' Idylls contain more than one speaking character; six of Virgil's 'Eclogues' and all of Calpurnius' eclogues except one are dialogues; and the eclogues of Petrarch and Boccaccio are all dialogues.<sup>87</sup> This theme is related to that of love and has to do with a sense of common humanity, since communication is an affirmation of the existence of the "other." It is, therefore, a sort of restoration of the original Oneness of all things, and may help to account for the prominence of homosexual love in the pastoral. That is, the fact of love and Oneness is more important than procreation, and the sex of the object of that love.

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<sup>86</sup>Ibid., p. 1.    <sup>87</sup>Congleton, op. cit., p. 249.

In concluding this general section on pastoral, it should be pointed out why, with all its "unrealistic" trappings of Arcadia and fond shepherds and oaten reeds, pastoral has any serious readers at all, and incidentally why it cannot be called escape literature. The depth of pastoral lies in the fact that its themes are not treated flatly as if to say, this is the way things should be. It is not the dream of the malcontent. Pastoral contains within itself its own commentary on what it presents. It is the expression of the conscious man who knows shepherds do not speak in elegant language and rhyme, but that it is pleasant to act, sometimes, as if they did. He knows that except for short intervals, life in the country among sheep and burbling streams would be no way of life for him, but that it is pleasant to pretend that it might be. Pastoral realizes that its subject is neither real nor is it our ideal. That is, besides being an untrue picture of what is, it is also an untrue picture of what we would wish. It aspires only, through its artful simplicity, to present something beautiful with which to relax the mind. It does not aspire to unfold the secret of Return; it offers rather a temporary resting place when we become tired of gloria mundi. It is as if the writer of pastoral were aware that Return might be return-to-Caliban, and prefers to pretend that we may take some of our refinements and civilization with us. Also, he is aware that we would not wish to remain and he seems

to wish only to restore our energy by an elegant diversion. That cannot be escape literature which does not present either a false picture of life or a false picture of what life ought to be, but seeks only to enable us to return to life refreshed. Escape literature debilitates because it falsifies and leads to expectations which can never be satisfied. Pastoral is so utterly and consciously impossible that it leads to no false expectations; thus we may give ourselves completely to it without danger, and find ourselves restored through the pleasure it has given. (There may be those who believe pleasure is "escape.") The fact that the formal style of pastoral gives it some freedom to investigate has already been mentioned.

Pastoral, then, has a double nature. It is concerned with man's most serious yearnings, yet it does not pretend to be realistic. It is consciously a hoax, but not having to bother with the built-up verisimilitude of less artificial genres, it can present insight with all incisiveness and immediacy. There also is the opposite argument, that the world is unreal and that its world is ontologically real. But real or not, this world is here and as it is, we must deal with it.

At the end of the complicated development of the pastoral comes Marvell, "whose handful of poems seem to sum up the whole story of the English Pastoral, inexhaustibly rich in their solemn undertones."<sup>88</sup> Pastoral rather than nature poetry is

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<sup>88</sup>Kermode, op. cit., p. 42.

Marvell's mode because of his "distance" from nature, and he is as far from pursuing the exhilarating awe of wild moors or rocky cliffs as he is from interest in the scientific observation of nature. His is the feeling of both the cultured gentleman whose taste is for the formal garden and of the mystic (or the primitive) who feels a union with nature.

The Mower poems are perhaps the most original of Marvell's pastoral poetry in the strict sense. The mower is at once more realistic for England than a Sicilian shepherd, more active, more subject to the senses, and more capable of symbolic possibilities. Here the "critic and the swain have joined forces."<sup>89</sup> The mower is aware of himself both as part of nature and as human being quite distinct from nature. He is sometimes a simple country fellow as in "Damon the Mower" and sometimes "his simplicity is the last reward of sophistication,"<sup>90</sup> as in "Mower against Gardens." In the mower poems there is also the sense of the passage of time and of death in the symbol of the scythe and in the actual "mowing down" of the grass. The mower is then the symbol for death, and because of his seasonal activities, he is also a symbol for time. "However simple his character or sincere his love, he cuts down for human ends what nature has produced. He symbolises man's alienation from nature."<sup>91</sup> But at the same

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<sup>89</sup>Bradbrook and Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 39. <sup>90</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>91</sup>Summers, "Marvell's 'Nature'," *ELH*, XX, p. 126.



time man and nature are still mysteriously identified. They have the same soul in them, the anima mundi.<sup>92</sup> Thus, the feeling toward nature is ambivalent. As Damon suffers, so does nature suffer, not as a reflection of his suffering, but as a result of his suffering, through his revenge ("Mower's Song").

The theme in Marvell's mower poems is stated on three levels, rather like subject, investigation or enlargement of subject, and recapitulation. First, there is the intuitive feeling of identity with nature; then, after observation and knowledge, the awareness of the complexity or even fallacy of this feeling of identity; then there is an action, a change of key, and finally, a reaffirmation of the union of man and nature, but in a symbolic and/or ironic way. These levels appear in the "Mower's Song." The first level, the intuitive sense of sameness:

My Mind was once the true survey  
Of all these Meadows fresh and gay . . .

The realization of difference, separation:

But these, while I with Sorrow pine,  
Grew more luxuriant still and fine;  
. . . . .  
Unthankful Meadows, could you so  
A fellowship so true foregoe . . .

The revenge, an action which forces the identity again:

But what you in Compassion ought,  
Shall now by My Revenge be wrought;  
And flow'rs, and Grass, and I and all,  
Will in one common Ruine fall.

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<sup>92</sup>Lewis, English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, excluding drama, p. 4.

And the final awareness that man and nature suffer the same fate though the agent may be different:

And thus, ye Meadows, which have been  
 Companions of my thoughts more green,  
 Shall now the Heraldry become  
 With which I shall adorn my Tomb;  
 For Juliana comes, and She  
 What I do to the Grass, does to my Thoughts and Me.

"Damon the Mower" has much the same movement, yet the imagery is more complex. There appear the Christian images of the snake, of the fountain (of life) and of the Fall, both of the grass and of Damon; there is the pastoral imagery of shepherdess and sheep; the Petrarchan metaphor of the heat of Juliana's eyes being stronger than the sun; the mythological mention of the Golden Fleece (stanza 7) and even of Celtic fairies in stanza 8. There is also the complexity of Damon's wounding of himself. Once more there is the story of a man in close relation with nature who then feels his separation from her as the result of loving a woman (the fall into sensuality). This time his revenge is not only against the grass 'Depopulating the ground' but against himself as he accidentally hits his ankle, 'By his own Sythe, the Mower mown.' Damon makes a sacrifice of himself, perhaps to atone for the human guilt of sensuality, both his, shown by the images of the "hot desires" and the snake which 'now glitters in its second skin,' and hers, since she caused the heat and also will not accept his present of the snake 'Disarmed of its teeth and sting.'

So the theme of this poem involves the double feeling about nature, or the dilemma of man at once part of and estranged from his universe. Both Damon and nature are subject to the heat and find no relief, but Damon's feeling is not innocent, he is both responsible for and object of the heat. He has been the darling of nature, cowslip's water has bathed his feet, and he has led the fairies in their dance; but only he is subject to the grief of love and so is estranged. In the final step he attempts to realize again his identity with nature by "mowing" himself as he had mowed the grass, only to find his estrangement emphasized because 'these hurts are slight' compared to that of love, whereas they are strong enough to kill the grass. But just as this difference in reaction is about to reassert and make final the separation between the two, and Damon says that there is no cure for him but death, he becomes again a part of nature in the realization expressed by: 'For death thou art a mower too.' As he is to death so the grass is to him. That is, the affirmation of his union with nature lies ironically in their mutual annihilation which will relieve him of his burden of love and restore his Oneness of experience with nature. Death is desired. Poetically the identification with nature is also affirmed in that the mower cannot climb to a realm of meaning beyond the sensory. He is earth-bound man, able to articulate, but not to transcend his suffering, except by relating it to the kind

of "higher" order whose only law is, death comes to all things. This is the only sense in which Oneness is perceived.

The four mower poems have in common their central theme of "luxurious man" who is separated from nature by his own human nature, and the resulting loss of sympathy with nature which leads to the excesses of "The Mower against Gardens." There are no compensations to being human; the state is felt only in terms of loss in the sense outlined in the previous section. The mower himself is self-examining, is man aware of his human destiny and mournfully realizing that his destiny is a lonely one:

For She my mind hath so displac'd  
That I shall never find my home.

Death is the sole means of making good the loss, of Return, as it not only obliterates consciousness, the mark of humanity, but it is the common end of all living things.

The relationship between man and nature appears in much of Marvell's poetry. One is made to stand for the other in many ways, allegorically in the "Drop of Dew," and in a more complex way in "The Picture of Little T. C. in a Prospect of Flowers." Here the child is in such harmony with nature that she has its approval for reforming 'the errors of the spring.' Yet even she must not go too far. She must 'spare the buds':

Lest Flora, angry at thy crime  
To kill her infants in their prime,  
Do quickly make th'example yours;  
    And, ere we see,  
Nip in the blossom all our hopes and thee.

That is, the harmony between man and nature is easily disturbed and violence and death result. The poet himself seems to be capable of achieving a harmony with nature, however:

Let me be laid  
Where I may see thy glories from some shade,

but the state is so quiet, so passive, that it is nearer to death, recalling again the solution of the mower poems, than to real harmony with nature. It seems to attempt avoidance of the violence of the 'glancing wheels' of love, avoidance of pain that comes when man, in this case T. C., is no longer in tune with nature, the possibility expressed again in the last stanza. The poet simply wishes to retire, into death if need be, from the awareness that man and nature are not in a static harmony, and that we are all subject to change. Summers mentions this passivity on Marvell's part, saying that his speakers "are farther removed from immediate embroilment in action than Donne's. They approach their situations from some distance, with a wider and clearer view."<sup>93</sup> This distance, explicit in the image of lying in a shade which appears in "Appleton House," "T. C." and "The Garden," is the sign of an effort to withdraw from too great an involvement. Involvement in human life seems to bring dilemmas and pain, and so the escape, the ideal state, is believed to be that of non-participation, in the mistaken hope that this will bring unity

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<sup>93</sup>Summers, op. cit., p. 121.

again with nature. But passivity achieves something positive only in the sense of its likeness to death, as is shown by 'to be laid' as a dead body, and the pun on 'shade.' The poet's dilemma is that he believes that when man is most alive, most involved, he is most alienated from nature which is his true home. The poet is disheartened at his own human feelings. He loves but he does not love to love, and so tries to withdraw into nature, or into death if need be. The loves which are portrayed as "good" to him are the ones which have a non-human object as the faun, or a human who is still pure, in tune with nature, as are T. C., Mary in "Appleton House" and the child in "Young Love." These are undisturbing loves which, it seems, cause no alienation.

The "Nymph complaining for the death of a Faun" joins the pastoral tradition through the elegy. It contains a suggestion of the set form of the Latin funeral elegy: the bidding to the mourners, regrets, outburst against the powers responsible, a list of those who could have been better spared, deathbed scene, hopes of future life and the committal.<sup>94</sup> And since the faun is both a human object and an object in nature, the poem is a clever twist and deepening of the normal theme of pastoral elegy. The nymph is one of those whose harmony with nature is destroyed by those who have none, in this case the 'wanton troopers,' and the theme is again that of loss.

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<sup>94</sup>Wilkinson, Ovid Recalled, p. 68.

Death is desired after the nymph is alienated from "nature," the faun, and so she wishes to share his fate, as in the mower poems, in order to reaffirm her kinship with him. Poems of lamentation for the death of an animal go back to the Greeks who had a number of epitaphs on animals and winged creatures,<sup>95</sup> and appear from Catullus (the sparrow poems) up to Shakespeare's Jacques. But the primary feeling of this poem is again, I think, that of the purity of nature and the impurity of man, and thus the sadness at the broken relationship between them. When this has occurred the nymph wishes only to die, leaving but a cold statue as a symbol to remind us of the joys that were.

Such nostalgia for the lost past, for the perfect harmony with nature that was, is at the root of all Marvell's pastoral poetry. Because of the desire to Return, man can take no pleasure in the here and now; that which binds him to the present, his human condition and specifically, love, is painful to him. The only relief seems to lie in death, or symbolic death, and ironically, such a death negates individuality, takes one outside of duration, is an experience shared with the plants, and so a sort of Return is achieved. But this destruction of self, though envisioned, is not actually accomplished in any of the poems. Somehow, even poetically, there must be another solution to the problem of life. In

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<sup>95</sup>Ibid., p. 68.

the next section, the overcoming of estrangement, the search for Being, is attempted in the present rather than by means of a Return. Now the effort takes on a less biological or sensory and more intellectual character.



## CHAPTER IV

### PAGAN

. . . Man as an element and representative of the world is a member, not only of nature, but also of history . . . .<sup>96</sup>

If pastoral expresses Marvell's values and the pastoral effort outlines his initial response to life, the Latin attitude expresses a further response after the first has been found unsatisfactory. The influence of the pagan, specifically the Roman, upon Marvell is not surprising considering the vogue of Latin rhetoric and style in the seventeenth century.<sup>97</sup> This section will discuss not whether there is such an influence, but rather the extent to which this influence is a part of the imagination of Marvell. He was an expert in Latin and continued to write Latin verses until his death.<sup>98</sup> Aubrey in the Brief Lives states: "He was a great master of the Latin tongue; an excellent poet in Latin and English; for Latin verses there was no man could come into competition with him."<sup>99</sup> Miss Wallerstein sees the Latin influence in several of Marvell's poems.

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<sup>96</sup>Spengler, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 48.

<sup>97</sup>Bush, Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry, pp. 46-47.

<sup>98</sup>Legouis, op. cit., p. 56.

<sup>99</sup>Clark, op. cit., p. 53.

In the perfection of design which created the stanza of "An Horatian Ode," and the exquisitely balanced structure of "Upon Appleton House," and "The Garden," his classicism united with his rational and philosophical tradition to create the poise, lucidity, and control of his forms.<sup>100</sup>

The Latin love of clarity, decorum, discipline, or nurture rather than nature, as set forth by Horace in "Epistle to the Pisos" (ingenium without ars is nothing), was partly the result of circumstances similar to those in Marvell's own time. The experience of the civil wars in Rome seems to have made the avoidance of further civil strife and confusion the highest imaginable good, hence, the ideal of control and discipline in both civil life and art. There is also another reason for the emphasis on form, and that is the uncertainty that was felt about ultimate things. The prevalence of ancestor worship in Rome<sup>101</sup> would indicate the attempt to emphasize the continuity of life in the face of the suspicion of its lack of continuity. Even Ovid's Metamorphoses is interpreted by at least one critic as a demonstration of the sense of flux in everything, "since the metamorphoses as described take place so fluently as to suggest that the identity of the species is less hard and fast than we think."<sup>102</sup> At any rate,

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<sup>100</sup>Wallerstein, Studies in Seventeenth Century Poetic, p. 338.

<sup>101</sup>Cassirer, An Essay on Man: An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture, p. 113.

<sup>102</sup>Wilkinson, Ovid Recalled, p. 218.

the consciousness of the brevity of life, what Tillich refers to as the anxiety of fate and death, was a primary feeling of the Romans. Their age was one in which the primitive feeling of man's identity with nature had long disappeared, when even the Greek feeling that the individual is the "representative of something universal,"<sup>103</sup> had softened, and the new sense of a unique and valuable individuality had not yet flowered.

In the philosophy of the time, two tendencies may be pointed out. The Stoicism which was prominent in Rome is the result of one reaction to this awareness of fate and death, and Epicureanism may be seen as the other. Stoicism, the acceptance of cosmic resignation,<sup>104</sup> is based on the control of reason in man, a sense of the "meaningful structure of reality as a whole and of the human mind in particular."<sup>105</sup> "This means that reason is man's true or essential nature, in comparison with which everything else is accidental."<sup>106</sup> The courageous man is therefore above suffering. "The wise man who courageously conquers desire, suffering, and anxiety 'surpasses God himself.'<sup>107</sup> This may be called the rising above the accidental. The Epicureans, although believing in a certain self-determination on man's part and the ability to

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<sup>103</sup>Tillich, The Courage to Be, p. 19.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid., p. 10.    <sup>105</sup>Ibid., p. 12.    <sup>106</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., pp. 15-16.

withdraw from external influences,<sup>108</sup> had more in common with the primitive and sensory view of life discussed in the previous two sections. They believed that all that exists is corporeal, that the intangible is non-existent or empty space, and that in sensation lies the final criterion of truth.<sup>109</sup> It is the Stoic outlook which characterizes this section, although the Epicureans, too, believed that some tranquility could be achieved in the face of the accidental.

The underlying goal towards which all efforts were bent was that of canceling, in so far as possible, the effects of this accidental. Through form, a rational device, the Romans attempted to express permanence and continuity, to eternalize what is, and make something that would exist into the time when we and the flowers would be dead. It is possible to view this situation also from the positive side, to emphasize not the uncertainty of ultimate things, but an area of certainty in present matters. There was a sense of the limitation of man's powers and significance, but there was also a feeling of guarantee, of the possibility of doing something about the here and now, perhaps even about ourselves. We may not change the necessities, but we may be able to adjust to them and enjoy existence. There was no large area of choice for man, but in practical matters, law, roads, military power, the arts, he controlled much of the matter around him. This

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<sup>108</sup>Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. VIII, p. 475.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid., p. 475.

enforced practicality of aspiration is allied with the rigorous demand for precision of expression, and control of form to ensure endurance. The Roman sense of language reflects this demand; it is thought of in practical terms, as functional, perfectible, and as affording pleasure through manipulation and saying well what was already known. Again, it is an eternalizing of what is.

Horace is an excellent example of these ideals. He wrote with "meditation, restraint, balance, and tact, urbanity --few poets have dared to hope that such qualities can make a successful poem." He exists

. . . wherever we find apparently effortless perfection, or commonplaces that seem fresh instead of platitudinous, or humour breaking through seriousness, or mock-solemnity, or calm dignity, or ironical self-revelation . . . .<sup>110</sup>

His theme was that the highest good lay in conquering the passions which are merely the sign of the soul in turmoil, a desiring more than is properly given. These are the result of discontent, fear, anger, and envy and most frequently arise from desire, avarice, ambition, and self-indulgence.<sup>111</sup> "Who much doth crave,/Much ever lacks." (Ode III, xvi.) Such a philosophy is reflected somewhat in Marvell's passive lying in some shade. But Horace was wary also of the opposite vice from too much passion, and that was apathy, which lay in

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<sup>110</sup>Jaffee, Horace, p. 59.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid., pp. 6-10.

complete indifference to this world. The passions are legitimate, he would say, as long as we can control them; so the art of life lies in the keeping of the mean.<sup>112</sup> Horace's Odes are poems of rejection, whether it be of luxury, vanity, or affectation. Most of them "are in some sense poems of refusal, dissuasion or deprecation."<sup>113</sup> It is his feeling that man is of little consequence in the universe. Wilkinson speaks of "his amusement at the incongruity of his own person and the sublime."<sup>114</sup> Horace's poetry is more accepting, though ironically, than Marvell's, which seems to arise out of his inconclusiveness, his feeling both of consequence and inconsequence, his more modern notion that there is something sublime in him. Yet the two are alike in their praise of the simplicity of country life, of which Horace makes a virtual panacea.<sup>115</sup> The shade and stream and oak, quiet and peace, appear frequently in both poets.

Horace's love of form and restraint is tempered by a strain of informality and exuberance.<sup>116</sup> I think we shall see that these are not the primary characteristics of Marvell, but that his poetry contains an echo of them. The poise even of the "Horatian Ode" lies not in any gentle coming to earth or distance from events, but rather in the knowledge that both

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<sup>112</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>113</sup>Wilkinson, Horace and His Lyric Poetry, p. 93.

<sup>114</sup>Ibid., p. 63.    <sup>115</sup>Ibid., p. 175.    <sup>116</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

sides may be right and good, that the spirit of good is divided against itself, and that violence (in the images of lightning, etc.) must occur before that spirit will be united once again. The feeling is "metaphysical," even Baroque, and yet there is reason for naming it "Horatian" because of the ease of the stanzas, and the simplicity, even familiarity, of the words. The violence behind much of Marvell's poetry is belied by the suppleness and simplicity of his form. We have only to compare his diction with that of Milton to see how effortless it is, and how "Horatian." The difference between Horace and Marvell seems to lie in that one has achieved an outlook and the other is still going toward one, that one has distance from everything, including himself, and the other has yet to achieve this perspective; but their subjects are often similar. We must also keep in mind that the very existence of a poem implies an outlook, at least a stance, for the time being. It is simply that with Marvell one has the feeling that there were many conflicting viewpoints in his mind and that therefore it was difficult for him to feel complete in any one. Men saw choices and ambiguities which were perhaps unperceived in ancient times.

Ovid's influence on Marvell might be expected to be extensive, since he, especially in his Metamorphoses, was the source of themes for writers from his own time until the seventeenth century. Syrinx and Pan and Apollo and Daphne,

mentioned in "The Garden" also appear in the Metamorphoses, and the water and the green which appears throughout Marvell's poetry, to one critic at least, seem to be prominent also in the Metamorphoses.<sup>117</sup> Ovid mentions these also with great affection in the poems about his birthplace, Sulmona, in Amores II 16, 1-10. The two poets had an affinity for unwild nature, for all the devices of rhetoric (Ovid was called a rhetorician by the poets and a poet by the rhetoricians),<sup>118</sup> and for fantastic metamorphoses, but in Marvell these are subdued to metaphor: a person may be ashes, abortion, shade, inverted tree, Phaeton, roses and lilies, or death. Another work of Ovid's which Marvell might have known, since it was translated into English during his lifetime,<sup>119</sup> is the Fasti, a work on the Roman calendar, and a sort of condensed history of Rome. Here the lesser gods, such as Maia, Flora, Zephyr, the stories of Romulus, and other heroes, customs such as the hanging of laurel on the doors to ward off spirits, and other primitive Roman beliefs and practices, appear. Marvell uses the goddess Flora in "Little T. C.," and the setting of "The Garden" seems to be related to the celebration sacred to Maia in the Fasti. Ovid's uncourtly, matter-of-fact attitude toward love in the Amores is reflected in Marvell's "Goy Mistress"

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<sup>117</sup>Wilkinson, Ovid Recalled, pp. 180-81.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid., p. 10.    <sup>119</sup>Ibid., p. 408.



and perhaps in "Daphnis and Chloe" and "Making Hay Ropes." Ovid's influence will be investigated further in connection with "The Garden."

Catullus is another of the Roman poets who seems to be recalled in Marvell's poetry. He gained recognition in England after Petrarchism and aloof ladies had gone out of fashion. "The passionate cry of Catullus is scarcely heard in the north until Donne revolted against the whole tradition."<sup>120</sup> Catullus' direct language can be noticed not only in Donne, but also in Skelton, Herrick, Randolph and others,<sup>121</sup> as well as in the "Coy Mistress." "It is finely ironic that this poet of the Protectorate should have written the superbly Catullan 'To his Coy Mistress,' and the lines on a 'Nymph Complaining for the Death of Her Faun.'<sup>122</sup> So this poem, too, though we have discussed it from the pastoral point of view, has direct Latin ancestors, specifically the sparrow poems of Catullus (Carmen II). McPeck says Marvell's poem "is perhaps the noblest product of all the attempts to emulate the Latin songs."<sup>123</sup> The difference between the two versions is that by seeming to lament the sparrow, Catullus hopes to ingratiate himself with its owner. The Marvell poem sincerely

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<sup>120</sup>Renwick, Edmund Spenser: An Essay on Renaissance Poetry, p. 126.

<sup>121</sup>McPeck, Catullus in Strange and Distant Britain, p. 94.

<sup>122</sup>Ibid., pp. 34-35.    <sup>123</sup>Ibid., p. 70.

laments over the death of the Faun and also uses the animal as a symbol for more bitter deaths. Catullus is faintly ironic; Marvell seems not to be. Wilkinson<sup>124</sup> and Campbell<sup>125</sup> believe the "Coy Mistress" to be Horatian in tone, but there is no ironic humor at self or philosophical acceptance of human foibles. The end of the poem has little detachment; it is fast and rough with its sounds of 'Life,' 'strife,' 'tear,' 'birds of prey,' and 'ball,' as of a bullet ripping the flesh. These are far from the Horatian philosophical quiet ending. The last stanza is almost entirely monosyllabic with first "f" and "st" sounds predominating, giving speed and a note of frenzy in contrast to the ironic ease of the first stanza. Legouis describes the poet of this poem as "en proie a la frenesie des sens qu'excite la reserve de sa maitresse;"<sup>126</sup> and:

Catulle seul en a montre une égale dans quelques pièces immortelles; mais ses emportements conservent quelque chose d'efféminé. Le poète anglais est plus sanguine, plus fier aussi . . . il entend triompher de celle-ci par la mâle vigueur de son intelligence.<sup>127</sup>

McPeck characterizes Catullus with the phrases: "unrestrained sensuousness of," "vituperative abuse," "darkly ribald bitterness," "passionate simplicity," "gayety,"

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<sup>124</sup>Wilkinson, Horace and His Lyric Poetry, p. 173.

<sup>125</sup>Campbell, Horace: A New Interpretation, p. 11.

<sup>126</sup>Legouis, op. cit., p. 75.    <sup>127</sup>Ibid., p. 75.

"insouciance," and "intensity,"<sup>128</sup> and similar descriptions could apply to "Coy Mistress." There is also in "Coy Mistress" the Catullan ominous sense of the coming night ("viviamus, mea Lesbia"), which makes for the urgency of love. Eliot says:

The verse of Marvell has not the grand reverberation of Catullus's Latin but the image of Marvell is certainly more comprehensive and penetrates greater depths than any of those quoted from Horace.<sup>129</sup>

But there is something in "Coy Mistress" which is not Catullan. It does not portray gay abandon, or insouciance, although in the third stanza it recites the familiar theme of "Now let us sport us while we may." The passion of the poet is not urgent so much because of anticipated pleasure (as the Latin poets would have it) but more because of the insistent pressure of time. It is time which is the subject of this poem, from the first stanza,

Had we but world enough, and time  
through the

But at my back I always hear  
Time's winged chariot hurrying near

to the last lines,

Thus, though we cannot make our sun  
Stand still, yet we will make him run.

The value of passion lies in its possible effect on time; it seems far removed from any sense of human joy and fulfillment.

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<sup>128</sup>McPeck, op. cit., pp. 27, 28, 32.

<sup>129</sup>Eliot, "Andrew Marvell," Tercentenary Tributes, p. 67.

The point of the persuasion of the poem is that the attractiveness of passion lies somehow in its power over the general fate of man, rather than in the personal pleasure it may give; and this is not Catullan. The last stanza is full of images of rough power, in the devouring of time and the

Tearing our pleasures with rough strife  
Through the iron gates of life.

It is something much larger and more earth-shaking which the poet wants to achieve than the simple joys of physical love. He wants even to affect the sun. His attitude toward his passion itself is ambiguous; it is urgent, needing satisfaction, and it may be powerful, but it is also almost sneered at. It is only a better choice when compared to the worms and dust which await the mistress if she will not make love now. Again, pleasure and delight are not part of the persuasion. It is as if, in order to justify his passion to himself, he must make great claims for the effects of its fulfillment. One may reply that all this is but rhetoric, to persuade in a strong fashion, but the theme of affecting time is a constant one with Marvell and therefore, I think, we may believe it had his feeling behind it.

In the mower poems, love was one of the burdens of fallen man, perhaps even a cause of the fall, preventing a Return to his original state of harmony with nature. In the "Coy Mistress" love is no longer a burden, but neither does

it have anything to do with human feeling for another human, much less with love. Before, the feeling was one of sadness and near rebellion, now too much is claimed by the intelligence for the act of love. Instead of accepting it as one of the human goods while time permits, it is supposed to defeat time. But there is in the poem an awareness of these impossible expectations and, therefore, of the dangers involved. The imagery throughout, from the tomb and ashes and dust to the birds of prey, tearing of pleasures and the Phaeton image of making the sun run, convey a sense of violence, or doom. Once again death and time and love are inextricably involved as in the poems discussed in the previous section. Whether death is the result of love or the escape from love, and whether love can affect time or is the cause of our time's being so fleeting and unpeaceful, is not clear, and yet the poem itself is lucid. It is a persuasion, from one intelligence to another to love while time permits. It is only in the imagery that the overtones of the unsatisfactoriness of the human condition, which is so powerless against fate and time, appear. Neither a simple animal fulfillment nor a complex human relationship is desired or believed in. Only by an overreaching intellectual claim for gratified passion is there justification, but even this claim has its irony, since making the sun to run means also bringing nearer our own end upon earth. The poise of the poem lies in its perfect

form of "if," "but" and "therefore" as well as in the perfect and unresolved balance of the contrasting feelings. Joy or reverence has no place in the poem. The tension between the felt power of passion and its powerlessness to hinder the passage of time is Latin. But the tension between the urbane persuasion to love in the poem:

Now, therefore, while the youthful hue  
Sits on thy skin like morning dew,  
And while thy willing soul transpires  
At every pore with instant fires,

and the awareness of what it will make of the lovers, who will even hurry their own death:

And now, like amorous birds of prey,  
Rather at once our Time devour,  
Than languish in his slow-chapt power,

is unresolved at the end. This is not Latin melancholy at realized fate, but the rebellion of the intelligence against love, time, and death, that is, against the conditions of our existence. In the mower poems life was no joy because it was impossible to live in the past, that golden time when man was in harmony with nature. Now life is no joy because it is impossible to accept our condition in the present in harmony and love with other human beings. The effort of the poet remains one of escape from what is.

The poem may also be thought of as being in the pastoral mode, a thing not improbable with Marvell, but it is cleverly turned so that pastoral love, which is portrayed usually "at

the point of despair"<sup>130</sup> in this poem, arouses in the "swain" an almost cynical cleverness. We "would" do this, and I "would" do that, but, look how foolish that all is. The poem makes fun of the pastoral pose, at the same time that it is quite persuasive about the urgency of love. It is interesting to compare the "Coy Mistress" with "Ametas and Thestylis Making Hay Ropes," which is also a twist on the normal pastoral attitude: all this persuasion on the part of the swain is foolishness; to succeed, a man must act.

What you cannot constant hope  
Must be taken as you may.

The dominant tone of "Coy Mistress" is not pastoral, but to be aware of what is pastoral in it adds to its richness.

In the "Picture of Little T.C. in a Prospect of Flowers" Marvell also investigates the Roman themes of the too swift passage of time, "so let us enjoy ourselves while we may;" and once again, death is the backdrop to the discussion. The pastoral aspects of this poem have already been discussed, the flowers, the garden, Flora, and the passivity of the poet 'lying in some shade.' This same passivity may be interpreted as an attempt to avoid the changes that will come with time, and demonstrates a dread of the future. Now is the green time, the time of innocence, the time even of power over the errors of the spring; therefore, any change must be for the

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<sup>130</sup>Empson, Some Versions of Pastoral, p. 13.

worse. But T. C. also stands for hope in the future, 'all our hopes' as well as future ability to conquer the baser elements in our natures. But this power is sexual power and so, even if it is chaste, it still will involve a loss of childish innocence. Rather than be involved in the frightening workings of such power, the poet would observe passively. He feels ambivalent about T. C.'s growing up. To wish she would not is to wish her death, as shown in the warning about Flora, but to grow up is to leave the sphere of nature and to enter the human world of struggle and pain, and 'glancing wheels.' When she does this she will lose her charm for the poet, for when possible sensuality enters, the poet retires to observe the changes from some shade. The attitude of the poet is related to Latin melancholy at the passage of time, but there is the additional Marvellian unwillingness to admit to a love relationship between adults and its inevitable element of sexuality. He is not only gently saddened at death which is wrought by time, 'That violets may a longer age endure,' but at the changes in the beloved object if it does endure. It will become a human instead of the "natural" creature it now is, and the implications of this are too disturbing. The poet then retires to some shade.

The same feeling for the purity of the young and the dread of inevitable change is found in "Young Love." Here, the child is again compared to a flower:



Whole fair Blossoms are too green  
 Yet for Lust, but not for Love.

We find Marvell's favorite 'green' connected now not with fecundity but with innocence. Green is the only color which contains such contradictory implications. It is the color most apparent in the world and most ambiguous in meaning. It is not only the color of nature, which fits well with Marvell's pastoral basso continuo, and the color which signifies freshness, beauty and innocence (even unripeness as with green corn), but it implies future ripeness and hope of future fertility. It is the color that is least enduring; hence the Latin melancholy which is always mixed with the joy we take in its newness, and the color of the humbly enduring grass. It is the color of hopeful change and the color which implies that change will be to a worse state, away from green innocence. The double nature of the word is surely the source of its fascination for Marvell. The melancholy which is implied in 'green' is also present in the idea of children for Marvell, and the two are connected in his mind. Children and green are wonderful and engage his love, but the knowledge that they are delicate and perish, or worse, become ripe and hardened, is crushing, and he must withdraw. Too much is hoped for from the condition of both the green world and of children, since their nature is to change.

The next two poems to be looked at, connect with "T. O." because they concern young love, and with "Coy Mis-

treasures" because they imply that love may have an effect upon time. They also deal with the questions of fate and time. The idea of escaping the effects of time appears in "Unfortunate Lover" where, although old loves fail:

Nor can they to that Region climb,  
To make impression upon Time,

those with whom the 'Infant Love yet playes' may not. This idea is the theme of "Young Love" in which the poet talks to a child:

Now then love me: time may take  
Thee before thy time away:  
Of this Need wee'll Virtue make,  
And learn Love before we may.

So we win of doubtful Fate;  
And, if good she to us meant  
We that Good shall antedate,  
Or, if ill, that Ill prevent.

The gentleness and sympathy of the poet towards children is one of Marvell's most charming attitudes. It seems to arise from his intense awareness that it is fleeting, ending either in death or in the death of innocence. Here too, love and death are connected then, but the love is asexual, and so free of the taint of the Fall. The double attitude in "Young Love" is to be seen in the expressions which say that this love can hoodwink time, and the understood sureness that such a thing is impossible. Youth and love and even life will pass. These poems of children, including "Little T. C." are more Roman than the "Coy Mistress" in their gentle melancholy at the flight of time; and they are less Roman in that they

are about the love of children. Because of the nature of the love objects, they are close to the feeling of "Death of a Faun." By loving children one may avoid sensuality, but this sort of love is as surely doomed as sensual love because its object will change, making love disappear or become sensual love. In the pastoral poetry we saw love as a burden, the sign of the Fall or loss of harmony with nature, and death as the escape. In these Roman poems love is partially accepted (but only in order to combat fate and time), and it still carries thoughts of death. In no sense does the poet come to terms with the human condition, much less does he give thanks for whatever goodness it may contain.

There is one poem, "The Definition of Love," which wittily pictures an asexual love for a grown woman in one of the few situations where it would be possible, in a world outside terrestrial duration. But ironically, Fate has made it asexual. The poem is so witty as not to be considered in the same vein as the above poems, but the static position described at the end of the poem, the lovers as parallel lines, is related to the death in the other poems. However, this poem is similar to the "Coy Mistress" through its use of irony and insult, but here the irony is at least explicitly directed toward the necessities of the human situation, rather than toward the woman. But the outcome is the same as all the poems looked at thus far: the sense of the impossibility

of human love's being a way to fulfillment. In this poem frustration is ironically pretended to be an advantage. The expert control of the tone and manipulation of the conceit which is the theme of the poem, makes it one of Marvell's most successful. The clever images of 'magnanimous despair' and of feeble hope with its 'tinsel wing' are ironical, a turning of disappointment against itself so that it has no power. Then, by implication the love that is born, which cannot be satisfied, is pretended to be greater than any ordinary love could be.

The poem is built on irony. "Marvell was using the new interests in geometry, which went with rationalism and the opposition to Plato, in a poem on Platonic love."<sup>131</sup> But there is a further irony: the Platonic love is not allowed to stand unquestioned, it is recommended so highly not because it is a good but because it is Platonic, that is, it is above sensuality and so a good, but the truth of the matter is that the two involved never willed it so. Love at last is clean and unfallen, but still it is a source of irony. The idea that the Platonic nature of this love is a sign of its rarity and value is balanced by bitterness underneath, which tries to outdo fate by the worship of despair. The vast distances implied in the images 'world,' 'distant poles,' and 'opposition of the stars' are familiar to us now in the poetry

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<sup>131</sup>Bradbrook and Thomas, op. cit., p. 45.

of Marvell. They seem to imply that the resolution to the dilemma in the poem resides only in withdrawal, this time not into the green world, but into outer space. But the tone of the poem is perfectly poised between the two opposing feelings presented, despair and recognition of special blessedness.

"Daphnis and Chloe" is an example of a not so successful control over dilemma by art. The language of such phrases as 'hopes devour,' 'Between Joy and Sorrow rent,' the tearing of the locks, the rolling, glaring eyes,

As the Soul of one scarce dead,  
With the shrieks of Friends aghast,

'torture,' 'wretched,' 'wound,' 'Executioner,' 'be fatted up  
express/For the Canibal to dine,' the ravishment of the 'body  
dead while warm,' or the sensuality of:

Or the witch that midnight wakes  
For the Fern whole Magick Weed  
In one minute casts the seed,  
And invisible makes,

are violent beyond rhetoric. As if to prove it, the last two stanzas smack simply of hurt pride. Here, the passion of rage and resentment at frustrated passion almost overwhelms the poem. But such a lack of control still has a certain success, probably because of the wit of the scheme in which the speaker says he will refuse what is finally offered because:

Nor to my Departure owe  
What my Presence could not win,

and by the wit of the various descriptions of love seen as far from any ideal.

The Latin sense of perfection of form can be eminently seen in "Drop of Dew." This is another "witty" poem, perhaps even an exercise, but its method is allegorical or emblematic, the drop of dew standing for the soul yearning for its heavenly home. The imagery is primarily Christian, but the poem demonstrates an extraordinary control of form by which the material or sensuous world is made to figure forth the immaterial. It is different from nineteenth century nature poetry because it is not about a drop of dew itself, and yet it precisely describes that phenomenon. Legouis claims that it has not a perfect form: "En apparence la symétrie est parfaite, en réalité le poète fait intervenir dans chaque partie des épithètes et des expressions qui conviennent proprement à l'autre."<sup>132</sup> This is true, but rather than being a criticism it is the secret of the poem. These expressions are the connecting links between its two elements. Its art rests firmly upon the traditions which have gone before, among them on the Roman tradition of the expert control of language in which the value of the images lies not in their accuracy or startling quality, but in their service to the end of the poem. The power to move is the result of how a thing is said, not in what is said. "The poet differed from the propagandist less in aim than in the depth and scope of his vision, and his methods differed less in kind than in subtlety and power."<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>132</sup>Legouis, op. cit., p. 136.

<sup>133</sup>Tuве, Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery: Renaissance Poetic and Twentieth Century Critics, p. 116.

Marvell was adept at the business of how a thing is said, but in the poems in which more is involved, where the matter of the poem is a problem rather than the elaboration of a statement, as in the "Drop of Dew," the resulting poetry is fuller and deeper, somehow more surprisingly poetic.

Besides the control and perfection of form, which prevails even when resolution of opposing feelings is impossible, that is, when the artistic response to an experience is direct and complete even though the human one is still fragmented, we have discussed some of the common Latin themes, particularly that of the subjection to time. But, as has been pointed out, there is always something unLatin in Marvell's handling of these themes. Instead of the Latin sureness of what is desired and the accompanying sureness that fate and time will intervene, that they are ultimately triumphant, our poet cannot accept life under these conditions, the life of man as it appears to be, and constantly attempts to fashion it in another way, first by a pastoral withdrawal into the past, then by a direct intellectual challenge to the condition of man in the present, to time itself, in making the sun to run, making impression upon time, learning love before we may, and so ill prevent, and 'O then let me in time compound.' But the awareness of the impossibility of his task is always present; children grow up and mistresses are unwilling, perhaps because they don't respond to such intellectual heat. The poet's love

is somehow an intense holding off from life, a cerebral attempt to circumvent its necessities instead of an intense living of life. Again appear the images of death, but in this section in which love is an important theme, they take on new violence, as if the experience of love were too rasping, too far from the single-mindedly pursued goal of Being. Love between two grown human beings, when sexuality must be dealt with, is a precipice over which the poet will be hurled into a torrent that will never allow him to climb back onto the road he so wishes to travel. Yet he feels love, and so the unresolvable opposition in his response to love, the opposition of his head and heart, forces him into withdrawal.

In the pastoral section, we saw the poet rendered passive by the split between his desires and his longing for the past. In this section we have seen him torn asunder by, or avoid through witty manipulation of thought and word (by loving the young or the impossible), the same opposition. Here, the effort is cerebral; before, it was through an intensity of longing; but in neither case can the poet bring his opposing selves into resolution or sympathy, nor can he transcend his sensuous nature to live entirely in the other realm. This is not only a problem of Marvell, but the problem of poets, since it is because of their deeply responsive and active sensuous natures that they are poets. Otherwise they would be philosophers, or shepherds, or mystics. In the poet



the human predicament is most intense; the tension between the sensuous, aesthetic, cerebral and mystical selves is most fully developed, and, if the poet is great, most fully investigated.

Before we see Marvell deal directly with the split in himself in "The Garden," we will see him make yet another effort to circumvent or obliterate one part of his total human nature in an attempt to live spiritually in the future.

## CHAPTER V

### RELIGIOUS

The future is not only an image; it becomes an 'ideal' . . . . It is more than mere expectation, it becomes an imperative of human life.<sup>134</sup>

In this section we shall deal with Marvell's expression of the achieving of this ideal future, as the pastoral section dealt with the achieving of the past or Return, and the Latin section dealt with the problem of existence in the present. The image of the future in Marvell's time was understood primarily in Christian terms, with emphasis upon the individual's relation to it. In Christian times, the individual was no longer but a representative of man: he was a unique part of creation,<sup>135</sup> and as such had a unique and personal relation to God. Under pressure of this closeness, the individual felt his failings to be not human ones, but personal ones, and so the problem of life lay not in overcoming fate and death in Latin times, but in overcoming personal sin and guilt.<sup>136</sup> Such an emphasis on the individual brings about a new psychology, "a new method of introspection and self-examination,"<sup>137</sup> of which Augustine is the founder; and under the influence of

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<sup>134</sup>Cassirer, An Essay on Man: An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture, p. 78.

<sup>135</sup>Tillich, op. cit., p. 19.      <sup>136</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>137</sup>Cassirer, An Essay on Man: An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture, p. 76.

the Counter-Reformation, the habit of self-scrutiny was intensified. It was "an indispensable preparation for all exercises directed toward the love of God, whether devotional or mystical."<sup>138</sup> It is Martz' thesis that methods of self-scrutiny are reflected in the literature of the seventeenth century. Not only devotional methods but also other Christian subjects became prominent then.

The merely pagan impulses of the Renaissance were exhausted. They had not vitality enough to preserve them from putrefaction. They could still appeal to some genuine poets, but the metaphysical movement brought fresh life to another kind of writing. For an important group thoughts of God and St. Teresa and eternity were replacing Olympus and Venus.<sup>139</sup>

At any rate, the emphasis had shifted from externals to man's inner nature, his relation to God, and hence to his idea of his own future: from ideas of withstanding or renunciation to ideas of salvation, and from object, God, to subject, worshipper.

It is not surprising that these ideas are reflected in the poetry of Andrew Marvell. Some general remarks to establish our frame of reference may be of help before discussing the poems. The typical problem in Christian thought is that of the proper value of this world in comparison with

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<sup>138</sup>Martz, The Poetry of Meditation: A Study in English Religious Literature in the Seventeenth Century, p. 118.

<sup>139</sup>Bush, Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry, p. 246.

the divine. This includes both the problem of the nature of men and the attitude toward nature. In the secular poetry of the Baroque times these questions are prominent, "poetry being, as is so often the case, the reenactment in secularized form of ancestral beliefs."<sup>140</sup> Now, nature used in a poem may be a reflection of man, a happy background, or a symbol for the lost Garden of Eden. It is this latter use with which we are concerned in this section.

Augustine, in opposition to the thought of the Ascetics, valued nature as God's creation. He used the contemplation of the visible objects of nature as assistance in the five steps toward God.<sup>141</sup> He found it to be subject to change and decay, but believed God made nothing unworthy of himself in the world.<sup>142</sup> St. Paul preached the doctrine that the invisible things of God are understood by the things that are made;<sup>143</sup> St. Thomas, St. Bonaventura and Hugh of St. Victor, that there is room for the love of God in the immediate delight in the creatures.<sup>144</sup> The book of the creatures was "the most

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<sup>140</sup>Spitzer, "Marvell's 'Nymph Complaining for the Death of Her Faun': Sources versus Meaning," MLQ, XIX, p. 239.

<sup>141</sup>Collins, Christian Mysticism in the Elizabethan Age with Its Background in Mystical Methodology, pp. 26-27.

<sup>142</sup>Wallerstein, op. cit., p. 31.

<sup>143</sup>Collins, op. cit., pp. 26-27.

<sup>144</sup>Wallerstein, op. cit., pp. 199-210.

immediate expression of the sense of the unity of all experience and of the dependence of the visible and momentary world upon the divine. . . ."145 The Ascetics and the Manicheans, on the other hand, denied reality to the incarnation of the creatures, any meaning to individual experience, or reality to history.<sup>146</sup> This extreme of mysticism is outside the main tradition and outside of Marvell, whose capacity for "sensuous self-identification with natural things has a touch of the old symbolic and religious concept of nature as the art of God which appears in so many philosophic writers from Plato to Sir Thomas Browne."<sup>147</sup>

But a suspicion of the things of this world does appear in Marvell's verse, in the "Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure," for example, where a Plotinian sense of evil, the notion that there is willful and negative separation from God implicit in the mutable world,<sup>148</sup> appears. In Christian terms, the joys of this world are shallow and transitory and death is the beginning of life. The dual attitude toward nature as expression of God or separation from God appears in medieval symbolism. Trees, for example, as symbols of virtues and

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<sup>145</sup>Ibid. pp. 253-54.    <sup>146</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>147</sup>Bush, English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century, 1600-1660, p. 160.

<sup>148</sup>Wallerstein, op. cit., p. 198.

vices were extremely popular in the Middle Ages.<sup>149</sup> A tree might stand for the tree of knowledge, but to lie in the shade might mean to seek refuge from God in worldly wisdom.<sup>150</sup> Hugh of St. Victor (De fructibus carnis et spiritus) makes the leaves of the evil tree the objects of worldly wealth, physical beauty, music, etc., and the shade, the transitory comfort of such things.<sup>151</sup> Marvell's "Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure" contains this typical imagery. The tree might suggest "idolatrous sexual love . . . a reflection of the fall" or the promise of the Second Coming.<sup>152</sup> Generally the good tree is a green tree; in Luke 25:31 Christ says, "For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"<sup>153</sup> We are reminded of Marvell's love of green.

This same sense of ambiguity about the things of nature appears in connection with other symbols; water, for instance, usually associated with purification, baptism, regeneration, may be the water of cupidity.<sup>154</sup> The rose, so common in medieval poetry, may signify the blood of Christ (one meaning in "Death of F Faun") or an object of

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<sup>149</sup>Robertson, "The Doctrine of Charity in Medieval Literary Gardens: A Topical Approach through Symbolism and Allegory," Speculum: A Journal of Medieval Studies, XXVI, p. 26.

<sup>150</sup>Ibid., p. 26.    <sup>151</sup>Ibid., p. 26.    <sup>152</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>153</sup>Ibid., p. 29.    <sup>154</sup>Ibid., p. 31.

physical desire, and the transitory attractions of worldly beauty. The lily was almost always associated with Christ, purity and innocence. Such symbolism extended to herbs, birds, and other natural phenomena. Gardens are a frequent symbol in medieval literature, for example, in "Roman de la Rose," and these gardens too might be good or bad depending upon whether Christ, who is described at one point in Scripture as Hortulanus, is the gardener.<sup>155</sup> A garden could symbolize such things as the church, the New Jerusalem, the individual, the soul. The Song of Songs came to be interpreted as an allegory of the soul's love for God.<sup>156</sup> However, through this association with the Song of Songs, a garden might symbolize the relationship between the sexes and so be associated with idolatrous sexual love and extreme cupidity.<sup>157</sup> At any rate the nature imagery we find in Marvell's Christian poetry reflects the double attitude toward the world which is still a problem of religion, although the main stream of Christianity glorifies the creation.

The Christian sense of the nature of man is also dualistic: "the carnal and the spiritual man were at perpetual variance" to Augustine.<sup>158</sup> There were those who praised the

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<sup>155</sup>Ibid., p. 31.    <sup>156</sup>Collins, op. cit., p. 225.

<sup>157</sup>Robertson, op. cit., p. 32.

<sup>158</sup>Collins, op. cit., p. 108.

qualities of the senses. Tertullian says:

For is not to sense to understand, to understand to perceive? What is a sensation unless an understanding of what is perceived? What is an intellection unless it be a perception of that which is understood?<sup>159</sup>

Augustine says that sin is not of the flesh but in the Soul's choice of evil, that the soul alone is capable of corruption;<sup>160</sup> the Christian emphasis on the Incarnate God helped to put a value on the things of this world and particularly on the senses by which we perceive Him.<sup>161</sup> The Jesuit Fuente believed "the soul in meditation becomes a rich and delicate whole, displaying 'the right use of the senses and interior powers of the Soule, reducing them all to union.'<sup>162</sup> The saved man is able to end the variance between his carnal and spiritual natures and to imitate God; St. Thomas says: "haec hominis est perfectis, similitudo Dei."<sup>163</sup> Thus, the main stream of Christian thought gives the non-Platonic answer to the question of the nature of man:

Man is not a soul lost as though by accident in a vile and weighty body, a spirit imprisoned in foreign matter, hostile to his highest aspirations. Those are agnostic, platonic and manichaeen errors which have not yet been entirely exorcised. Man is intrinsically one: a spiritualized body, or, more correctly, a corporal person.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>159</sup>Wallerstein, op. cit., pp. 188-89.

<sup>160</sup>Ibid., p. 189. <sup>161</sup>Collins, op. cit., pp. 26-27.

<sup>162</sup>Martz, op. cit., p. 69. <sup>163</sup>Eliade, op. cit., p. 32.

<sup>164</sup>Fransen, "Towards a Psychology of Divine Grace," Gross Currents, VIII, p. 213.



But Platonism was strong in the seventeenth century and we may expect to find in the poetry of Andrew Marvell a reflection of the doubt about the unity and goodness of man.

With the attitude toward love, it is the same. "The fact that the word love (amor) could be used for either Charity or cupidity opened enormous possibilities for literary word-play."<sup>165</sup> Idolatrous sexual love is a form of extreme cupidity because it is opposed to the love of God,<sup>166</sup> but since God is love "the image of God in us will therefore also be love . . . ."<sup>167</sup> The two ideas of the virtuous life are set forth in "Appleten House" where the nuns, who counsel the young girl (Stanza XII-XXVIII) to take the vow, are revealed to be corrupt and far more dangerous to her soul than is the chaste bed of marriage. In this poem Marvell celebrates chaste love rather than celibacy, but in some of the others any fleshly involvement is thought to lead the soul away from its proper concern. As we have seen in the previous sections, the attitude towards love has been an indication or symbol of the attitudes toward life presented in that section. It was love, felt and rebelled against, which hindered Return; it was love which was to end the subjection of man to external forces; now it will be love which will aid or hinder

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<sup>165</sup>Robertson, op. cit., p. 28.    <sup>166</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>167</sup>Fransen, op. cit., p. 214.

the realization of the future. In each case it is love which keeps the poet tied to the here and now and will force him eventually to make his peace with its necessities.

In "Thyrsis and Dorinda," a pastoral poem, are to be found the Christian elements of which we have been speaking. In this dialogue the shepherd, possessing scientia, worldly wisdom, is explaining Elizium to Dorinda. But ironically, through her intuition, she understands the implications far better than he, as is shown by her immediate longing for her heavenly home. The uneducated and simple person is the one who can understand the meaning of the phrase "Heaven's the Center of the Soul," and so she longs to go there, like the drop of dew in the poem already discussed. The symbolic future to her is a promise, and so she longs for death, the means of achieving it. Although the imagery is pastoral, the sense of the poem is Christian-Platonic, and death is chosen, not as escape from turmoil, since she has had a good life here as shown by her ingenuous question, 'Is our cell Elizium?', but as a means to the fulfilled life. Her experience of love for a creature taught her to long for higher love. But characteristically, the system is taken literally, and Marvell shows that the way to that future life is gained by means of the senses:

And thou and I'll pick poppies and them steep  
 In wine, and drink on't even till we weep,  
 So shall we smoothly pass away in sleep.

That is, the way to the next world, the world of the spirit, is to be gained not by foregoing the senses, as in Platonic asceticism, but by means of the senses; not by leaving the senses, but by dulling them through satiation. In this poem the underlying paradox of Marvell's thought is shown: the non-sensuous world which is the object of all our desires, is to be gained through the senses.

In the "Dialogue Between the Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure" the question of the soul and the senses takes the form of a debate, and to emphasize the spiritual combat the poem is full of battle imagery, from the first lines:

Courage my Soul now learn to wield  
The weight of thine immortal shield

to the last stanza

Triumph, triumph, victorious Soul.

The soul has a shield against all temptation, from Nature's banquet of fruits and flowers, to that of the Faustian desire for knowledge which may be the greatest temptation if we may judge by its being the last. However, the temptation of music would appear to be the strongest to the poet both because it is the only one which elicits more than two lines in reply from the soul, and because in these lines the soul says:

None can chain a mind  
Whom this sweet chordage cannot bind.

The pun on 'chordage' and the battle imagery previously men-

tioned are examples of the wit and rhetorical control which comprise the merit of this poem on the conventional subject matter of contemptus mundi. The final answer of the poem is that humility, not knowledge, is the way to true knowledge, Heaven. The question of soul versus sense is more passionately investigated in some of the poems which are not specifically Christian, as in the mower poems where the subject is a natural outgrowth of the problem of love:

For she my mind hath so displac'd  
That I shall never find my home (Mower to Glowworms)

Nor is this poem in sedate and self-righteous couplets telling of simple rejection of temptation. Nor in "Damon the Mower" is there a simple solution: the Christian fountain as the water of purgation and regeneration is useless to preserve the speaker from the power of his senses. In these poems the involvement in life is strong, and the achieving of the next is quite dubious, and so in a sense they are more truly Christian than the poems we have left to this section.

In the "Dialogue Between the Soul and the Body" the Christian question is investigated both more wittily and and with much more weight thrown on each argument than in "Resolved Soul." We feel again Marvell's ability to see the right of both sides and to allow the end of the poem to remain unresolved; there are no simple answers to the problem of man's dual nature. The soul is enslaved with

Bolts of Bones, that fetter'd stands  
 In Feet; and manacled in Hands.  
 Here blinded with an Eye; and there  
 Deaf with the drumming of an Ear

all of which keep the resentful soul away from its proper home. In fact, it is cleverly shown that it is forced to be more interested in this world than it desires. But the Body, too, has its complaints:

O who shall me deliver whole,  
 From bonds of this Tyrannic Soul?  
 Which, stretcht upright, impales me so,  
 That mine own Precipice I go;  
 And warms and moves this needless Frame?  
 (A Fever could but do the same.)

The Body, too, is forced to be concerned with what concerns it not, but the Body has the last word.

What but a Soul could have the wit  
 To build me up for Sin so fit?

an echo of Augustine's remark that the Soul not the body chooses sin.

So Architects do square and hew  
 Green Trees that in the Forest grew.

The body seems to win the argument; it is the Soul which is responsible for debasement of a good and natural object, the body, which seems to be the expression of unfallen nature, green and pure, of primordial unity and goodness. However, there is also the suggestion that architects do something fine with trees. The soul is the gadfly, the author of value and finicky differentiation. The body would be fine and pure as a tree, caring only for life and growth if it

weren't that the soul distorts it with its constant urge upwards. The soul is not enough interested in this world and the body is too much. This may seem to be a poem of the body, but the soul has fine rhetoric, too, demonstrating that here again we have a poem that is an extremely clever exercise on an old subject, but with the Marvellian twist that it is unclear at the end which "faction" has won. The statements of both sides are utterly felt and convincing, and clever. That is, at the end, we are left with a new awareness of the basic ambiguity of the nature of man. The poem does convey how inextricably the two elements are bound together and how they are forced into realization of the desires of the other. It is the irony of man's predicament that the urgency and seeming rightness of the claims of both parts is equalled by the utter wrongness of both parts. Therefore the implicit statement of the difficulty of achieving salvation at all, of even discovering what "sin" and "guilt" might be, is the impressively worked out theme of the poem. The outcome remains so noncommitted that Legouis, for one, becomes impatient with what he calls "un détachement presque excessif."<sup>168</sup> "Quant au poète, il reste dans une suspension toute pyrrhonienne."<sup>169</sup> He concludes that Marvell is a complete sceptic, saying also that the result of such

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<sup>168</sup>Legouis, op. cit., p. 34.    <sup>169</sup>Ibid., p. 87.

inclinations to curiosity and investigation would have made a less solid head an "illumine."<sup>170</sup> (This picture of the illuminated vision and the solid head seems to be actually stated by Marvell in "Appleton House" where he refers to himself as an inverted tree.)

So, Marvell sees the nature of man as inadequately expressed in a simple dualism of soul and sense. The point of difficulty is that neither is wholly right and neither is wholly wrong. This subtlety of thought (or uncertainty of conviction) makes action difficult and, especially relevant here, makes the achievement of the envisioned future by no means certain. The only solution to the problem of the dualism of man is to think no longer in those terms. Man is one, but the poet is not ready to accept this integration.

The Christian significance of the poems on nature lies also in the question of the value of this world compared to that of the next. Here, too, we find Marvell sometimes regarding delight in nature as sufficient in itself to praise the creator, and sometimes regarding nature as a temptation. This latter attitude appears in "The Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure" already discussed, and the former in "Clorinda and Damon" and "Bermudas:"

What should we do but sing his Praise  
That led us through the watry Maze, . . .  
He hangs in shades the Orange bright,  
Like golden lamps in a green Night  
And does in the Pomgranates close,  
Jewels more rich than Ormus shows.

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid., p. 89.

Here the delight in nature is the foremost feeling but always with thanks to its Maker.

Such praise of nature is also the theme of the "Mower Against Gardens" where fallen man cannot appreciate and so ruins the "unfallen" harmonies of the natural world. "Musicks Empire" is a praise of music as well as of its creator. The "Drop of Dew," though the very story of ascent to our true home, is an allegory which makes use of an element of nature which, as well as we, waits to return to its home and bides its time upon earth as it, 'shuns the sweet leaves and blossoms green.' "The Coronet" is a repudiation of such delight in nature since

Alas I find the Serpent old  
That, twining in his speckled brest,  
About the flow'rs disguis'd does fold,  
With wreaths of Fame and Interest.  
Ah, foolish Man, that wouldn'tst debase with them  
And mortal Glory, Heavens Diadem!

Here nature is fallen as is man. This latter theme appears, too, in "Eyes and Tears":

I have through every Garden been,  
Amongst, the Red, the White, the Green;  
And Yet, from all the flow'rs I saw  
No Honey, but these Tears could draw.

The whole world is but cause for tears; however, the 'full sailles hasting loaden home,' the 'chast Ladies pregnant Womb,' the Incense, the Perfume, the Clouds and the Fountains all indicate an interest in, even a delight in, the things of this world.



The same dialectic between the delight in this world and awareness of its unworthiness appears also in "The Nymph Complaining for the Death of her Faun." The Faun is the symbol of innocence and love and is a victim of the world, as was Christ, and the poem is the story of how much more He was worth than this world, but the images used to convey this show appreciation of this world, and even, especially, of its luxurious and sensuous qualities:

Among the beds of Lillyes, I  
 Have sought it oft, where it should lye;  
 Yet could not, till it self would rise,  
 Find it, although before mine Eyes.  
 For, in the flaxen Lillyes shade,  
 It like a bank of Lillyes laid.  
 Upon the Roses it would feed,  
 Until its Lips ev'n seem'd to bleed;  
 And then to me 'twould boldly trip,  
 And print those Roses on my Lip.  
 But all its chief delight was still  
 On Roses thus its self to fill;  
 And its pure virgin Limbs to fold  
 In whitest sheets of Lillyes cold.  
 Had it liv'd long, it would have been  
 Lillyes without, Roses within.

The roses and lilies are usual symbols of Christian poetry, but here the feeling for their sensuous quality is as strong as for their religious significance. The mixture of love and sorrow in the poem is also typical of Christian mystical treatises, and the reverence of the nymph for the faun recalls the Christian feeling toward Christ, but there is also in the poem a human love for a natural object, as said before, and also seemingly the human love of a girl for her lover and of a mother for her child. It is truly a poem of love,

playing on the several meanings of that word. The very structure and wit of Marvell's poetry is made of the playing upon and intertwining of elements from different spheres of existence, whether this be the green world and the human world, the worlds of love and of fate, or, as in the Christian poetry, the qualities of this world and of the next.

So, Marvell does not write religious poetry in the sense of a vision of the future, nor does he convey the ecstatic sense of the mystery of something more than meets the eyes. The mystery which he constantly expresses, which he is gifted in seeing, is the mystery of the values of the things he knows, such as sense and spirit. His poetry is firmly grounded in the sensuous world even when it speaks of the rejection of that world as in the "Drop of Dew," "Death of a Faun," "Dialogue between Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure." His soul does not fly to the here and now where it does battle with its fleshly existence. Somehow, the image of the future is not strong enough to capture the poet's imagination, and thus to rescue him from the present predicament of paradox and opposition. The future calls forth no positive imagery, such as the glories of Christ, or heaven, or even a sense of what might be. The "Coronet" comes closest to this but, as we have seen, the imagery is primarily of this earth, snake and all. In the other poetry, the future is seen through some symbol system as in "Drop of Dew," or

mythical system as in "Damon and Chlorinda." But none of these is positive in the sense that the imagination succeeds in attaining the future. The other Christian poems, "Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure," etc., picture it in terms of denial. The attempted resolution of head and heart into a Christian unity of Being fails at the outset because of the intense involvement in and love of this world. Only an attitude toward life which includes that love can be satisfactory for this poet.

Sensuous poet that he is, Marvell's religious poetry is not ethereal or of another realm, in the sense that Dante's is. It is built rather on the stress and tension which is achieved by the use of images and feelings proper to the here below in poems about the next world, as typically in the "Drop of Dew." This is in the Baroque manner, of intense combination of the particular and the vast, the sensuous and the other-worldly, the sad and the beautiful. In Marvell, however, it is more than the fashion of the time, it is his very method of double seeing and double knowing, which we have marked from the beginning and which caused him to be accused of indecision or worse. The sense of multiplicity, of shifting value, or non-static reality, combined with an awareness of the subtle way in which opposing elements are similar to and interact on one another, is a special gift of Marvell's. This awareness helps to account for his wit and his puns, and also for his inability to take a simple and decisive view of

the world, or even of himself. When one sees much, it is difficult to make of it a simple pattern.

Marvell's love of perfumes, colors, of growing things is only equalled by his knowledge of their transitoriness. His feeling of love, for a woman, a child, a faun, exists in the face of his knowledge of love in the sense of longing for that other world. His value of soul is only equalled by his value of body, and in the poems we have discussed, all these opposing elements remain in a state of tension, though, of course, this implies some interaction, some connection. The only resolution of tension lies in a recognition of transcendent unity or kinship; that love and charity are essentially the same, that the soul and the body are parts of a whole, essential complements; that nature is part of the universe, and the expression of God. So far, the only unity we have seen achieved (but a valuable one) is the aesthetic one of the creation of a poem. Each poem is a whole, is a complete statement of the problem, with interaction and tension cleverly played upon, but never at the expense of tearing the poem. In fact, the poetry contains its poise and cleverness and wit because of the delicate play of opposites in it. But this very sense of non-reconcilables makes for some discomfort, since the mind needs the promise of resolution. When there is a true sense of reconciliation, of unity underlying tension, Marvell will not have lost his ability to see, but will have

gained a sureness which will make his poetry more profound. It may remain as complex as before, in fact it may be able to bear a greater burden of opposition, depth and complexity of image, because there will be the sense of connection and relationship between the self, the world and the future. "The Garden" is the story of the achieving of this metamorphosis.

In the previous sections we have seen attempts made to take a part for the whole, to live in the world of nature and sense, to live in the world of intellect and control, and to live in the world of soul and yearning. Each attempt fails because one part of human existence is denied, because all the ways of seeing of which Marvell is capable are not included and so the resultant thought remains only a temporary stance, not a total view of life. In the next section we will look into "The Garden" and see the rejection of the three modes of existence already attempted and the evolution of a fourth and satisfactory one.

## CHAPTER VI

### "THE GARDEN"

For nothing can be sole or whole  
That has not been rent. (Yeats)

In the preceding sections, three general attitudes towards existence have been presented: the urge towards a distant past when man and his world were in tune, a metamorphosis into a "natural" being in the literal sense; the urge to struggle directly with the conditions of man, death and time, a metamorphosis into a creature who can do battle with the normal necessities; and the urge towards the future, a metamorphosis into a being whose values and desires are of the next world. We have seen each one of these attempts to be hampered by the nature of human existence, particularly as expressed in the love situation. Each poem, while stating one point of view, has also presented implicitly the equally powerful opposite, and the result has been the typically Marvellian balance and poise so striking because it refuses to arrive at simple resolutions. The poem, "The Garden," a further investigation of these three attitudes, contains the awareness of a way towards a resolution, but it is not achieved at the expense of complex thought. In this lyric poem the personal difficulties which inhibit the poet's attempts at resolution are faced, and faced with the maturity and humor at self which convinces us of the importance of the experience.

The result is not only a poetic achievement, but also an achievement of the only kind of metamorphosis which is "good" for such a man, a metamorphosis into the 'easie philosopher,' the man of inner harmony, and so of harmony with his world.

A review of recent criticism on "The Garden" is perhaps in order. A. H. King compares the Latin and English versions of the poem, his point being that the poem is lighter in tone than is usually assumed; that "it has an air of 'Let's pretend' that makes it a less considerable poem than 'To His Coy Mistress'."<sup>171</sup> It has a "mincing approach"; the 'fall' is "amiably ludicrous"; the 'green thought' is "slightly pejorative, but it is another of many indications that Marvell does not take his pastoral relaxation too seriously."<sup>172</sup>

Putt says "assumptions were his [Marvell's] delight, but a fear of being oversolemn caused him to abhor protestations."<sup>173</sup> In the stanza of the fountain Marvell "veers away into prettiness;"<sup>174</sup> and Putt speaks of certain "reticences in the poem" and of his "peculiar craving after precision and accuracy."<sup>175</sup> He concludes that Marvell's gift was for Fancy though of a very high order, and not for Imagination.<sup>176</sup> Other

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<sup>171</sup>King, "Some Notes on Andrew Marvell's Garden," English Studies, XX, p. 121.

<sup>172</sup>Ibid., p. 120.

<sup>173</sup>Putt, "Mosaiques of the Air: A Note on Andrew Marvell," English, II, p. 370.

<sup>174</sup>Ibid., p. 371.    <sup>175</sup>Ibid., p. 373.    <sup>176</sup>Ibid., pp. 368-69.

criticism is more thoroughgoing and the poem is treated more seriously.

Bradbrook and Thomas, writing about 1940, view "The Garden" primarily as emblem poetry, as a statement of the problem of life and religion. In method they see Spenserian influence which "gives to his poetry a depth and resonance it had hitherto lacked."<sup>177</sup> Spenserian influence in this sense means the symbolic view of nature as the Divine Hieroglyph, which grew out of Marvell's emblematic technique,<sup>178</sup> and also the tradition in which "metamorphosis is the poetical answer to the decay of beauty and the triumph of time."<sup>179</sup>

They speak specifically of stanza II where, in the pun on 'race' (contest, family, seed):

He finds, as the gods found, that the only lasting satisfaction for the instincts is an activity which does not employ them for their original purpose. Apollo hunted Daphne for the laurel crown of Poetry and Pan sped after Syrinx to capture Music.<sup>180</sup>

In this garden "life is perpetually renewed, as it was for Spenser in the Garden of Adonis."<sup>181</sup> According to Bradbrook and Thomas, the poem then proceeds to tell of an escape from the self through the baptismal fountain, or tree of knowledge, the escape of the soul from the flesh and flight into the boughs.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>177</sup>Bradbrook and Thomas, op. cit., p. 54.

<sup>178</sup>Ibid., p. 55.    <sup>179</sup>Ibid., p. 61.    <sup>180</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>181</sup>Ibid., p. 60.    <sup>182</sup>Ibid., p. 62.



"As Daphne was the culmination of the classical, this is the culmination of the Christian imagery of the poem."<sup>183</sup> Of the last verse Bradbrook and Thomas say that it is the

metamorphosis of Time, and partly the return to the world suggested by the gaiety of the verse before. It is far more definitely concerned with the garden as a local and temporal fact. The poet is looking at a floral sundial; a most sophisticated and artificial toy.<sup>184</sup>

He comes back to earth refreshed--there is humility but also exhilaration, in his recognition of his place in the scheme of things:

Time is now dependent on living things, instead of living things being subject to time; the 'industrious Bee' correlates with the 'uncessant Labours' of the first verse. Time is not here something to be reckoned, but to be experienced; it is told by the living flowers and the bee 'computes' it no less well than men.<sup>185</sup>

This interpretation seems largely just, but the emphasis on Stanza VII as the high point of the poem, and the rest as a gentle return to earth seems to me to miss the crucial point of Stanza VIII which is the turning point of end and realization of the poem. The very important though implicit point that there exists in the poem a variety and complexity of symbol orders which make any final view of it difficult, also needs to be emphasized. The point that the garden itself is a formal one, and that the poem is related to the emblematic writing of the seventeenth century is also important, but the

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<sup>183</sup>Ibid., p. 62.    <sup>184</sup>Ibid., p. 63.    <sup>185</sup>Ibid., p. 64.

metamorphosis of which they speak is also a personal one as well as the answer to the problem of the decay of beauty.

Joseph H. Summers is concerned primarily with Marvell's attitude toward nature and so speaks of Marvell's 'green' (the assumed climax of the poem in Stanza VI), which he says represents hope, vitality and virility, the fertile promise of life which man desires and destroys--vital, fecund and triumphant.<sup>186</sup> It is 'good' but "its goodness is neither available nor quite comprehensible to man."<sup>187</sup> Man is also superior to the green world. Summers sees Marvell's poems as primarily the expression of the human predicament: "Whatever the immediate resolutions, man is usually suspended between the greenness and God at the conclusions as well as the beginnings of Marvell's poems."<sup>188</sup> "The Garden," to Summers,

presents a fictional and momentary attempt to recapture what has been lost . . . . Marvell's image for the lost garden is as much an occasion for the recognition of man's alienation from nature as it is for remembered ecstasy.<sup>189</sup>

This criticism contributes something also.

Douglas Bush, speaking of 'green', believes that it does not imply a thirst to return, like Vaughan's favorite 'white.'<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>186</sup>Summers, op. cit., p. 124.    <sup>187</sup>Ibid., p. 128.

<sup>188</sup>Ibid., p. 129.    <sup>189</sup>Ibid., p. 125.

<sup>190</sup>Bush, English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century, 1600-1660, p. 162.

"The Garden" is not the mere idyllic ecstasy of a romantic primitivist or escapist; the rhythmic variations themselves suggest complexity. Even in the moment of apparent surrender, when the creative mind suddenly transforms the universe into Virgil's viridi umbra,

Annihilating all that's made  
To a green Thought in a green Shade,  
the detached intelligence is there to criticize what it creates. Marvell is aware that he is a man in the world of men, that a golden holiday is not, though it may approach, a mystical vision.<sup>191</sup>

This again emphasizes the eminently rational or resolutive quality of the last stanza. Bush sees Marvell more as the observer than as the one who experiences, and more as the intellectual with distance and control (since he makes Stanza VI the high point of the poem) than as the person who is totally involved.

Although Legouis has written a major work on Marvell, his criticism, made up of bits and pieces of insights, is only sometimes interesting. He emphasizes the fact of there being an actual garden. He points out that of the fruits mentioned in Stanza V, not even the apple is native to England, hence the significance of 'curious' as applied to peach, which means, "that which needs care." (Margoliouth says it means "exquisite.")<sup>192</sup> The poet's final praise is for the gardener, therefore, though more explicitly in the Latin version, Hortus, than in the English.<sup>193</sup> Legouis, too,

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<sup>191</sup>Ibid., p. 161.    <sup>192</sup>Margoliouth, op. cit., p. 226.

<sup>193</sup>Legouis, op. cit., p. 93.

is struck by the word 'green,' and believes that Marvell is primarily a poet not of flowers or of trees but of grass,<sup>194</sup> and that it is the color he loves and not the thing of that color.<sup>195</sup> Douglas Bush disagrees, seeing 'green' as eminently mystical, mentioning St. John of the Cross's "O prado de verduraz!" and as the color which represents unity, elimination of all that is accidental or accessory.<sup>196</sup> In "The Garden"

Legouis finds:

l'amour de la retraite, une mythologie amiable, le goût de la simplicité et celui de l'artifice, la galanterie et l'impertinence, la sensualité souriante d'une philosophe terre-à-terre, et les transports de l'extase, toutes ces disparates que révèle la gaucherie de la traduction [into French] mais qui se cachent dans l'original sous la 'mosaïque arienne' de la mélodie.<sup>197</sup>

The use of 'red' and 'white' recalls to him Spenser's "Hyme in Honor of Beautie," but he believes that the stanza contradicts Spenser who wishes to show that physical beauty expresses moral beauty.<sup>198</sup> The Greek names in the poem are taken as a protest against anthropomorphism and, contrarily, as the idea that Daphne and Syrinx must be loved as plants and not as women.<sup>199</sup> He, too, believes the climax of the poem to be in Stanzas VI and VII, with the last stanza being

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<sup>194</sup>Ibid., p. 99.      <sup>195</sup>Ibid., p. 122.

<sup>196</sup>Bush, English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century, 1600-1660, p. 162.

<sup>197</sup>Legouis, op. cit., p. 123.      <sup>198</sup>Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>199</sup>Ibid., p. 124.

a sort of postscript:

Le poème s'arrête sur une boutade misogyne, spirituelle sans doute, mais qui déçoit après les transports extatiques des stances VI et VII. Le nonchaloir de Marvell l'a empêché de donner au jardin une conclusion véritable.<sup>200</sup>

This seems to say that "The Garden" is Marvell's most witty and least serious poem, one where again he comes to no conclusion, an opinion, though held by others too, which is certainly open to question. Marvell's style Legouis believes to be more in the manner of Spenser than Donne, and he finds the verse a bit monotonous,<sup>201</sup> but "Peut-être parce que sa pensée est rarement dense il la coule sans effort dans la moule iambique."<sup>202</sup> He finds even in "The Garden" that the use of monosyllables (in seventy-two lines, seven are entirely composed of monosyllables) bothers him. In "Definition of Love" he concedes it has the most happy effects.<sup>203</sup> He finds Marvell's total verse sweet, often monotonous, and even "assez molle."<sup>204</sup> But "The Garden" "approaches perfection."<sup>205</sup> The remark that Marvell's thought is rarely "dense" gives us an idea of the density of this critic.

William Empson, as usual, has some striking ideas on the subject. He says in the subtitle to his chapter on "The Garden" that the poem tells of the "Ideal Simplicity

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<sup>200</sup> Ibid., p. 127.      <sup>201</sup> Ibid., p. 154.      <sup>202</sup> Ibid., p. 153.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., p. 156.      <sup>204</sup> Ibid., p. 157.      <sup>205</sup> Ibid., p. 158.

Approached by Resolving Contradictions."

The chief point of the poem is to contrast and reconcile conscious and unconscious states, intuitive and intellectual modes of apprehension; and yet that distinction is never made, perhaps could not have been made; his thought is implied by his metaphors.<sup>206</sup>

These remarks recall those of Douglas Bush on the distinction between the intelligence and the intuition operating in the poem. Empson's remarks on details of the poem are also interesting. The 'green thought in a green shade' is

either "reducing the whole material world to nothing material, i. e., to a green thought," or "considering the material world as of no value compared to a green thought;" either contemplating everything or shutting everything out. This combines the idea of the conscious mind, including everything because understanding it, with that of the unconscious animal nature, including everything because in harmony with it. Evidently the object of such a fundamental contradiction (seen in the etymology): turning all ad nihil (to nothing, and to a thought), is to deny its reality; the point is not that these two are essentially different but that they must cease to be different so far as either is to be known.<sup>207</sup>

He also mentions the

two entrancingly witty verses about the sublimation of sexual desire into a taste for nature. (I should not say that this theme was the main emotional drive behind the poem, but it takes up a large part of its overt thought) . . . .<sup>208</sup>

Further:

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<sup>206</sup>Empson, Some Versions of Pastoral, p. 119.

<sup>207</sup>Ibid., p. 119.

<sup>208</sup>Ibid., p. 126.

It is only for a time, and after effort among human beings, that he can enjoy solitude. The value of these moments made it fitting to pretend they were eternal; and yet the lightness of his expression of their sense of power is more intelligent, and so more convincing than Wordsworth's solemnity on the same theme, because it does not forget the opposing forces.<sup>209</sup>

But the climax, "The Alpha and Omega of the verse are the Apple and the Fall," reflected previously in "still in a tree did end their race," the tree being the cross. Thus the significance of "I fall on grass," is, he concludes, of the same pattern. The melon is Greek for apple, so: Marvell "tosses into the fantastic treasurechest of the poem's thought all the pathos and dignity that Milton was to feel in his more celebrated Garden . . . ." <sup>210</sup> For Empson then, the poem is primarily Christian, with sexual overtones having to do with the Fall, and questions of solitude and life among men. The Christian element is surely one of the important ones, but how important is a matter of opinion. My own view is that the poem is more of a personal story than a Christian one, though to some extent stated in Christian terms since such terms helped to form Marvell's thought.

In Seven Types of Ambiguity Empson enlarges upon the last stanza of the poem. The bees are an old symbol, as we saw from Virgil:

It is a vision of civil order conceived as natural, made at once charming and convincing by its expression

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<sup>209</sup> Ibid., p. 131.    <sup>210</sup> Ibid., pp. 131-32.

in terms of creatures so petty and apparently so irrelevant. The parallel passage in Vergil uses the same methods; it pokes fun at bees and their pretensions to humanity, and so, with a sad and tender generosity, elevates both parties in the mind of the reader by making a comparison between them. For matters are so arranged that the only things the reader thinks of as in common between men and bees are the more tolerable things about either of them, and since, by the compactness of the act of comparison, a wide variety of things in which bees and men are alike have appeared in his mind, he has a vague idea that both creatures have been adequately described.<sup>211</sup>

William Orwen, writing in Notes and Queries, 1946, believes that "The Garden" is a poem of love and that lines 47-48 are not nature mysticism.

If we take the phrase, 'a green Thought,' to mean the amorous fancies of the lover who speaks the poem inasmuch as the word 'green' often connoted 'love' in Marvell's time; and if we recognize the preposition 'To' as implying comparison as it does in line 16 of 'The Garden' itself, and as it does through the poetry of Marvell's contemporary, George Herbert, we shall achieve an interpretation that blends perfectly with the tenor and theme of the entire piece which the nature-mysticism does not.<sup>212</sup>

Isn't there something erroneous in searching for one so simple theme in this poem? 'Green' in Stanza III, he says:

alludes to more than the Garden's foliage. Indeed, he is at pains to be explicit about his meaning. 'Green' is both 'am'rous' and 'lovely.' It seems to him more worthy ('am'rous') of love than 'red or white'--the colours which to Marvell's contemporaries meant the beauty of women; and it is 'lovely,' that is, it pertains to love . . . . In brief, the lover is playing upon a double signification

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<sup>211</sup>Empson, Seven Types of Ambiguity, pp. 112-13.

<sup>212</sup>Orwen, "Andrew Marvell's 'The Garden,'" Notes and Queries, CXCI, p. 247.



of 'green.' It is both the colour of love and the colour of innocence. He recognizes 'this lovely green' as the colour of the Eveless Garden.<sup>213</sup>

Stanzas IV, V, and VI are, to Orwen, about the superiority of love in the garden over love in the world. In Stanza IV:

he reads . . . his own desire to transform his failure in love into success when he says that these gods pursued the mortals, Daphne and Syrinx in order to discover Poetry and Music.<sup>214</sup>

The best retreat for him is this womanless garden and his "snubbing of Eve is obviously a slight to his mistress."<sup>215</sup> 'Annihilating' means his poetic inspiration owes nothing to a mistress. Further confusion is achieved by Orwen:

"However we regard 'a green Thought' we must agree, since his 'Mind' annihilates it, that the lover does not esteem it as he does 'this lovely green' of the earlier stanza," since actually the poem does not say the mind annihilates it.

The green shade is a "very spot for love, and bitterly reminds the disdained lover again of his mistress . . . ." <sup>216</sup>

If we take

'To' in the sense of 'in the likeness of' or 'comparable to' which seventeenth century poetic practice regarding 'to' warrants our doing, then the couplet can be construed: 'Destroying all that is similar to, or is suggestive of, a thought or rendezvous of love.' This interpretation is in keeping with the lover's pose of aloofness towards his mistress, and with his preference for the state of guiltless love which he enjoys in the Garden . . . . The Garden, by virtue of its immaculateness, heals his wounded

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<sup>213</sup>Ibid., p. 247.      <sup>214</sup>Ibid., p. 247.

<sup>215</sup>Ibid., p. 248.      <sup>216</sup>Ibid., p. 248.

vanity by providing pleasures which do not involve women, and its healing effects finally empower his 'Mind' to annihilate all thought of the mistress who has scorned him. He enjoys the 'Place' because there he is free from all thought of unrequited passion.<sup>217</sup>

Much of this criticism seems the result of having read "The Garden" immediately after "To His Coy Mistress." The other critics have not seen fit to emphasize the importance of the personal in the poem, but Orwen fails to mention the variety of images, the classical and Christian, and to take them into consideration, and therefore, over-simplifies the poem. However, I think his emphasis on the eighth stanza is important, and his attempt to relate it is a step in the right direction. As we have seen, the other critics tend to think this stanza part of a coming back to earth, a witty expression, a conscious realization of the impossibility of really achieving the garden-state, and therefore the link to the here and now of the last stanza. I think it is surely this link, but I think it also more than that. Orwen's emphasis on love as the theme of the poem may not be far wrong, but the implications of this are broader than those he envisages.

Earl Daniels holds with the above critic and says that Marvell tries to convince himself that solitude and the garden are the best life because of disagreement with a lady.<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>217</sup>Ibid., p. 249.

<sup>218</sup>Daniels, The Art of Reading Poetry, p. 262.

Ruth Wallerstein has a lengthy, rambling discussion of Marvell and "The Garden" with much information about the Christian and neo-Platonic backgrounds. She feels these are the dominant elements of the poem, but qualifies the neo-Platonic interpretation:

It hardly requires saying that such a neo-Platonism as Marvell's differs radically from that of Plotinus, a Bonaventura, or even a Ficino, in the absence of a great explicit metaphysical or logical structure to support it and in the radical simplification of its epistemology.<sup>219</sup>

Such goes without saying since Marvell is a poet and not a philosopher or theologian. It is a little difficult to penetrate Miss Wallerstein's final thoughts on the subject; however, she does agree with Bradbrook and Thomas that Marvell often uses emblem images,<sup>220</sup> and that the symbolic is essential to him, either as neo-Platonism or as the older symbolic interpretations of the Bible.<sup>221</sup> The last stanza, she feels, is perhaps indebted to the literature of the Song of Songs.<sup>222</sup> His word play, she says, emphasizes his "underlying dialectic of thought," his "philosophic irony and paradox."<sup>223</sup> But, she says, religion is the groundwork of this thought, and Marvell allows his mind to play on his most serious preoccupations.<sup>224</sup> From this she interprets the last stanza of "The

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<sup>219</sup>Wallerstein, op. cit., p. 231.      <sup>220</sup>Ibid., p. 154.

<sup>221</sup>Ibid., p. 161.      <sup>222</sup>Ibid., p. 161.

<sup>223</sup>Ibid., p. 169.      <sup>224</sup>Ibid., pp. 300-01.

Garden" as being an analogue for the garden emblem book for the Virgin, Parthenia Sacra,<sup>225</sup> and at the same time, the whole garden is the hortus conclusus, the soul making a delightful garden in the mind from Scripture.<sup>226</sup> She also says the poem is partly a conscious answer to the libertine, St. Amant, and Théophile de Viau of France,<sup>227</sup> a subject which Bradbrook treats in another article. Miss Wallerstein says that in "The Garden" Mervell has put passion behind him for delight in nature itself,<sup>228</sup> which recalls Empson's remarks. "The Garden" then is a poem of piety by "a spirit deeply habituated to the Roman attitude of detachment, measure, responsiveness to the patterns of social order."<sup>229</sup>

For specific interpretations, Miss Wallerstein sees 'green' as the color of youth and joy, or hope, but also as the failure of hope.<sup>230</sup> 'Am'rous' is taken in a religious sense;<sup>231</sup> the pun on 'heat' has to do with Cupid and the "consuming contest of the world and appetities";<sup>232</sup> Stanza V tells of the delight of the senses in nature which for a moment takes possession of the poet, and he revels in the pleasures of fruits and flowers.<sup>233</sup> She disagrees completely

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<sup>225</sup>Ibid., p. 304.      <sup>226</sup>Ibid., p. 241.      <sup>227</sup>Ibid., p. 306.

<sup>228</sup>Ibid., p. 317.      <sup>229</sup>Ibid., p. 319.

<sup>230</sup>Ibid., pp. 321-22.      <sup>231</sup>Ibid., p. 323.

<sup>232</sup>Ibid., p. 324.      <sup>233</sup>Ibid., p. 328.

with Empson, saying Marvell is not thinking at all of the Apple in the word melon.<sup>234</sup> The next stanza, she says, is the hortus conclusus itself,<sup>235</sup> and she accepts Margoliouth's two meanings of the last two lines, which signify "the God of Nature in the field of Grace."<sup>236</sup> After this "meditation on values and the definition completed," the next stanza (VII) is the experience of transcendence where the various light is the multifold reflection in nature of the one essential Light from which Nature springs," following Bonaventura. She says this is not a specifically religious experience, but an enlarging and unifying of consciousness.<sup>238</sup> It is no departure from the body, it is an intuition in which grace has its part signifying both the Fall and the neo-Platonic separation of the soul from the Divine Intelligence.<sup>239</sup> It is not an allegory of the fall of man, but a record, a "lyric study" of Marvell's experience. The articulation of Eden in Stanza VIII is only after the ecstasy,<sup>240</sup> so she also believes the high point of the poem to be in Stanzas V, VI and VII. She mentions in connection with Stanza VIII the rabbinic legend cited in Leone Ebreo that Adam was an androgyne in Paradise before the fall.<sup>241</sup> The bees of Stanza IX recall to her

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<sup>234</sup>Ibid., p. 177.    <sup>235</sup>Ibid., p. 328.    <sup>236</sup>Ibid., p. 329.

<sup>237</sup>Ibid., p. 329.    <sup>238</sup>Ibid., p. 332.    <sup>239</sup>Ibid., p. 332.

<sup>240</sup>Ibid., p. 333.    <sup>241</sup>Ibid., pp. 333-34.

Gregory of Nyssa as well as Virgil.<sup>242</sup> In conclusion, she says one often has the feeling that "Marvell accepts elements of symbolic thought imaginatively without accepting them systematically."<sup>243</sup> She feels that somehow the poem is "very deeply committed,"<sup>244</sup> but to what it is not clear. She has traced the many and conflicting origins of much of the symbolism but has failed to present a unified interpretation.

Milton Klonsky has a new emphasis in his article in the Sewanee Review, whose thesis is that the poem itself is a figure where "neo-Platonic Ideas are brought to a metaphysical bloom." It is a conceit "elaborated from a single essential metaphor, seedlike, so that its revelation to us is an unravelling of itself, the flowering of one rooted Idea: A Garden in time is the neo-Platonic Realm of First Forms."<sup>245</sup> The Platonic realm is also connected here with the Biblical Garden.

First Klonsky investigates the puns: 'shade' in Stanza I is a place not exposed to the sun and also a "vital essence of soul"; 'Toyles' is harsh labors and the twisting of branches; and 'upbraid' is to chide and to weave upwards, so 'whole' refers to vain men or single herb or tree, "or, as it does, to both considered as one."<sup>246</sup> "The figure must be taken literally, and the literal meaning figuratively. For only by

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<sup>242</sup>Ibid., p. 334.    <sup>243</sup>Ibid., p. 336.    <sup>244</sup>Ibid., p. 336.

<sup>245</sup>Klonsky, "A Guide through the Garden," The Sewanee Review, LVIII, p. 16.

<sup>246</sup>Ibid., pp. 17-18.

metaphor can the Idea of the vain men be transubstantiated into the root and sap of the Garden."<sup>247</sup> The souls are self-condemned because they rejected the principle of reason for the life of sensation and action. "Plotinus believes this audacity to be the original sin."<sup>248</sup> 'Repose' is the quiet and innocence of the garden before the Fall.<sup>249</sup> Here, "such a Garden solitude where thought and the object of thought copulate in Platonic love, is, truly, as Marvell says it is, 'delicious'--with all the erotic Latin of the word exposed."<sup>250</sup>

In the next stanza

the mode of abstract passion is further advanced; and here the very objects of love are transmuted, their essence becoming the plants of the Garden. The mortal creatures Daphne and Syrinx who aroused the lust of the Gods were possessed by them--but only as Ideas--their Platonic love. Eros and Agape are sisters under the skin.<sup>251</sup>

Ambition even on the part of the Gods is condemned. Christ is also recalled as well as the gods in the puns on 'heat,' 'retreat,' 'chase,' 'race.' And in the next stanza the realm of first forms becomes the Garden of Eden, "the sensuality which had been steadily rising up to now is climactically discharged."<sup>252</sup> Here, when the protagonist finally acts, he falls, the grass and flowers representing the transitory beauty of the senses, and Klonsky quotes a passage from

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<sup>247</sup>Ibid., p. 18.    <sup>248</sup>Ibid., p. 18.    <sup>249</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>250</sup>Ibid., p. 20.    <sup>251</sup>Ibid., p. 20-21.    <sup>252</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

Plotinus about valuing external objects.<sup>253</sup> In the next stanza 'a pleasure less' is sensation; the mind is now free from sensation and is united with the Universal Mind.<sup>254</sup> He, too, calls the last four lines of this stanza the climax of the poem:

The thought is a 'green thought' because it is a thought of green, 'the Garden of Ideas' and, since the Garden contains all thoughts, such a Thought must be the only Thought, the Thought of Thoughts, the Garden-Thought. The Shade is a 'green-Shade' because the 'green Thought' enters it, becomes it, and stains it green, just as the mind enters into and becomes the Supreme Intelligence. The Garden state is a state of mind.<sup>255</sup>

Further:

The Supreme Mind must have no envy of, nor deny actuality to, anything which exists potentially within it, or else suffer a diminution of itself; and contrarily, the Supreme Mind must also be self-contained and self-sufficient since it is of itself the divine Thought and its thinking is a thinking on thinking.<sup>256</sup>

This is a "triumphant solution of this paradox by fusing both terms of his metaphor in God."<sup>257</sup>

In the next stanza the soul is ready for its "transmigratory flight."<sup>258</sup> The bird is a reincarnation. It is a purgative state in Plotinian terms.<sup>259</sup> Of Stanza VIII Klonsky says it is a realization that only God can live

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<sup>253</sup>Ibid., p. 22.    <sup>254</sup>Ibid., p. 23.    <sup>255</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>256</sup>Ibid., p. 24.    <sup>257</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>258</sup>Ibid., p. 25.    <sup>259</sup>Ibid., p. 26.



alone in Paradise; "for the Idea of the Garden, the substance of God, is the archetype of all other paradises in men's minds."<sup>260</sup> The couplet here reflects that about the green shade "as a copy is to the original, as the 'mortal's share' of the Garden thought is to the Idea in God's mind. Marvell's poem is like a thinking mirror that reflects upon its own images."<sup>261</sup>

In the last stanza the bees compute the time as well as we since, according to Plotinus, time is defined as the life of the soul, therefore, it is the same time for all things. Klonsky sees this stanza as an "ironic nosegay."<sup>262</sup>

For whoever have not acquired civil virtues in life (and the protagonist who yearned to 'wander solitary there' is such a one), all these, says Plotinus, are 'transformed into a social animal such as the bee, or other animal of the kind!<sup>263</sup>

And here the poem ends, with "God as best thinker and best thought, uniting the Idea and the Soul."<sup>264</sup> Marvell identifies the words and the ideas which they contain, and punning plays an indispensable part in the "conceit" which this poem is.

Puns are used as tacks to join the two terms of a metaphor at crucial points in order to maintain, as it were, their separate identity. It was the

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<sup>260</sup>Ibid., p. 26.      <sup>261</sup>Ibid., p. 26.      <sup>262</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>263</sup>Ibid., p. 27.      <sup>264</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

punning words 'Shade,' 'Toyles,' 'upbraid,' etc. which enabled Marvell to compose his transubstantiate metaphor at the start of 'The Garden.' Without these his design could never have been fulfilled.<sup>265</sup>

"The Platonic form or Idea of 'The Garden' is its basic metaphor."<sup>266</sup>

Klonsky's analysis is stimulating, well written, and thorough, but he has left out the personal experience which seems essential in the poem; the fusion of intellect and soul is not simply described, it happens, with the suddenness of self-revelation. But Klonsky's thesis, that some mighty dilemma is resolved here, is a good one.

Before proceeding to our interpretation of "The Garden," it should be said that these critics have much to offer and it is almost all good. There are many ways of understanding and of knowing, and each may have some value. From them we can probably agree that the general theme of the poem is that of a contemplation in a garden, which takes the poet from his sensory self, through his intellectual to an almost mystical experience. One of the most interesting points of disagreement among the critics lies in how seriously to take the poem. Some seem to believe it is simply a playing at ideas, and that, at the end, there is no real conclusion. The thesis of this last section is that "The Garden" is deeply personal, revealing the poet as he moves from non-

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<sup>265</sup>Ibid., p. 32.    <sup>266</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

commitment and confusion arising from abundance of experience and inclination, to a realization of self which amounts to a transformed relationship to the world.

The three traditions to which Marvell is heir must now be made apparent in "The Garden." We are familiar with them in Marvell's poetry, and know that they may exist side by side in one poem without clash, and also without resolution. They seem to elicit almost equal loyalty from the poet. Also, within a single tradition, we have seen that there was a curious inability on the part of the poet to come to any conclusion about the basic dilemmas involved in that tradition. The question of body and spirit in "Dialogue between Soul and Body" is typical, or the question of to love or not to love in "Daphnis and Chloe." Somehow there has been a lack of definite belief, so deep that it appears in every poem; many attitudes are put on and worn for the space of a poem, but none seems to be satisfactory and, so, lasting. The question of this man's relation to the world, and even if it is possible to have one, remains unanswered.

The speaker in "The Garden" finally faces the ultimate question of existence, life versus the avoidance of life, both of which are attractive to him; life is decided for and the outlines of what sort it is to be become clear. Life is usually thought of as a problem of love as we have seen, rather than as one of art or work, which seem not to have been disturbing.

Also, from another point of view, love of another human is an analogy of the unity of Being, and it is Being, and relief from estrangement with which Marvell is ultimately concerned, whether his symbols are taken from Christian sources, (love as reflection of God's love), from Pagan ('let us sport us while we may'), or whether they simply have to do with a longing for peace. The difficulty with love, as the difficulty with life, is that it is not what it might be, and so his speakers have resented its existence, or wished to conquer it by force, or tried to avoid it either through the love of children, or by willing away its attractiveness in thoughts of the next world. It is the problem of love which must be solved, but it is also love which is enough to make one long for death.

Until "The Garden," the attractive 'green' has been the connection between the two worlds of death and life. It signifies growth and naturalness and life in its most elemental and pure form, but it also connects with the world of death since it does not move, is tranquil and undemanding. It is unconcerned and uninvolved. Somehow the poet must solve this most basic question before he can write the poem which is "deeply committed," as Miss Wallerstein believes "The Garden" to be. I think, on the contrary, utter lack of commitment is the ground theme of the poem. But the deeply honest statement of the problem and investigation of all its implications leads,

before our eyes, to a revelation which brings the promise of commitment, a metamorphosis.

First, to come back to the three traditions. Marvell and the seventeenth century fall between that perhaps mythical time when the tradition was firm, as behind a poet like Dante, and the time when there is a multiplicity of traditions to choose from, making commitment to any one of them difficult. He was close enough to the time of the single tradition to gain the sense that a firm tradition is possible, and yet he was close enough to the moderns to have been forced to take three traditions into account, the pastoral (romantic), the Roman and the Christian, and to try to make from them a whole. He lived too late to believe exclusively or simply in any one, hence the tensions in his poetry. Tradition in this sense involves more than literary tradition, which is the way the word was used in the preceding part of this paper. But there is little difficulty in translating the meanings of a literary tradition into tradition in the broader sense; pastoral, as we have seen, is devoted to simplicity, nature, a certain retirement from the world, natural man, expression of the "real" self, and can be thought of as related to romanticism. This is not to say that pastoral as a genre did not become highly artificial, yet the theme of simplicity or a cultured admiration for cultured simplicity is characteristic throughout. The Roman tradition is witty, poised, self-controlled and

sadly aware of the necessities of human life, our subjection to time and the whims of fate. The Christian tradition, perhaps an attempt at resolution of the other two, involves both a feeling of more control over one's fate, awareness of choice, and, at the same time, a feeling of helplessness before our own nature, and therefore of the necessity of help from above. Each of these traditions contains a problem at its heart, which may be stated (too simply) as: what is the relation between nature and man's nature; what is the relation between men and man; and what is the relation between man and his god. And these basic problems appear in the related literary traditions. With Marvell they resolve, as has been stated, into the ultimate question of commitment to human life with all its hazards and beauties, or to death, with its ease from time. Life is not perfect; to do something about it seems impossible, so death seems tempting. This is the story which we have seen throughout the lyric poetry and which, I believe, finds its conclusion in "The Garden."

Let us go through the poem first to note instances of the different traditions. To begin we might take Stanza V as an investigation of the pastoral problem, the relation of man to nature seen in its ideal form, the Golden Age. Stanza VI may be thought of in Latin terms, a tradition more cerebral than the previous one, expressed also in the ideal form in which the mind, the thought and the thing are all mutually

identified. Stanza VII may be interpreted as Christian, also the ideal state, where man's best self triumphs over his beastly self and he is elevated almost to the future existence. I think most of the critics could agree with this simple analysis, and with the fact that each tradition or modus vivendi is rejected, or at least that this is true of the first two. However, I think there is a fourth garden, a "real garden, which is not rejected, where the poet becomes himself. At any rate, the movement is progressive with insight deepening as we follow along, and with distance from worldly self increasing until the abrupt about-face of Stanza VIII where the truth is revealed, its surprise realized and then encompassed. Stanza IX is the outcome of this experience which has not only given knowledge but is a record of the metamorphosis which has occurred in the poet.

The complexity of the poem starts out at us when we realize that often there is more than one tradition being expressed in a single image. The title of the poem is an example. It may be thought of as a version of pastoral, with the emphasis on life and growth far from the complexity of city life, reminding of Spenser and cool luxuriousness. It may be thought of in Roman terms, that is, a recalling of Horace or Ovid, the georgic Virgil intended to write on gardens,<sup>267</sup> or a reference to Epicurus, the philosopher of

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<sup>267</sup>Lilly, op. cit., p. 75.

the garden. Thirdly, it may remind of the medieval and Christian tradition, as stated by C. S. Lewis: "To the medieval poet (unless outlaws are his subject) the typically pleasant place out of doors is a garden, usually a garden well walled or hedged,"<sup>268</sup> with overtones of the garden of Eden, and the hortus conclusus of the soul.

The garden is perhaps Marvell's favorite symbol because of its complex meaning, as green is his favorite color. The garden appears in "Death of a Faun," "Mower against Gardens," "Bermudas," "Appleton House," etc. As stated above, it is a symbol which connects with the world of the living and the world of the dead. Throughout the progress of "The Garden" with its complexity of symbol, unity is attained by its use in connecting not only the three traditions, but also the two poles of attraction, life and death. Green is living and fertile and full of promise, but it is also reposed, unconscious, and will-less, characteristics of death. So 'green' is identified with life and also with its avoidance. The poem is a progress from this split in sense of value, symbolized by the two significances of green, to a gradual identification with one part, a healing of the split, acceptance of the character of human life, and so acceptance of the self.

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<sup>268</sup>Lewis, op. cit., p. 58.



The final acceptance is brought about suddenly by the reappearance of the problem of love in Stanza VIII. Stanza VII seemed to have achieved a satisfactory state of contented waiting for the future, but the realizations in Stanza VIII, as the result of recognition of the impossibility of Stanza VII in which the necessities of life, the necessity of relationship with "another" self have not been taken into account, lead to the new freedom and spontaneity of Stanza IX, which is the reward of acceptance. This spontaneity has not been possible by identification with nature, by intellectual analysis, or by attempting the spiritual at the expense of the senses. But a fourth way, a way which makes use of all of man's capabilities and at the same time accepts his limitations, is discovered. Stanza IX contains echoes of all three traditions, but the fundamental idea of the stanza is that the garden is again a garden and the speaker is at last himself, and both are more themselves than they have ever been. The speaker has acquired a knowledge of self which outlines his being for the first time.

Knowledge of self and acceptance of one's limitations make possible a relation to the rest of the world and so more freedom of action than any of the three essentially self-centered poses attempted. The narrowness of the pastoral attitude would stifle; a constant intellectual attitude distorts the world; and the egocentrically spiritual (as opposed

to a theocentric spirituality) rather than being a unity of head and heart nullifies the world and the possibility of action in it; it is a static state of waiting. The narrowness or perverseness of each of these is the story of Stanza VIII, where life as it is for earthly creatures suddenly reasserts itself, and the poet laughingly admits that so it must be. He is of the world and he must come to terms with it. The three attitudes precluded action, but the force of life in him makes him know he must act, express his several selves fully and, moreover, express them specifically to "another."

Stanzas I through IV then show us the split, the urge toward inertia and passivity. Stanzas V through VII are the investigation of various ways of healing that split, and Stanzas VIII and IX, the way that must finally be chosen. The tone of Stanza IX is different from the others, I think, not so much because the symbolically imaginative gardens have of necessity been left behind, but because the real garden is, after all, the one which contains the most possibilities. Life in the other three contains artificial limitations. Only the acceptance of life as it is, within our specific human limitations, somewhere between the plants and God, can transform our relationship to the world, can renew our forces, can carry us out of dilemma and inertia.

This movement must be explained in more detail. We shall look at Stanzas I through IV, tracing symbols of the

three traditions, the pastoral first. In Stanza I we are introduced to the pastoral setting of the poem far from the needless complexity, turmoil and competition of the city. Word play on 'amaze' signifies how men confuse themselves, confusion is not entirely thrust upon them. The 'palm' 'oke,' and 'bayes' were the symbols of the ancients for pre-eminence, but these are shown in all their smallness as merely man made, insignificant in comparison with their real nature as found in the pastoral garden. And the leaves themselves (knowing their worth) laugh at their false use by men. Here in the first stanza there is conveyed the sense that the green things are in some way superior to man, and the poet, in wanting to return to them, seems to want to identify with them, rather than with their feeble counterparts. These in turn upbraid the pointless labors of men, as does the poet. So, in a small way, he already identifies with the green things as he does in "Appleton House," Stanza LXXI: "I was but an inverted tree," the past tense perhaps conveying the idea that such visions do not endure.

The first stanza, then, tells of a retreat from the world of men to a place where contemplation is possible, but it is also more. In the last two lines of the stanza there is a suggestion elaborated upon in the next stanzas, that the plants know of a love which is superior to that known by men. The verb 'to close' is a pun which implies the sexual

act. The other meaning might be to finish, and along with 'repose,' and 'shade' in line 5, brings out the poet's other pole of attraction, inertia, non-participation. But the pun on 'shade' pushes the meaning to the point of death. In the seventeenth century it was believed that the sexual act shortened one's life; therefore 'close' connects with both love and death. So the superiority of the garden things lies in their ability to love without toil and complication, and in their closeness to the quietness and peace of death. The poet is attracted by both these qualities of the green world. It is not that death itself is desired but the things desired have a certain similarity to the characteristics of death. This is the old pastoral identification with nature as simple and therefore "good," as well as the pastoral longing to return to that time when man and nature were in sympathy, both of which involve longing for inactivity, hence at the opposite pole from the busy city in the stanza. It is characteristic of Marvell's wit that these two opposed worlds, the city and the country, are interlocked by the use of a single symbol, the oke-laurel-palm symbol which is part of both worlds. We saw such connecting links used to the same effect in "Drop of Dew," only now one world is not an allegory of the other, but the two worlds involved are directly opposed, and the metaphor serves to mark both their opposition, and their connection in the life of men. The death imagery also

joins both worlds, connecting wittily with the busy world through the narrow verged shade which upbraids men and their occupations, and with the green world and the inactivity of 'close' and 'repose' there. It is connected with both, and is, as stated above, a desirable state to the speaker. Life and death are inextricably mixed in both worlds, form the fundamental deliberation of the poem and so are presented in the first stanza. Each of the stanzas of investigation of the three traditions, V through VII, ends in a state of non-involvement, the solitariness and inertia which are akin to death. And since each way is seen to lead nowhere, it is rejected. Therefore the poem is a progress away from the desire for death toward a positive desire for life.

In the next stanza (II) the last two lines emphasize the connection, implied above, between the green world and physical love by the use of the word 'delicious' meaning pleasure, voluptuousness. That is to say, one of the attractions of the garden world is that it is more satisfying than the world of men. The love that is felt for the 'delicious' sisters, quiet and innocence, is more complete than that felt for anything else. There is also in the stanza the witty turn on the conventional view of the country as boorish: the beau monde is seen as 'rude,' whereas the pastoral world, "country pleasures" are subtle and rewarding. One may even agree with Empson, who says that in the first part of the poem sexual

desire is sublimated into a taste for nature. The whole stanza is a play on the delights of the country as compared to the rudeness of the city, especially because the pleasures in the country are more delicious than any subtle invention of the city.

In Stanza III further fun is had in pushing the pastoral pose as far as it will go. The speaker takes his love of the green world so seriously that green is seen to be more attractive than the white and red of young ladies; the sensual content of the poem becomes even more specific. Green is now 'am'rous' and 'lovely'; we had learned before how 'delicious' it was, and how the plants closed and reposed in calm but voluptuous entwining. This is reemphasized, and there is further withdrawal into the green world. In Stanza I the two worlds were equal in importance although opposed; now the 'busie' world has almost disappeared from consciousness, as the garden world is seen to have all the delights ever dreamed of in the city. Here also the conventional pastoral device of cutting the names of mistresses in trees is turned by the poet into a cutting of the trees' names in the trees because conventional fond lovers are really cruel and he wishes to be neither. The sensuousness of the love for green things and the green (innocent) love for the things of the senses are both present in this stanza in a complex interrelationship. The love for green has to do with a longing for repose and

with the pull towards active participation in the processes of life. These three stanzas have shown that the split, at first thought to be between values of the city and values of the country, is more personal; it is the split between opposite desires, participation and passive observation which are mutually exclusive and so must be decided upon.

Stanza IV is a further elaboration of the complexity of the personal problem. The mythological characters are conventional pastoral trappings, but here, too, the convention is turned to show that even the gods preferred green things to women. The preceding lines indicate that the race was willed to end in a tree. Retreat from love into nature, permanently, is playfully stated to have been the desire of gods. There is also the implication, as Bradbrook and Thomas have pointed out, that since laurel was for poetry and reed may stand for music, the arts can be gained only by sexual sublimation, and that this the gods also knew. The nature of human sexuality is being withdrawn from, 'run' and 'heat' reflecting the 'Labours' of the first stanza. Voluptuous, easy love which the green things perform is the love which seems good. It is the kind which makes a 'retreat,' recalling the idea of withdrawal from life as well as retreat into that past when man and nature were one. The picture of that world is presented in Stanza V. The 'I' is used there indicating that the speaker is dealing with a problem which is his, not

an abstract one of city versus country, and also that the experiences described are real, a living in the attitude which has seemed to be the answer to life. It is a fully imagined experience, and at the end of the stanza, when it is rejected ('I fall on grass'), we feel it to be permanently so. The pastoral attitude alone will never again seem a temptation or an answer.

Before we deal with Stanzas V through VII, the Latin and Christian elements in the first four stanzas will be pointed out. In Latin terms the first stanza is a short poem of rejection in the Horatian manner. In Ode II, 3, Horace uses much the same theme and his words laborat, trepidare, fugax,<sup>269</sup> might even have been in Marvell's mind. The suggestion that the trees are making love as they entwine and form a shade appears also in the same Ode. Horace's theme is that, considering the brevity of life, love-making should not be neglected.<sup>270</sup> The themes of the brevity of life, the pleasures of solitude and praise of simple country life are frequent in Horace; Ode III, 29; Sat. I, vi; Sat. VI, book ii; Epistle I, xvi. The trappings of the Marvell poem, country life, laurel crowns, golden age, etc., are typical of Horace since, of course, these were connected with everyday Roman life. In Marvell such things are an affecta-

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<sup>269</sup>Wilkinson, Horace and His Lyric Poetry, p. 129.

<sup>270</sup>Ibid., p. 129.



tion, but a conventional one at his time. At any rate, the first stanza is Horatian, and several of the images are taken directly from his Ode.

The Epicurean withdrawal from the active life may also be suggested here, or even the Ovidian praise of the green and beauty of his birthplace, Sulmona, in *Amores* II, 16, 1-10. However that may be, there is a strong Latin tradition behind this poem which shows through probably quite without conscious effort. The puns and the wit in general demonstrate an affinity with the Latin writers. There is never a thought of telling about one's own personal feelings in the first stanza. The stanza is given from the point of view of common sense, since who would want all that trouble just for a branch, when it is possible to enjoy all the trees. In these terms the joys of country life are good with no thought of a similarity to death except that it comes too soon, and even the trees and flowers know this and love while they yet have time. Love and death are not equated as in the pastoral attitude, but they are still connected, the presence of the latter making for the urgency of the former.

In speaking of the Latin elements in "The Garden," the imagery throughout of garlands, flowers, 'Oke, 'palm, 'Bayes,' green, bees, honey, vines, suggests the section in Ovid's *Fasti* (translated into English by John Gower in 1640)<sup>271</sup> on

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<sup>271</sup>Wilkinson, *Ovid Recalled*, p. 408.

the celebration for Flora, queen of flowers, which took place in Rome at the end of April and the beginning of May.<sup>272</sup>

Frazer says that the licentious character of the theatrical performances in her honor was because of her significance in the fertility of the earth, animals and men.<sup>273</sup> And this seems so in keeping with the tone of the poem that I think it is not far fetched to investigate further.

Especially interesting in connection with "The Garden" is Ovid's stating that the name Flora was formerly "Chloris" the Green One,

Chloris eram, quae Flora vocor: corrupta Latino  
Nominis est nostri littera Graeca sono.<sup>274</sup>

This ties in so closely with Marvell's affinity for green that we might well conclude that he had this particular derivation (though it is erroneous)<sup>275</sup> in mind. Besides, if we accept that the poet had Ovid in mind we shall have a world of symbols opened up to us which might otherwise be overlooked. According to Ovid, Flora enjoys perpetual spring<sup>276</sup> as it is spring in Marvell's poem. She says, "I have a fruitful garden fanned by the breeze and watered by a spring of running water,"<sup>277</sup> and this spring appears in Stanza VII of "The Garden" associated as it is with purification,

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<sup>272</sup>Frazer, Publii Ovidii Nasonis: The "Fasti" of Ovid, I, p. 261 ff.

<sup>273</sup>Ibid., III, p. 418.      <sup>274</sup>Ibid., I, p. 260.

<sup>275</sup>Ibid., IV, p. 21.      <sup>276</sup>Ibid., I, p. 261.

<sup>277</sup>Ibid., I, p. 263.

virginity and salvation, concepts dealt with in Stanza VIII. Flora's garden is filled with flowers, and she is queen of them as she is of corn, vines, olives, fruit trees, and even honey as well as blossoms in general. "Soon as the dewy rime is shaken from the leaves, and the varied foliage is warmed by the sunbeams, the Hours assemble, clad in dappled weeds, and cull my gifts in light baskets . . . ,"<sup>278</sup> reminding us of the hours in Stanza IX. Further, Flora says she has wine too, and "Honey is my gift. 'Tis I who call the winged creatures, which yield honey, to the violet, and the clover, and the grey thyme . . . ."<sup>279</sup> And her province is not woods "but garden and fields, where no fierce beast may come."<sup>280</sup> She is truly a deity for Marvell. I think we can conclude that, on the Latin level, a celebration of spring and wantonness, which among other things makes clear the specific meaning of 'delicious' in line 16, is in Marvell's mind. So we may affirm the sensual tone we discovered in the pastoral level, and also look further in Ovid for elucidation of meanings.

The readings in Ovid's Fasti shed light on the problem of love in the poem. In the pastoral interpretation of the first four stanzas we saw that love could be identified with

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<sup>278</sup>Ibid., I, p. 263.

<sup>279</sup>Ibid., I, pp. 265-66.

<sup>280</sup>Ibid., I, p. 273.

both sides of the split; it had to do with life, but seemed more to have to do with the quiet and repose and will-lessness of the other side, of death. The green things also were divided in the split in the same manner, having to do with life and death. And even the attitude toward love, since it was related to the green world, suffered the same split. The kind which was presented as most attractive was the kind without effort, a sort of passive kind which stays forever exactly as it is; that is, a non-dynamic love which is impossible when the nature of the other person involved is known and dealt with. The love for solitary peace, and unwillingness to be involved with another is further brought out by overtones in the Latin imagery. Here we find signs of a love which doesn't flow outward but is turned in, has no object, or is frustrated in the obtaining of its object, as is shown in the stanza about Pan and Apollo. In the Fasti, the Arval Brothers, eunuchs who symbolize fertility, are prominent in the celebration for Flora.<sup>281</sup> They carry on their orgiastic rites in memory of Attis who, though he had pledged faith to Cybele, loved Sagaritis, a naiad. Cybele was enraged and killed the tree of the naiad by making wounds in it<sup>282</sup>--which brings to mind the cruel lovers of "The Garden's" Stanza III. Attis went mad and dismembered himself. The blood from his

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<sup>281</sup>Ibid., III, p. 417.    <sup>282</sup>Ibid., I, p. 263.

wounds and those of Crocus and Adonis are the source from which the beauty of Flora's garden springs.<sup>283</sup> We see now, instead of a passive denial of sexual desire and preference for nature, "the sublimation of sexual desire into a taste for nature," that there is a violent turning away from sexual activity connected with the garden world. And in an undertone, such violence has to do with the beauties of that world. Destruction of one's physical nature, again a death, is seen as necessary to complete enjoyment of the beauties of the spring, or even a cause for their existence.

The destruction of the physical self is alluded to again in Stanza IV, where the witty 'in a tree did end their race' seems to mean the ending of the human race because of a ceasing of reproduction. Those who love mortals are doomed to destruction, and so once again, love is connected with death. It is a state to be avoided; even the gods were so doomed. Death is not wished for, but seems to be the inevitable result, whether one love green things or whether one attempt to actually love another human.

In this Stanza (IV) the idea of metamorphosis becomes explicit. The notion occurs to the speaker that by an effort of imagination he may be able to achieve one of those existences outlined in the sections on the three traditions, either

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<sup>283</sup>Ibid., I, p. 263.

a metamorphosis into a green thing, as Syrinx and Daphne, subject of Stanza V, or into a loveless being responsible in some way for the existence of the world, subject of Stanza VI, or into a creature dissociated entirely from the world, subject of Stanza VII. So the next three stanzas are enlarged investigations of the possibilities of solving the dilemma of life envisioned in the first four stanzas. Three kinds of metamorphosis are attempted and then rejected. Before we follow these attempts let us first look at the Christian imagery in the first four stanzas.

The general Christian tone of the first stanza lies in its idea of the futility of worldly effort, and the transitory nature of its successes. Contemplation rather than action is the medieval value. In the second stanza, line 5, the phrase 'if here below' sounds Christian in its rejection of there being anything really 'sacred' in this world. The intent of the tradition, then, is to reject this world and this life, and to see the next life as the better one, again a rejection of human existence. Now there is no urge to be a green thing, and no sense of the self-destruction involved in love, but a desire to rise above the 'here below,' and the garden is seen as the only place where such sacredness could exist, in the company of 'innocence' and 'quiet.' In Stanza IV the first line recalls, but as an overtone, the heavenly reward which we will receive after 'we have run our passion's

heat' here below. But line 4, 'still in a tree did end their race,' is a definite reference to Christ on the Cross, symbolically identified with the tree of knowledge in Eden. Christ died for our sins and for the first sin. The overall Christian tone of the first four stanzas is related to the medieval contemptus mundi, the garden being a symbol for the Garden of Eden before the fall when man was innocent and close to God. The attractions of this world are all transitory and utterly vain and the worldly self is deplored (line 1).

So we have seen the workings of the three traditions. Put simply, the poem has progressed from a statement of general feeling, the garden is better than the city, to a sense that there is more involved. The poet's individual problem of how to accept life, becomes the explicit theme of the poem. In Stanza V, fulfillment of the pastoral desire for identification with nature is imaginatively experienced. It is 'wond'rous,' but is finally rejected in the last two lines:

Stumbling on Melons, as I pass,  
Insnar'd with Flow'rs, I fall on Grass.

This is related not only to Flora's garden and the Return to the primitive Golden Age, but it is also a recalling of the story of Eden and the Fall. The stanza is wittily put, and the fall is not a serious one, but the ideal must be rejected, both because Being is not to be achieved by going backwards, and especially because of the limited satisfactions to be found in the senses alone. This sort of metamorphosis is not

a satisfying one. The fall here also recalls Eve, as a reminder that the problem of love is still not solved, even in the world of the senses. The stanza may be seen also as the rejection not only of the primitive way but of childhood, as the fall is the death of childhood's spontaneity, and the birth of consciousness. For the first time this is rejected and the problems of the mature conscious human are faced with the feeling that solving them is the only way life can be dealt with. It cannot be in the withdrawal into childish, or country pleasures.

In the next stanza (VI) the glories of this consciousness, which is more pleasurable than the biological, primitive, childhood life of the above stanza, are investigated. The idea that the growth of consciousness is compensation for an increased estrangement seems to be accepted. Lines 3 and 4 are a reference to the belief that man is a microcosm, recollecting the idea that he somehow participates in the beauties of the spring. Yet in the next lines the concept is rejected since the mind is able to create more things than are dreamt of in this world. It is a part of the creative force of the universe, far above the simple existence of things. But then, in the final lines, this answer to life is also rejected, since from the time of the fall:

all the original power of reason has been obscured.  
 And reason alone, when left to itself and its own  
 faculties, never can find the way back. It cannot  
 reconstruct itself; it cannot, by its own efforts,



return to its former pure essence . . . . Here we have come to a complete reversal of all the values upheld by Greek philosophy. What once seemed to be the highest privilege of man proves to be his peril and his temptation; what appeared as his pride becomes his deepest humiliation.<sup>284</sup>

The stanza shows the realization of the failure of the reason. Its sort of creation is similar to annihilation. The mind can so wander from reality in the stories it tells itself, having no direct experience of the world as do the senses, that reality disappears and there is nothing left at all, only 'a green thought in a green shade.' That phrase, the most quoted of the whole poem, may mean in Christian terms the simultaneousness of the idea and the existence of the world, the instantaneusness of God who can make thoughts out of shades and shades out of thoughts, with Whom the poet, in the height of his intellectual pride, now identifies. So the stanza reveals the failure of reason, and worse, its temptation to pride. Unguided by the senses it loses the world, and unguided by God or the spirit of humility it is self-deceiving. The speaker remains above his power of reason in that he can realize its deceit and can reject its pride, as shown in the last two lines. 'Annihilating' here and 'stumbling' in the preceding stanza, show that the poet rejects the continued pursuit of the "way" embarked upon so hopefully at the beginning of each stanza. These words do not convey horror, they

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<sup>284</sup> Cassirer, An Essay on Man: An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture, pp. 25-26.

are but firm and final; the feeling they indicate is only implied. The poet has full knowledge of the charms of each way, but now, after total immersion in each, also of its limitations; he knows the end of each is no more than a charming interlude, or even a stimulating diversion, but as far as being a final and satisfactory stance in life, each is found to be too particular, too self-dividing, too lacking in freedom. Each requires the death of some part of the self. A thunderous and passionate rejection would not only have been unMarvellian, it might indicate a lingering desire in that direction. But with the willingness of the uncommitted to investigate all avenues, the poet has fully accepted and then rejected it. As each tradition is rejected the knowledge of the self is increased. A thorough pastoral and sensuous orientation to life is as impossible as is a solely intellectual one. Formerly these were thought of as possibilities, now they are known in the completest sense and rejected in the same sense. Layers are successively stripped off as the speaker discovers that he is not essentially like a tree, nor is he able to create instantaneously and to exact purpose like a god.

He continues his explorations in the next stanza, arriving at what appears to be the deepest, most essential part of himself, his spiritual nature, and throughout the stanza it seems he has discovered the satisfactory attitude.

At least he says, I am able to await my future with humble and total gladness. The body is left far below where it belongs among the growing things, and his soul glides up into the boughs. The speaker still believes in the possibility of avoiding involvement in what is. However, the flight here is not the same as the utter flight from reality of Stanza VI. Here reality does not disappear but is risen above quite literally, the nature images of fountain and fruit-tree, showing that it is kept well in mind. Somehow a more proper estimate of what a human is is revealed in this stanza whereas in Stanza V human capabilities were rather underestimated, and in Stanza VI they were rather overestimated. Here there is humility in the picture of the speaker as a bird, and there is a certain self-respect in the belief that longer flight is possible. We are getting closer to a just estimation of the self somewhere between the plants and the angels. But the non-participation in life, 'casting the Bodies vest aside' still remains, and is underlined by the happy waiting for death and the next world. We seem to be back almost to the point where we began but now with death, 'longer flight,' more attractive than ever. But much has been learned in between. Stanza VII seems to be the perfect blending of the sensuous self and the intellectual self into a Christian unity in which the soul is elevated not entirely away from the world, but just a little above mundane concerns. Within the stanza there is no rejec-

tion of the imagined "way" as has been true of the two previous stanzas. There is only a hint of possible unsatisfactoriness in the rather static state of affairs pictured, in the fact that the wait may be a long one and even a bird cannot forever simply wave its plumes. I would hesitate to take this as significant if it weren't for the next stanza, of which it may be said that it is a more complete statement of rejection than any which appears in Stanzas V and VI.

The life portrayed 'beyond a mortal's share,' and the poem thus far have taught that the speaker at least is mortal, neither god nor tree. Now he must face and accept what that implies; somehow the world must be reckoned with, and even the busy companies of men. Even the imagined existence in Stanza VII is not fulfilling of the whole man since living among others is part of the nature of man as it is of the bees. And further, only by living with others can oneself be fully realized. Since the speaker has not imagined himself in relation to God, which might have required the necessary gift of self, but only as awaiting alone some future flight, his molding of himself must be accomplished through relation with others, and, explicit in Stanza VIII, with another. Absurd though it seem, it is beyond a mortal's share to live as One as does God. Mortals are meant to live in relationship to the world, and, as we shall see from the imagery, only thus can they accomplish a fulfillment which

is analogous to the unity of Being. We seem to be back at the beginning, at the realization of the existence of the rest of the world, but now with a difference. The world of men can be accepted now because life has been accepted. This was only accomplished through the imaginative investigation of the three forms of "death" which were found to be deceiving and unattractive. When the speaker has finally decided for life for himself, he also decides for life in general, the life of others, and this is what is stated in Stanza VIII, with irony and reluctance, but it is there. The gap of "either/or" between the self and society, "others," is finally closed.

Let us look at these ideas as shown in Stanzas VIII and IX. The question of love reasserts itself violently in the first two lines of Stanza VIII, meaning that the creation of Eve was the beginning of all the trouble. The result of this is that first and foremost the problem of relationship must be solved, and it will never be done by withdrawal into any of the three poses attempted. It exists, and the admission of this is the first step toward a working out of the problems it creates. Withdrawal is not only impossible, it is a sin against the life in oneself. As the question of love comes into perspective, so does the question of life among mortals in Stanza IX, since one's sexual adjustment is, to a large extent a symbol of one's adjustment to life. Although the necessity of human relationship is faced with

reluctance, it is also faced with wit, an indication of its being no longer a destructive experience:

Two paradises 'twere in one  
To live in Paradise alone.

The tone is philosophical: sad but true. We are mortal and so are not meant to live alone (though 'What other Help could yet be meet!') and this is accepted. Previously, the speaker had felt that sexual love, standing for relationship, intense involvement, could and must be avoided. It was an obstacle, perhaps even the cause of the human predicament. To put it bluntly, the poet would rather be dead than subject to it. Now it is seen that not only is human love a necessity of existence, but a possible means of salvation, of fulfillment, of unity. Far from being a hindrance on the "way," it is the "way," and freedom exists only in the acceptance of this fact.

The revelation of the stanza lies not only in the speaker's now seeing the necessities inherent in being human, but in the fact that he has never realized them before, which explains his lack of contact or sympathy with other mortals, and his inability to love where he desires, as well as his ability to love only when desire is impossible (the children, and the story of "Definition of Love"). To accept oneself as human, as being unable to exist without contact with others, is the beginning of acceptance of others. The stanza is the record of his previous failure in the direction of self-acceptance, the realization that this has been largely

responsible for his inertia between the urge to participate and the urge to retire, and for his inability to express himself in action. This stanza shows the metamorphosis into himself as a human and an individual for whom it is vital that the problem of love be solved. As the poet has taken on new meanings, so has life, and finally, so has the garden itself in Stanza IX.

Before we look at Stanza IX, I should like to point out some of the complexity of Stanza VIII, and its reiteration of the death theme stated in terms of the three traditions. In Stanza VIII we are down to earth again, away from all possibility of sensuous, intellectual or mystical gardens. This is clear from the past tense of the first words: 'Such was that happy garden-state . . . .' We are now looking back on an experience, and it is time for summing up and for humor. In pastoral terms we are reminded of the Golden Age, the 'place so pure and sweet,' the difficulties and lamentations of love, and also of the frequent homosexual loves of that genre, in the recalling of the Eveless garden, as well as the immaculateness, innocence and death-like inactivity of the green things praised in the early part of the poem. In Latin terms we are reminded of the urge for solitude of Horace, but more interestingly of three stories mentioned by Ovid in connection with the celebration for Flora. These are of Narcissus: "Thou, too, Narcissus, hast a name in the trim

gardens, unhappy thou in that thou hadst not a double of thyself . . . ,"<sup>285</sup> and of the violent dismemberment and death of Orocus and Attis of whom Flora says, "from whose wounds by my Art doth beauty spring."<sup>286</sup> These again touch upon the inability to feel an outgoing love for "another" of which the speaker has been guilty. The whole poem in one sense has been a narcissistic fascination with the self, and the only possible companion would have been a double of the speaker. It is explicitly admitted that a mate is not wanted. Only now can the poet admit that his previous attitude was inverted, and if love was felt it was but for an image of his own creation in himself.

Ovid's passage goes on to speak about the various gods, Mars, etc., and goddesses who conceived children without the "services" of the opposite sex, Flora having helped Juno to do this<sup>287</sup> through the use of one of her flowers. In Stanza VIII of "The Garden" we are reminded that the speaker would have been quite willing to participate in such a reproduction as the plants perform. Rather than be involved in loving "another" he would willingly have ended his race in a tree as did the gods of Stanza IV, for 'What other Help could yet be meet!' when Flora is around with her efficacious flowers?

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<sup>285</sup>Frazer, op. cit., I, p. 263.

<sup>286</sup>Ibid., I, p. 263.    <sup>287</sup>Ibid., I, pp. 263-65.



As a bridge between the Latin and the Christian traditions we may recall that Epicurus believed "that man can, like the gods, withdraw himself out of reach of all external influences, and thus, as a sage, 'live like a god among men.'"<sup>288</sup> This, too, the speaker has tried throughout the poem; it was his desire to withdraw, but by Stanza VIII he has realized not only that it is impossible, but that the attempt is a sin against the self. In Christian terms we are explicitly reminded of the garden of Eden in the lines about Paradise, and 'Such was that happy garden-state.' In these terms love again was self-love and life was death-like in its denial of the body. We are reminded of the rabbinic legend cited in Leone Ebreo in the seventeenth century that Adam before the Fall was an androgyne.<sup>289</sup> (This also connects with the story in the Metamorphoses of Hermaphroditus, who is perhaps associated with the pool of Stanza VII.)

But the outstanding realization in Christian terms is that only God is One:

But 'twas beyond a Mortal's share  
To wander solitary there:

Being mortal compels us to meet and to make our peace with other humans. This stanza is the explicit statement of the

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<sup>288</sup>Encyclopaedia Britannica, VIII, p. 475.

<sup>289</sup>Wallerstein, op. cit., pp. 333-34.

false ideas to which the poet has been subject, the withdrawal from life and repulsion of love, and is the proof that he is now metamorphosed and can look back at what he was with humor. The homosexual imagery points up the fact that he was incapable of an outgoing love and so of the release of the giving of the self; that he was doomed to the death which is the never-ending, turning back on the self within. This stanza is not only the summation of the entire poem but also the revelation of the now transformed relation to human life, his own and that of others. The split between life and death has been healed, life has been decided upon, the self can be expressed in the action of love and worship, and Stanza IX is a celebration of this new ability to praise Being as it appears in the self, in the garden, in society, and in the "other," here the gardener.

In Stanza IX the metamorphosed poet is back in the real garden, giving thanks for what has happened to him, thanks to the 'skilful Gardner' who has made the garden and has made himself again. This is the first time God is referred to. That is, even He cannot be conceived unless one first conceives of oneself. The images from the three traditions still appear, but now they are in perspective; their answers are no longer needed and they are used to demonstrate just that. Perhaps they are Flora's hours that appear but they are also simply hours. The bees may recall Horace's comparing himself to a bee,<sup>290</sup> but they are also real bees buzzing in

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<sup>290</sup>Horace, Ode IV, 11, 27.

the sun. And the praise of the gardener may be a prayer to God, but there also must have been a real, skillful gardener. Pastoral delight in nature is present, but now it contains the awareness that one must return to the city and carry on. Now the computing of the industrious bee, which recalls the 'Labours' and 'Toyles' of Stanza I, is accepted, and it is recognized that even such creatures are we. Business is now related to 'good' and 'wholesome.' We know that we are subject to time (thyme) but we can also compute it, which is a kind of control, and make use of it. Most important, the speaker has decided for life and for being human. He is able to appreciate the various goods of the three traditions, but is no longer subject to the temptation of withdrawing into them. He subordinates the insights they have given to the sense of his own value as a human, and this value is increased because of the experience of them. He knows the temptations to which he is vulnerable, has faced them fully, and so his self-respect is firmly grounded on self-knowledge. From the negative realization of the impossibility of withdrawal has grown the positive sense of unconfined capabilities. Now the world as it is, the garden though subject to time, is something to be thankful for.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion we shall return to the beginnings. There has been in the poet the sense of separation, of estrangement from Being, from the universe, from society, and even from himself; an overburdening sense of the human predicament which made him yearn for that mythical time when we were not estranged. And in the frustration of not achieving Return he often wished for death in order to find relief. All was out of focus; is a human a part of nature like a tree, caring only for growth and greenness, or is a human a spiritual being, a creator like a god? The loss of connection with the world has meant a loss of connection with himself, divided as he has been between longing for life, finding it unsatisfactory, and so longing to withdraw from life. A Return has been accomplished and has been found restricting. The creation of a new world has been accomplished and found to lead to nothingness, and a living in the future has been achieved and found to be a denial of life. All the efforts to discover Being, to rediscover that existence outside of time and outside of the burden of individuality (and the burden of contact with other individuals), have ended in fragmentation of self, of loss of freedom, in short, in loss of the one thing we all do possess, our own selves.

He has, from Return, arrived back where he began, in the here and now, but not precisely where he began. With his new-found awareness of what constitutes a whole man, he is ready for acceptance, which he was absolutely unable to achieve before. And the magic of acceptance is a metamorphosis. He has been metamorphosed not into an archetypal being, living happily in a golden age, nor into a reshaper of the world, nor into a spiritual being already in heaven. These have been seen to be but a sort of death. He has been metamorphosed into himself. There is no Return and there is no hasty future. One must live, and one must love the living of another human being, and not withdraw to some shade for fear of the implications of being human. In Christian terms one might state the nature of the metamorphosis as being from an orientation towards chastity to an orientation towards true or faithful love. The praise of 'sweet and wholesome' in Stanza IX rather than the 'quiet' and 'innocence' of Stanza II seems to bear this out. Rather than preserving oneself in the hopes of achieving unity, one must use oneself, give oneself, participate in this world outside the walls of the self, since only in this way is the primordial union of all things in some sense reached.

I have called the poem a metamorphosis because that term implies a broader sense of change than "rebirth," which sounds too Christian, or transformation, which implies some-

thing too total. Metamorphosis implies that one changes and yet remains somehow the same, and this, I think, is the sense of the poem. Also, the idea of metamorphosis runs throughout the poem in the puns and images, from the men who are shades, through the body which is both delight and fall, and the world which is a thought, to a garden which is all these worlds and finally itself. A third reason is that in Ovid most of the metamorphoses had to do with love if not sexuality, and this theme is Marvell's primary one throughout almost all of his poetry, giving rise to his problem about life and being solved in his solution of that problem.

Language and the power of language have been respected since primitive times. To the primitive, language as part of ritual helped in achieving Return. To him:

the symbol is still regarded as a property of the thing like other physical properties . . . . In mythical thought the name of a god is an integral part of the nature of the god. If I do not call the god by his right name, then the spell or prayer becomes ineffective.<sup>291</sup>

As late as Biblical times, metamorphosis (miracle) was achieved through the power of the word.

When doubts arose about the relationship between word and thing, when it became evident that nature did not understand the language of men, man's sense of estrangement increased. He felt a new independence from his surroundings

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<sup>291</sup>Cassirer, An Essay on Man: An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture, p. 57.

but also a keener sense of aloneness. The word was seen to be physically impotent but became a vehicle of expression of the nature of the universe. "Logically it is elevated to a higher, indeed to the highest rank. The Logos becomes the principle of the universe and the first principle of human language."<sup>292</sup>

The third concept of language is the allegorical, figural, used by Dante,<sup>293</sup> and assumes its ability to figure forth what will be, and what the significance of things is.

The poet believes in all these ways of language, the actual performing of something, its being a symbol of something, and its figuring forth the inner meaning of something. In "The Garden" the Return to the sensory life has been achieved through language; the demonstration of awareness of how the intellect deceives itself with its symbols has been achieved through language; and the mystical vision of the future has also been conceived and portrayed in terms of language. The power of words has effected these changes, but it has done more; it has also participated in the final inner change, that of the poet's becoming himself. He has been metamorphosed by his poem as he has fashioned it.

The power of words may have accomplished even a fourth purpose here, and that is to have, paradoxically, eliminated

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<sup>292</sup> Ibid., pp. 144-45.

<sup>293</sup> Auerbach, Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature.

the need for them. Since Marvell's poetry was the product and expression of tension, of the ill-connected head and heart, the resolution of the tension makes further poetry of this kind unnecessary, or even impossible. Perhaps "The Garden" is Marvell's last lyric poem.



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