

TR 86-25

A View of Herrick's Poetic World And Its Values,
With Some Reference to His Fairy Poetry

Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts
in the Department of English
of Rhodes University

by

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July, 1985

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A NOTE ON THE TEXT USED

The text used in this study is that of *The Complete Poetry of Robert Herrick*, edited and with an introduction and notes by J. Max Patrick (New York: Norton, 1968). For additional notes, and for poems not included in the 1648 edition of *Hesperides* and *His Noble Numbers*, I have consulted *The Poetical Works of Robert Herrick*, edited and annotated by L.C. Martin (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968). This is considered to be the definitive edition, but it is not convenient to cite, since Martin does not number each poem, giving instead page number and sequence on each page. I have therefore preferred to follow the text of Patrick, who numbers each poem.

In quoting from Herrick's work, I have represented what are presumably his italics as set out in the body of a poem. It seems likely that he was in London to supervise the printing of his book, having been expelled from his parish in 1647. The 1648 edition prints all poem titles in italics, except for names of persons, and the reverse is true in the body of each poem. I have, however, used quotation marks to indicate a title and have italicized all names within titles. This seems acceptable as Herrick's intention is obviously to highlight those names. I have not felt it necessary to reproduce the full stop with which a Herrick poem title customarily ends, although I have followed the poet's practice of capitalizing the initial and second letters of the first line of each poem. It has not been practical to retain the large initial letter of each poem.

ABBREVIATIONS

- Martin [Herrick, Robert]. *The Poetical Works of Robert Herrick*. Ed. L.C. Martin. Oxford English Texts. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968.
- Patrick [Herrick, Robert]. *The Complete Poetry of Robert Herrick*. Ed. J. Max Patrick. New York: Norton, 1968.
- H- Poem number in *Hesperides*, as given by Patrick.
- N- Poem number in *His Noble Numbers*, as given by Patrick.
- S- Poem number in Patrick's "A Supplement of Poems Not Included in the 1648 Edition".
- K.M. Briggs, *Dictionary* Briggs, K[atharine] M. *A Dictionary of Fairies*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979.
- K.M. Briggs, *Puck* Briggs, K[atharine] M. *The Anatomy of Puck: An Examination of Fairy Beliefs among Shakespeare's Contemporaries and Successors*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959.
- R.L. Colie, *Kind* Colie, Rosalie L. *The Resources of Kind: Genre-Theory in the Renaissance*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1973.
- R.L. Colie, "My
Echoing Song" Colie, Rosalie L. "My Echoing Song": Andrew Marvell's Poetry of Criticism. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1970.
- R.L. Colie, *Paradoxia Epidemica* Colie, Rosalie L. *Paradoxia Epidemica: The Renaissance Tradition of Paradox*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1966.
- Delattre, *EFP* Delattre, Floris. *English Fairy Poetry from the Origins to the Seventeenth Century*. London: Frowde; Paris: Didier, 1912.
- Delattre, *RH* Delattre, Floris. *Robert Herrick: Contribution à l'étude de la poésie lyrique en Angleterre au dix-septième siècle*. Paris: Alcan, 1911.
- English Experience* Facsimile editions published in the series *The English Experience*. Amsterdam; New York: Da Capo Press, Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1971.

- Fowler, *Kinds* Fowler, Alistair. *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982.
- Fowler, *RH* Fowler, Alistair. *Robert Herrick*. Warton Lecture on English Poetry. British Academy, 1980. London: Oxford University Press, 1982.
- M.W. Latham Latham, Minor White. *The Elizabethan Fairies*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1930.
- Rollin Rollin, Roger B. *Robert Herrick*. New York: Twayne, 1966.
- K. Scoular Scoular, Kitty. *Natural Magic*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965.
- B.H. Smith Smith, Barbara Herrnstein. *Poetic Closure: A Study of How Poems End*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970.
- "*Trust to Good Verses*" Rollin, Roger B. and Patrick, J. Max, eds. "*Trust to Good Verses*": *Herrick Tercentenary Essays*. Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 1978.

PREFACE

Herrick was a prolific poet, and a remarkably consistent one. *Hesperides* encompasses a lifelong collection of poems on themes as diverse as serious reflections on life's brevity and the playful examination of the minutely imagined world of the fairies, yet his vision of life remains coherent. My purpose in this study is to try to see Herrick's secular work in its unity and as a whole, without claiming to consider every aspect of his secular poetry. (I have not attempted, for example, to consider his classical sources.) As my interest lies mainly in his values and vision, my emphasis is on theme and tone, and the way they indicate his conception of life. For this reason, I only occasionally consider Herrick's poetic techniques, such as his versification and language, and there are no detailed analyses of individual poems which examine them from every angle. In addition, I am almost entirely concerned here with *Hesperides*, the secular poetry, and not with Herrick's religious verse, which is collected under the title of *His Noble Numbers*. (Although Herrick calls his book *Hesperides: or The Works both Humane and Divine*, the arrangement within is clearly a division into *Hesperides*, the secular poetry, and *His Noble Numbers*, the religious verse.)

As Herrick nears the end of *Hesperides*, and as the culmination of a subtle and orientating movement towards his section of religious poems, he offers a number of valedictory statements, one of which is

a simple summing up of his themes:

I'll write no more of Love; but now repent
 Of all those times that I in it have spent.
 Ile write no more of Life; but wish twas ended,
 And that my dust was to the earth commended.

("On Himselfe" [H-1124])

Hesperides can be said to treat of love and life, and of the relationship of art to both, and I look at these capacious themes in Herrick's poetry.

It is sometimes thought that Herrick's fairy poetry has little discernible relation to his other work. While agreeing that we would get the essential Herrick without the fairy poems, I have become aware that these poems are integral to Herrick's poetic vision. They evidence similar concerns and approaches, and they complement or supplement central poems, for example, "*Corinna's* going a Maying" (H-178), the epithalamia, "Upon *Julia's* Clothes"(H-779), "Delight in Disorder" (H-83), "To Blossoms" (H-467), "To *Dianeme*" (H-160), "The Apparition of his Mistresse calling him to *Elysium*" (H-575), "To Daffadills" (H-316) and "The Lilly in a Christal" (H-193). It seems likely that considering the four major fairy poems actually helps one to see what are Herrick's values, and this forms a subsidiary but important part of this thesis. In each chapter, therefore, the fairy poems are given some attention.

I begin in Chapter I by discussing pastoralism at some length, as it seems to me that Herrick's vision is in many respects a pastoral one. Even a superficial reading of *Hesperides* leaves an impression of a green and flowery world, where the rhythm of the country year and its festivals is a reminder of the deeper rhythm of birth, youth, age and death, and is ultimately the joyful recognition of renewal and

regeneration which is the basis of Herrick's Christian faith. His liminal quatorzain, "The Argument of his Book" (H-1), shows in microcosmic progression the themes which concern him, and most, if not all, of them are pastoral in nature:

I sing of *Brooks*, of *Blossomes*, *Birds*, and *Bowers*:
 Of *April*, *May*, of *June*, and *July-Flowers*.
 I sing of *May-poles*, *Hock-carts*, *Wassails*, *Wakes*,
 Of *Bride-grooms*, *Brides*, and of their *Bridall-cakes*.
 I write of *Youth*, of *Love*, and have Accesses
 By these, to sing of cleanly-*Wantonnesse*.
 I sing of *Dewes*, of *Raines*, and piece by piece
 Of *Balme*, of *Oyle*, of *Spice*, and *Amber-Greece*.
 I sing of *Times trans-shifting*; and I write
 How *Roses* first came *Red*, and *Lillies White*.
 I write of *Groves*, of *Twilights*, and I sing
 The Court of *Mab*, and of the *Fairie-King*.
 I write of *Hell*; I sing (and ever shall)
 Of *Heaven*, and hope to have it after all.

Chapter II takes as its focus another element which *Hesperides* shows Herrick to have close to his heart, and that is the miniature, both as an adjunct to wonder and delight, and as a test of technical skill in the art of encapsulating meaning in small space.

In the third chapter, I attempt an elucidation of *Hesperides* as a poem-garden, in the context of seventeenth-century ideas on gardens as places of beauty and variety, and of mental and spiritual refreshment and recreation.

The last chapter approaches a concept of central importance in Herrick's poetic world: that of the art of juxtaposition and arrangement, and of concealment and revelation, in order to achieve intensities of feeling and insight. Herrick, a consummately sensuous poet, uses his ability to convey the concrete and the temporal as a means of arriving at an understanding of the invisible and the eternal. I hope to show that *Hesperides* can be seen as a comprehensive *oeuvre* which attempts to order experience, as, for example, an epic does, or any substantial work which undertakes to demonstrate the variety and unity of life.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to offer my thanks to Mrs M.J. Robinson for her patience and care in typing this thesis, and to the librarians of the Rhodes University Library, especially Miss Sue Arnott of the Inter-library Loan section, for all their help. I owe a debt of gratitude to Professor J.S. Gouws of the Rhodes University English Department, who introduced me to Herrick, supervised the early stages of this study, and offered me helpful advice and the use of his library; and particularly to Professor Ruth Harnett, whose supervision has been an unfailing and generous source of enlightenment, inspiration and kind strength.

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to my husband, Trevor, and to my children, Catherine, Christopher and Sarah, for their love and encouragement.

V.H.L.

CHAPTER I

THE PASTORAL POET

To the tradition of English pastoral poetry, Herrick makes a delightful contribution, and a significant one. The influence of the Elizabethan pastoral poets is clearly recognizable in the spontaneous joy of his depiction of country life, in the accurately observed detail, and in the strongly conveyed sense of simplicity, order and the mutual harmony of man and nature. As Frank Kermode says, "Herrick ...seemed to look back on all the richness of the Elizabethan Pastoral and distil from it a nostalgic essence".¹

In searching for a manageable definition of pastoral, one might see the concept as that nostalgic longing of urban and sophisticated man to return to some remembered or imagined time of idyllic and uncomplicated rural perfection. While praising the country qualities of harmony, peace and closeness to nature, the pastoral poet highlights the falsity, ambition and mercenary values of the city, often in a keenly satirical vein.

English Renaissance pastoral was inspired by such celebrators of the Golden Age as Theocritus (3rd century B.C.) and Sannazaro (1458-1530). As W.W. Greg has shown, however, there are two strands to pastoralism in English literature: the first is firmly rooted in

¹ Frank Kermode, *English Pastoral Poetry* (London: Harrap, 1952), p.42.

the traditional features of lament for lost goodness and longing for the simple life, and in strong condemnation of the city and the court; while the other is a perhaps naïve though certainly sincere belief in the innocence, beauty and utter contentment to be found in the vernal English countryside.²

The serious and traditional aspects of the genre find their highest expression in the poetry of Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton. And yet, these poets, while adhering closely to orthodox pastoralism, reveal at the same time a fresh, original and distinctively English conception of the theme of *beatus ille*—the initial words of Horace's second Epode. Cowley's translation of the opening lines runs:

Happy the Man whom bounteous Gods allow
With his own hands Paternal Grounds to plough!
Like the first golden Mortals He
From Bus'ness and the cares of Money free!³

In Greg's happy phrasing, it is Spenser's consciousness of "a latent power of simple native inspiration" that makes his Piers and Cuddie touch us more nearly than Mantuan's Sylvanus and Candidus,⁴ and the same is true of Herrick's Corinna and Julia. Most Elizabethan and Jacobean pastoral poetry is "less weighty and more spontaneous"⁵ than that in the classical tradition, and Herrick is characteristic of his time in including in his poetry the natural features of rural England. Floris Delattre is right in saying that Herrick does not have

² W.W. Greg, *Pastoral Poetry and Pastoral Drama* (London: Bullen, 1906), pp.68-69.

³ Quoted in Maren-Sofie Røstvig, *The Happy Man: Studies in the Metamorphoses of a Classical Ideal* (Oslo: Norwegian Universities Press, 1962), p.29.

⁴ Greg, p.89.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.68.

Tennyson's meticulous noticing of the curious details of natural objects, nor Wordsworth's profound understanding of the mysterious communion of nature with man; he knows the country intimately and loves it for itself, for the simple beauty of its colours and its perfumes.⁶ But this is the seventeenth century, where poets see nature as God's Book of the Creatures.⁷ As Sydney Musgrove says, "Herrick's poetry springs from an imagination which has been trained to see the visible as the mirror of the supernal".⁸ Rosemary Freeman echoes this in recognizing in the thinking of the seventeenth century "an habitual cast of mind, a constant readiness to see a relation between simple, concrete, visible things and moral ideas".⁹ There is an assumption of "a living tie between all creatures including man",¹⁰ and a correspondingly empathetic relationship between nature and man. The shepherd, Mirtillo, in "A Pastorall sung to the King: *Montano, Silvio,* and *Mirtillo, Shepherds*" (H-421), recalls the effect his lost shepherdess had on grasses and flowers:

In dewie mornings when she came this way,
Sweet Bents wode bow, to give my Love the day:
And when at night she folded had her sheep,
Daysies wo'd shut, and closing, sigh and weep.

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⁶ "S'il ne faut demander à Herrick ni l'observation méticuleuse, si abondante en petits détails curieux, inobservés encore, d'un Tennyson, ni le sentiment si profond chez un Wordsworth de la communion mystérieuse de la nature et de l'homme...." Floris Delattre, *Robert Herrick: Contribution à l'étude de la poésie lyrique en Angleterre au dix-septième siècle* (Paris: Alcan, 1911), pp.288-89.

⁷ Kermode, p.44.

⁸ Sydney Musgrove, *The Universe of Robert Herrick*, Auckland University College Bulletin, no.38; English Series, no.4 (Auckland: Pelorus Press, 1950; reprint ed., Folcroft, Pa.: Folcroft Library Editions, 1971), p.17.

⁹ Rosemary Freeman, *English Emblem Books* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1967), p.155.

¹⁰ Rosemond Tuve, *Images and Themes in Five Poems by Milton* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957), p.106.

Even when she was alive, the daisies were aware that she, being mortal, would soon be dead, and so closely attuned to her were they that they would weep with grief as each closing day foreshadowed her death, together with their own and those of all living things. This seems to be an example of *pastoral hyperbole*,¹¹ a phrase coined by J.B. Leishman, who defines the concept as it occurs in pastorals by Theocritus and Virgil as "saying that all things flourished in the presence of the beloved and withered at her (or his) departure".¹² He goes on to show that many poets of the seventeenth century adopted this conceit and exploited all possibilities for its "witty elaboration", the success of which required, "in addition to sheer literary skill, a peculiar combination of qualities—wit, sense of beauty, quickness and flexibility of mind—such as even very great poets have not always possessed".¹³ Herrick loves to use pastoral hyperbole; its extravagance and wit suit his gallant, affectionate and only half-serious approaches to his mistresses, and his acknowledgement of nature's close kinship with man. Other examples are "The sadnesse of things for *Sapho's* sicknesse" (H-118); "Upon a Virgin kissing a Rose" (H-144); and "To *Anthea*" (H-1054):

Sick is *Anthea*, sickly is the spring,
 The Primrose sick, and sickly every thing:
 The while my deer *Anthea* do's but droop,
 The *Tulips*, *Lillies*, *Daffadills* do stoop;
 But when again sh'as got her healthfull houre,
 Each bending then, will rise a proper flower.

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¹¹ I am indebted to Professor R. Harnett for having directed my attention to this concept.

¹² J.B. Leishman, *The Art of Marvell's Poetry* (London: Hutchinson, 1968), p.80.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp.245-46.

Herrick's flower poems are particularly expressive examples of the way his chosen pastoral mode leads to philosophic insight and thoughtful conclusion. The poet looks at a flower, responds to its beauty instinctively and tenderly, as he would to one of his "girls", perceives its symbolic ambience, and then employs it, in a seemingly natural unfolding of ideas, as a profound metaphor for some aspect of human life. In "To Blossoms" (H-467), Herrick's eye is caught by the beauty and fragility of the flowers: they are "faire pledges", they "blush and gently smile", and they provide "delight" because they are "lovely" and "brave". But he is reminded by the poignancy of their transience of that of all things: like the blossoms, everything will "glide /Into the Grave". The tone, though pensive, is serene, and "glide", with its implications of smoothness, gracefulness, and an unhaltable forward movement, conveys the poet's calm acceptance of, and acquiescence in, the lesson nature teaches him.

This, and many similar examples, should be enough to disprove Peter V. Marinelli's contention that Herrick's pastoral is trivial because purely "decorative".¹⁴ The more one reads his poetry, the more one is convinced of the extent to which his vision of life is illuminated by the pastoral vision, his values by pastoral values. Marinelli is partly right, however, in observing that Herrick's interest lies outside the main stream of the pastoral tradition; it does, occasionally. For example, he does not denigrate the city as a place of sinful pleasure, artificiality and mercenary striving, to the exclusion of its advantages. In fact, the city is always dear to him, always remembered as mentally stimulating and intoxicatingly sociable,

¹⁴ Peter V. Marinelli, *Pastoral*, The Critical Idiom (London: Methuen, 1971), p.7.

especially as recalled from the quiet valley of the Dean. His removal from the city to his country parish gives him pain, but cannot blind him to the wealth of delight to the senses the country offers, nor to the opportunities for contemplation and creation it furnishes. Only occasionally is he sunk in glum depression and moody revilement of his rural surroundings, as in "Discontents in Devon" (H-51), "To *Dean-bourn*, a rude River in *Devon*, by which sometimes he lived" (H-86), "His Lachrimae or Mirth, turn'd to mourning" (H-371), "Upon himself" (H-456), and "His returne to London" (H-713). So, for Herrick, the country is not seen only as the classical retreat of the weary soul, sickened by the appetites of the city, but as a source of delight, a flowery, green and sunny setting for his loves and his contentment. Frank Kermode sums up Herrick's pastoral view accurately in his comments on the English pastoral poets of the Renaissance:

...even more keenly than Theocritus, perhaps, [they] found a pure though nostalgic pleasure in contemplating the life of the countryside. That is, in essence, the same delight that all ages know, and which is so keenly expressed in Chaucer. Country sports and country loves were interesting for their own sake, as well as being a kind of comment on the sophistication of the city. Flowers were valued not only as decorations for the laureate hearse of a dead shepherd-poet, but for their own beauty. Although, in thoughtful mood, the poet might think of Nature as God's Book of the Creatures, the more usual reaction of the Elizabethan poet is one of spontaneous pleasure. This pleasure, and the nostalgia of which I have spoken, combine with the critical and philosophical elements in the pastoral tradition to produce the rich profundity of English pastoral poetry.¹⁵

To accuse Herrick, as Marinelli does, of neglecting the pastoral poet's consideration of "great issues", seems to be misunderstanding all that Herrick is concerned with in his distinctive treatment of

¹⁵ Kermode, pp.43-44.

pastoral. Marinelli writes:

The Arcadian pastoral of pure contentment is almost never the greatest and most serious pastoral art. Drayton and Herrick, with their free range of fancy and their general ignoring of the great issues to which pastoral gives rise in its most ambitious moments, are saved from prettiness by their irony and wit, and yet we sense that an entire world of human concerns is missing from their poems, for which the substitution of great lyric beauty is only a moderate recompense.¹⁶

When one remembers Herrick's elegiac poetry, mourning the deaths of friends and relations, and their young children, one realizes that he is indeed within the tradition of "Et in Arcadia ego"—the acknowledgment that even in Arcadia, death is present. The following tender epitaph encapsulates the distilled essence of at least one of pastoral's "great issues":

Upon a Lady that dyed in child-bed, and
left a daughter behind her
As Gilly flowers do but stay
To blow, and seed, and so away;
So you sweet Lady (sweet as May)
The gardens-glory liv'd a while,
To lend the world your scent and smile. 5
But when your own faire print was set
Once in a virgin *Flosculet*,
(Sweet as your selfe, and newly blown)
To give that life, resign'd your own: 10
But so, as still the mothers power
Lives in the pretty Lady-flower.
(H-318)

Furthermore, Herrick's poetry fits the definition of pastoral given by Marinelli earlier in his study: "The subjects of love, death and poetry are the most constant characteristic elements of Arcadia".¹⁷ And he is in the line of the precedent set in the fifteenth century by

¹⁶ Marinelli, pp.51-52.

¹⁷ Ibid., p.43.

Sannazaro, whose realistic and recognizably Italian pastoral settings are generally thought to be a welcome alternative to the usually remote and stylized Arcadian landscapes of earlier poets. What makes Herrick's poetry so personal and so pleasant is its peculiarly English quality; as George Saintsbury says, Herrick's style "is as racy of the soil of England as any style of any English poet.... [It has] a native and individual quality with which he blends and subdues [his] almost excessive classicality, so as to make it an English style of the simplest and most original, hardly smelling at all of the lamp or the lexicon".¹⁸ The poetry which celebrates the joyful country festivals, the weddings, wakes and mayings, the Christmas jollity, and the gentle and pious layings to rest is memorable for its English sweetness and simplicity of style, as well as for the values it upholds. In the vividness with which he conveys the English rural scene, Herrick allows the features of the natural world he knows so well to inform and illuminate his vision of life.

Earl Miner sums up the world of Cavalier poetry: it is that of "an England at peace (or hopefully at peace), dedicated to ancient rights of king and subject, liberal to friends and dependents, given to love, drink, song, angling and hunting, certain of the value of learning, and espoused (with certain infidelities) to the Anglican *via media*".¹⁹ It is, to a large extent, true to say that these are the values which Herrick espouses. In his case, perhaps more so than that of his contemporary poets, there is a profound attachment to the English

¹⁸ George Saintsbury, ed., *The Poetical Works of Robert Herrick* (London: Bell, 1905), pp.xlv and xlvii-viii.

¹⁹ Earl Miner, *The Cavalier Mode from Jonson to Cotton* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1971), p.84.

countryside and to its ancient traditions.

Mark L. Reed has shown that Englishmen of the seventeenth century were far closer to the country than we might imagine, both in proximity—for instance, a short walk from his birthplace in Goldsmith's Row would have taken Herrick out into the open fields on the outskirts of London—and in the way in which they perceived and thought about the world.²⁰ Christmas and maying festivals were as enthusiastically celebrated in London as they were in the country villages. Herrick's early poems, such as "An Epithalamie to Sir *Thomas Southwell* and his Ladie" (H-149A) and "A Nuptiall Song, or Epithalamie, on Sir *Clipseby Crew* and his Lady" (H-283), dated 1618 and 1625 respectively by L.C. Martin,²¹ show that he was already fascinated by rural customs and the natural features of the countryside. This interest may have been reinforced by his leaving London in 1629 or 1630 to take up his appointment as parish priest in Dean Prior in Devon. In this connection, Delattre sees a striking change in Herrick's pastoral composition, a change from the tired and jejune classicism of the eclogues such as "A Beucolick, or discourse of Neatherds" (H-716), to the fully realized description of flowers, birds, fruits and country sports of "To *Phyllis* to love, and live with him" (H-521).²² It is tempting to accept the view that Herrick's removal from London to the

²⁰ Mark L. Reed, "Herrick Among the Maypoles", *Studies in English Literature*, 5(1963), 133-50.

²¹ L.C. Martin, ed., *The Poetical Works of Robert Herrick* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p.xxxvii.

²² Delattre, *RH*, pp.271-80, esp. p.280: "La pastorale fait donc avec Herrick un pas très net vers la vie. Elle se dépouille peu à peu de son attirail de vagues formules surannées pour se revêtir d'une grâce plus précise et plus vigoureuse, pour adopter une allure qui, par sa libre franchise enfin, sent déjà le plein air".

country was responsible for a flowering of his art, but Reed is persuasive in his argument that the climate of thought in which Herrick worked, "the growing awareness in the English artistic sensibility of natural scenery and folk and rural life other than that of Arcadia and classical verse—more exactly, of the beauties and meaning of the countryside, inhabitants, and popular activity of England itself",²³ would in any environment have shaped Herrick's pastoral verse.

As Delattre says, spring invades all the parts of the garden of *Hesperides*.²⁴ "The Argument of his Book" (H-1) prepares us for this:

I Sing of *Brooks*, of *Blossomes*, *Birds*, and *Bowers*:
Of *April*, *May*, of *June*, and *July*-flowers.

One's enduring impression is of "the succession of the four sweet months" (H-70), and of *Hesperides* as a place "where spring-time smiles throughout the yeare"(H-256). Herrick's temperament precludes him from dwelling too long on the mournful aspects of autumn and winter; he prefers to see *Hesperides*, like Arcadia, as a place of perpetual spring.

The poem which seems best to demonstrate Herrick's use of conventional pastoral language and imagery, sharpened by his choice of actual and recognizable detail, is "To *Phyllis* to love, and live with him" (H-521). The shepherd-lover entices his mistress with the usual pastoral attractions of mossy bed, murmuring streams, rich clothing, and delicious things to eat, smell and listen to. Herrick's delight in enumerating these items, drawn from the abundance of the countryside and from the intricacies of art, is obvious, and the world he outlines

²³ Reed, pp.149-50.

²⁴ Delattre, *RH*, p.291: "Le printemps envahit de toutes parts le jardin des *Hespérides*".

is at once as timeless as the Arcadia of *The Winter's Tale* and as vividly realized for the reader as if he were walking with him in spring sunshine through the meadows of his Devonshire parish. The beloved, Phillis, is pleasantly evoked in the words which describe the natural objects. The "blushing Apple", "bashfull Peare" and "shame-fac't Plum", together with the "straight, and smooth-skin tree" are metaphors for the girl's own beauty, and a reminder of the close inter-relationship of the human and the natural worlds. The prevailing atmosphere of "cleanly-*Wantonnesse*" is present in the idea that Phillis's finery will move "others to Lust, but me to Love"; this is a world of restraint, art and sensibility, not of licence, and this principle of attitude to experience is unmistakably conveyed through his pastoral poetry.

As Kermode says, "The first condition of pastoral is that it is an urban product".²⁵ In nice balance with the "sweet content" of his poems praising country life, Herrick offers "Discontents in Devon" (H-51):

MOre discontents I never had
 Since I was born, then here;
 Where I have been, and still am sad,
 In this dull *Devon-shire*:
 Yet justly too I must confesse;
 I ne'r invented such
 Ennobled numbers for the Presse,
 Then where I loath'd so much.

5

This is the lament of the urban poet cut off from the liveliness of city life, and yet wryly allowing that his forcible retirement has given him unexpected opportunities for the creation of exalted verse. The same tone of half-serious indignation is discernible in

²⁵ Kermode, p.14.

"To *Dean-bourn*, a rude River in *Devon*, by which sometimes he lived" (H-86), an indignation almost outdone by the poet's delight in finding as many ways as possible to use the words "rocks" and "rockie"!

DEan-Bourn, farewell; I never look to see
Deane, or thy warty incivility.
 Thy rockie bottome, that doth teare thy streams,
 And makes them frantick, ev'n to all extreames;
 To my content, I never sho'd behold, 5
 Were thy streames silver, or thy rocks all gold.
 Rockie thou art; and rockie we discover
 Thy men; and rockie are thy wayes all over.
 O men, O manners; Now, and ever knowne
 To be *A Rockie Generation!* 10
 A people currish; churlish as the seas;
 And rude (almost) as rudest Salvages
 With whom I did, and may re-sojourne when
 Rockes turn to Rivers, Rivers turn to men.
 (H-86)

I would agree with Roger B. Rollin, who suggests that Herrick's years in rural Devonshire gave him experience at first hand of the country life, but that "his partial disenchantment...does not seem to have undermined appreciably his pastoral orientation".²⁶ He goes on to expand on this:

Because he is a pastoral poet, which means that he is a type of idealist, it follows both that he is aware of the discrepancy between the real and his ideal and that he rejects whatever falls so far short of his vision. "Warty incivility" can only become acceptable when it is refined into "a wilde civility," that middle state in which nature and art have achieved a harmonious, ordered synthesis. Herrick's vision of pastoral, as it is expressed in *Hesperides*, can be seen to embody such a synthesis. Hence, though this poetic address is self-evidently an anti-Devonshire poem, it is not necessarily antipastoral.²⁷

"His returne to London" (H-713), a parallel poem to "To *Dean-bourn* ...", shows the ecstasy the poet feels at the thought of leaving behind

²⁶ Roger B. Rollin, *Robert Herrick* (New York: Twayne, 1966), p.57.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.58.

"the dull confines of the drooping West". London is in the East, the source of light and life, and it is with "ravish[ment]" and reverence that the poet rushes towards it. There is a heavy realization that much of his life has passed since his "banishment", and a resolve to die rather than return to the West. These are passing fits of impatience and discontent, and though Herrick does not too seriously condemn the country life, his longing for London drives him on occasion to speak of "the loathed West", in "His Lachrimae..." (H-371), and to revile "the loathed Country-life", in "Upon himself" (H-456).

Most of Herrick's poems are clearly favourable to country life, and present an idealized though unsentimental view of the rustic existence. In the tradition of Horace, he praises such a life for its closeness to nature, its simplicity, and its emphasis on moderation. Because of the political disturbances in England between 1630 and 1660, Royalist poets found consolation in a genre of poems celebrating the happy life of retirement in the country. James Turner elaborates on this:

Rural poetry flourished in the crisis of 1630-1660. There is a great increase in the number and quality of retirement and garden poems, of rural celebrations like "The Hock Cart" [sic], of poems on actual places or modelled on landscape painting. The theatre introduces landscape scenery and creates a topographical genre.²⁸

It is interesting that the earlier date mentioned here should coincide with Herrick's incumbency of Dean Prior, and understandable that he should so often exalt rural retirement to the status of a demi-paradise.

In "A Country life: To his Brother, Master *Thomas Herrick*" (H-106),

²⁸ James Turner, *The Politics of Landscape* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1979), p.1.

in keeping with the theme of moderation, Herrick's criticism of city and courtly life is mild, and is implied by contrast with the virtues of the retired life, rather than overtly stated. Urban existence is seen to be less simple, less innocent, more a prey to ambitious desires and the longing for riches, and made fearful by uncertainty and restless mercantile travel. The most explicitly condemnatory statement is: "Vice rules the Most, or all at Court" (l.90) and the poet leaves it at that. His focus is on the virtues and pleasures of the country life, rather than on the vices of the other.

The general tone of this poem is one of content and of enthusiastic support for the life of moderate and controlled desires, where even one's physical boundaries are confined as a parallel to the limiting of appetite. The eulogy falls roughly into nine sections. The first (ll.1-30) is a commendation of Thomas Herrick for having chosen a life of restraint and simplicity, and for moderating his desires for wealth, land and rich diet.

...Riches have their proper stint,
In the contented mind, not mint.
(ll.17-18)

The poet then turns to a consideration of the peace and happiness which are attained by marriage to a faithful wife (ll.31-42). Having been chosen not for beauty but for virtue, she represents her husband's security and contentment of mind. Perhaps the implication is that a beautiful wife would encourage extremes of feeling and behaviour, thus disturbing her husband's tranquillity, while raising anxiety about her chastity. (This seems to be a traditional idea, probably having its origins in the classics or in the teachings of the medieval church fathers.) Any possibly derogatory overtones are negated by the

earlier statement:

...that which most makes *sweet* thy country life,
Is, the *fruition* of a wife....
(11.31-32; my italics)

The emphasis on the undisturbed and "silken" slumbers such a wife can ensure flows naturally into the section on the satisfaction of peaceful dreaming (11.43-54), and a strongly pastoral mood is conveyed with dreamlike effect. Nature is seen as actively employing her beauty and her bounty for man's delight, in the tradition of pastoral hyperbole :

The Damaskt medowes, and the peebly streames
Sweeten, and make soft your dreames:
The Purling springs, groves, birds, and well-weav'd Bowrs, 45
With fields enameled with flowers,
Present their shapes; while fantasie discloses
Millions of *Lillies* mixt with *Roses*.

The classically inspired figure of Faunus, introduced at this point, fits naturally into the pastoral scene; he is overtly protector of the sheep, and implicitly, a guardian of the country peace and safety, in much the same way as the "private *Larr*" of 1.106. We might see his presence as representing what Rosemond Tuve calls "the usual pastoral conception of a strong web of support provided for human goodness of various kinds, by the very existence of a harmonious natural order". She elaborates further: "There is a kind of common front of all natural things; all unperverted nature stands with the human creatures against the dark forces of *unnatural*, *intemperate disharmony*".²⁹

Devotion to God is an integral part of this simple life, and the fourth section (11.55-62) describes the early morning services of a

²⁹ R. Tuve, *Images and Themes*, p.125.

pious household. The poem is charged with Christian imagery and liturgical echoes, though, characteristically, Herrick uses symbols of a Roman sacrifice to the gods, involving "Holy-meale" and "spirting-salt"; Faunus himself has an almost Christ-like quality in his role as protector of the sheep from the "rav'ning wolves". Piety and virtue are concomitant with the life of retirement. "Blest" (or "blessed") occurs five times, and Herrick heaps up other words connected with holiness: soul, virtue, conscience, innocent, sacrifice, heaven, quire, love, faith, troth, and sanctuary. The implications are those of an earthly saintliness.

Section five (ll.63-82) shows the contrast between the retired life and one ruled by mercenary aims. "Securest ease" (l.69), "a more safe survey" (l.73), and the possibility that Thomas Herrick may, by looking at his "Map", "securely saile" (l.79), are elements of the "Rurall Sanctuary" of l.136. Section six (ll.83-100) looks at the Court; free from its vices and anxieties, and its dependence on fortune's favours, the retired man can face life with equanimity. Section seven (ll.101-110) envisages the possibility of natural vicissitudes, by praising the simple diet as preparation for the easy bearing of dearth, should it come, and this is in keeping with the pastoral tradition, which takes account of mutability and death.

The contentment of the moderate man reflects on that of the household creatures, the "Crickits", "brisk Mouse" and "green-ey'd Kitling", who feast and sing, as their more moderate master does not, each secure from ravin and rape in the circle of his generosity. We see Herrick's fondness for the little in the presence of the "Kitling" (l.124), whose size offers less danger to the mouse than would a cat's; indeed, the mouse seems, in this environment, to lead a charmed

existence. Her escape to her "Cabbin" is a reflection in miniature of the master's retreat to his country estate. These matters form part of section eight (ll.101-136), which goes on to reiterate the virtues of a careful ordering of life's necessities.

The ode concludes with a resounding coda (ll.137-46):

Thus let thy Rurall Sanctuary be
Elizium to thy wife and thee;
 There to disport yourselves with golden measure:
For seldome use commends the pleasure.
 Live, and live blest; thrice happy Paire; let Breath,
 But lost to one, be th'others death.
 And as there is one Love, one Faith, one Troth,
 Be so one Death, one Grave to both.
 Till when, in such assurance live, ye may
 Nor feare, or wish your dying day.

The meditative and tranquil tone of the conclusion has been anticipated throughout the poem in the frequent use of balance: "The last is but the least; the first doth tell/Wayes lesse to live, then to live well" (ll.9-10); "More blessed in thy Brasse, then Land" (l.24); "Lesse with a neat, then needfull diet" (l.30); "[a wife] not so beautifull, as chast" (l.34); and "To make sleep not so sound, as sweet" (l.54). The argument is wound up in the sober emphasis given to "Rurall Sanctuary" and "golden measure", but that the rewards for a life of moderation and seclusion are rich ones is apparent in the words "*Elizium*" and "pleasure". There is a profound sense of peace and satisfaction in the last lines; they are a celebration of virtuous lives well lived:

Live, and live blest; thrice happy Paire; Let Breath,
 But lost to one, be th'others death.
 And as there is one Love, one Faith, one Troth,
 Be so one Death, one Grave to both.
 Till when, in such assurance live, ye may
 Nor feare, or wish your dying day.

(ll.141-46)

This poem exemplifies Herrick's use of the pastoral mode to convey his values, while at the same time it shows him imprinting upon that mode

his distinctive and homely English touch.

"The Country Life, to the honoured Master *Endimion Porter*, Groome of the Bed-Chamber to his Majesty" (H-662), another poem praising the life of the country, goes a stage further than "A Country life..." (H-106) towards an unmistakably "English" vision of pastoral. It begins in similar vein with a section on mercantile striving and courtly jealousies, then lists the reasons for the "sweet content" Endimion Porter undoubtedly feels in the country. The cock, the "lily-wristed Morne", the cornfields, the hind whistling to his team, the enamelled meads and great-eyed kine, are all reminiscent of the vivid detail of that most evocatively English poem, "L'Allegro", as are the delighted references to the activities of country holidays: the dances, wakes, quintels, May-poles, morris-dances and Christmas revels. Perhaps it was the realization that he had been distracted from his point—an encomium to Endimion Porter—that led Herrick to abandon this poem, labelling it "*Caetera desunt*—" ("the rest is lacking"); he was, nevertheless, pleased to include it in his collected works, because of its simple effectiveness, and its successful recreation of the English country life he loved.

Other poems on the country, such as "The Hock-cart, or Harvest home: To the Right Honourable, *Mildmay*, Earle of *Westmorland*" (H-250), and "A Panegerick to Sir *Lewis Pemberton*" (H-377), give evidence for the comment by Earl Miner that "...the good life tends to be defined in terms of good lives; the good life finds understanding in terms of good men".³⁰ If one did not know of the real need Herrick felt to ensure the patronage of his landed friends, one might be inclined to

³⁰ Miner, p.61.

think that he was using them merely as launching points for his interest in writing about the rural countryside. The character which he gives these moderate, generous, simplicity-loving gentlemen, or which he shows them to have, plays a part in the credibility and attractiveness of the pastoral world which he describes, and is recognizable as that of the traditionally benevolent country landowner.

As Marinelli points out, pastoral's concern with time is what renders it universal.³¹ Although the Christian religion tends to counter the theme of *carpe diem* by emphasizing that of *de contemptu mundi*, and to stress that the idea of man's joy lies not in the temporal but in the eternal, Herrick the parson is nevertheless the "devoted classicist",³² much influenced by his literary ancestors and their insistence that man seize the moment and enjoy to the full the opportunities his senses provide him with.

Eric LaGuardia shows convincingly how the apparent opposition between *de contemptu mundi* and *carpe diem* can be reconciled:

The concern with mutability and the somewhat desperate seizure of the present are evident in both cases. The crucial difference is that [with respect to mutability] the fulfillment of man occurs after and beyond the use of the present, while in *carpe diem* poetry the fulfillment of man (and nature) is fixed in the present moment itself. In the first instance, eternity in God is a consequence of a virtuous seizure of the present; in the second, the characteristics of eternity reside within the very moment to be seized.

³¹ Marinelli, p.9.

³² A.B. Chambers, "Herrick, Corinna, Canticles and Catullus", *Studies in Philology* 74(1977), 227.

He goes on to quote Boethius's classic definition of eternity: "... that which grasps and possesses wholly and simultaneously the fulness of unending life, which lacks naught of the future, and has lost naught of the fleeting past...", and concludes: "This description applied to heaven may also be applied to that moment in *carpe diem* lyric in which all the forms of nature have reached their perfection—neither half-blown nor decaying".³³ With that ease in reconciling opposites which he shares with other Renaissance poets, Herrick succeeds, in that remarkably comprehensive pastoral poem, "*Corinna's* going a Maying" (H-178), in confronting an essential truth of man's existence—his temporality—and in exhorting Corinna, and indeed, all human beings, to live each moment to the full, while at the same time he is imbuing the green world of the poem with reverberatingly Christian images. The flowers genuflect towards the East, the birds say matins and sing "thankfull Hymnes", Corinna herself gives time to prayer before going a-Maying, so that Maying becomes an act of worship.³⁴ Douglas Bush makes clear the reason for the Renaissance acceptance of a mingling of classical myth and Christian belief: it lies in "the universal reverence felt for the ancients as a superior race and for the moral wisdom, of almost Christian elevation, to be found in such thinkers as Cicero...".³⁵ Katharine Briggs elaborates further: "...the authority

³³ Eric LaGuardia, *Nature Redeemed: The Imitation of Order in Three Renaissance Poems* (The Hague: Mouton, 1966), p.50.

³⁴ Leah Sinanoglou Marcus, "Herrick's Hesperides and the 'Proclamation made for May'", *Studies in Philology* 76(1979), 69.

³⁵ Douglas Bush, *Pagan Myth and Christian Tradition in English Poetry*, Jayne Lectures for 1967 (Philadelphia: Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society, 1968), p.2.

of the past would have a sanctity which we could hardly conceive, and a quotation would be an argument".³⁶ Pastoral itself can accommodate a variety of images. One remembers Milton's conflation of Christ and Pan in "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity",³⁷ and that of Faunus and Christ in "A Country life..." (H-106) mentioned earlier.³⁸ Marinelli speaks of "the happy coincidence of meanings" in the development of pastoral, in "the word *pastor*, shepherd and priest, and through the influence of pastoral life visible in the Scriptures: the shepherd Abel, the shepherd David, Christ the Good Shepherd, the Lamb of God, the shepherds present at the nativity, the entire pastoral atmosphere of the Song of Songs".³⁹

Herrick makes use of the elements of pastoral to underline the concept of transience. For example, the first stanza of "*Corinna's* going a-Maying", while conveying the urgent invitation of a lover, is suggestive of the fleeting in its reference to the "fresh-quilted colours" of the dawn (l.4) and the "Dew-bespangling Herbe and Tree" (l.5). If Corinna does not awake at once, these treasures of nature will have vanished, unenjoyed.

The dew is again a symbol of the transitory in "A Paranaeticall,

³⁶ K.M. Briggs, *The Anatomy of Puck: An Examination of Fairy Beliefs among Shakespeare's Contemporaries and Successors* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959), p.3.

³⁷ "The Hymn", st.VIII.

³⁸ See p. 16 above.

³⁹ Marinelli, p.10.

identity which is drawn out into an allegorical equivalence; the Drop of Dew is a guise of the soul, confronting its fate, which is time".⁴⁰

It is probably a commonplace that men and women of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries viewed death very differently from the way we do today. As Allan H. Gilbert says, "in the seventeenth century preoccupation with mortality was far greater than at present, and a part of normal religious feeling".⁴¹ Infant mortality, disease, war and accident meant a close acquaintance with death, while a more or less universal belief in the Christian afterlife removed some of the terror associated with it. Robert Herrick, somewhat exceptional in reaching an advanced age, had long years in which to contemplate life's brevity and the need to live fully in the present, while calmly facing the inevitable end. The cycle of the English country year would have been a reminder of birth, decline, death and renewal, and many of Herrick's poems on death have a serenity and even a joy in the certainty of these. There is a tranquil comfort in these lines on a dead child:

HEre a pretty Baby lies
Sung asleep with Lullabies:
Pray be silent, and not stirre
Th' easie earth that covers her.

("Upon a child" [H-640])

Nature's participation as precursor makes death easier to bear:

... the Oke
Droops, dies, and falls without the cleavers stroke.
("All things decay and die" [H-69])

⁴⁰ A.E. Berthoff, *The Resolved Soul: A Study of Marvell's Major Poems* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1970), p.27.

⁴¹ Allan H. Gilbert, "Robert Herrick on Death", *Modern Language Quarterly* 5(1944), 62.

One of the five straight branches of my hand
 Is lopt already; and the rest but stand
 Expecting when to fall: which soon will be;
 First dies the Leafe, the Bough next, next the Tree.

("Upon the losse of his Finger" [H-565])

Die ere long I'm sure, I shall;
 After leaves, the tree must fall.

("After Autumne, Winter" [H-1058])

As a counterpart to the calm recognition that death will come, goes the age-old resolve to be merry while we may: *carpe diem, carpe florem*:

WHile Fate permits us, let's be merry;
 Passe all we must the fatall Ferry:
 And this our life too whirles away,
 With the Rotation of the Day.

("To enjoy the Time" [H-457])

Then live we mirthfull, while we should,
 And turn the iron Age to Gold.
 Let's feast, and frolick, sing, and play,
 And thus lesse last, then live our Day.

30

("A Paranaeticall..." [H-670])

LEt's be jocund while we may;
 All things have an ending day:
 And when once, the Work is done;
Fates revolve¹ no Flax th'ave spun.

¹ rewind [Patrick's note]

("An end decreed" [H-639])

Douglas Bush recognizes in Herrick that "unified vision that was the common inheritance of his age, the vision that embraces God and the book of creatures in a divine whole".⁴² The "joyous and sober interweaving of rustic and pagan and Christian elements",⁴³ so clearly evident in "*Corinna's* going a Maying", is the underlying strength of Herrick's poetry,

⁴² Douglas Bush, *English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), p.118.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp.118-19.

and offers, especially to those critics who complain of the apparent lack of order in *Hesperides*, a powerful sense of unity and wholeness.

In reading Herrick's pastoral poetry, one is conscious of the way in which his use of homely and familiar detail illuminates his reflections on man's condition. This quotation, in which Marinelli is discussing *The Shepherdes Calender*, throws light on this aspect of Herrick's achievement: "Pastoral constantly strives to acclimatize and domesticate the distant vision; in so doing, it finds the universal in the particular and gives to the world of daily experience the luminosity of an ideal"⁴⁴. In Herrick's most famous *carpe diem* lyric, "To the Virgins, to make much of Time" (H-208), we have, in the simplest stanza form, and in the most accessible of images, evidence of his ability to "acclimatize and domesticate the distant vision":

1. Gather ye Rose-buds while ye may,
Old Time is still a flying:
And this same flower that smiles today,
To morrow will be dying.
2. The glorious Lamp of Heaven, the Sun,
The higher he's a getting;
The sooner will his Race be run,
And neerer he's to Setting.
3. That Age is best, which is the first,
When Youth and Blood are warmer;
But being spent, the worse, and worst
Times, still succeed the former.
4. Then be not coy, but use your time;
And while ye may, goe marry:
For having lost but once your prime,
You may for ever tarry.

Although she is discussing three other poets, I think Ruth Wallerstein's words apply with equal aptness to Herrick's pastoral concept: "...Milton, like Spenser and Marvell, reaffirmed the holiness

⁴⁴ Marinelli, p.49.

of 'day and the sweet approach of even and morn, and flocks and herbs and human face divine' in themselves and in their direct power to reveal God to man and to communicate to him the divine love and goodness".⁴⁵ To conclude this section (on *carpe diem*, *de contemptu mundi* and pastoral), I should like to use a quotation from a later section in her book, in which she identifies Herrick's affinity with "the Roman sense of order":

...Marvell's songs on the marriage of Mary Cromwell in 1657 (with their classical myth and pastoral names) remind us of no one else so readily as of Robert Herrick, least contentious of poets, least given to "a line". And Herrick's name...may serve to remind us of an earlier, less philosophical Renaissance feeling for nature, but even more of that Horatian temper, that spirit of reconciliation, of eclecticism, that Roman sense of order which no less than philosophical and devotional literature were at work in the age....⁴⁶

As Alistair Fowler says, "[Herrick's] poems of death's trans-shifting are not in the end depressing. The feeling is not fear so much as love of nature's transience, and confidence in the arts that transform it".⁴⁷ Herrick demonstrates his conviction that poetry will endure in "To his peculiar friend Master *Thomas Shapcott*. Lawyer" (H-444):

I've paid Thee, what I promis'd; that's not All;
 Besides I give Thee here a Verse that shall
 (When hence thy Circum-mortall-part is gon)
 Arch-like, hold up, *Thy Name's Inscription*.
Brave men can't die; whose Candid Actions are
 Writ in the Poets Endlesse-Kalendar:
 Whose *velome*, and whose *volumne* is the Skie,
 And the pure Starres the praising Poetrie.
 Farewell.

5

⁴⁵ R. Wallerstein, *Studies in Seventeenth-Century Poetic* (Richmond, Virginia: University of Wisconsin Press, 1950), p.110.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.277.

⁴⁷ Alistair Fowler, *Robert Herrick*, Warton Lecture on English Poetry, British Academy, 1980 (London: Oxford University Press, 1982), p.248.

The poet's calendar appears again in "To his worthy Kinsman, Master *Stephen Soame*" (H-545), and here Patrick adds a gloss to explain its meaning as "list of saints".⁴⁸ Stephen Soame will receive canonization and join Herrick's preferred list of friends. To be included in the "Poetick Liturgie" is not only to be canonized, but to achieve immortality, as *Mistresse Penelope Wheeler* is promised:

NExt is your lot (Faire) to be number'd one,
Here, in my Book's Canonization:
Late you come in; but you a Saint shall be,
In Chiefe, in this Poetick Liturgie.

("To his Kinswoman, *Mistresse Penelope
Wheeler*" [H-510])

In all these poems, the tone is unmistakable; it is one of humorous seriousness, and what makes it possible seems to be Herrick's firm belief in the endurance of art, and his confidence in himself as artist. There is jocoseness in his religious imagery, and yet it is precisely that imagery which underlines the poet's profound seriousness.

Leah Marcus is illuminating on another aspect of Herrick's pastoral poetry, namely, its political intention. She points out that the *Book of Sports*, published by James I in May, 1618, and re-issued by Charles I and Archbishop Laud in 1633, served as a means of encouraging the old country customs. Herrick and other Royalist poets would have supported these measures as part of their concern that a valuable way of life was being threatened by the strictures of the Puritans, and was in need of restoration. Leah Marcus goes on to emphasize, as we have seen, the deeply sacramental side to such poems as "*Corinna's* going a Maying", and to indicate that they are not only

⁴⁸ J. Max Patrick, ed., *The Complete Poetry of Robert Herrick* (New York: Norton, 1968), p.265, n.4.

an advocacy of paganism, but a reconciliation between a celebration of nature and a glorification of God:

The maying season, for all its horseplay, was dedicated to divine praise: God had renewed his grace by pouring down spring abundance upon a barren land; through the rituals of Mayday rural folk expressed their joy and offered thanks. This circle of reciprocity is evident in popular May carols of the period....⁴⁹

As C.L. Barber says: "May-game wantonness has a reverence about it because it is a realization of a power of life larger than the individual, crescent both in men and in their green surroundings".⁵⁰ Leah Marcus notes that "*Corinna's going a Maying*" (H-178) reverberates with echoes from the *Book of Common Prayer* and homilies for the maying season, echoes so strong and direct that they make Herrick's rites of May an extension of the Anglican liturgy". She touches on Herrick's desire to underline the value of rural sports not only because they appealed to his sociable temperament, but as a means of unifying a strife-torn nation. In "*Corinna's going a Maying*", he concedes to the Puritans that "the traditional pastimes are indeed pagan in origin, yet part of a vital historical continuity which cannot be broken without disastrous consequences". The poem can be seen, she suggests, as "a fertility charm, a piece of mimetic magic". In considering the crop failures of the 1620s, "Royalists tended to blame the apparent waning of England's agricultural productivity on the decay of the traditional agrarian commune and its seasonal celebrations". She observes: "...in singing of his '*May-poles, Hock-carts, Wassails, Wakes, Of Bride-grooms, Brides, and of their Bridall-cakes*', the poet

⁴⁹ L.S. Marcus, "'Proclamation made for May'", p.68.

⁵⁰ C.L. Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1972), p.24.

constructs an idealized vision of what England could be in the present and how that present should be understood within a larger historical continuum". She concludes: "Herrick's preoccupation with rituals of all sorts, charms, fairies, and folk beliefs is inseparable from his larger goal of restoring a feudal or immediately post-feudal way of English life, and tying that way of life to current theory of the monarch as ruler of Church and polity by divine right".⁵¹

Having attempted in the previous pages of this chapter to trace Herrick's concern with pastoral, I now turn to consider one particular area of his pastoral poetry, the matter of fairy. A comment by Rollin provides a perspective on the subject: "Occupying as it did a place between the human and divine worlds, the realm of faery was a convenient myth through which poets could comment on both; in addition, it provided a unique challenge to their imaginative and technical faculties".⁵² Just as nymphs and fauns inhabit the landscape of classical pastoral, so do the fairies that of English pastoral. "The meddow verse or Aniversary to Mistris *Bridget Lowman*" (H-354A) can be seen as illuminating the twilight area between Herrick's purely pastoral poems and his fairy poetry.⁵³ The lady celebrated in the meadow verse, which Alfred Pollard defines as "a verse to be recited at a rustic feast",⁵⁴ seems to be the epitome of spring, or, indeed, the Queen of the May herself:

Come with the Spring-time, forth Fair Maid and be
This year again, the *medows Deity*.

⁵¹ L.S. Marcus, "Proclamation made for May'", pp.59,66,67,73,73-74.

⁵² Rollin, p.22.

⁵³ I am indebted to Professor J.S. Gouws of Rhodes University for this idea.

⁵⁴ Alfred Pollard, ed., *Robert Herrick: The Hesperides and Noble Numbers* (London: Lawrence & Bullen; New York: Scribner's, 1898), I,176.

These lines convey a sense of seasonal renewal, too. Bridget's flowery crown sets her apart from the others at the feast, and identifies her as a personification of nature in her freshness and beauty. Such a "flowry Coronet" will last but a few hours, and so is a reminder of transience, but also of the renewal of spring. She is "the Prime, and Princesse of the Feast", and the word "prime" is an important one in the pastoral context. The primary sense of the word as used here is "first in quality or character or rank" (from Latin *primus*). Among its many connotations is that of the first hour of the canonical day, either six o'clock or sunrise, the time when Corinna is called from her bed for the spring rituals. (Compare 11.63-64 of "The Apparition of his Mistresse calling him to *Elizium*" [H-575]: "...and now I see the prime/Of Day break from the pregnant East...".) Another meaning of "prime" is the beginning or first age of anything, including the year, which may be thought of as beginning at the vernal equinox or 21 March, the first day of spring. A meaning common in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was that of the springtime of human life, the time of early manhood or womanhood, from about twenty-one to twenty-eight years of age. Milton has this meaning in mind in these lines from Sonnet IX:

Lady that in the prime of earliest youth,
Wisely hast shun'd the broad way and the green....⁵⁵

"Prime" seems often to be associated with summer, and another of its secondary meanings is "the period of greatest perfection and vigour",⁵⁶ with its suggestion of ripeness. "Time" and "prime" are

⁵⁵ Helen Darbishire, ed., *The Poetical Works of John Milton* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), p.432.

⁵⁶ *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "Prime" sb.

meaningful and thematically related rhymes for Herrick:

LEts now take our time;
While w'are in our Prime...

("To be merry" [H-806])

and he seems to enjoy the puns implicit in the word "prime":

BY the next kindling of the day
My *Julia* thou shalt see,
Ere *Ave-Mary* thou canst say
Ile come and visit thee.

Yet ere thou counsel'st with thy Glasse,
Appeare thou to mine eyes
As smooth, and nak't, as she that was
The prime of *Paradise*.

5

("To *Julia*, in her Dawn, or Day-breake"
[H-824])

One remembers line 57 of "*Corinna's* going aMaying" (H-178), too:

"Come, let us goe, while we are in our prime", and, in many ways,

"The meddow verse..." can be seen as a parallel poem. Like *Corinna*,

Bridget is no ordinary girl; she goes bare-footed, as becomes nature's
darling, but her feet are silver, magical, otherworldly, with

additional connotations of beauty, rareness and preciousness. The

freshness and purity of the attendant nymphs are shown in their sweet
breath, and we are prepared for their natural translation into fairies

of the countryside, when *Bridget* is explicitly referred to as "Lady of

this Fairie land"; and, in fact, the Latin word for nymph was often

translated as "fairy".⁵⁷ The world of green meadows is at once

pastoral England and Fairyland, and the mirth which accompanies the

⁵⁷ Cf. Stephen Fender, *Shakespeare: A Midsummer Night's Dream* (London: Arnold, 1968), p.28: "...Arthur Golding's translation of *Metamorphoses* renders 'fairies' for *naidas et dryadas*". See also Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. A.R. Shilleto (London: Bell, 1903), Part I, Section 2, p.219: "Terrestrial devils are those *Lares, Genii, Faunes, Satyrs*, Wood-nymphs, Foliots, Fairies, *Robin Goodfellows, Trulli*, etc...".

rustic feast has overtones now of a peculiarly fairy sort. The mirth is of an unmixed or unadulterated delight, such as will not call up a blush on a youthful cheek, but will instead "cherrish" it—that is, cause it to redden (like a cherry) with emotion and pleasure. Nature and human beings are at one in their protective and joyful celebration of life. I think Rollin is right when he says: "the phrase, 'this Fairie land',...may suggest not only the actual fields where the celebration takes place but Herrick's *Hesperides* itself, the half-actual, half-artificial land in which the event of the poem occurs...". By implication, too, he suggests the place of the fairies in *Hesperides*: "The contrast between innocent mirth such as [that in 'The meddow verse...'] and the kind which results in a blush of shame symbolizes the contrast between 'this Fairie land', or the 'Sacred Grove', and the world of objective reality".⁵⁸

Herrick's fairy world, then, can be seen as a special form of pastoral. As Barber says of Shakespeare's fairies, Herrick's are "creatures of pastoral varied by adapting folk superstitions so as to make a new sort of Arcadia". They, too, "have a freedom like that of the shepherds in arcadias, but raised to a higher power: they are free not only of the limitations of place and purse but of space and time".⁵⁹

It is obviously Herrick's interest in the customs of the past that is the basis of his fairy poems, in much the same way that this involvement inspires his pastoral poetry. The fairies are the natural inhabitants of the rural scene, and their haunts have a special place in "The Argument of his Book" (H-1):

⁵⁸ Rollin, pp.170-71.

⁵⁹ Barber, pp.144-45.

I write of *Groves*, of *Twilights*, and I sing
The Court of *Mab*, and of the *Fairie-King*.

The inter-connectedness between pastoral, pagan and fairy, apparent in Herrick's poetry, is underlined in Cleanth Brooks's contention that "pagan" originally meant "country-dweller", because the worship of the old gods and goddesses persisted longest in remote country places.⁶⁰ Herrick's fairy world is part of his assertion of the value the old customs and pieties still had for his own time.

An interesting aspect of fairy literature is its origin in earliest folklore and development into a written art. We start with a primitive belief in a race of beings similar to mortals, but with unnervingly superior powers in the controlling of human beings and the environment, their actions providing the explanation for many otherwise puzzling aspects of the natural world. This belief underwent many developments, until there occurred a move away from the simple beliefs towards a view of the fairies as no longer real, awesome and threatening beings, but as creatures of fantasy, whom poets could use to extend the imagination of an intelligent, literate and appreciative audience. Shakespeare, Jonson, Drayton, William Browne and Herrick were among those Elizabethan and Jacobean poets inspired to compose fairy poetry of the highest quality, at a time when belief in the fairies had declined sufficiently to allow a sophisticated enjoyment of the world in which they were supposed to exist, different from the real one, and yet intriguingly similar.

As Sir Walter Scott, in his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*,

⁶⁰ Cleanth Brooks, *The Well Wrought Urn* (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1947), p.64.

remarks: "The general idea of spirits, of a limited power and subordinate nature, dwelling among the woods and mountains, is, perhaps, common to all nations".⁶¹ And Floris Delattre, in considering the prehistoric origins of the fairies, epitomizes what one instinctively feels must have been the cause of their existence, in appropriately expressive prose:

Primitive man, in his attempt to explain the natural phenomena around him, was apt to regard all objects as animate, as instinct with a life akin to his own, even as possessed of a conscious personality. These beings, haunting hill and forest, dwelling in the caverns of the earth or in the deep waters, appeared all the more awful to him as they were the more mysterious. They were no doubt far more powerful than men, hence they must be feared, paid homage to, made friends with if possible, that they might perform those services which the peasant expected at their hands; or they must be appeased by some rites, lest they visit the offender with dire punishment.⁶²

The fairies, as one might expect, are elusive of definition. Katharine Briggs, perhaps the foremost living English authority on fairies, divides the fairies of Britain into four classes, and these seem to offer the best working description of the various kinds. The classes are: the Trooping Fairies; the hobgoblins and Robin Goodfellows; the mermaids, water sprites and nature fairies; and the giants, monsters and hags.

Within the category of Trooping Fairies are included both the heroic figures of Celtic and Romance tradition, and the small elves.

⁶¹ Sir Walter Scott, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (London: Harrap, 1931), p.288.

⁶² Floris Delattre, *English Fairy Poetry from the Origins to the Seventeenth Century* (London: Frowde; Paris: Didier, 1912), p.13.

The heroic fairies are of human or more than human height. They are the aristocrats among fairy people, and pass their time in aristocratic pursuits, hunting, hawking, riding in procession on white horses hung with silver bells, and feasting in their palaces, which are either beneath the hollow hills or under or across water.... They are masters of glamour and shapeshifting; they are amorous, open-handed, reward kindness and are resentful of injuries.... As a rule, though not invariably, they are dangerous to human beings, their food is taboo and people who fall into their power are carried away and often crumble into dust on their long-delayed return.⁶³

The other Trooping Fairies, the ordinary fairies of Britain, are smaller, like Oberon in *Huon of Bordeaux*, the size of a three-years child,⁶⁴ or, like the Wee, Wee Man, three spans or hand-widths in height.⁶⁵ Some are flower-loving fairies, capable of couching in a cowslip bell. They are shape-shifters and tricksters, stealing human babies, and leaving their own offspring in their place. They love singing and music, and they take an interest in farming, delighting in neat and orderly farm houses, and punishing with pinching lazy wives and dairymaids.

Somewhat similar to these are the hobgoblins or Robin Goodfellows, also agricultural spirits, and sometimes identified in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with the Roman household deities, the *lares* and *penates*. Milton's "lubbar fiend" is obviously a hobgoblin of this kind:

And he by Friars Lanthorn led
Tells how the drudging *Goblin* swet,
To ern his Cream-bowle duly set,
When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,

⁶³ K.M. Briggs, *Puck*, pp.13-14.

⁶⁴ K.M. Briggs, *A Dictionary of Fairies* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979), pp.227-28.

⁶⁵ K.M. Briggs, *Puck*, p.14.

His shadowy Flale hath thresh'd the Corn
 That ten day-labourers could not end,
 Then lies him down the Lubbar Fend,
 And stretch'd out all the Chimney's length,
 Basks at the fire his hairy strength;
 And Crop-full out of dores he flings
 Ere the first Cock his Mattin rings.⁶⁶

Milton is echoing the true folk tradition as it is recorded in this description by Reginald Scot (1584) of Robin Goodfellow and his cousin, the Brownie, which also includes the recipe for the "laying" of such spirits:

In deede your grandams maides were woont to set a boll of milke before him and his cousine Robin good-fellow, for grinding of malt or mustard, and sweeping the house at midnight: and you haue also heard that he would chafe exceedingly, if the maid or good-wife of the house, having compassion of his nakednes, laid anie clothes for him, beesides his messe of white bread and milke, which was his standing fee. For in that case he saith; What haue we here? Hemton, hamten, here will I neuer more tread nor stampen.⁶⁷

Katharine Briggs's third class of fairy, the nature fairies, mermaids and water sprites, are, as she says, a small class in Britain, as many of them are assimilated in the category of Trooping Fairy. The water sprites often had evocative names, such as Jenny Greenteeth and Peg Powler.⁶⁸

The last category, the giants, monsters and hags, covers such creatures as the Grant,⁶⁹ the Pick-tree Brag,⁷⁰ and the Hedley

⁶⁶ H. Darbishire, *The Poems of John Milton*, pp.422-23.

⁶⁷ Reginald Scot, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (London, 1584), IV,10,85 (*English Experience*, 299).

⁶⁸ K.M. Briggs, *Puck*, p.16.

⁶⁹ K.M. Briggs, *Dictionary*, pp.196-97.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* p.36.

Kow,⁷¹ all three notorious for their quirky sense of humour.

The inspiration for Herrick's fairy poetry is clearly Shakespeare's depiction of the fairies. Coming from the country as he did, Shakespeare brought with him an intimate knowledge of the folk belief in fairies, probably learnt from his elders. He selects from this knowledge to great effect in a number of plays, notably *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Tempest*. As Katharine Briggs points out, he is in no way an innovator or creator of fairy lore; all his fairies have their antecedents in literature or in popular belief.⁷² However, those aspects which he chooses to stress here had such immediate and lasting appeal that they have tended to overshadow, in literature at least, all other notions of the fairies.

The names he gives his fairy king and queen in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* illustrate his influence in the transmission of fairy lore from country belief into literature. Oberon was the fairy king in the fifteenth-century prose romance, *Huon of Bordeaux*, which was translated into English in 1548 by Lord Berners. As the result of a curse laid upon him at his christening, he is the size of a three-years child. Shakespeare makes him the size of a human being, and he is, as Katharine Briggs says, "a typical fairy king, even to his amorous interest in mortals".⁷³ Herrick, like Drayton, retains the name of Oberon for his fairy king, but reduces his stature even more significantly than that of the original Oberon in *Huon of Bordeaux*.

⁷¹ Ibid., pp.218-19.

⁷² See K.M. Briggs, *Puck*, pp.44-45.

⁷³ K.M. Briggs, *Dictionary*, p.314.

Shakespeare calls his fairy queen Titania, a name he derived from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, where it is used as a synonym for Diana.⁷⁴ Harold F. Brooks shows that while Shakespeare relied heavily on Golding's translation of the *Metamorphoses* for some of the wording and detail of the play, "The name Titania is not in Golding: Shakespeare had it from the original Latin, where Ovid uses it once for Diana and twice for Circe: moon-goddess and shape-shifter, each associated with a leading motif in the play".⁷⁵ King James the First alludes to the Scottish association of Diana with the fairies: "That fourth kinde of spirites, which by the Gentiles was called *Diana*, and her wandring court, and amongst us was called the *Phairie*...or our good neighboures...".⁷⁶ Minor White Latham says that "the precedent for Diana's sovereignty over the fairies is to be found in [Scot's] *Discovery of Witchcraft*, in Golding's translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, in the *Faerie Queene*, and in [Lyly's] *Endimion*. But the character of the picturesque and romantic queen who rules over the fairies... [is] Shakespeare's own creation".⁷⁷ Delattre sees Titania's relationship to the goddess Diana in this light: "If she leaves aside her maidenly attributes and her patronage of chastity, she preserves, though not a goddess herself, some of her characteristics, with regard to the moon especially: she appears now as a votaress bound to her service, dealing in occult influences and

74

Minor White Latham, *The Elizabethan Fairies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1930), p.181.

75

H.F. Brooks, ed., *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, The Arden Shakespeare (London: Methuen, 1979), p.lix.

76

James I, *Daemonologie* (London: Apsley & Cotton, 1603), p.72 (Bodleian Library, Douce I, 210).

77

M.W. Latham, p.181.

strange herbs, now as a strange gleaming huntress starting on aerial quests in dim, dewy nights".⁷⁸

In *Romeo and Juliet*, Mab is the name given to the queen of the fairies in Mercutio's fantasy, and Shakespeare probably drew this name from a more formidable and native fairy presence, Mabb of Wales, or perhaps Maeve of Ireland.⁷⁹ This is the name Drayton and Herrick adopt for their fairy queen, who imitates Shakespeare's Mab in being less dignified than Titania, and in being minute in stature.

While Oberon and Titania were visualized as of human size, their attendants, the flower fairies, and Mercutio's Mab were presented by Shakespeare as tiny, and it was these tiny fairies who captured the imagination of other Renaissance poets. Such minute creatures, capable of creeping into acorn cups, or of being "overflown" with a bee's honey bag, were, as we have seen, not new to folklore, but were certainly new to literature.⁸⁰ As Katharine Briggs says, "The pleasing and poetic traits of the little flower-loving fairies had long existed in solution, as it were, in the alembic of fairy-lore; the Elizabethan poets merely precipitated it".⁸¹ The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines fairies as "supernatural beings of diminutive size, in popular belief supposed to possess magical powers and to have great influence both for good and evil over the affairs of men".⁸² We can gauge from this how strong the

⁷⁸ Delattre, *FFP*, p.105.

⁷⁹ K.M. Briggs, *Dictionary*, p.275.

⁸⁰ K.M. Briggs, *Puck*, p.45.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p.19.

⁸² *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "Fairy" sb.4.

influence of those Elizabethan poets has been in shaping our modern understanding of the fairies.

Shakespeare invests Ariel in *The Tempest* on occasion with smallness, and also with the fairy characteristics of shape-shifting and invisibility, advantages used to good effect too by Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Though touchingly responsive to human feelings, there is a wilder quality about Ariel than we find in the miniature courtiers, Moth, Cobweb, Mustardseed and Peaseblossom, as they bravely and dutifully carry out dangerous quests at their queen's behest. They share with Ariel, though, "a cool strange sweetness"⁸³ which is the essence of Shakespeare's fairy world.

Mercutio's mischievous Mab is clearly the model for the fairies of Herrick, Drayton and Browne; and to some extent, Puck, drawn from fairy lore regarding Robin Goodfellows but less malevolent, is represented in some of Herrick's fairy poetry, disguised as the Roman household genius or *Lar*.⁸⁴

On the whole, the fairy characteristics which Shakespeare highlights are those of smallness, benevolence and association with flowers and other aspects of nature. His fairies show almost nothing of the sinister which runs through fairy lore, but, as Katharine Briggs says, folk lore is full of kindly fairies,⁸⁵ and these best suit his purposes.

⁸³ K.M. Briggs, *Puck*, p.55.

⁸⁴ See "To the Genius of his house" (H-723) and "To Larr" (H-333).

⁸⁵ K.M. Briggs, *Puck*, p.46.

If Shakespeare is selective in shaping his fairies, Herrick is even more so. His fairies are exclusively diminutive beings, and though there is some emphasis on their benevolence (for example, as in Herrick's wish that "luckie Fairies...may dance their Round" within his house),⁸⁶ their otherness is capable of calling forth a frisson of fear in the onlooker. The consistency of Herrick's view of fairy size, his insistence on smallness, contrasts with the necessary ambiguity of Shakespeare's position. The fairies on the stage have to appear as life size human adults or children, and this may partly account for the fact that we feel less distanced from Shakespeare's fairies than we do from Herrick's. Whereas Shakespeare's fairies drive away all the creatures associated with witchcraft—owls, snakes, spiders, newts and bats⁸⁷—features of these find a place in Oberon's palace. There seems to be a return to the folk fairies in the accoutrements of Oberon's apartments, which incorporate human physical items such as moles, whitlows and cauls. The strange half light in which we discern these exotic decorations has the magical quality of the twilight of the old tales, twilight being a time peculiarly associated with fairies as midnight is with witches. Shakespeare's fairies seem to live on nuts, fruit and honey, while we might think that Herrick's are somewhat macabrely carnivorous: they eat butterflies' horns, mice beards, the stewed thighs of newts, and bloated earwigs.⁸⁸ Delattre calls Herrick's fairies "brisk and witty puppets", and the play they are

⁸⁶ "To the Genius of his house" (H-723), 1.7.

⁸⁷ K.M. Briggs, *Puck*, p.46.

⁸⁸ See "*Oberon's Feast*" (H-293A), 11.26,37,38.

acting "but a sort of ingenious peepshow".⁸⁹ He sees them as removed from life, no more than finely artificial. In rebuttal of this, I think that the large observer, bent over Herrick's fairy hill, has an atavistic sense of awe and a certain awareness of relief that telescopic distance protects him from observation by, and traditional retaliation from, these self-absorbed small creatures. Oberon's childish petulance⁹⁰ seems to reflect the folk belief that the fairies are "capricious, vindictive and easily irritated".⁹¹ But, of course, any fear the reader may experience is on a playful level, and is part of the contract with the poet to suspend disbelief for a moment. Herrick's reduction of the fairies' size allows too a reduction of the superstitious frisson which acknowledges the kinship of these fairies with the powerful beings our forefathers knew by intuition.

What I should like to make clear, though, is what seems to be a more serious aspect of Herrick's fairies, and one which might account for the ease with which they may be assimilated into his pastoral. It is not a paradox, I hope, to say that, in spite of the darker overtones I have discerned in Herrick's fairy lore, Herrick's fairies are essentially benign, and representative of a kind of pastoral innocence. They are closely involved with nature, and seem to be a necessary concomitant of fertility and good luck, both human and agricultural. In this connection, I have already quoted an appropriate

⁸⁹ Delattre, *EFP*, p.181.

⁹⁰ See "*Oberons Palace*" (H-443), ll.11-17.

⁹¹ Scott, p.288.

line from "To the Genius of his house" (H-723): "That luckie Fairies here may dance their Round" (l.7).

One can see vestiges of the timeless belief in the power of the supernatural to ensure fertility in the countryside and in man in "*Oberons Palace*" (H-443). There is a sense in which Herrick seems to accord his fairy queen those powers over natural increase with which Shakespeare invests Titania and his Oberon. The ritualistic movements of Oberon through his palace to the bedchamber of his queen can be seen as the re-enactment of an age-old fertility rite, of the kind associated with the May-game and Midsummer's Eve. Through such associations, the fairy queen might be seen as a pastoral deity or semi-deity, a Proserpina or Flora, goddess of fertility.⁹² This neo-classical influence is illustrated by Spenser:

The May King's Queene attone
Was Lady Flora, on whom did attend
A fayre flock of Fairies, and a fresh bend
Of louely Nymphs.⁹³

C.L. Barber makes the point that "poets have merely to describe May Day to develop a metaphor relating man and nature",⁹⁴ and it seems to be true to say that in Herrick's case there is a natural affinity between (on the one hand) such country festivals as May Day, and (on the other) man, nature and the fairies. In "*Oberons Palace*" (H-443), we recognize, in the consummation of the love of Oberon and Mab, a symbolic re-enactment in the fairy world of the human ceremony of marriage, and,

⁹² See Barber, p.34, and particularly n.31: "One of Campion's madrigals, (1591) is addressed to 'the fairy queen Proserpina'".

⁹³ J.C. Smith and E. de Selincourt, eds., *The Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), "Maye", ll.30-32a, p.436.

⁹⁴ Barber, p.19.

by implication, an assurance of its attendant procreation.

Herrick's vision of love, as exemplified in his addresses to his mistresses, and particularly in the eroticism of his fairies, has its antecedents in Spenser's Garden of Adonis:

But were it not that *Time* their troubler is,
All that in this delightfull Gardin growes,
Should happie be, and haue immortall blis:
For here all plentie, and all pleasure flowes,
And sweet loue gentle fits emongst them throwes,
Without fell rancor, or fond gealosie;
Franckly each paramour his leman knowes,
Each bird his mate, ne any does enuie
Their goodly meriment, and gay felicitie.⁹⁵

John D. Bernard identifies the character of this most sensuous of passages as "the literary expression, under the pastoral guise, of an idyllic view of eroticism as essentially innocent, untrammelled by the constraints of conventional morality".⁹⁶ That this concept of innocent eroticism is a touchstone in Herrick's Hesperidean garden is revealed in its placing in "The Argument of his Book" (H-1):

I write of *Youth*, of *Love*, and haue Accesse
By these, to sing of cleanly-*wantonnesse*.

Jay A. Gertzman's definition of "cleanly-*wantonnesse*" is useful: "it postulates a decorous sensual indulgence which refines away feral impulse and allows man to enjoy nature and his appetites 'wanton' ", in an unashamed, unselfconscious and sinless (i.e., cleanly) way".⁹⁷ This is one of the characteristics of Herrick's pastoral and fairy worlds.

⁹⁵ Smith and de Selincourt, eds., *The Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser, The Faerie Queene*, III.VI.41, p.175.

⁹⁶ John D. Bernard, "Pastoral and Comedy in Book III of *The Faerie Queene*", *Studies in English Literature*, 23 (1983), 8.

⁹⁷ Jay A. Gertzman, "Robert Herrick's Recreative Pastoral", *Genre*, 7 (1974), 186.

It is clear that there is a close connection between these two worlds. One has only to glance through "*Oberon's Palace*" (H-443) to be aware of the pastoral nature of the fairy world. There is something bucolic in this description of Oberon: he is

Full as a Bee with Thyme, and Red,
As Cherry harvest...

and the analogies underline the suggestions of abundance and richness. Oberon is later seen as an impatient bull, carrying "Hay in's horne", and his flinging of waspish stings at his attendants as they attempt to restrain his wild movements is like the tossing of the head of an enraged bull. The mossy bank and the flowers and the creatures who contribute to Oberon's comfort—the snails, sweet-breathed cows, squirrels, trout-flies, snakes, fish, glow-worms, kitling, spiders and gnats—could all be part of any English rural scene. The difference lies in the grotesque, eccentric or magical use each item is put to. The typically pastoral notion that nature is sympathetic to human concerns is applied to the fairies too; for example, the snails and glow-worms actively employ their light for Oberon, while the mossy bank, "spungie and swelling", seems to press against his careless feet in a gesture of support for, and communion in, his sensual progress towards his fairy queen.

Gertzman uses "The Argument of his Book" (H-1) to show that Herrick sees pastoral as an intrinsic element of *Hesperides*, in such characteristic aspects as *locus amoenus*, or pleasant place, Golden Age and Elysium. The focus seems to be on "the fertility and loveliness of the place itself, and the soft primitivism of its inhabitants... which is characterized by familial and sexual love, sinless enjoyment

of beauty, constant song and fertility".⁹⁸ All this results, as I have said, in "cleanly-*Wantonnesse*", and is also the basis of the fairy world of *Hesperides*.

A. Leigh DeNeef sees the fairy poems as effecting a bridge between those poems which deal with the domestic-pastoral world and those which are focussed on the realm of art,⁹⁹ and I agree that there is truth in this view. I should like to suggest, perhaps fancifully, that the fairy poems have a place in Herrick's poetic hierarchy, in which the movement is upwards, from everyday reality (as typified by the coarse epigrams of *Hesperides*); to pastoral and its attendant concern with love, natural beauty and death; to the fairy world of natural artifice; and, finally, to the realm of cool and enduring art itself.

⁹⁸ Gertzman, p.184.

⁹⁹ A. Leigh DeNeef, "*This Poetick Liturgie*": Robert Herrick's *Ceremonial Mode* (Durham, N. Carolina: Duke University Press, 1974), p.68.

CHAPTER II

THE MINIATURIST

As we have seen in his use of pastoral, Herrick's poetry tends to reflect contemporary vogues, and one such vogue was an interest in the natural world, and particularly small animals and insects, both for themselves and as an indication of God's ingenuity and skill in designing their intricate forms. In contrast, the earlier Renaissance had found its inspiration in the large, the grand and the human. What is remarkable in Herrick's age is evidence of the capacity for wonder and delight, a capacity encouraged by the intellectual and scientific developments of the time.

It is generally accepted that, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, man's understanding of the natural world underwent radical changes. Perhaps the most important of all was as a result of the recognition by Copernicus (in 1543), supported by Galileo (in 1632), that the universe was heliocentric rather than geocentric. In Newton's *Principia Mathematica* (1687), a series of such dramatic discoveries was amalgamated into an intelligible whole,¹ and a new perspective on nature and the universe was established. Throughout the seventeenth century, an interest in "natural philosophy" flourished, and was by no means confined to those we would term the early scientists. A

¹ Marjorie Cox, "The Background to English Literature: 1603-60", in *From Donne to Marvell*, vol.3 of *The New Pelican Guide to English Literature*, ed. Boris Ford (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), p.18.

distinguishing feature of the seventeenth-century mind generally was its attitude of eager inquiry, and its desire to transcend the limitations of surface reality and human sight. Renaissance man, to quote Alistair Fowler,² could do little more than look, in his relations with nature, and the development of the means to look more closely, in the form of the microscope and the telescope, was greeted with excitement.

There was a keen interest in the rare and the curious, the mysterious and the novel, the fine and the artistically skilful, the unusual and the grotesque. It became the fashion to collect objects evincing these qualities, and the most famous of such collectors were John Tradescant (died 1637?) and his son, the younger John (1608-1662). Their celebrated "Cabinet of Curiosities" held botanical specimens gathered by the Tradescants in their travels through Europe as far as Russia, and in America, as well as early artefacts and clothing from North America, shells, minerals, medals and coins. Elias Ashmole (1617-1692) inherited the collection, and had it housed in a specially built museum, the Ashmolean, in 1683, and Sir Peter Mundy reported that it took a whole day to review "superficially".³ The collection is described in fascinating detail in the *Musaeum Tradescantianum* (1656), a catalogue of the treasures compiled in part by Ashmole himself.

That the Tradescants were household words in England is confirmed

² Fowler, *RH*, p.258.

³ Arthur MacGregor, ed., *Tradescant's Rarities: Essays on the Foundation of the Ashmolean Museum, 1683, with a Catalogue [in microfiche form] of the Surviving Early Collections* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), p.20, who quotes from *The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia 1608-1667* (1919), ed. Sir R.C. Temple.

by the fact that the Scottish botanist, Sir Arthur Balfour, referred to his rarities as "my Tradescants".⁴ Herrick incorporates the name in an epigram, interestingly reminiscent of the decorations in "Oberons Palace" (H-443):

FOr ropes of pearle, first Madam *Ursly* shoves
A chaine of Cornes, pickt from her eares and toes:
Then, next, to match *Tradescant's* curious shels,
Nailles from her fingers mew'd, she shewes: what els?
Why then (forsooth) a Carcanet is shown
Of teeth, as deaf as nuts, and all her own.

("Upon Madam *Ursly*, Epigram" [H-668])

Here, Herrick's regard for the small, the curious and the skilfully designed is comically juxtaposed with his perception of the grotesque, and in this portrait of a fanatical possessiveness, there is possibly a playful look at the prevalent fashion for collecting and displaying.

John Tradescant the elder was, for a short time, gardener to Robert Cecil, first Earl of Salisbury (c.1563-1612), and, in 1611, he went to Europe to collect trees, flowers and fruit trees for Hatfield House.⁵ His interests are revealed in a description of him by his fellow botanist and herbalist friend, John Parkinson, as "that worthy, curious and diligent searcher and preserver of all natures rarities and varieties, my very good friend, John Tradescante".⁶ In 1623, Tradescant became gardener to George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham (1592-1628), at Newhall in Essex. In 1627, he accompanied Buckingham on the disastrous expedition to capture La Rochelle, and his engineering efforts in constructing trenches in the mud on the Isle of

⁴ See Michael Hunter, "Mighty Curious", rev. of *Tradescant's Rarities*, ed. Arthur MacGregor, *Times Literary Supplement*, 29 July 1983, p.798.

⁵ MacGregor, p.5.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.6-7.

Rhé were of invaluable aid to the English in the encounters with the French. Herrick at this time was one of the Duke's chaplains on the expedition, and it is interesting to speculate that he and Tradescant might have had an opportunity of meeting and discussing Tradescant's passion for collecting. It is highly likely that Herrick at some time visited the Tradescant collection and others like it; Arthur MacGregor, in his chapter on "Collectors and Collections of Rarities", makes it clear that the Tradescants were only two, though the most famous, of the many who indulged the popular taste for rarities.⁷ Herrick's appreciation of the small, his "microphilia",⁸ would have led him to the section of the collection which the *Musaeum Tradescantianum* entitles "Mechanick artificiall Works in Carvings, Turnings, Sowings and Paintings".⁹ A selection from this list illustrates the timeless interest of human beings in technical virtuosity:

Severall Heads cut on Agates.
 Divers Figures cut on Shells.
 Variety of Figures cut in crystall.
 Divers sorts of Doublets.
 Divers sorts of {Flyes } naturall.
 {Spiders}
 A Bird sitting on a pearch naturall.

 Divers things cut on Plum-stones.¹⁰

 Severall curious paintings in little forms, very antient.
 A little Box with the 12 Apostles in it.

 Halfe a Hasle-nut with 70 pieces of housholdstufte in it.

⁷ MacGregor, pp.75ff.

⁸ Fowler, *RH*, p.245.

⁹ MacGregor, Microfiche 5, p.36.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.36.

A Cherry-stone holding 10 dozen of Tortois-shell-combs,
made by *Edward Gibbons*.
A nest of 52 wooden-cups turned within each other as thin
as paper.

.....
Figures and stories neatly carved upon Plum-stones,
Apricock-stones, Cherry-stones, Peach-stones, etc.
A Cherry-stone, upon one side S.Geo. and the Dragon,
perfectly cut; and on the other side 88 Emperours faces.

.....
Divers rare and antient pieces carved in Ivory.¹¹
A Cherry-stone with a dozen of wooden-spoons in it.

.....
Flea chains of silver and gold with 300 links a piece
and yet but an inch long.

Divers curiosities of { Amber }
turned work in { Ivory }

.....
A cup turned in a pepper-corne and garnished with Ivory.
A set of Chesse-men in a pepper-corn turned in Ivory.
Divers sorts of Ivory-balls turned one within another,
some 6, some 12 fold; very excellent work.

Divers sorts of pictures wrought in feathers.¹²

Admiration creeps in to what is a mere catalogue in phrases such as
"neatly carved", "perfectly cut", and "very excellent work". The
relevance to Herrick's fairy poetry is unmistakable, with its invitation
to marvel at the microscopic skill employed in adorning temple and
palace.

Arthur MacGregor indicates the affinity between an appreciation
of marvellous human skill, and the wonder and awe accorded to God, in
this extract:

At Dresden technical virtuosity was more highly prized
than abstract aestheticism. Lathe-turned ivories and
other pieces were produced to a standard which is hard
to match even today. Micro-carving, particularly
that carried out on nuts and fruit-stones, was
cherished for the skill it expressed. As a result, the
lathes, tools, and magnifying glasses associated with

¹¹ Ibid., p.37.

¹² Ibid., p.39.

the production of these objects were equally venerated in the collection....The technical wonders of the Dresden collection were invested with an almost mystical significance, gained from the belief that as expressions of complex mathematical principles they reflected something of the divine principles on which the entire universe depended.¹³

The nineteenth-century scholar, Sir William Flower, in commenting on the *Musaeum Tradescantianum*, remarks: "The wonderful variety and incongruous juxtaposition of the objects make the catalogue very amusing reading".¹⁴ One feels that the seventeenth-century mind is unlikely to have been similarly amused; the variety would indeed have seemed wonderful, but the heterogeneity of the collection would have been taken as a sign of the richness and inventiveness of the Creator's design. This is relevant to our understanding of the genre to which *Hesperides* belongs. What has seemed to later critics to be an extraordinarily mixed collection of verse was, in Herrick's time, a perfectly acceptable and frequently used analogy of the variety to be found in the natural world.¹⁵

That fascination with variety and detail was characteristic of the age is shown in the European still-life floral painting of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The great variety of the flowers in the gardens of Europe at the time, many of them exotics collected by

¹³ MacGregor, p.75. *Musaeum Tradescantianum* has a relevant entry on p.43: "Severall sorts of Magnifying Glasses".

¹⁴ Sir William Flower, *Essay on Museums* (1890), quoted in the article on the Tradescants, *Dictionary of National Biography*, LVII, 145.

¹⁵ See Rosalie L. Colie, *The Resources of Kind: Genre-Theory in the Renaissance*, ed. Barbara K. Lewalski (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), and Alistair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), *passim*.

enthusiasts such as the Tradescants, is represented in profuse arrangements in these pictures. Among the most striking are those of Jan Brueghel (1568-1625) (known as "Velvet" Brueghel and mentioned with other painters by Herrick in "To his Nephew, to be prosperous in his art of Painting" [H-384]) and Jan van Huysum (1682-1749). The flower studies of the latter, for example, "Flowers in a Terracotta Vase", are the culmination of a tradition magnificent in detail and richness of texture. Flies, butterflies, drops of dew, and eggs and birds' nests are painted with exquisite care, and "the massed bouquets are studies in dominance, contrast, rhythm, and sculptural effect. The eye is drawn round and into the bouquets by the turning of flower heads, the reversing of leaves, and the curving of graceful flower stems".¹⁶

There is much that parallels Herrick's poetic technique in the painted bouquets of contemporary European artists, particularly the Dutch; for example, the attention to detail, and the vivid lifelike quality. As Robin Gibson says: "The technique of *trompe-l'oeil*—deceiving the eye into thinking the painted flowers are real—was much admired...",¹⁷ and he suggests, in discussing a painting by Jan van Huysum, that the urge to wipe the dew off the surface is irresistible, so lifelike are the drops.¹⁸ Herrick comes close to creating, in words, such an effect, in his poem "The Primrose" (H-580):

¹⁶ *Encyclopaedia Britannica, Macropaedia*, 15th ed. (1975), 7, 415-16, s.v. "Floral Art".

¹⁷ Robin Gibson, *Flower Painting* (Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1976), p.4.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.11.

ASke me why I send you here
 This sweet *Infanta* of the yeere?
 ASke me why I send to you
 This Primrose, thus bepearl'd with dew? 5
 I will whisper to your eares,
 The sweets of Love are mixt with tears.

 ASke me why this flower do's show
 So yellow-green, and sickly too?
 Ask me why the stalk is weak
 And bending, (yet it doth not break?) 10
 I will answer, These discover
 What fainting hopes are in a Lover.

Gibson shows that artists often did not complete a picture for a year or more, so that flowers, berries and leaves could be painted from life at the appropriate season. The result is indeed life captured and held still for ever. One is reminded of a similar quality in Herrick's poetry, and of his belief in "the Poets Endlesse-Kalendar" (H-444) and its ability to withstand the ravages of time. Like the poets, the floral artists saw flowers as symbolic of transience and of man's *vanitas*, and, in addition, would sometimes include books in their compositions, to show the futility of human learning and aspiration when weighed against eternity. Caterpillars might be used as symbols of salvation and resurrection, depicting, as Gibson puts it, "man in his earthly existence before freeing himself in resurrection, as the caterpillar turns into a butterfly".¹⁹ The butterfly was from Greek times a symbol of the soul, and, for similar reasons, a bird too came to represent the soul.²⁰ One remembers Marvell's image of the soul as a bird in "The Garden": "My Soul into the boughs does glide:/There like a bird it sits, and sings,/Then whets, and combs its silver Wings...".²¹ The flower portraits were often painted with eggs in

¹⁹ Ibid., p.23.

²⁰ Ibid., pp.10 and 23.

²¹ "The Garden", st.VII.

nests in the foreground, another ancient symbol of resurrection. Peter Mitchell describes the paintings of Daniel Seghers (1590-1661) in this way: "Nothing imprecise is admitted....Utterly natural, uncluttered, elegant, the bouquets of Daniel Seghers are among the most serenely beautiful things in the history of flower painting".²² The epithets are applicable to Herrick's work as well, and while it would not be true to say that we can find in Herrick's flower poems an exact analogue of the painted floral bouquets of the artists of the Low Countries, the similarity lies in the resemblance of the latter to Herrick's *silva* as a whole. The rich profusion of *Hesperides*, in which each poem is as nearly perfectly constructed and finished as Herrick can manage, and placed with the utmost care amongst its companions, is not unlike the variety of flowers, arranged and painted with careful attention to detail, that contemporary painters favoured. Like these painters, Herrick then looks beyond the obvious beauty and tender fragility of the flowers to find the essential truth inherent in them relating to man's fate in the order of nature.

That the English Herrick had actually seen these European paintings, or works of this kind, is not known, but Gibson does say that the works of Seghers in particular were "eagerly accepted by the great princes to whom they were sent, Charles II among them",²³ so it

²² Peter Mitchell, *Great Flower Painters: Four Centuries of Floral Art* (New York: The Overlook Press, 1973), p.234.

²³ Gibson, p.25. See also Norman K. Farmer, Jr, "Herrick's Hesperidean Garden", in Roger B. Rollin and J. Max Patrick, eds., *"Trust to Good Verses": Herrick Tercentenary Essays* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 1978), p.35: "Through copy-work done by his [artist] nephew and through social contact with artists, Herrick could have had direct experience with works by [Holbein, Rubens, Van Dyke and Jan Brueghel]", and p.45: "Herrick's vivid flower poems... reflect an awareness of an interest in still life of the sort done by Jan Bruegel [sic] and collected so avidly by Peter Paul Rubens".

is likely at least that members of the court circle to whom Herrick had access would have discussed them with him. Their technical perfection is very similar to that of his flower poetry, as is their emblematic quality;²⁴ their celebration of the richness, beauty and variety of God's creation mirrors that to be found in *Hesperides*.

In attempting to discover the way in which the minds of the seventeenth century revolved upon nature, it is useful to consider the seventeenth-century fascination with "natural magic", defined by Kitty Scoular as "a descriptive term on the borderline between a mystical Paracelsan alchemy involving a supposed communion with the hidden forces of nature, and a more modern conception of scientific effort".²⁵ The development of new instruments such as the burning-glass, the prism, the microscope and the telescope, were for scientists and philosophers alike the means of seeing into and interpreting God's purpose. Kitty Scoular illustrates this tendency in a quotation from John Wilkins's *A Discourse concerning the Beauty of Providence in all the rugged passages of it* (1649):

As it is in the works of *Nature*, where there are many common things of excellent beauty, which for their *littlenesse* do not fall under our sence; they that have experimented the use of *Micrescopes*, can tell, how in the parts of the most minute creatures, there may be discerned such gildings and embroderies, and such curious varietie as another would scarce beleive....

²⁴ See Fowler, *RH*, P.247: "In the midst of their beauty, like Dutch flower pieces or *vanitates*, they insist on *memento mori*".

²⁵ Kitty Scoular, *Natural Magic* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), p.4. Paracelsus (1493-1541) dealt in magic, alchemy and astrology, and is supposed to have been the father of modern chemistry. See *Encyclopaedia Britannica, Macropaedia*, 13, 983-85, s.v. "Paracelsus".

So it is likewise in *the wayes of Providence*, those designs that in respect of our apprehensions are carried on by a crypticall involved method, are yet in themselves of as excellent contrivance, as any of those, that seem to be of more facile and perspicuous order.²⁶

Herrick's fairies are cousins in fantasy to those "most minute creatures of nature", sharing "such gildings and embroderies, and such curious varietie as another would scarce beleive". As evidence of a mode of thought natural to the seventeenth-century mind, there is Charles Webster's scathing comment at the expense of John Wilkins: "Oxford scholars are good at two things, at diminishing a commonwealth and at multiplying a louse".²⁷

Kitty Scoular shows how the strange admixture of philosophy and science that was "natural magic" finds expression in the literature of the time:

For the poet of our period and his society, wonder was a habit of mind knitting together an awareness and appreciation of the variety, the mystery, and the flux of the universe. *Variety, enigma, metamorphosis* were terms which might describe either the arts or the natural world, the abundance of forms in the universe was matched with a copious style, its enigmatic quality with the riddle, the allegory, the hard metaphor, and its changeability with a style transmuting one thing into another.²⁸

Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626) deplored the tendency to blur the outlines of science with philosophy and poetry, particularly with respect to the emotion of *wonder*. Wonder, he said, should be the

²⁶ Quoted in K. Scoular, pp.6-7.

²⁷ Quoted in Donald M. Friedman, "Sight and insight in Marvell's Poetry", *Approaches to Marvell*, ed. C.A. Patrides (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), p.329, n.10.

²⁸ K. Scoular, p.5.

perquisite of poetry and faith: "for the contemplation of God's creatures and works produceth (having regard to the works and creatures themselves) knowledge, but having regard to God, no perfect knowledge, but wonder, which is broken knowledge".²⁹ Wonder, as Kitty Scoular elaborates, "was also preserved for poetry through the unique operation of the imagination, whose special privilege it was to contradict expectation and normality, to combine where reason and observation separated, to bound the world in a moment".³⁰ There are elements here which might constitute a definition of Herrick's *Hesperides*.

Kitty Scoular shows that "A habit of wonder is the natural outcome of a contemplative attitude to life which became increasingly familiar to English readers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries".³¹ Interestingly, it was Herrick's bishop, Joseph Hall, Bishop of Exeter, who was mainly responsible for encouraging the contemplation of the creatures as a religious exercise: "The creatures are half lost, if we only employ them, not learn something of them. God is wronged, if his creatures be unregarded: ourselves most of all, if we read this great volume of the creatures, and take out no lesson for our instruction."³²

The poets were eager to respond to such exhortations and

²⁹ Francis Bacon, *The Two Bookes of the Proficiencie and Advancement of Learning* (London, 1605), Book i, fol.6^r (*English Experience*, 218).

³⁰ K. Scoular, pp.9-10.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp.10-11. See also R. Wallerstein, pp.211-12 in particular, and Chapter VIII generally.

³² Joseph Hall, *The Art of Divine Meditation* (1606), *The Works of Joseph Hall*, ed. Josiah Pratt (London: Williams & Smith, 1808), 7,46.

particularly with respect to the smaller of God's creatures, contemporary fascination with the diminutive being what it was. It seemed that, in order to do justice to God's creation, the pious mind must take into account not only the vastness of earth, ocean and heavens, but also the status of the most humble and insignificant of His creatures. Kitty Scoular points out that it was the early Fathers of the Church who "smoothed out distinctions between small and great in their adoration of the Maker of all things", and she quotes Hugh of St Victor, in a translation of 1577 by Richard Coortesse, Bishop of Chichester:

Tell me which is more straunge, the teeth of the Bore,
or of the Moath, the winges of the Griffin, or of the
Gnat: the head of the Horse, or of the Grasse-hopper:
The thigh of an Elephaunt, or of a Flye: The snowte
of a Sow, or the beake of a Wrenne: an Eagle, or an
Ante: a Lyon, or a Gnat: a Tiger or a Snayle.³³

Bacon himself underlined the merits of the small and insignificant: "...it commeth often to passe, that mean and small things discover great, better than great can discover the small: and therefore *Aristotle* noteth well, *that the nature of every thing is best seene in his smallest portions....* So we see how that secret of Nature, of the turning of Iron, touched with the Loadestone, towards the North, was found out in needels of Iron, not in barres of Iron".³⁴ Fowler emphasizes that trivial images could be far from negligible: "In the rhopographic tradition, insignificant things were indeed regularly chosen for juxtaposition to divinity".³⁵ Jonson praised the quality

³³ Quoted in K. Scoular, pp.81-82.

³⁴ Bacon, Book ii, fol.10^v and ^r.

³⁵ Fowler, *Kinds*, p.263.

of brevity thus:

In small proportions, we just beautie see:
And in short measures, life may perfect bee.³⁶

"Measures" suggests that he was thinking of poetry and music, too,³⁷ and, indeed, there was a marked interest in attenuated forms of poetry, particularly the epigram. Rosemond Tuve suggests that the increase in the number of short poems from the sixteenth century on into the seventeenth was partly due to "the slow establishment of a reading rather than a listening public, during a hundred years of printing...".³⁸ Douglas Bush quotes figures to show that between 1500 and 1630, the annual production of books rose from about forty-five to about four hundred and sixty, and by 1640, it had approached six hundred.³⁹ Fowler sees a relationship between the popularity of short poems and the publication of the *Anacreontea* in 1554 and the Planudean Anthology in 1566, with their emphasis on the concisely witty and expressive. He remarks: "Perhaps, too, the epigram's brevity and freedom of subject were ideally suited to a period of rapid change".⁴⁰ Rhetoricians of Herrick's time were intrigued by the idea of changes of scale, which, according to Alistair Fowler, may be by *macrologia*, a term relating to

³⁶ Ben Jonson, "To the Immortal Memory and Friendship of that Noble Pair, Sir Lucius Cary and Sir H. Morison", *Ben Jonson: Poems*, ed. Ian Donaldson (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), p.236.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.236, n.62.

³⁸ Rosemond Tuve, *Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), p.242.

³⁹ Douglas Bush, *English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century*, p.27.

⁴⁰ Fowler, *Kinds*, p.222.

the magnifying of a genre, "as when the *Divina Commedia* enlarges the epic *nekuia*, or descent into hell, to form a third of the work", or by *brachylogia*, when an accepted genre, such as the ode, is reduced to the size of an epigram, a frequent accomplishment of Herrick's. Fowler continues, "Of the two, *brachylogia* is formally more interesting. It is necessarily more complex, since in condensing it must find ways to suggest the original features not explicitly present. *Brachylogia* should be considered together with selection, *macrologia* with topical invention".⁴¹ *Brachylogia* was an exercise in achieving *multum in parvo*, much in little.

Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century poets responded to the challenge that a limited form offered. Contemporary education laid emphasis on craftsmanship, ingenuity and skill in imitation, and these qualities combined well with the taste for concise expression and the praise of the insignificant.⁴² William Browne, Drayton, Herrick and others exercised their skill in making the small and trivial fascinating and worthy of attention. As a craftsman laboured to produce exquisite carvings on a cherrystone, so the poet endeavoured to present his minute subjects as vividly as possible, and his subject matter in general as succinctly as he could. We see, then, two facets of the vogue for the miniature: one was the nice representation of such tiny creatures as fairies and insects, and the other was the encapsulation of meaning in as concentrated a fashion as skill allowed. The

⁴¹ Ibid., pp.172-73.

⁴² Edward Lee Piepho, "'Faire, and Unfamiliar Excellence': The Art of Herrick's Secular Poetry" Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 1972, *DAI* 33 (1972), 3665A. (I have seen only the abstract, and this is true of the other unpublished dissertations from which I quote.)

natural choice, as Rosalie Colie points out, was the epigrammatic mode: "the epigram's syntactical economies challenged ingenuity precisely by its terseness".⁴³ Herrick's contemporary, Campion, spoke in praise of brevity in music and poetry: "Short Ayres, if they be skilfully framed, and naturally exprest, are like quicke and good Epigrammes in Poesie, many of them showing as much artifice and breeding as great difficultie as a larger poem".⁴⁴

It is no coincidence that the fashion for the miniature in English poetry was preceded by an interest in miniature portrait painting from the mid-sixteenth century into the seventeenth. Both seem to have been inspired by the human impulse to meet a challenge to ingenuity and artistry. The best known and best loved of the English miniaturists was the Elizabethan, Nicholas Hilliard (1547-1619). Hilliard, like Herrick, had had a goldsmith's training, and he made use of gold and silver in innovative ways to achieve glittering portraits, which both incorporated and were set within realistic minute imitation jewels, "so convincing...that in one miniature in which Hilliard also set a genuine table-cut diamond, the real stone is not immediately distinguishable from the counterfeits which surround it".⁴⁵

The nineteenth-century critic, Nathan Drake, whose article of 1804,

⁴³ R.L. Colie, *Kind*, p.37.

⁴⁴ Thomas Campion, Preface to *Two Bookes of Ayres, The Works of Thomas Campion*, ed. Walter R. Davis (London: Faber & Faber, 1969), p.55.

⁴⁵ Jim Murrell, "The Craft of the Miniaturist", in *The English Miniature*, eds. John Murdoch, Jim Murrell, Patrick J. Noon and Roy Strong (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981), pp.7-8.

"On the Life, Writings and Genius of Robert Herrick", initiated the renewal of interest in Herrick's poetry after more than a century of neglect, was the first to see Herrick's exercises in diminution as "miniatures".⁴⁶ One can see the parallel between these "miniatures" and those of the miniaturist painters in this comment from a review of an exhibition of Tudor miniatures at the Victoria and Albert Museum (1983): "The tiny size and rapid watercolour technique of the limning made it uniquely capable of capturing the pulse of life. It recorded what Hilliard called 'those lovely graces, witty smilings, and those stolen glances which suddenly like lightning pass', a feat beyond any oil painting in England at the time. This immediacy made it a very intimate art form".⁴⁷ A comment by DeNeef shows the striking similarity between what Hilliard was doing and what Herrick himself could do so well:

"Bashfulnesse" (H-300)...is a perfect example of what is meant by calling Herrick a miniaturist:

OF all our parts, the eyes expresse
The sweetest kind of bashfulnesse.

The art of a "miniaturist" poet consists in taking the simplest of images or actions, such as the blinking of an eye, and transforming it into a meaningful experience in the smallest of spaces.⁴⁸

Jim Murrell speaks of "The special effects by means of which Hilliard had so brilliantly changed the concept of the miniature from its earlier status of a painting 'in little' to that of a highly stylized

⁴⁶ Fowler, *RH*, p.245.

⁴⁷ Marc Jordan, "Tokens of Love and Loyalty", rev. of an exhibition of Tudor miniatures at the Victoria and Albert Museum, and of *The English Renaissance Miniature*, *Times Literary Supplement*, 5 August 1983, p.832.

⁴⁸ DeNeef, p.140.

jewel-like object, whose rich variety of colours and metals became a perfect complement to the jewelled lockets in which so many miniatures were set...".⁴⁹

I have referred to the seventeenth-century interest in reduction of scale remarked upon by a critic like Fowler,⁵⁰ and we might now consider how this feature is reflected in Herrick's poetry. To borrow an apt definition of Gordon Braden's, *Hesperides* is a very long book of very short poems,⁵¹ and it soon becomes apparent to the reader that Herrick has a decided penchant for the small and the brief, and that the epigram appeals to him greatly.

Perhaps an attempt to unravel the complex nature of the epigram would be useful before looking more closely at the genre itself as Herrick employs it. Coleridge epitomized the epigram epigrammatically thus:

What is an Epigram? A dwarfish whole,
Its body brevity, and wit its soul.⁵²

Indeed, brevity is the salient feature of the epigram as we know it, yet Ben Jonson was imitating the master, Martial, in considering as an epigram his poem on "Inviting a Friend to Supper", which is forty-two

⁴⁹ Murrell, p.9.

⁵⁰ Fowler, *Kinds*, pp.172-73, referred to on p.11 of this chapter.

⁵¹ Gordon Braden, *The Classics and English Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), p.154.

⁵² S.T. Coleridge, "Epigram", quoted in *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), p.156, with no indication of source. But see *Stevenson's Book of Quotations*, selected and arranged by Burton Stevenson (London: Cassell, 1974) p.566: "Attributed to S.T. Coleridge, but not found in his works".

lines long.⁵³ The sixteenth-century idea of the epigram was based on the Roman satiric version of the form, and approximates generally to the definition to be found in the *Oxford English Dictionary*: "A short poem ending in a witty and ingenious turn of thought, to which the rest of the composition is intended to lead up". The turn of thought and the pointed ending are essential features. There was a resurgence of interest in the epigram in the seventeenth century, after a period of disfavour, and writers then were strongly influenced by the Greek tradition, which allowed a greater freedom of subject and verse form.⁵⁴

Barbara Herrnstein Smith gives an excellent summary of the nature of epigram, and also identifies its appeal for poets:

As an utterance, the epigram seems to be the last word on its subject. This quality can probably be referred to the origins of the form: engraved on tombs, statues, public buildings, or wherever an inscription was wanted to identify or characterize something both briefly and permanently, the epigram would stand, for all time, to all readers, as the ultimately appropriate statement thereupon. Since engraving is laborious and space limited, concision was obviously a physical and perhaps an economic necessity. And since it was impractical to carve, for example, a man's entire biography on his tombstone, the few markings that would remain as his most permanent testament would have to be entirely "to the point."...What was originally a practical problem apparently became, in time, an aesthetic one, with its own rewards; for concision and economy could be seen not as necessary limits but as expressive means.⁵⁵

What she says on the subject a few pages later is of particular

⁵³ See T.K. Whipple, *Martial and the English Epigram* (Berkeley, 1925; reprint ed., New York: Phaeton Press, 1970), p.289: "[Martial's] epigrams range in length from a single verse to fifty lines and more".

⁵⁴ DeNeef, p.111.

⁵⁵ Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Poetic Closure: A Study of How Poems End* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), pp.196-97.

relevance to the epigrammatic writings of Robert Herrick:

To epigrammatize an experience is to strip it down, to cut away irrelevance, to eliminate local, specific, and descriptive detail, to reduce it to and fix it in its most permanent and stable aspect, to sew it up for eternity.⁵⁶

This is the *carpe diem* poet's defence against the mutability of time. With this fixing of a moment for all time goes, however, a sense of spontaneity, of the capturing of a living instant. Fowler makes the point that "spontaneity of effect was after all an ideal of the epigram *silva*".⁵⁷

Rosalie Colie is enlightening on further aspects of the form:

An epigram might be epideictic (praise of a ruler, a hero, a servant); it might be an epitaph; it might celebrate a public event, a victory, a great building, a significant person living or dead....In tone, [it] could range from celebration to insult, its topic from emperor to prostitute, its style from high to low. But it must be brief...; its inherent terseness—*brevitas*—was regarded as the result of its origin in incised inscription.⁵⁸

Fowler is instructive on the historical effects of the development of the epigram in the seventeenth century:

The great epigrammatic transformation that took place then profoundly altered a large part of literature, and even altered the literary model in an irreversible way. By making for concision, it changed the usual scale, texture, and standard of finish. It made wit and ambiguity valuable. And it gave the couplet—as much the epigrammatic distich as the heroic couplet—its Augustan primacy. One result was that the sonnet virtually disappeared between Drummond and Cowper or Bowles.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Ibid., p.208.

⁵⁷ Fowler, *Kinds*, p.210.

⁵⁸ R.L. Colie, *Kind*, p.67.

⁵⁹ Fowler, *Kinds*, p.196.

All the salient characteristics of Herrick's use of the genre are summed up in G. Rostrevor Hamilton's definition of the epigram as the most traditional kind of English verse, and, in some ways, the most limited: "It is so compact in shape, so intent in purpose, so welded together by rhyme, and, above all, so subject to the natural cadences of English, that it has little freedom for formal experiment, however it varies in mood or idea".⁶⁰ Its commonest form is the quatrain, and, according to him, it has "a very English note of humour" and of "broad high-spirited fun".⁶¹

Herrick's epigrams are generally held to be important in the history of the genre. Rosalie Colie speaks of them as decided *tours de force*,⁶² Hamilton calls Herrick the finest of all English epigrammatists,⁶³ and Fowler speaks of *Hesperides* as "this greatest of epigram sequences".⁶⁴ Anyone who reads "Upon *Julia's* Clothes" (H-779) or "To *Dianeme*" (H-160) will echo these encomia, but there remains the thorny issue of Herrick's "foul" epigrams, those scurrilous and scatological references to real or imaginary but always coarsely viewed human beings which have often mystified and repelled the sensitive, and been regarded by even the most sympathetic of Herrick's later critics as strange aberrations in the work of an exquisite lyric poet.

⁶⁰ G. Rostrevor Hamilton, *English Verse Epigram*, Writers and their Work, No.188 (London: Longmans, Green, 1965, for the British Council), p.7.

⁶¹ Ibid., p.9.

⁶² R.L. Colie, *Kind*, p.67.

⁶³ Hamilton, p.10.

⁶⁴ Fowler, *Kinds*, p.197.

It is difficult to place the "foul" epigrams in a clear historical perspective; for one thing, as E.M.W. Tillyard says, "the English habit of mind between 1560 and 1660 is more remote from our own time than we are usually prepared to admit".⁶⁵ We do not know how Herrick's contemporaries received these epigrams, but it is likely that classical scholars of the time would have been perfectly familiar with Martial and other satirists, and that many would thus have accepted the attendant scatology as part of the epigram tradition. In 1561, Julius Caesar Scaliger published his *Poetices Libri Septem*, which offered a classification of the various types of epigram, which included the obscene and the foul (which were beneath consideration and deserved banishing), the *fel* or gall, *acetum* or vinegar, *sal* or salt, and *mel* or honey.⁶⁶ Scaliger's desire to banish the *foetidas* epigram seems to suggest that at least some of Herrick's contemporaries might have found his examples offensive. Viewed in the light of Shakespeare's wordplay and its frequent coarseness, particularly in the *Sonnets*, however, Herrick's "foul" epigrams seem to have been less likely to repel readers of the seventeenth century than they have repelled some of those of the nineteenth. (Herrick was apparently largely unknown to the eighteenth century, and there are no records of any reaction at that time to his epigrams.) Some Victorian critics evinced shock and disgust, and one editor, Alfred Pollard, fastidiously removed the offending epigrams to an appendix in his edition of the poems in 1891.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ E.M.W. Tillyard, Introduction to *English Emblem Books* by Rosemary Freeman, p.vii.

⁶⁶ On the types of epigram, see R.L. Colie, *Kind*, pp.66ff., and Antionette C. Dauber, "Herrick's Foul Epigrams", *Genre* 9. 2(1976), 88.

⁶⁷ Alfred Pollard, ed., *Robert Herrick: The Hesperides and Noble Numbers*. The Muses' Library. 2 vols. rev.ed. (London: Lawrence & Bullen; New York: Scribner's, 1898).

George Saintsbury, in his edition some years later, abhors "the presence of these loathsome weeds, in an otherwise charming, if somewhat 'carelessly-ordered' garden".⁶⁸ Palgrave's *The Golden Treasury of Songs and Lyrics* (1861) and Quiller-Couch's *The Oxford Book of English Verse* (1900), while giving an otherwise fairly representative selection of Herrick's poetry, totally exclude any of these epigrams. We might imagine, though, that Victorians schooled in the classics would have been able to tolerate the coarse epigrams as part of a convention of satire.

What strikes most modern readers about certain of Herrick's epigrams is that they seem to be cold-blooded, motiveless and contextless. Doubtless, Herrick's seventeenth-century readers, from their knowledge of literature, both English and classical, would have understood Herrick's satiric intention better than we do.⁶⁹ We can accept, with Rosalie Colie, Patrick, Martin, and Fowler,⁷⁰ that Herrick wished to alleviate a tendency to cloying sweetness in his *silva* by interspersing his fair or *mel* lyrics with the foul epigrams.

⁶⁸ George Saintsbury, ed., *The Poetical Works of Robert Herrick*. The Aldine Edition of the British Poets. 2 vols. (London: Bell, 1893), p.xxxvii.

⁶⁹ Views expressed in conversation with my supervisor, Professor R. Harnett.

⁷⁰ R.L. Colie, *Kind*, p.75; Patrick, p.viii; Fowler, *RH*, p.245; Martin, p.xx, n.1: "Herrick's own explanation would probably have been on the lines of his epigram on love:

Love's of it self, too sweet; the best of all
Is, when loves hony has a dash of gall—

and the apparent disorder of each poem in *Hesperides* may well have been calculated, so that each poem might be a foil to its neighbours".

Some other explanations of Herrick's inclusion of these epigrams show critics engaging with what remains a problem, and often with real ingenuity: for example, the foul epigrams are seen as "illustrations of human nature in the raw—unimproved by Art", where art includes "right living, an art achieved by imposing the principles of 'manners,' 'civility,' and 'vertue' upon social behaviour";⁷¹ they are acceptable for their keen satire and didacticism;⁷² and most surprisingly, Herrick's intention in writing his epigrams was "to cure epigram [as fathered by Martial] of its inbred anality".⁷³ Fowler sees them in this light: "Herrick's foul epigrams are relatively few, and not very good: his tender heart was not in them. But it is worth noticing how they fail: namely through being overcompressed to the point of pointlessness".⁷⁴ Overcompression and pointlessness are illustrated in these examples:

FRANCK wo'd go scoure her teeth; and setting to't,
Twice two fell out, all rotten at the root.

("Upon *Franck*" [H-728])

When *Pimpes* feet sweat (as they do often use)
There springs a sope-like-lather in his shoos.

("Upon *Pimpe*" [H-1113])

MUDGE every morning to the Postern comes,
(His teeth all out) to rince and wash his gummes.

("Upon *Mudge*" [H-965])

⁷¹ Rollin, p.79, elaborating on an unpublished thesis by Richard J. Ross, "'A Wilde Civility': Robert Herrick's Solution of the Paradox of Art and Nature".

⁷² "They provide contrast, variety, and realism as well as a certain earthiness...". John L. Kimmey, "Robert Herrick's Satirical Epigrams", *English Studies*, 51(1970), 322.

⁷³ A.B. Dauber, p.88.

⁷⁴ Fowler, *RH*, p.245.

However, some of these low epigrams can be quite "pointed"; one of life's ironies is demonstrated here:

HOrne sells to others teeth; but has not one
To grace his own Gums, or of Box, or bone.

("Of *Horne* a Comb-maker" [H-595])

Since I agree with Fowler on the inferior quality of the "foul" epigrams, and since they are, in any case, relatively few, my concentration in this chapter will be on the "fair" epigrams, which amply illustrate Herrick's powers. As Fowler says, Herrick "everywhere finds ways to make his brief forms expressive",⁷⁵ and one of these is his use of the couplet, which plays its part in his exploration of the effects of closure.⁷⁶ In "The Carcanet" (H-34), a "fair" epigram, one is aware of a neatness in the click of the rhyme, and a sense of words used without superfluity:

INstead of Orient Pearls of Jet,
I sent my Love a Karkanet:
About her spotlesse neck she knit
The lace, to honour me, or it:
Then think how wrapt was I to see
My Jet t'enthral such Ivorie.

The poet's sensuous pleasure in the contrast of the dark necklace against his beloved's white skin is obvious, as is his enjoyment of the pun in "wrapt" ("wrapped" and "rapt"). There is a certain self-mockery in his awareness that though his gift seems, by encircling the neck of his mistress, to enslave her, her attitude remains ambiguous: does she wear the necklace to honour it or the poet, or merely for reasons of vanity, to enhance the whiteness of her skin? The thrall, we feel, is the enraptured poet himself. One is struck by the skill

⁷⁵ Ibid., p.248.

⁷⁶ Fowler, *Kinds*, p.222.

of the "setting-up" of the situation, and the metaphorical glint in the poet's eye which is forerunner to his unmistakably conveyed sense of triumph at the final neatness of a conceit carefully contrived.

(Patrick punctuates the first line of "The Carcanet" as I have given it, reproducing the punctuation of the 1648 edition of *Hesperides*; Martin and Saintsbury add a comma after "Pearls", and Pollard omits the comma after "Jet". I should like to believe that Pollard points the way to the correct interpretation; here, it is the contrast that matters, the visual effect of jet against ivory, and Pollard's "correction" makes this clearer.)

In another epigram, "Upon *Silvia*, a Mistresse" (H-62), the concision of the form and the bipartite structure of each line, as well as the use of couplets, contribute to the chilling finality of the last line, which is almost surreal in effect:

When some shall say, Faire once my *Silvia* was;
 Thou wilt complaine, False now's thy Looking-glasse:
 Which renders that quite tarnisht, which was green;
 And Priceless now, what Peerless once had been:
 Upon thy Forme more wrinkles yet will fall,
 And comming downe, shall make no noise at all.

What makes those last six words so sinister is their simplicity, their apparently childlike candour. In contrast to this is the cool and delicate "To *Electra*" (H-663):

I Dare not ask a kisse;
 I dare not beg a smile;
 Lest having that, or this,
 I might grow proud the while.
 2. No, no, the utmost share
 Of my desire, shall be
 Onely to kisse that Aire,
 That lately kissed thee.

Sincerity, in this witty compliment, is conveyed by the spareness and restraint of the poetry. The poet achieves a paring down to such a minimum that we are left with an appropriate sensation of airy

nothingness, and a perception of there being such fineness and beauty in the beloved that even the air is in love with her and is moved to kiss her. Barbara Smith uses this poem to demonstrate the way in which a variation in metre can strengthen the sense of closure:

"...one of the many factors which combine to make the eighth line closural is the fact that it is a return to a strictly iambic pattern after the most deviant line in the poem".⁷⁷

Óneĳ tŏ kĳsse thăt Áire,
Thăt láteĳ kĳssĕd thĕe.

The trochaic "Onely" has indeed a remarkable effect of intense emotion.

Herrick's ability to convey in small space a vivid reality is illustrated by "The coming of good luck" (H-247):

SO Good-luck came, and on my rooffe did light,
Like noyselesse Snow; or as the dew of night:
Not all at once, but gently, as the trees
Are, by the Sun-beams, tickel'd by degrees.

The comparisons involving images of nature send out reverberations of suggestion, and the caesuras and enjambment work economically to extend the meaning, as if the poet were exemplifying the way in which he had slowly perceived the coming of his good luck, "by degrees".

An example of an ingenious compliment expressed in a very few lines is "The Weeping Cherry" (H-23):

I Saw a *Cherry* weep, and why?
Why wept it? but for shame,
Because my *Julia's* lip was by,
And did out-red the same.
But pretty Fondling, let not fall
A teare at all for that:
Which *Rubies, Corralls, Scarlets*, all
For tincture, wonder at.

5

⁷⁷ B.H. Smith, p.44.

This might be seen as a variation of pastoral hyperbole (discussed in Chapter I), in which natural objects respond to the beauty of the beloved not with sympathetic admiration, but with emulous despair (as also in "How Roses came red" [H-258]). Herrick's choice of the cherry as the disappointed rival is proof of his adroit sense of compression, and his ability to choose a simple, natural and meaningful small image. In many ways, few other natural objects seem so fitted for this role as the cherry. In thinking of the word, we focus first on the idea of colour, and then almost unconsciously absorb such connotations as smallness of size, moisture, roundness, plumpness, ripeness, sweetness and freshness. The symbolic role of the cherry in love play has a part in the rich allusiveness of the word, too.⁷⁸ The move from cherries to "*Rubies, Corralls, Scarlets*" is a strategy for suggesting range and extending the horizons of this small poem. Though the subject is ostensibly the cherry, our attention is directed to the enthralling redness of Julia's lip. The tenderly condescending tone in which the poet comforts the cherry is an oblique and clever way of extolling his mistress's beauty; even the most brilliant reds, he says, marvel and concede victory to the lady. The impression is one of a transcendent and inimitable richness of colour. The charm of this epigram lies in its seemingly artless yet urbane tone and in its

⁷⁸ Cf. Patrick, p.549, "The Description of a Woman" (S-6):

Their Nature, for a sweet allurements, sets
Two smelling, swelling, bashful cherrilets;
The which, with ruby redness being tipp'd,
Do speak a virgin, merry cherry-lipp'd....

See also "Chop-Cherry" (H-364) for suggestions of the traditional link between cherries and love.

tightly knit structure. "Tincture", by virtue of the care needed to "say" the word, halts the reader momentarily, and in so doing gives time for a mingling of suggestions of flavour as well as colour.⁷⁹

This is an instance of Herrick's skill in choosing what Fowler calls "a single telling word"⁸⁰ to cause widening ripples of meaning.

One of Herrick's most exquisite epigrams is "Upon *Julia's* Voice" (H-67):

SO smooth, so sweet, so silv'ry is thy voice,
As, could they hear, the Damn'd would make no noise,
But listen to thee, (walking in thy chamber)
Melting melodious words, to Lutes of Amber.

The essence of the girl's voice is expressed in the melliflousness of the first line, the repetitions combining to convey the poet's ecstatic response to the sound. Though the epigram is intent on describing harmonious sounds, the impression is of a soundless beauty, or of a sound too perfect for ordinary human perception, and so potent that it could calm the most horrendous noises of pain and torment from the damned. The sweetness of the girl's voice is emphasized by her apparent unconsciousness of the effect she is making; she is "(walking in her chamber)", so absorbed in the act of making music that she is enclosed from the world, a state further suggested by the poet's use of brackets. The moment is rendered sublime in its demonstration of what harmony means; it is a "melting" of "melodious words", until they

⁷⁹ *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "Tincture" sb. 2. Hue, colour: *esp.* as communicated (naturally or artificially) by a colouring matter or dye...; a tinge, tint. Now *rare*.... 5. A physical quality communicated to something; *esp.* a taste or flavour....*Obs.* 1625 N. CARPENTER *Geog.Del.II.v.*(1635) 77. 'They receive their tincture of saltiness from some salt minerals of the earth.'

⁸⁰ Fowler, *RH*, p.247.

blend to form rich sounds such as might be played upon lutes of amber. According to Patrick, Herrick may be thinking either of the fossilized resin, or of the alloy made of four parts of silver to one of gold. His elaboration of Herrick's possible meaning is helpful: "What Herrick probably intends is that the silver of her voice melts with the golden words to produce musical sounds (like those from lutes), which are thus a musical alloy analogous to metallic amber."⁸¹ However, I feel sure that the properties of resinous amber are meant to invest the meaning with further richness. Amber was supposed to have been the concretion of tears shed by Meleager's sisters for his death.⁸² MacGregor records its medicinal virtues and magical effects in his description of the amber curiosities mentioned in the *Musaeum Tradescantianum*.⁸³ Delattre lists the qualities of amber as being aromatic, golden and luminous.⁸⁴ Nevertheless, no explication can fully convey the effect these few lines have on the reader. They become a perfect moment, with girl and music immortalized, not unlike a lily enclosed in crystal, or a small creature rendered jewel-like and yet forever lifelike by its encasing amber. As Barbara Smith remarks (about an epigram of Donne's), "What surprises [the reader] ... is not the novelty of the material but the elegance and economy with which it is deployed. In an imperfect world, perfection is surprising".⁸⁵

⁸¹ Patrick, p.34, n.1.

⁸² *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* (London: Cassell, 1983), s.v. "Amber", p.30.

⁸³ MacGregor, p.245.

⁸⁴ Delattre, *RH*, p.448: "*Amber* designera d'abord la substance resinouse et aromatique, puis la couleur blonde ou dorée, *flavus*, puis tout ce qui est clair, lumineux ou parfumé".

⁸⁵ B.H. Smith, p.206.

The evocative word "melt" is often used by Herrick with a concentration of meaning to suggest both the effect of sounds interfused, and the ecstatic response of the listener. (See "To Musick" [H-176]: "...as thou stroak'st mine eares/With thy enchantment, melt me into tears"; "To Musique, to becalme his Fever" [H-227]: "Charm me asleep, and melt me so/ With thy Delicious Numbers...", and "Melt, melt my paines/ With they soft straines..."; and "A Nuptiall Song, or Epithalamie, on Sir *Clypeby Crew* and his Lady" [H-283]: "O marke yee how/ The soule of Nature melts in numbers...".) The primary meaning in these instances seems to fit this definition from the *Oxford English Dictionary*: "Of sound: to be soft and liquid", and "To melt away: to dissolve into ecstasies".⁸⁶ "Melting" is defined, in reference to sound, as "liquid and soft, delicately modulated".⁸⁷ The dictionary cites examples of its use from Bacon (1626): "No Instrument hath the Sound so Melting and prolonged as the Irish Harp", and from Milton's *L'Allegro* 142: "The melting voice through mazes running". Herrick is therefore not obviously innovatory in his use of "melt" and "melting", but instead perhaps chooses words with rich literary connotations to aid his poem's succinctness.⁸⁸

In the epigram which follows "Upon *Julia's* Voice", "Againe" (H-68), Herrick uses the image of the poet's turning "all to eare", an example of his capacity for capturing in few and simple words a striking and

⁸⁶ *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "Melt" v. 6 and 10b.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, s.v. "Melting" intrans. 1c.

⁸⁸ I am indebted to Professor Harnett for having suggested this to me.

pregnant image. (In "A Canticle to *Apollo*" [H-388], he sees, in even more expansive hyperbole, "the very Spheres,/...turne all to eares" in response to the god's music. As John Hollander remarks, though, such praise "seems no more or less extravagant when extended towards some object for whom the cosmological extravagances are less hyperbolic".⁸⁹ Once again, there is a nice interplay between a vast idea and its compact expression.)

In the epigram "Againe", the synaesthesia of "drink in Notes and Numbers" implies a rapturous absorption of each liquid sound:

WHen I thy singing next shall heare,
 Ile wish I might turn all to eare,
 To drink in Notes, and Numbers; such
 As blessed soules cann't heare too much:
 Then melted down, there let me lye
 Entranc'd, and lost confusedly:
 And by thy Musique strucken mute,
 Die, and be turn'd into a Lute.

The poet undergoes an intricate series of metamorphoses here, a series effected in only eight lines; from being made "all eare", he loses identity still further, being melted down and transformed into a lute, able to utter forever those sublime sounds which wrought the transformation to begin with.

The transforming power of music is again clearly and briefly delineated in "Upon a Gentlewoman with a sweet Voice" (H-228):

SO long you did not sing, or touch your Lute,
 We knew 'twas Flesh and Blood, that there sate mute.
 But when your Playing, and your Voice came in,
 'Twas no more you then, but a *Cherubin*.

The transformation seems to occur within the perception of the

⁸⁹ John Hollander, *The Untuning of the Sky: Ideas of Music in English Poetry 1500-1700* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1961), p.336.

onlookers; under the influence of the music, before their eyes and ours, within the space of a quatrain, a woman of flesh and blood becomes a heavenly being. Another example of Herrick's musical imagery is this brief tribute to a dead girl:

HEre a solemne Fast we keepe,
While all beauty lyes asleep
Husht be all things; (no noyse here)
But the toning of a teare:
Or a sigh of such as bring
Cowslips for her covering.

("An Epitaph upon a Virgin" [H-450])

The "tiptoe lightness" of this lyrical epigram (Hamilton's phrase)⁹⁰ expresses most poignantly the speakers' sadness, and the quiet reverence of the occasion can be felt in the gentle sounds of "the toning of a teare" and the "sigh" of the mourners. These, since they bring cowslips, which are associated in country tradition with love, are perhaps the maidens who were her friends, and who sigh because she is now bereft of the joys of youth, beauty and love to which they can look forward. The pastoral setting of this lyric elegy is made clear by one word: "Cowslips", which reminds us of the offering of flowers to the youthful dead in pastoral tradition. There is consummate artistry in the concentration of meaning in these lines, in themselves so deceptively simple. The origin of the epigram as memorial inscription is brought to mind here, and a recognition of the versatility of the epigrammatic form, which can cover the range of human feeling from tender grief to harsh satire, challenging the poet's ingenuity in compressing a wealth of meaning into as small a compass as possible.

Hamilton speaks of the "unique wealth in the monosyllable" which

⁹⁰ Hamilton, p.12.

is part of the nature of the English language,⁹¹ and what strikes one frequently about Herrick's epigrams is his use of the monosyllable. He employs its spare simplicity to significant and often moving effect, weaving in the sinuous elegance of a Latinate word in occasional contrast. The consummate "Upon *Julia's* Clothes" (H-779) is an illustration of his powers in this respect:

WHen **as** in silks my *Julia* goes,
 Then, then (me thinks) how sweetly flowes
 That liquefaction of her clothes.
 Next, when I cast mine eyes and see
 That brave Vibration each way free;
 O how that glittering taketh me!

The Latinate words "liquefaction" and "vibration" (and the Saxon "glittering", too—a trisyllable possibly modified by slurring) have a luminous life of their own which comes in part from our delighted recognition of their contrast to the plainer words which serve to set them off. This poem, celebrating movement and glancing with light and change and shimmer, achieves transcendence when an intense moment of emotion is transmuted into enduring art. Fowler makes an interesting point about the two strikingly beautiful words of this poem which a modern reader might easily miss. He says: "The two words [the poem] highlights, prominent by length and rhythm, are both scientific terms; 'liquefaction' being a term of art for the physical process of melting, and 'vibration' referring to the special movement of celestial orbs whereby they gave out light ('that glittering'). The lover could be looking at the heavens. Such imagery is not designed to enhance the human beauty but to illustrate its disclosure of a larger beauty".⁹²

⁹¹ Ibid., p.6.

⁹² Fowler, *RH*, pp.259-60.

Again, in his choice of single telling words in this small poem, Herrick has been able to convey the metaphysical resonance of his meaning.

In an illuminating comment, Barbara Smith defines an aspect of closure which is particularly applicable in considering the poetry of Herrick: "...the ending of a poem is a gesture of exit, and like all gestures it has expressive value. The manner in which a poem concludes becomes, in effect, the last and frequently the most significant thing it says".⁹³ In "The Bracelet to *Julia*" (H-322), we have an example of this expressive gesture:

WHy I tye about thy wrist,
Julia, this my silken twist;
 For what other reason is't,
 But to show thee how in part,
 Thou my pretty Captive art?
 But thy Bondslave is my heart:
 'Tis but silke that bindeth thee,
 Knap the thread, and thou art free:
 But 'tis otherwise with me;
 I am bound, and fast bound so,
 That from thee I cannot go;
 If I co'd, I wo'd not so.

In these airy, continuous tercets, the poet shows Julia how lightly his silken bracelet restrains her: "Knap the thread, and thou art free". What dominated the poet's thoughts at the beginning of the poem becomes clear in the tenth line: "I am bound, and fast bound so,/ That from thee I cannot go". The repetition of the almost knell-like "bound" contrasts with the lightness of "Knap". This is an ending in itself, but the true ending carries with it an element of surprise: "If I co'd, I wo'd not so". What seems almost a throw-away line is in fact the most vital—a simple affirmation of enduring love. Piepho speaks

⁹³ B.H. Smith, p.196.

of Herrick's use of qualified closure, so as to produce "an understated tone, or to comment obliquely on a situation or conceit".⁹⁴ This poem, in its expressive subtlety, well illustrates this technique. Part of its effect lies in the kinetic tug of the last line, where

the reader feels too the magnetic attraction that Julia has for the poet.

Tercets and monosyllables are again used to lead to an effective closure in "Divination by a Daffadill" (H-107):

WHen a Daffadill I see,
Hanging down his head t'wards me;
Guesse I may, what I must be:
First, I shall decline my head;
Secondly, I shall be dead;
Lastly, safely buried.

Here every lucid word is essential, and the exceptionally "neat minimality" (to borrow Fowler's phrase)⁹⁵ is satisfying because the end of this poem is so strikingly present in its beginning. The daffodil quietly and sadly inclines its head towards the poet in a gesture of communication, a literal pointing to the grave which awaits them both. This smooth declining of the daffodil head upon its stem presages the smooth decline of man's life. In "First...Secondly...Lastly" there is a serene acceptance of the inevitable approach of death, and we feel a powerful sense of culmination in "safely buried". (One is reminded of the "easie earth" which covers the dead baby in "Upon a child" [H-640].) The poem is a demonstration of *multum in parvo*, much in little, in which, to quote Hamilton in another context, "we alternate between admiration of the artistic detail...and sympathy for human

⁹⁴ Piepho, p.3665A.

⁹⁵ Fowler, *Kinds*, p.198.

grief".⁹⁶

In considering aspects of the miniature in Herrick's poetry, one discovers two points of focus: the demonstrations of his skill in being both brief and cogent, as in the "fair" epigrams; and his interest in the small, which, as we have seen, was part of a contemporary vogue. Both of these facets, form and subject, are expressively interwoven in "The Amber Bead" (H-817), which provides an appropriate introduction to what Fowler terms Herrick's "microphilia":⁹⁷

I Saw a Flie within a Beade
Of Amber cleanly buried:
The Urne was little, but the room
More rich then *Cleopatra's* Tombe.

The fly, humble creature that it is, is marvellously metamorphosed into an *objet d'art*, and the word "cleanly" seems to work as the catalyst, endowing the fly with a purity it did not have in life. Its setting is amber, a favourite material for jewellery, and when the amber is seen as a funerary urn, the fly reaches a further elevation in importance. In a remarkable and witty expansion, the minute object encased in its piece of fossil resin (by nature) achieves the significance of art when in the poem its burial place is accorded the size and grandeur of Cleopatra's tomb. That this intellectual trick has occurred in the space of four brief lines, with each of only twenty-three relatively simple words functioning economically to create a sense of concrete reality, is a proof of Herrick's consummate skill.

The same "easy relationship between artifice and the creatures" common to seventeenth-century thinking described by Kitty Scoular⁹⁸ is

⁹⁶ Hamilton, p.13.

⁹⁷ Fowler, *RH*, p.245.

⁹⁸ K. Scoular, p.102.

apparent in "Upon a Flie" (H-497), too long to quote here. In eighteen lines Herrick presents the trivial elevated to the significant, using an accumulation of detail and example. When Kitty Scouler says that the poet shows a "tender amusement and a style in which conceit is not over-played against detail",⁹⁹ she sums up his control of his subject.

Besides his use of couplets or tercets, each in itself often a premonition of the end of a poem, Herrick employs varying line lengths to signal finality. In "To Blossoms" (H-467), these fluctuations in length can be seen as a wittingly futile attempt to counter transience, an attempt which concludes in utter acquiescence. The initial tetrameter ("FAire pledges of a fruitfull Tree") dwindles to a pair of urgent trimeters ("Why do yee fall so fast?/ Your date is not so past"), has a brief resurgence ("But you may stay here a while"), and then capitulates, as evident in the trimeter ("To blush and gently smile") and in the simple brevity of the concluding dimeter ("And go at last"). Another movement runs parallel to the internal pattern, corresponding to the three-part structure of regret at fading beauty, rebellion that beauty should be so short-lived, and then joy in and acceptance of a design that makes adjustment to transience more bearable to the transient. T.G.S. Cain makes the valuable point that the pauses between each stanza become almost as important as the words themselves,¹⁰⁰ a point which is relevant to many of Herrick's brief poems written in the form of more than one stanza; it highlights one of the poet's strategies to achieve his effects with economy.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p.101.

¹⁰⁰ T.G.S.Cain, "'Times trans-shifting': Herrick in Meditation", in Rollin and Patrick, eds., *Trust to Good Verses*, p.120.

Herrick's accomplishment in the art of closure and the theme of finality is demonstrated in "To Blossoms". In this strophic poetry, the poet's subtle use of rhyme plays an essential part in lacing the lines and the argument together, without inhibiting the sense of flexibility or free movement. Each stanza follows this pattern of metre and rhyme (the numbers denote feet): $a_4b\ b_3\ c_4c_3b_2$. The first lines of each stanza rhyme, and the effect on ear and eye of the consequent delay is to heighten intensely the sense of satisfaction when fulfilment is eventually achieved in the rhyme. The "b" rhymes in the second, third and last lines, and the impression of enfolding which this structuring conveys, help to strengthen the idea of inevitability and finality. The reader is conscious of a poignant sense of yearning as he is drawn onward in the desire to find in the rhyme a response to the urgent question. There is a striking economy here in the close relationship of theme and structure. As Fowler cogently remarks, "The soft movement may be the very thing that brings the inescapability [of the recognition of transience] home...".¹⁰¹

"To Daffadills" (H-316) employs rhyme and line length to similarly telling effect, in reinforcing closure and underlining finality. Here is the second and final stanza:

We have short time to stay, as you,
 We have as short a Spring;
 As quick a growth to meet Decay,
 As you, or any thing.
 We die,
 As your hours doe, and drie
 Away,
 Like to the Summers raine;
 Or as the pearles of Mornings dew
 Ne'r to be found againe.

¹⁰¹ Fowler, *RH*, p.247.

In this rhyme scheme ($a_4b_3c_4b_3d_1d_3c_1e_3a_4e_3$), the delay imposed by the separation of the rhyming first and penultimate lines plays a part in the movement towards closure. This movement is underlined by the firm sense of conclusion implicit in the effect of enclosing the penultimate line within the two new "e" rhymes. To become aware of this complex underlying structure is to be convinced of Herrick's conscious artistry, which is more remarkable in being concealed beneath simple and natural expression; *sprezzatura* exemplified.

Clearly, Herrick "everywhere finds ways to make his brief forms expressive".¹⁰² "Upon his departure hence" (H-475) is a visual enactment of the theme of withdrawal from life:

THus I
 Passe by,
 And die:
 As One,
 Unknown,
 And gon:
 I'm made
 A shade,
 And laid
 I'th grave,
 There have
 My Cave.
 Where tell
 I dwell,
Farewell.

(H-475)

Each line is in effect a little death, so that one is half-consciously absorbing the idea of death and ending as one reads on. Each triplet of iambic monometer holds a clear reference to departure, and the inevitable "Farewell" has the lightness of a whisper, a dying fall, an ineluctable withdrawal. This poem, like the minutes of man's life, evaporates as one experiences it. Braden's comment is apt: "'Carpe

¹⁰² Fowler, *RH*, p.248.

diem', we might say, is not just a convenient paraphrase of much of Herrick's 'meaning', but is a proposition acted out in the writing of the poems".¹⁰³

This poem clearly illustrates the concept of "closure" as it is described by Barbara Smith:

Closure occurs when the concluding portion of a poem creates in the reader a sense of appropriate cessation. It announces and justifies the absence of further development; it reinforces the feeling of finality, completion, and composure which we value in all works of art; and it gives ultimate unity and coherence to the reader's experience of the poem by providing a point from which all the preceding elements may be viewed comprehensively and their relations grasped as part of a significant design.¹⁰⁴

The extent to which poets of the period were thinking of poetry from the point of view of closure and along epigrammatic lines is indicated by a quotation from one of John Donne's *Sermons* :

And therefore it is easie to observe, that in all Metricall compositions,...the force of the whole piece, is for the most part left to the shutting up; the whole frame of the Poem is a beating out of a piece of gold, but the last clause is as the impression of the stamp, and that is it that makes it currant.¹⁰⁵

Before looking at Herrick's love of the small in relation to his fairy poetry, it is pleasant to note that he was not so obsessive a microphile as to be incapable of a humorous look at his preoccupation, as "A Ternarie of littles, upon a pipkin of Jellie sent to a Lady" (H-733) shows. This "lively and lovely song in praise of miniature

¹⁰³ Braden, p.161.

¹⁰⁴ B.H. Smith, p.36.

¹⁰⁵ Quoted in B.H. Smith, p.37.

things", in Marchette Chute's phrase,¹⁰⁶ is a true *reductio ad absurdum*, in which the reader and the lady who is to receive the gift of jelly are invited to imagine such mildly ludicrous images as a small saint in a minute shrine, a little choir in a tiny church, and a miniature bell in an appropriately miniature spire. The self-mockery extends to "my small Pipe best fits my little note", and there is charm and humour in the feminine rhymes of the last stanza:

A little meat best fits a little bellie,
As sweetly Lady, give me leave to tell ye,
This little Pipkin fits this little Jellie.

We are close here to the mood and tone of the fairy poetry.

As we have seen from Kitty Scoular's enlightening study of the inquiring mind of the seventeenth century, "high value was placed upon fine craftsmanship, in both nature and art, even to the point of excess".¹⁰⁷ Small creatures were often dignified by lengthy poems, as part of the vogue for "hyperbolic expansion and dilation upon trivialities".¹⁰⁸ There is an element of play here, a kind of literary and philosophical joke which takes pleasure in incongruities. One thinks of Donne's "The Flea", where, as with Herrick's elegy for his sparrow, Phil (H-256), there is, beneath the rich hyperbole, an underlying seriousness.

Kitty Scoular points out that "The special challenge of a limited form was frequently appreciated by the Renaissance poet as a particular test of his sense of craftsmanship and of his versatility in producing

¹⁰⁶ Marchette Chute, *Two Gentlemen: The Lives of George Herbert and Robert Herrick* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1960), p.247.

¹⁰⁷ K. Scoular, p.85.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p.89.

new things from old. So to dispose one's mind towards a lineage of poems on the flea or the grasshopper as a tournament of ingenuities, a game played well, is to give them the sort of attention appropriate to them".¹⁰⁹ As an indication of contemporary interest we may note this entry, quoted on p.50 above, in the *Musaeum Tradescantianum*: "Divers sorts of Amber with Flyes, Spiders, naturall", and the same work mentions "Flea chains of silver and gold with 300 links a piece and yet but an inch long".¹¹⁰ Du Bartas's lines in praise of a mechanical fly which occasioned great wonder at the skill of the inventor, sixteenth-century astronomer and mathematician, Regiomontanus, are quoted here in Sylvester's translation:

From under's hand an iron Flie flew out,
Which having flowne a perfect Round about,
With wearie wings, return'd unto her Maister,
And as judicious, on his arme she plac'd-her.
O devine wit, that in the narrow wombe
Of a small Flie could find sufficient roome
For all those springs, wheelles counterpoize, and chaines,
Which stood in steed of life, and spur, and raines.¹¹¹

"O devine wit": such skill raised human ingenuity almost to the level of God's, and recognition of this skill was an oblique way of praising the first Creator and Inventor.

Herrick's insects are those creatures of anthropomorphic tradition to be found in the fables of Aesop and resemble, too, the symbolic insects of Anacreon. The English poet's grasshoppers, crickets, ants, flies and gnats are usually carefree, merry, singing things; for

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p.99.

¹¹⁰ Macgregor, pp.93-94.

¹¹¹ Susan Snyder, ed., *The Divine Weeks and Works* by Guillaume de Saluste Sieur Du Bartas, trans. Joseph Sylvester (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 1, 287.

example, Herrick and his friend, John Wickes (or Weeks) will drink until they are "full as merry/ As the crickit..." (H-336) (and, as Kitty Scoular says,¹¹² the cricket was often a symbol for the poet himself); one of the pleasures of country life is to hear "a Quire/ Of singing Crickits by [the] fire" (H-106, ll.121-2, and see too H-333, ll.7-8); and Oberon's feast has "the chirring Grasshopper;/ The merry Cricket, puling Flie,/ The piping Gnat for minstralcy" (H-293A).

It is a small step from these childlike, entomic creatures to those their equal in size, the diminutive fairies; and, as Kitty Scoular remarks, fairy poetry is a special expression of an interest in minuteness: "One of the most notable characteristics of this small world is that elves and insects fraternize freely."¹¹³ Insects provide the food for fairy banquets, and rather as the elves of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* creep into acorn cups to hide, Lovelace's grasshopper sleeps in a "Carv'd acron-bed".¹¹⁴ The contemporary minor poet Robert Heath explicitly compares an errant flea to a fairy in his poem "On a Fleabite":

And though for drawing so much guiltles blood
Thou wel deserv'st to die,
With a gold chain about thy neck, I wu'd
Have thee kept daintilie....¹¹⁵

Herrick's Oberon, after his feast, is as "full as a Bee with Thyme" (H-443, l.8). The nineteenth-century critic, Alfred Nutt, sees the

¹¹² K. Scoular, p.108.

¹¹³ K. Scoular, p.91.

¹¹⁴ Richard Lovelace, *The Poems of Richard Lovelace*, ed. C.H. Wilkinson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), p.39.

¹¹⁵ Quoted by K. Scoular, p.101, n.4.

similarities between insects and fairies in these terms: "...the minute size and extreme swiftness of the fairies...insensibly assimilate[s] them in our mind to the winged insect world...".¹¹⁶

It seems natural that Herrick's interest in the small and the finely wrought should find expression in fairy poetry. The dedication of "The Fairie Temple: or, *Oberons* Chappell..." (H-223) is significant in our understanding of Herrick's concerns. He offers the poem to John Merrifield, a lawyer, who seems to be a connoisseur of strange and beautiful temples, perhaps, like the Tradescants, a dedicated traveller in search of marvels. What Herrick is about to show him is something even more "rare" and "curious" than he has yet seen. These words are important in the seventeenth-century context. "Rare" is defined as "Of a kind, class, or description, seldom found, met with or occurring; unusual, uncommon, exceptional...of uncommon excellence or merit; remarkably good or fine; distinguished".¹¹⁷ A close companion of "rare" is "curious", a word occurring frequently in Herrick's fairy poetry, and meaning "Bestowing care or pains; careful; studious; attentive", and "Careful as to the standard of excellence; difficult to satisfy; particular; nice, fastidious, especially in food, clothing, matters of taste". It can also mean "Ingenious, skilful, clever, expert" and "Taking the interest of a connoisseur in any branch of art; skilled as a connoisseur or virtuoso". Its meaning as an objective quality of things is highly relevant to the objects to be found in Oberon's palace: "Made with care or art; skilfully, elaborately or beautifully wrought...Of food, clothing, etc.:

¹¹⁶ Alfred Nutt, *The Fairy Mythology of Shakespeare* (London: Nutt, 1900), p.6.

¹¹⁷ *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "Rare" 5,6a.

Exquisitely prepared, dainty, delicate...Characterized by special care, careful, accurate, minute".¹¹⁸ Herrick's fairies are indeed "rare" and "curious", evoking a sense of wonder at their minuteness, delicacy, craftsmanship, beauty, and quality of "artificiality" as opposed to the purely natural. We get a good idea of the importance of such words to the inquiring minds of the seventeenth century, and their relevance to the miniature in Kitty Scouler's discussion of Robert Hooke's *Micrographia* (1665), a treatise on the microscope:

Robert Hooke, in his *Micrographia*, had much to say about nature's "curiosity" as well as about the "useful informations" to be got from minute studies. The word "curiosity" had acquired several senses since its introduction during the 14th century with the meaning "careful workmanship". For the Elizabethans it might mean vain speculation or frivolous over-elaboration; but it was also gathering to itself the related senses of ingenuity, connoisseurship, carefulness of construction, and strangeness. By Hooke it was used especially with a sense of mathematical precision ("the Points of the most curious Mathematical Instruments"), of elaborate craftsmanship ("you can hardly look on the scales of any Fish, but you may discover abundance of curiosity and beautifying"), of delicacy ("the finest Lawn...so curious that the threads were scarce discernable by the naked eye"), and of surprising novelty ("an infinite variety of curiously figur'd *Snow*").¹¹⁹

To return to John Merrifield (mentioned above, p.91), the lover of curiosities, for whose delight Herrick is revealing his fairy temple. One reason for the "rareness" of the temple is its having been made without the use of normal building materials, and thus, by implication, by supernatural means. The temple, says Herrick, was once the fairies' and it is now Merrifield's; there is a sense here that the poet has

¹¹⁸ Ibid., s.v. "Curious" 1,2,4,6,7a,b,9.

¹¹⁹ K. Scouler, p.85.

discovered an aspect of "nature", and has transmuted it into art so that it becomes an *objet d'art*, not unlike the rare, beautiful or grotesque objects favoured by connoisseurs of the curious. (The rationalism and sophistication attaching to Merrifield's status as a lawyer and a connoisseur is important in establishing the credibility of Herrick's creation.)¹²⁰ In this connection, it is helpful to consider Rosalie Colie's description of the "Wunderkammern" and "Kunstschaenke" owned by some of the princes and virtuosi of Europe, in which were displayed, not nature "'most plain and pure,' but rather '*Nature Erring, or Varying,*' or '*Nature Altered* or wrought,' the oddities, rarities, wonders, and puzzles of the natural world".¹²¹ (Her quotations are from Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, II.8.) Ingenious mechanical inventions played tricks with the eye in these closets, altering perspective and creating illusion. Whether or not Herrick had ever seen or heard of a "Kunstschrack", in inviting Merrifield to look within his fairy temple, he is following a vogue of his time, the fascination with paradox and "the fundamental mystery of metamorphosis, which may be practiced [sic] upon nature by art, so that their collusion, their playing together, may result in *serio ludere*".¹²² As in Herrick's fairy poetry, not only is man's technical skill being demonstrated, but also the work of "God Himself, the author of Nature, who plays on the earth".¹²³

¹²⁰ Daniel H. Woodward in "Herrick's Oberon Poems", *JEGP* 64(1965), p.274, expresses a similar thought.

¹²¹ R.L. Colie, *Paradoxia Epidemica: The Renaissance Tradition of Paradox* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1966), p.304.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p.307.

¹²³ This is a quotation from Schott's *Magia Naturalis* (1677), quoted by Rosalie L. Colie, *Paradoxia Epidemica*, p.307.

Part of the rarity of Oberon's highly stylized temple is the number of small, strange objects and creatures which occupy and adorn it. Because this religion is "Part Pagan, part Papistical" (1.25), there are idols to be worshipped, namely, insects enshrined in niches: a cricket, a beetle, a canker worm, and the fly *Cantharides* (a specimen of which is mentioned in Tradescant's catalogue).¹²⁴ Herrick's audience would have recognized that he was adhering to tradition in placing some of these in his fairy environment. According to Katharine Briggs, the cricket was always a magical creature, and the infliction of the canker worm on plants seems to have been within the power of the fairies.¹²⁵ The way these small creatures are described and the emphasis on "fine Fripperie" (1.21) set the focus of attention on elaborate craftsmanship and decorative skill; and appropriately so, for the fairies were legendary for their skill in working gold and other metals.¹²⁶ One is reminded of Herrick's apprenticeship as a goldsmith by the delicacy of these lines describing the altar cloth; as A.B. Chambers rightly says, they suggest "an admirably ordered beauty created from rare and curious materials":¹²⁷

[Its] Linnen-Drapery is a thin	60
Subtile and ductile Codlin's skin;	
Which o're the board is smoothly spred,	
With little Seale-work Damasked.	
The Fringe that circumbinds it too,	
Is Spangle-work of trembling dew,	65
Which, gently gleaming, makes a show,	
Like Frost-work glitt'ring on the Snow.	

¹²⁴ Macgregor, Microfiche 5, p.15.

¹²⁵ K.M. Briggs, *Puck*, p.66.

¹²⁶ Scott, p.288, and K.M. Briggs, *Dictionary*, p.139.

¹²⁷ A.B. Chambers, "Herrick and the Trans-shifting of Time", *Studies in Philology* 72(1975), 93.

Credulity accepts "Seale-work", "Spangle-work" and "Frost-work" as crafts befitting the fairies' minute fingers and love of glamour, that "mesmerism or enchantment cast over the senses".¹²⁸

The richness and elegance of the writing continues in the reference to the "board" or altar as "fetuou"—artistically fashioned, handsome¹²⁹—and to the "Fairie-Psalter" as "grac't" with the fine and delicate wings of trout-flies. There is an artist's feeling for fine decorative style in the depiction of the "neat" altar rails as "Hatcht, with the Silver-light of snails" (l.92), where "hatcht" means either "inlaid" or decorated with close parallel lines".¹³⁰ The effect is of minute and careful workmanship, the kind to be appreciated best through a magnifying glass, either an actual one, such as a goldsmith might use, or the metaphorical one of Herrick's poetry.

The miniature saints of Oberon's religion have correspondingly miniature names: Tit, Nit, Is, Itis, Frip, Trip, Fill and Fillie, the assonance insisting on their fairy fragility. The priests are little and puppetlike, their voices mere squeaking and puling. As I mentioned in Chapter I, Delattre, mourning the passing of the true folk fairy, sees Herrick's fairies as "brisk and witty puppets", and the play they are acting as "a sort of ingenious peep-show".¹³¹ He has hit it exactly, though the inference he draws is, I feel, mistakenly derogatory.

¹²⁸ K.M. Briggs, *Dictionary*, p.191.

¹²⁹ See Patrick, p.131, n.17.

¹³⁰ See Patrick, p.131, n.21, and *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "Hatch" v. 1,2.

¹³¹ Delattre, *EFP*, p.181.

The value of this poetry lies in the ingenuity of the poet in finding appropriate natural objects for his process of reduction, and in investing them with a jewel-like permanence and importance; in this way, a knuckle-bone becomes a holy altar, insect eggs, "nits", make up a rosary (l.115), a dried apple core with "ratling Kirnils" (l.127) does duty as a church bell. As in "*Oberons Palace*" (H-443), objects that seem worthless to human beings undergo a magical transformation in the world of the thrifty and inventive fairies. Many of the objects which Herrick mentions would be associated with the supernatural by his contemporaries. Katharine Briggs writes, "Apple skins, salt, dry chips and old shoes are all used in divination, fasting spittle has been from time immemorial a protection against witchcraft, and pins are variously used in magic".¹³² She regrets that "The Fairie Temple..." should emphasize superstitions and spells at the expense of true fairy-lore;¹³³ however, perhaps because of the small size of the objects and the fine detail of the description, the atmosphere does not strike the reader as inauthentic. Daniel Woodward would agree, I think; he says:

As Milton was to do later in *Paradise Lost*, I, 777-88, when he compared the rebellious angels to "Faery Elves," Herrick used the vitality of the popular imagination embracing fairy lore to give additional reality to a further, more complicated realm.¹³⁴

This seems just; we have moved away from a recounting of the ways of the fairies on the level of folklore to a realm of art, where our reaction, and that of Herrick's seventeenth-century readers, is one of

¹³² K.M. Briggs, *Puck*, p.66.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p.66.

¹³⁴ Woodward, p.273.

aesthetic delight in the cunningly and credibly devised.

The next fairy poem in the sequence is "*Oberons Feast*" (H-293A), dedicated, like "The Fairie Temple...", to a lawyer and prizer of "things that are/ Curious, and un-familiar", Thomas Shapcot. (A reading of *Tradescant's Rarities* leaves one feeling that most seventeenth-century people were fascinated by these qualities.)¹³⁵ Thomas Shapcot is promised another poem—"Oberons Palace" (H-443)—when the dishes of this feast are cleared away. William Browne, in Book Three of *Britannia's Pastorals* (hypothetically dated 1624 by Joan Mary Ozark on the basis of recently discovered internal evidence),¹³⁶ has a fairy feast which seems to have inspired Herrick's. It was common practice for poets to circulate their poems in manuscript form to their friends, and this frequently led to admiring imitations. An early version of "*Oberons Feast*", "A Description of his Dyet" (numbered H-293B by Patrick), was published in 1634 with some other fairy poems. The later version shows strong similarities to Browne's fairy feast, and was probably influenced by it. Both are quaint parodies of Jacobean courtly feasts, and Woodward calls Herrick's description of fairy food "one of the most charming...in all English poetry".¹³⁷ Although all is fantastical, Herrick keeps the illusion believable with such lifelike details as those which qualify Oberon's attendant musicians: "the chirring Grashopper;/The merry Cricket, puling Flie,/ The piping Gnat for minstralcy" (ll.15-17). Katharine Briggs finds the detailed

¹³⁵ See the account of *Tradescant's Rarities*, above, p.3.

¹³⁶ Joan M. Ozark, "Faery Court Poetry of the Early Seventeenth Century", Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Princeton, 1973., *DAI*, 34(1974), 5115A-16A.

¹³⁷ Woodward, p.280.

description of Oberon's food "gross",¹³⁸ but in suspending disbelief sufficiently to enter Oberon's world, one is prepared to accept that it will be strange and different from the human one. The correspondences between the fairy feast and a characteristic Jacobean one are close, however, and "a Newt's stew'd thigh" is possibly the equivalent of a piece of Devonshire mutton. Though the thought of eating such food as is set before Oberon might occasion disgust in modern readers, it is possible that Herrick's fellows were less squeamish, the age being generally more robust in its tastes than ours. Interestingly enough, the atmosphere of Oberon's feast is one of refinement, freshness, and innocent enjoyment. The feast is "less great then nice" (l.12); the bread is made of "A Moon-parcht grain of purest wheat"(l.9); the wine is a "pure seed-Pearle of Infant dew, (l.21); the "little Fuzz-ball-pudding" (l.29) is rejected by the fastidious Oberon as being "too coorse"; another wine is pressed from the "sweet and dainty" flower, bridewort or meadowsweet (l.50), and is served in a "daintie daizie" (l.51);¹³⁹ and the feast is introduced and concluded in reverent and civilized fashion by prayers said by Oberon's chaplain. The poem is undeniably sensuous, but the richness is prevented from becoming cloying by the emphasis on the tiny, by the precision and distinctness of the syntax, and by the orderly and vigorous use of the rhyming couplet. Oberon's essential innocence is conveyed in the lines, "His kitling eyes begin to runne/Quite through the table..." (ll.24-25). Patrick, rather surprisingly, glosses

¹³⁸ K.M. Briggs, *Puck*, p.65.

¹³⁹ See *Cavalier Poets*, ed. Thomas Clayton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), p.84, n. and quotation from *Gerard's Herbal*.

"kitling" as "morose";¹⁴⁰ although, in all his other usages of the word, Herrick seems to mean "kitten". "Kitling" here suggests that Oberon's eyes are small, lively, bright, capricious and childlike, all qualities of the diminutive and, in a sense, ingenuous fairies.

Katharine Briggs highlights the seventeenth-century enjoyment of seeing things in unusual ways when she says that we see the courtly fairy worlds of Drayton and Herrick (and, she might have added, William Browne) through a "minifying-glass".¹⁴¹ Alexander Leggatt is another who speaks of the poets' delight in "viewing familiar things from a special angle...".¹⁴² We see this reflected particularly in "*Oberon's Palace*" (H-443), in which small, cast-off pieces of human and animal bodies are put to wholly new uses. Children's and squirrels' teeth and nails pave the floor of the palace; a mole stolen from the neck of a shy girl becomes an ornamental feature of the entrance; a cast-off blue snakeskin forms a tapestry-like covering for the walls. Herrick seems to invite us to consider two particular aspects of his fairy palace: its Lilliputian size and accoutrements; and the ingenious artistry—both the fairies' and his own—which has created such a small and perfect object. The clue lies in his reference to "Art's/ Wise Hand" (ll.59-60). The word "curious" plays its part again (ll.31 and 69), with implications of astonishing and exquisite craftsmanship. Even more prominent and suggestive are the words "neat" or "neatly" (ll.24,50,56,71,103). The *Oxford English Dictionary*

¹⁴⁰ Patrick, p.163, n.7. Other examples of the use of "kitling" are found in H-106, l.124; H-336, l.146; H-443, l.74.

¹⁴¹ K.M. Briggs, *Dictionary*, p.238.

¹⁴² Alexander Leggatt, *Shakespeare's Comedy of Love* (London: Methuen, 1974), p.107.

qualifies its definitions of these words¹⁴³ by saying that, in seventeenth-century usage, the precise sense intended is not always clear. It is possible that Herrick was remembering the Latin root of "neat": *nitere*, to shine; and other meanings seem to include clean, clear, bright, exact, refined, elegantly formed or arranged, dainty and tasteful, cleverly contrived, and exhibiting skill and precision. The insistence on neatness does much to lessen any sense of the grotesque or the gross; all is fine, carefully worked and fastidious. Without the poet's sharply focussed "microscope", we should be the poorer in being aware of none of it. The fabrics of the fairy bedchamber are so delicate as to be almost impalpable. The blankets of Mab's bed are made of "Gossamore"—spiderweb—(1.95), and so are the curtains of ^{the} bed and ^{the} tester (11.100-104), and the fringe of these has been cunningly contrived of "those Threds/ Broke at the Losse of Maiden-heads" (11.105-6). That Herrick is here not too far from country belief is plain in this quotation from Robert Kirk, one of the most engaging and devoted of seventeenth-century fairy chroniclers:

...Ther Women [the fairies'] are said to Spine very fine, to Dy, to Tossue and Embroyder; but whither it is as manuall Operation of substantiall refined Stuffs, with apt and solid Instruments, or only curious Cob-webs, impalpable Rainbows, and a fantastic Imitation of terrestriall Mortals...I leave to conjecture as I found it.¹⁴⁴

In the last of the sequence of longer fairy poems, "The Beggar to Mab, the *Fairie Queen*" (H-638), Herrick indulges in a further exercise in credulities which becomes a triumph of reduction. The comedy, if a

¹⁴³ *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "Neat" adj. 1,2,4c,8b,c,9b.

¹⁴⁴ Quoted by K.M. Briggs, *Puck*, p.31.

rather cruel one, lies in our being invited to imagine a hungry beggar (presumably, of human size) beseeching the queen of the fairies to give him such minute articles from her larder as an ant, a mouse ear, a bee's abdomen, a cricket's hip or haunch, a pea, the fine dust of a flour mill, or even the crumbs from a prisoner's begging basket. The reader's imagination undergoes contortions even more vigorous than before, and the way is prepared for the even smaller fairies of Margaret Cavendish's teeming mind, which envisages creatures so microscopic as to be found inhabiting the human brain, their mining excavations the cause of human toothache!

...And that same place where Memory lies in,
Is great King *Oberon* his Magazine...¹⁴⁵

.....
When we have Pious Thoughts, and think of Heaven,
Yet go about, not ask to be Forgiven,
Perchance they're Preaching, or a Chapter saying,
Or on their knees they are Devoutly Praying...¹⁴⁶

The capacity of the human imagination to be inspired by the revelations of the microscopic, used to such effect by Herrick and his contemporaries, has not been exhausted. A recent report in *New Scientist*, entitled "X-ray Microscope to view Cellular Life", seems to echo the excitement of that seventeenth-century scientist, Robert Hooke, as conveyed by the extract from his *Micrographia* which is quoted on page ninety-two of this chapter.

British scientists will soon be offered the exciting prospect of observing microscopic life in action, from tissues and cells to large molecules—something they have been able only to dream about until now....The problem with conventional electron microscopy is that

¹⁴⁵ Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, *Poems and Phancies* (London: 1664), p.228: "*The City of these Fairies is the Brain*". Bodleian Library, Douce C. subt.17.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.229: "*The Fairies in the Brain may be the Cause of Many Thoughts*".

it has to operate in a vacuum, so it is impossible to study living tissues. Also, the preparation [which involves embedding each sample in an epoxy resin—shades of flies in amber!] kills tissues. [The Daresbury X-ray microscope will make it possible to examine living tissues and] it promises to alter radically our view of the microscopic world.¹⁴⁷

Katharine Briggs speaks rather scathingly of Herrick's fairies as "miracles of littleness and very little else";¹⁴⁸ however, it is indeed the aspect of miracle that impresses the reader of Herrick's fairy poetry. We are removed from the fairy world by our large size and by the sensation of looking through the diminishing end of a telescope—the "glass" that intervenes to separate us from the creatures within, now metamorphosed into objects of art in much the same way as lilies were encased in glass or Herrick's pet sparrow Phil was "With Lillies Tomb'd up in a Glasse" (H-497). The sensation is one of wonder, and is part of the poet's ability to make us marvel at all aspects of the multifarious world as indications of the infinite variety of God.

¹⁴⁷ Roger Highfield, "X-ray Microscope to View Cellular Life", *New Scientist*, 14 February 1985, p.27.

¹⁴⁸ K.M. Briggs, *Puck*, p.47.

CHAPTER III

HESPERIDES AS A GARDEN

In the seventeenth century, there was a keen interest in gardens, which were valued both for the aesthetic pleasure they could give, and for the metaphysical insights to be gained in considering and walking through them. Whereas the formal, geometrically organized gardens of the sixteenth century had been man's attempt to imitate the perceived order of the universe, the gardens of the following century, for reasons I shall make clear, were remarkable for their apparent casualness, a careful disorder artistically achieved. The aesthetic principle behind this arranging of the seventeenth century garden will be seen to be one which Herrick espouses, and which finds echoes in his phrases "A Sweet disorder", "wilde civility", "civill Wildernesse", "sweet neglect".¹ It is natural in a poet of Herrick's pastoral inclination to think in terms of gardens, and to seize upon their usefulness as metaphors in a variety of ways. The title which Herrick gives his book of secular poems is proof of this; he sees his collection as a garden, and his poems as its golden fruits.

So rich is the symbolism of the garden in literature that it is useful to consider its development. As Anthony Low remarks, "The art and culture of almost every civilization which has left any trace reveal an interest in the garden. The garden is what we might call a

¹ See H-83, H-244, H-560, and H-665.

primeval event, an archetypal fact of life, and naturally so".² In the western world, human beings seem always to have yearned for the peace and happiness and innocence which they associate with man's first habitation, given expression in Genesis: "And God planted a garden in Eden...". This remote and blissful place, now lost to man through the Fall, came to be known to the mediaeval church as Paradise, the word having acquired several semantic accretions from Greek, Hebrew and Latin usage to undergo a subtle change from its original Persian meaning. (The Persian word *pairidaēza* meant the royal park, enclosure, or orchard of the Persian king.)³ By the time of the Renaissance, the concept of a perfect garden world had gathered further associations, closely connected with the ideas of pastoral.

Western man's views on gardens begin with Homer, a point made by Ernst Curtius:

From Homer's landscapes later generations took certain motifs which became permanent elements in a long chain of tradition: the place of heart's desire, beautiful with perpetual spring, as the scene of a blessed life after death; the lovely miniature landscape which combines tree, spring, and grass; the wood with various species of trees; the carpet of flowers. In the hymns to the gods ascribed to Homer we find these motifs elaborated. The flowery mead of the Hymn to Demeter displays roses, violets, irises, crocuses, hyacinths, and narcissuses [sic].⁴

This is indeed a *locus amoenus*, the primeval pleasant place which is an almost unconscious part of our desires and atavistic memories. It

² Anthony Low, *Love's Architecture: Devotional Modes in Seventeenth-Century English Poetry* (New York: New York University Press, 1978), p.xi.

³ A. Bartlett Giamatti, *The Earthly Paradise and the Renaissance Epic* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1966), p.11.

⁴ Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1953), p.186.

was Virgil who used the epithet *amoenus* (lovely, pleasant) for beautiful nature in his description of the Elysian Fields,⁵ and his name is connected with the abundant variety to be found in such pleasurable landscapes. In his mock epic on the death of a gnat (*Culex*), Virgil mentions a mixed forest with nine kinds of trees and a grassy plot in which eighteen kinds of flowers flourish.⁶ Virgil's description of the Elysian Fields served as the model for Christian poets in their depiction of Paradise.⁷ H.V.S. Ogden's important essay on the principles of variety and contrast in the seventeenth century makes the point that "the human mind is naturally pleased with change", an idea which poets and philosophers of the Renaissance enthusiastically adopted from the classical writers. It was supported too by Christian optimistic thought, which held that God's world, in Ogden's phrase, is "suitable and beautiful" because of its diversity. This view is typified in Myles Coverdale's *The Old Faith* (1541):

And first, inasmuch as man should inhabit the earth,
 [God] garnished it aforehand, and decked it with a
 goodly green garment; that is, with a substance,
 which he decked first with flowers and all manner of
 herbs, which not only are pleasant to look upon and
 wonderfully beautified, of a pleasant taste and
 goodly colour, but also profitable for food and all
 manner of medicine. To the same also did he first
 add sundry trees and plants. Then watered he the
 earth with fair springs, rivers, and running waters.
 And the ground made he not like on every side, but
 in many places set it up pleasantly. And hereof
 have we the valleys, plains, mountains, and hills;

⁵ Ibid., p.192.

⁶ Ibid., p.193.

⁷ Ibid., p.200.

which things all have their due operation, fruit and pleasantness.⁸

A similarly rich variety is to be found in *Hesperides*, where we might agree with Herrick's claim in his prefatory poem⁹ that "Full is my Book of Glories" (l.9). On two significant occasions he links "glories" with "garden", and hence the first word seems to imply more that does Patrick's gloss of "circles of radiance; laudatory displays".¹⁰ One might picture the magnificence and variety of a display of garden flowers, as well as "an effulgence of [heavenly] light, unearthly beauty attributed by imagination".¹¹ When one sees that Herrick's combination of the terms "garden" and "glories" refers in fact to two beautiful girls, like flowers in loveliness and brevity of existence, and equally fit to be commemorated in Herrick's book, one looks at the line from the prefatory poem with new insight; the first of these references appears in "Upon a Lady that dyed in child-bed..." (H-318).

⁸ H.V.S. Ogden, "The Principles of Variety and Contrast in Seventeenth-Century Aesthetics, and Milton's Poetry" *Journal of the History of Ideas*, X,2 (April, 1949), 161. See also Richard L. Capwell, "Herrick and the Aesthetic Principle of Variety and Contrast", *South Atlantic Quarterly* 71 (Autumn, 1972), 488-95; and Robert W. Halli, "Robert Herrick's Various Blazon of Beauty", in *Renaissance Papers*, 1980, eds. A. Leigh DeNeef and M. Thomas Hester (Durham, N.C.: Southeastern Renaissance Conference, 1980), pp.53-61. Robert W. Halli, in discussing Herrick's use of variety, shows that Herrick believes, as do his contemporaries, that "Variety is more than mere numerousness and demands that each element in an artistic creation be particularized sufficiently for sensory appreciation. Artistic variety is designed to produce in its audience wonder and admiration, the effects of God's various creation upon the mind of a perceptive man" (p.54).

⁹ Patrick, p.9 (unnumbered).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.10.

¹¹ *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "Glory", sb. 6.

crescendo in the enumeration of some of the glories of "art":

Thou sha't have Ribbands, Roses, Rings,
Gloves, Garters, Stockings, Shooes, and Strings
Of winning Colours....

(11.51-53)

We have only to remember Herrick's fascination with clothing as shown in "Delight in Disorder" (H-83), "Upon *Julia's* Clothes" (H-779), and "*Julia's* Petticoat" (H-175) to know that this list of items of the sort that Autolycus might have in his pedlar's pack is almost as important to the poet as a list of flowers. Just as the fields are lovelier for being enamelled and pied with daisies and cowslips, so the beauty of a girl is enhanced by such profusion of ornament. In both conventional and unconventional ways, Herrick shows that Virgil's principle of Arcadian variety is one which is important to his conception of the Hesperidean garden that is his volume of poetry, and to his vision of the world.

Elysium in Greek mythology was the home of the blessed dead, and it became associated with the Fortunate Isles and the garden of the Hesperides, the three sisters who guarded the golden apples which Hera had received as a wedding gift. "It was a popular medieval belief that paradise, a land or island where everything was beautiful and restful, and where death and decay were unknown, still existed somewhere on earth."¹² The hope of the early voyagers was that they would discover it, and indeed, according to A. Bartlett Giamatti,¹³ Columbus thought he had found it. Further voyages of discovery made it unlikely that such a paradise would be found on earth, and now it

¹² *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, p.832, s.v. "The Earthly Paradise".

¹³ Giamatti, p.4.

came to be seen as some "other world" or realm of the mind. One might compare with this Satan's view of the cosmos as he descends from heaven in *Paradise Lost*:

...Starrs distant, but nigh hand seemd other Worlds,
Or other Worlds they seemd, or happy Iles,
Like those *Hesperian* Gardens fam'd of old,
Fortunat Fields, and Groves and flourie Vales,
Thrice happy Iles....¹⁴

Man could thus recreate paradise within himself. This removal of the garden of paradise to a symbolic plane is probably the genesis of the notion that a book of poems can be seen as a garden, an intellectual "other world". Norman Farmer adduces the titles of various Elizabethan miscellanies as proof of this tendency: *Briton's Bowre of Delights* (1591, 1597), *The Arbor of Amorous Devises* (1597), *England's Helicon* (1600, 1614) and *Bel-vedere: or the Garden of the Muses* (1600).¹⁵ *Hesperides* is obviously well within this tradition.

In order to understand still further what gardens meant to Herrick and to his contemporaries, I turn now to a look at the seventeenth-century conception of the garden, and how it differs from that of the sixteenth century. Robert Burton (1577-1640) is our guide:

But the most pleasant of all outward pastimes is that of *Aretaeus*, *deambulatio per amoena loca*, to make a petty progress, a merry journey now and then with some good companions, to see Cities, Castles, Towns, ...
To see the pleasant fields, the crystal fountains,
And take the gentle air amongst the mountains:
to walk amongst Orchards, Gardens, Bowers, Mounts, and Arbours, artificial wildernesses, green thickets, Arches, Groves, Lawns, Rivulets, Fountains, and such like pleasant places, ... Brooks, Pools, Fishponds, betwixt wood and water, in a fair meadow, by a river side, ... to disport in some pleasant plain, park, run up a steep hill

¹⁴ H. Darbishire, *The Poems of John Milton, Paradise Lost*, III, 566-70, p.67.

¹⁵ Farmer, p.15.

sometimes, or sit in a shady seat, must needs be a delectable recreation.¹⁶

As Low says, "...the physical garden became an emblem of meditation; its very shape and substance were understood allegorically, and this understanding had much to do with the burgeoning interest during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in gardening as an avocation."¹⁷ The roots of this development are to be found in the mediaeval concept of the enclosed garden, *hortus conclusus*. This was inspired by a quotation from Canticles 4:12: "A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse". *Hortus conclusus* became an allegorical figure for the Virgin Mary, a being enclosed from sin, and then was associated with the retired life of spiritual contemplation. The soul was seen as enclosed within a garden, and subsequently was identified as the garden itself. To illustrate this, Ruth Wallerstein quotes St Bonaventura, interpreter of St Augustine's doctrines:

In Paradise is no plantation save of eternal causes...And the soul is a paradise in which is planted the Scripture. And it has innumerable sweetnesses and beauties, whence it is written "An enclosed garden, sister my bride." A garden in which are sacramental mysteries and spiritual intelligences, where flows a fountain of spiritual emissions; but the garden is enclosed and the fountain sealed, for it does not lie open to the sinful, but to those of whom "God knows that they are his".¹⁸

Ruth Wallerstein also gives a quotation from the Flemish humanist, Lipsius (1547-1606), whose influence on the thinkers of the seventeenth century is important, and who draws imaginative parallels between actual

¹⁶ R. Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, Part 2, Section 2, Mem.4, p.86.

¹⁷ Low, p.112.

¹⁸ R. Wallerstein, p.206.

gardens and spiritual ones:

For gardens be ordained, not for the body, but for the mind: and to recreate it, not to besot it with idlenesse: only as a wholesome withdrawing place from the cares and troubles of this world. Art thou wearie of the course of people? here thou maist be alone. Haue they worldly businesses tyred thee? here thou maist be refreshed again, where the food of quietnes, and gentle blowing of the pure and whol some aire, will euen breath a new life into thee. Doest thou consider the wise men of olde time? They had their dwelling in gardens...So many sharp and subtil disputations of naturall philosophy, proceed from those greene bowers. So many precepts of manners from those shadowy Achademies. Yea out of the walkes and pleasant allies of gardens, spring those sweet abounding riuers which with their fruitful ouerflowings haue watered the whole world. For why? the mind lifteth vp and advanceth it self more to these high cogitations, whenit is at libertie to behold his owne home, heauen.¹⁹

The task of trying to discover what Herrick feels about gardens is made more difficult by his characteristically never dealing directly with the garden as an image. That he sees his *silva* as a garden collection is to be assumed from his title, with its evocation of a mythological garden. In fact, though, this last is only a garden in the sense that Eden is: the implication is of a fertile, green and spacious park. What we can be almost sure about is that the poet loves gardens as he loves nature, for the reasons inherent in these lines from "A Dialogue betwixt himselfe and Mistresse *Elizabeth Wheeler*, under the name of *Amarillis*" (H-1068):

In country Meadows pearl'd with Dew,
And set about with Lillies;
There filling Maunds with Cowslips, you
May find your *Amarillis*.
(11.5-8)

The passage from Lipsius quoted above discerns in gardens two qualities which infuse Herrick's *Hesperides*: love of gardens for their

¹⁹ Ibid., pp.271-72.

own sake, and for the healing and reviving effect on the spirit of a withdrawal into nature, an action which affords opportunities for consolation and meditation. Though it is hard to cite precise evidence for the latter, there are intimations of this in the country life poems:

The Damaskt medowes, and the peebly streames
Sweeten, and make soft your dreames...

("A Country life..." [H-106], ll.43-44)

Closeness to nature leads to a quiet conscience, and results in a contented spirit. In "A Panegerick to Sir *Lewis Pemberton*" (H-377), Herrick presents the good fortune of a man in the retirement of the country who finds, as a consequence of his goodness and generosity, that "all things even/ Make for thy peace, and pace to heaven" (ll.29-30). The enclosed garden of Herrick's *Hesperides*, in Low's words, can represent "the other world, the world not seen by the natural man",²⁰ but, one might add, apprehended by him through his love of nature.

Herrick's garden is a protean fancy, amenable to a number of horticultural interpretations, and a more obvious one than most is probably that of the secular garden of love, as it is depicted in *The Romance of the Rose*. Servius, a late fourteenth-century commentator on Virgil, connects Virgil's use of the word *amoenus* (lovely, pleasant) with "amor" ("the same relationship, that is, as between 'love' and 'lovely'", as Curtius points out),²¹ and there is an obvious connection between the ideal garden and the garden of love, both profane and divine. Terry Comito speaks of the potency of the garden gods, and says that "Like the fairy pleasancess of Celtic tradition, such spots are not

²⁰ Low, p.145.

²¹ Curtius, p.192.

just conveniences for lovers but incitements to love, centers of a sometimes dangerous power".²² What critics have identified as Herrick's libertine strain is highlighted here. Herrick's obvious appreciation of beautiful women, and his sensuous descriptions of them, seem to me less an example of libertinism than an exploration of the way in which beauty heightens the sensibilities and results in an artistic, aesthetic view of the world, a view on which I shall elaborate in a later section of this study. Whitaker better expresses what I mean: "Julia, Corinna, and the rest, daughters of the Hesperides...were means to an end. Through them he approaches the golden apples, the natural fruit transmuted into artifact, the lily in the crystal".²³ As, in the pastoral convention, a beautiful shepherdess is the inspirer of verse and song, so Herrick's many mistresses are the occasion and the inspiration for his poetry, each in turn or all together taking on the aspect of muse. If my reading of "To his Mistresses" (H-19) is right, Herrick makes metaphorical use of the story of King Aeson, restored to "manly vigour" (as Patrick's note explains)²⁴ with the magical aid of the enchantress, Medea, to convey, in his customarily oblique way, the effect that beauty, as realized in the shape of his "Girles" (H-634, H-1093), has upon his poetic powers:

HElpe me! helpe me! now I call
 To my pretty *Witchcrafts* all:
 Old I am, and cannot do
 That, I was accustom'd to.

²² Terry Comito, *The Idea of the Garden in the Renaissance* (Hassocks, Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1979), p.90.

²³ Thomas R. Whitaker, "Herrick and the Fruits of the Garden", *ELH* 22(1955), 33.

²⁴ Patrick, p.18, n.1.

Bring your *Magicks, Spels, and Charmes*, 5
 To enflesh my thighs, and armes:
 Is there no way to beget
 In my limbs their former heat?
AEson had (as *Poets* faine)
 Baths that made him young againe: 10
 Find that Medicine (if you can)
 For your drie-decrepid man:
 Who would faine his strength renew,
 Were it but to pleasure you.

In view of Herrick's often demonstrated delight in erotic wordplay, my interpretation may seem naïve; but, taken in the perspective of his profounder concerns and poetic values, I think there are grounds for such a reading. Herrick's style is always to invite the reader to look through the filmy lawn of his words to the deeper truth lying veiled beneath. There is even ambiguity in his telling his lovely mistresses that his ghost will,

as I glide by, 10

Cast on my Girles a glance, and loving eye:
 Or fold mine armes, and sigh, because I've lost
 The world so soon, and in it, you the most.

("To his lovely Mistresses" [H-634])

The folding of the arms, besides being a customary gesture of melancholy, is perhaps also an acknowledgement that the poet mourns not only for his lost mistresses, but also for the fact that he can now, in death, no longer hold a creative pen. The instructions "To *Julia*" (H-957) before she offers incense to the gods can be credibly understood as a reference to *Julia*'s role as muse and inspiration, as fanner of the poetic fire:

Offer thy gift; but first the Law commands
 Thee *Julia*, first, to *sanctifie* thy hands:
 Doe that my *Julia* which the rites require,
 Then boldly give thine incense to the fire.

What tends to support my interpretation is Herrick's choosing to use "*thine* incense" rather than, for example "the incense", and the knowledge that he is always highly responsive to the "Richly Aromaticall"

(H-155) perfumes of his mistresses, a fact demonstrated most memorably in, among many evocative examples (H-32, H-98, H-414), "To the most fair and lovely Mistris, *Anne Soame*, now Lady *Abdie*" (H-375):

SO smells those odours that do rise
 From out the wealthy spiceries:
 So smels the flowre of *blooming Clove*; 5
 Or *Roses* smother'd in the stove:
 So smells the Aire of spiced wine;
 Or *Essences of Jessimine*:

 Thus sweet she smells, or what can be 27
 More liked by her, or lov'd by mee.

The garden of love is, in any case, an appropriately sweet-smelling one.

The enclosed garden finds a reflection in *Hesperides* in other ways. As I have said, it is a garden of love, in which trees, flowers, fragrant breezes and spring are the background to dalliance. It is, too, a world apart, a world enclosed from harsher or everyday actuality; and this aspect is indicated in such happy poems on the circumscribed life as "His Grange, or private wealth" (H-724), and "A Thanksgiving to God, for his House" (N-47). In the ~~former~~ poem, towards the end of his catalogue of contentments, Herrick says:

To these
 A Trasy I do keep, whereby
 I please
 The more my rurall privacie:
 Which are
 But toyes, to give my heart some ease: 30
 Where care
 None is, slight things do lightly please.

These lines show yet another aspect of the garden enclosed, its function as a retreat for the poet from the misery of "the untuneable Times" (H-210).

The poem-garden is also the place in which to find and preserve the remnant of a lost paradise, where valued traditions, now in jeopardy, are still honoured. These traditions are celebrated in

poems like "*Corinna's* going a Maying"(H-178), and in those which herald the winter festivities: "Ceremonies for Christmasse" (H-784); "Christmasse-Eve, another Ceremonie" (H-785); "Another" (H-787), and the poems on Candlemass (H-892, H-893, H-894).

Finally, the enclosed garden provides a place in which to meditate upon life's brevity and to prepare for eternity, as is clear from "His wish to privacie" (H-770); and it is a place where the values of art are paramount and unchanging. "His Poetrie his Pillar" (H-211) both visually and intellectually erects a monument to art's timelessness:

5. Behold this living stone,
I reare for me,
Ne'r to be thrown
Downe, envious Time by thee.
6. Pillars let some set up,
(If so they please)
Here is my hope,
And my *Pyramides*.

In "To his Booke" (H-405), Herrick reiterates the idea that his poetry will "superlast all times" even if it finally perishes with everything else:

...thy Stars have destin'd Thee to see
The whole world die, and turn to dust with thee....
(11.15-16)

Herrick's belief in the value of art is subtly and suggestively underlined in the attractive epigram, "*Anthea's* Retraction" (H-1006):

ANthea laught, and fearing lest excesse
Might stretch the cords of civill comeliness:
She with a dainty blush rebuk't her face;
And cal'd each line back to his *rule* and *space*.

Expressed here is Herrick's conviction of the charm of a certain restrained disorder, allowed within the bounds of "civill comeliness", and the poet's delicate but sure control.

Rosalie Colie puts into perspective many of the aspects of a garden

of poetry such as Herrick's:

...the poem-garden has its origins in the gardens of dalliance (pastoral, libertine, Ovidian, Epicurian), the gardens of contemplation (Stoic, Epicurian, Neoplatonic, Scriptural), the gardens of the Hesperides, the Garden of Eden; it takes place also in a seventeenth-century formal garden, planted in dial shape. Most important of all, it transcends these.²⁵

Giamatti's comments on the *Fortunatae insulae* as described by Isidore of Seville (ca.560-636) are relevant to a consideration of Herrick's earthly paradise, the idea of which was conceived perhaps in Devon, in the west of England, another fertile island country:

They are situated to the west in the stream of Ocean and are marked by fruit, precious trees, slopes covered with vines, crops, and garden vegetables. Because of the "fecundity of the soil," says Isidore, "gentile and pagan poets have confused these islands with Paradise".²⁶

Giamatti goes on to say that "the ancient image of an island, east or west, or of an Elysium; with perfect climate, perpetual springtime, a sweet west wind, fecund earth, shade and water; where under Cronos there was communal and personal harmony, bliss and ease—this image declined at times but never died....Because...it represented a dream of peace for mankind, it was never dropped from Christian literature".²⁷ There is material here for understanding why Englishmen of the sixteenth and earlier seventeenth centuries came to see England itself as an island paradise, cut off as it was from the political and religious wars of the continent of Europe. Herrick himself makes no

²⁵ R.L. Colie, *"My Echoing Song": Andrew Marvell's Poetry of Criticism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1970), p.169.

²⁶ Giamatti, p.32.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.32.

specific reference to England as either an island paradise or a garden, but on one occasion, he does use a garden image to describe the West; it occurs in a welcome "*TO THE KING, upon his comming with his Army into the West*" (H-77):

The Drooping West, which hitherto has stood
As one, in long-lamented-widow-hood;
Looks like a Bride now, or a bed of flowers,
Newly refresh't, both by the Sun, and showers.
(11.3-6)

In a fully documented study, Josephine Waters Bennett puts forward other reasons to show why English poets of Herrick's time could visualise their island as Elysium (Eliza's blessed field), one of the Fortunate Isles, an Island of the Blest, Paradise, "another world", and Spenser's "Fairyland". All these associations serve to explain Herrick's choice of a title for his book, and his conception of its nature. To begin with, the ancients considered that England was cut off from the rest of the known world; Virgil described its inhabitants as "wholly sundred from all the world".²⁸ There was a natural association with the Fortunate Isles, because of England's mild climate and fertile soil. William Camden, antiquary and historian (1551-1623), emphasizes the similarities between England and the Hesperides: "This plentiful abundance, these goodly pleasures of *Britain*, have perswaded some, that those fortunate Ilands, wherein all things, as Poets write, doe still flourish as in a perpetuall Spring tide, were sometime here with us".²⁹ The dying Gaunt in *Richard II* calls England

This other Eden, demi-paradise
.....

²⁸ Josephine Waters Bennett, "Britain Among the Fortunate Isles", *Studies in Philology* 53 (1956), 114.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.119.

This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England
³⁰
 This land of such dear souls....

It becomes clear that, as Ann Berthoff says, "The identification of England and Eden was a commonplace. For instance, the fifth edition of Sir Hugh Platt's (1660) *The Paradise of Flora* (1600) was entitled *The Garden of Eden, or an accurate description of all Flowers and Fruits now growing in England*".³¹ In his translation of Du Bartas, Joseph Sylvester adds a panegyric on England:

All-haile (deere ALBION) Europes Pearle of price,
 The Worlds rich Garden, Earths rare Paradise.³²

And Joseph Hall, Bishop of Exeter, in his capacity as Royalist poet, uses the theme in an epideictic welcome to James I to the throne of England. England, he says, is "a second Paradise below".³³ Josephine Bennett points out that Herrick is making use of all these ideas in calling his volume of secular lyrics, largely about country life, the *Hesperides*.³⁴ Marvell speaks for the English poets of his time in the forty-first stanza of "Upon Appleton House" in his evocation of England as Paradise:

Oh Thou, that dear and happy Isle
 The Garden of the World ere while,
 Thou *Paradise* of four Seas,
 Which *Heaven* planted us to please,
 But, to exclude the World, did guard
 With watry if not flaming Sword....³⁵

³⁰ *Richard II*, 11.i.39-57.

³¹ A.E. Berthoff, p.170, n.9.

³² Du Bartas, Week II, Day II, Part III, "The Colonies", 11.755-6, in S. Snyder, ed., *The Divine Weeks and Works*, I,463.

³³ *The Kings Prophecie*, quoted in J.W. Bennett, p.126.

³⁴ J.W. Bennett, p.127.

³⁵ H.M. Margoliouth, ed., *The Poems and Letters of Andrew Marvell* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927), p.69.

However, Marvell is writing during the Civil War, as the concluding lines of this stanza, depicting a fallen world, show:

What luckless Apple did we tast,
To make us Mortal, and The Wast?

Paradise indeed has vanished from the earth, and is to be found only in the minds of men, or simulated by art. Herrick too feels sadness at the state of England at this time, but buoys himself up with memories of its greatness and its past; his book stands as an implicit reminder of what has been and what can be again, a monument to the values all men have long cherished. These are represented symbolically in "Farwell Frost, or welcome the Spring" (H-642):

So when this War (which tempest-like doth spoil
Our salt, our Corn, our Honie, Wine, and Oile)
Falls to a temper, and doth mildly cast
His inconsiderate Frenzie off (at last) 20
The gentle Dove may, when these turmoils cease,
Bring in her Bill, once more, *the Branch of Peace.*

The corn, honey, wine and oil are harvest images of the necessities and pleasures of life, and the salt might suggest the healthy taste for humour and satire now spoiled by the sobering internal strife.

In returning to the Elizabethan Golden Age, we find a time when Englishmen felt confidence in their Queen and pride in the peace and order of their country. The desire to create order or to perceive it was a strong one, and Elizabethan garden designers favoured formal, geometrically organized gardens, often using the quincunx as the basis for variations on the rectangle and the square in the planting of trees and the laying out of walks and flower-beds.³⁶ Terry Comito traces

³⁶ See Sir Thomas Browne, *The Garden of Cyrus in Religio Medici and Other Works*, ed. L.C. Martin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964).

the origin of the vogue for the quincunx to Xenophon's description of the "geometrical rigour" of the Persian king Cyrus's "paradise" garden; "the typical way of disposing of such gardens was in four squares, with the emperor's pleasure dome at the intersection of the canals or alleys—rivers of paradise".³⁷ The monastic artists of the middle ages, for example, those at Cluny,

multiplied the "quarternities" in which they had been taught to discover an "intuition of the Godhead"; and when four seasons or four elements are arranged around Christ as their ruler, the cosmic diagram that appears is the quincunx of Eden or of the cloister.... [I]n Milan in 1400 builders found their inspiration for a quincuncial ordination of towers in the fact that "the Lord God is seated in Paradise in the center of the throne, and around the throne are the four Evangelists".³⁸

Bearing in mind the inclination of the age to think emblematically, it is easy to see why formal gardens were held to mirror the ordained order of the universe.³⁹

In the seventeenth century, however, with the shocks dealt to accepted beliefs by scientific developments and the voyages of discovery, as well as by the civil discord, poets and other thinkers began to doubt that the pattern of all things was as simply defined and ordered as had been believed. Instead, an awareness arose that nature's post-lapsarian order might be a disturbed one, and that all that man could hope for was "a qualified peace in an ultimately disordered universe",

³⁷ T. Comito, pp.209-10, n.138.

³⁸ Ibid., p.45.

³⁹ This point is also made by Hannah Disinger Demaray, "'Disorderly Order' in the Garden Literature of Browne, Marvell, and Milton", Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southern California, 1968, *DAI* 29 (1968), p.257A.

as Hannah Disinger Demaray suggests in her study of garden literature.⁴⁰ This belief had an effect on the garden design of English great houses, an effect given support by the influence of the style of the gardens of Italy which made its impact in the first forty years of the seventeenth century.⁴¹ Hannah Demaray assumes that Milton's visit to Italy in 1638-39 greatly influenced his depiction of the garden of Eden in *Paradise Lost*. What appealed to garden lovers of the time was what she calls "controlled irregularity" or "the Aesthetics of Disarray".⁴² Variety and a kind of magical atmosphere prevailed, so that a visitor could no longer survey the garden at a glance, but was enticed from one area to the next, along paths and alleys, and through mazes. The result was, as John Dixon Hunt says, to involve the visitor mentally and psychologically in his explorations.⁴³ "The idea of 'regular' nature was now superseded by that of 'capricious' nature, full of 'inventions' and the unpredictable".⁴⁴ Hunt sums up the intention behind garden design at this time as follows:

[Sculpture is a feature of ornamentation and] at a distance capture[s] the eye and ultimately [leads] the feet to it.... Visual exhibits, carefully arranged openings and vistas, terraces that end in double stairways where choices have to be made, inscriptions and deliberately allusive imagery—all involve the spectator and convey him, as Wotton puts it, "by several *mountings* and *valings*, to various entertainments of his *sent* and *sight*" and thence of his mind.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.257A.

⁴¹ John Dixon Hunt, "'Loose Nature' and the 'Garden Square': the Gardenist Background for Marvell's Poetry", in *Approaches to Marvell*, ed., C.A. Patrides (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), p.344.

⁴² H.D. Demaray, p.257A.

⁴³ Hunt, p.332.

⁴⁴ Christian Norberg-Schutz, quoted in Hunt, p.333.

⁴⁵ Hunt, p.336.

In many ways, this description captures characteristic elements of *Hesperides*; for example, the use of allegory or metaphor; the sense that a reading of the poems is akin to a perambulation amongst varying items of interest, before each of which one is invited to pause (and here Herrick's favourite use of apostrophe and his requests to his reader to look, see or mark are important, as in "The admonition" [H-330]: "SEest thou those *Diamonds* which she weares...?/ Ah then consider!..."); and, as in a garden, the senses are engaged, particularly those of sight and scent (most evocatively called into play in "To the most faire and lovely Mistris, *Anne Soame*, now Lady *Abdie*" [H-375], which I have quoted on page 115.) Both garden and book are places of cunningly contrived variety and design so that senses and imagination are kept fresh and responsive by constant change. To illustrate what I mean, I should like to examine a sequence of poems from H-658 to H-668, although almost any sequence, chosen at random, would do. The first, "On himselve" (H-658) is a reminder in reverse of "The Argument of his Book" (H-1), with the poet resolving to celebrate no more the things he loves to write about. From the sombre pentameters of this we are whisked into the jaunty rhythm of a satirical comparison of two girls whose pleasing appearance belies the corruption beneath. A carping critic is railed at next ("To *Momus*" [H-660]), and the following epigram, "Ambition" (H-661), has a subtle link with this in suggesting the reason for the poet's anger with Momus. The joyous and graceful ode on "The Country life, to...*Endimion Porter*..." (H-662) is next, and is followed in succession by the delicate "To *Electra*" (H-663) and by a warm commendation to another friend, "...Master *Arthur Bartly*" (H-664). "What kind of Mistresse he would have" (H-665) is a statement on both girls and art; the poet requires both to be "Pure enough, though not precise:/ ...Like a civil Wilderness;/ ... [showing] Order in a

sweet neglect". The sequence ends with three satirical epigrams, one upon Zelot, a crop-eared criminal (H-666), one upon Tradescant's rival "collector", Madam Ursly (H-668), and the last a sly comparison of marriage to a burial (H-667). The result of such an interweaving of topic and mood is to sustain the active and alert involvement of the reader.

To read the descriptions of English travellers of the time in Italy is to become even more aware of the similarities between Herrick's metaphorical garden and contemporary ones in the engagement of sense and feeling. An inveterate and necessarily hardy traveller, Fynes Moryson, published a book of his travels in 1617, in which he says this of the castle of Marino at Tivoli (presumably the Villa d'Este):

Among the mountains in the village Tivoli, the deceased Cardinal *Hipolito* of *Este*, built a Pallace and a wonderfull garden...it resembles a terrestriall Paradice, by reason of the fountaines, statuaes, caves, groves, fishponds, cages of birds, Nightingales flying loose in the groves, and the most pleasant prospect.⁴⁶

The gardens of Naples enchanted him:

On all sides the eye is as it were bewitched with the sight of delicate gardens, aswell within the City, as neere the same. The gardens without the wals are so rarely delightfull, as I should thinke the Hesperides were not to be compared with them; and they are adorned with statuaes, laberinthes, fountaines, vines, myrtle, palme, cetron, lemon, orange, and cedar trees, with lawrels, mulberies, roses, rosemary, and all kinds of fruits and flowers, so as they seeme an earthly Paradice.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Fynes Moryson, *An Itinerary containing His Ten Years Travell through the twelve dominions of Germany, Bohmerland, Sweitzerland, Netherland, Denmarke, Poland, Italy, Turkey, France, England, Scotland and Ireland* (London, 1617) Part 1, Bk 2, ch.2, p.104 (*English Experience* 387).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.112.

By this time, a conventional analogue for a beautiful garden was an earthly paradise, or the Hesperides. The following description shows that the element of surprise was an important part of a garden's appeal, even though, as in this example of *giocchi d'acqua* (water games) at the Palace of Castello, the visitor might suffer some discomfort. Fynes Moryson writes:

Here our guide slipped into a corner, which was only free from the fall of waters, and presently turning a cock powred upon us a shower of raine, and therewith did wet those that had most warily kept themselves from wetting at all the other fountaines.⁴⁸

Herrick's garden is likewise a place of delight and surprise, as his juxtaposing of lyrical poems and crude epigrams suggests. A typical example is the enclosing of the poem upon lovely "...Mistresse *Elizabeth Wheeler*, under the name of *Amarillis*" (H-130) between two particularly repellent epigrams, "Upon Glasco. Epigram" (H-129) and "The Custard" (H-131).

In 1675, the year after Herrick's death, Milton's nephew, Edward Phillips, included in his "Compleat Collection of the Poets" a dismissive summary of Herrick's work:

That which is chiefly present in these poems is now and then a pretty Floury and Pastoral gale of Fancy, a vernal prospect of some Hill, Cave, Rock, or Fountain; which but for the interruption of other trivial passages might have made up none of the worst of Poetic Landskips.⁴⁹

Norman Farmer uses this quotation to show that Phillips has noticed the "generic element in the poems that deserves exploration, namely,

⁴⁸ Ibid., Part 1, Book 2, Chapter 3, p.154. On *giocchi d'acqua*, see Hunt, p.342.

⁴⁹ Edward Phillips, *Theatrum Poetarum; A Compleat Collection of the Poets, Especially the most Eminent, of all Ages* (London, 1675), British Museum, 1088. d.6., p.162.

that of landscape".⁵⁰ It seems to me, too, that Phillips might almost be giving an accurate description of the frontispiece to *Hesperides*, which was designed by the prolific and popular engraver, William Marshall; this is a landscape of hills and groves, of fountains and grottoes, of flowers and statuary—all the elements of an ornate Italian garden are here.

Herrick's idea of a garden, then, we assume from the hints he gives us, is of nature taken under man's hand, and the effect is a happy combination of nature and nurture, of nature and art. The ideal seventeenth-century garden seems to have been an achievement whereby nature appears to best advantage through the medium of man's cultivation, design and arrangement. However, it is felt that the evidence of man's intervention should be subtly conveyed so that the effect remains "natural"; a part of the garden, for example, is left unworked and is known as a "wilderness".⁵¹ A visitor to such a garden would delight in the contrast between the illusion of untamed nature and the evidence of "Arts wise hand" (H-193, l.46). In this way, the garden makes its appeal not only to the senses but to the intellect. The parallels with Herrick's Hesperidean garden are clear.

The order which man imposes on nature in forming a garden is seen at this time to mirror the order with which God has invested the universe. God the Creator has a counterpart in man the gardener, and there are further associations between Creator, gardener and poet, all

⁵⁰ Farmer, p.16.

⁵¹ A.E. Berthoff (p.39) mentions this aspect of seventeenth-century gardening.

artificers in the sense of their being makers employing art or skill, contrivers, inventors and devisers.⁵² The painstaking work involved in perfecting one's creation, be it universe, garden or poetry, is vividly illustrated in George Puttenham's comparison of gardener and poet, both "ayde[s] and coadjutor[s] to nature":

Or as the good gardiner seasons his soyle by sundrie sorts of compost: as mucke or marle, clay or sande... and waters his plants, and weedes his herbes and floures, and prunes his branches, and unleaves his boughes to let in the sunne: and twentie other waies cherisheth them, and cureth their infirmities, and so makes that never, or very seldome any of them miscarry, but bring foorth their flours and fruites in season. And in both these cases it is no smal praise for the Phisition and Gardiner to be called good and cunning artificer.⁵³

Scaliger was one of the first to compare the poet to the great Artificer Himself, and the intricate knot of significance is drawn tighter for us in noting that Augustine, in *The City of God*, saw the world as God's poem.⁵⁴

The gardener and the poet, then, exercise a controlling hand on nature, bringing things to fulfilment, moulding and transforming them. Herrick, in his garden of poetry, by implication, enjoys the role of artificer. On first viewing, his garden appears to be allowed to flourish in a natural state, to be an artless and naïve succession of poems without perceptible plan. Underneath, however, as in an apparently "natural" garden, there is a perceptible order which consists

⁵² *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "Artificer" 1 and 4.

⁵³ George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie* (London, 1589), III, xxv, 253-54 (*English Experience* 342). (The *English Experience* facsimile edition gives as the possible author of this work, Lord Lumley.)

⁵⁴ R. Tuve, *Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery*, p.151, n.5.

in a careful mixing of varied topics. Rollin makes the observation that *Hesperides* is "a world which has an order and a harmony that are no more blatantly obvious but no less effectually real than the order and harmony of the actual universe".⁵⁵

The lines connecting gardens and poetry, God and other creators, are intriguing. Herrick seems to be making use of these analogies when, in "To Master *Denham*, on his Prospective Poem" (H-673), he speaks of "*Pean*-Gardens":

Or did I walk those *Pean*-Gardens through,
To kick the Flow'rs, and scorn their odours too?
(11.3-4)

Patrick's note on this passage is suggestive: "A *Paeon* is a song to Apollo; if this is intended, Herrick walks through gardens sacred to Apollo, god of poetry; his own *Hesperides* are, in a sense, such a garden of poetry",⁵⁶ and many of the poems are, though sometimes implicitly, dedicated to the art of poetry.

The actual garden undergoes transformation into a poet's work, and also into the garden of the mind, *hortus mentis*. In much the same way that thinkers of the seventeenth century despaired of finding Paradise in an earthly location, and came to regard it as an "other world", so poets in retreat from harsh actuality came to conceive of a harmonious world within the mind. The contemporary delight in reduction of scale plays a part here; a universe can be contracted to a world within the head; an actual and extensive garden becomes a garden of poetry within the covers of a book; the substance of that

⁵⁵ Rollin, p.84.

⁵⁶ Patrick, p.310, n.2.

poetry can become *hortus mentis*; unstable and vicissitudinous life is crystallized at a stroke into permanence as art. In Marvell's "Garden-mind", says Rosalie Colie, "The mind is a tiny cosmos, a tiny totality, a tiny universe, its finiteness managing to enclose everything in pattern, whatever it might be".⁵⁷ Though Herrick never expressly offers such a substitution, I feel sure that the poet who is capable of reducing the vast universe to the extent of Corinna's eye (H-133) is likely to effect a similarly intellectual transformation of cosmos to mind.

It is so natural to the minds of the seventeenth century to think in terms of scalar reduction, as we have seen, that Herrick can easily consider his *silva* as representing in its variety a microcosm of the world, or of the universe. It is in keeping with the pattern of reduction that he (the poet) is then the creator of a small world. U. Milo Kaufmann imagines that Herrick would shrink the actual world to miniature and manageable proportions if he could,⁵⁸ and he makes use of a term of Morse Peckham's to highlight what he identifies as Herrick's "claustrophilia".⁵⁹ He sees Herrick's idea of paradise as a "womb-like sanctuary",⁶⁰ but Herrick's view of the world is surely broader than the anxious and restricted one that Kaufmann emphasizes. It is true that Herrick uses the art of reduction as an admirable way of making comprehensible his perception of God's design for the universe. The

⁵⁷ R.L. Colie, *"My Echoing Song"*, p.120.

⁵⁸ U. Milo Kaufmann, *Paradise in the Age of Milton*, English Literary Studies, no.11 (Victoria, British Columbia: University of Victoria, 1978), p.53.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.52.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.52.

process of artistic reduction necessarily implies an appreciation of the large and the macrocosmic, and is allied with a playful, because serenely secure, inclination to imitate God's manipulation of the vast and the complex. It is not fear, then, but joyful exhilaration and faith that inspires the seventeenth-century mind, of which Herrick's is a representative example. Ann Berthoff's comment (on Marvell) that "love and truth licence wit"⁶¹ is apt here.

In "The Eye" (H-133), we see Herrick's powers of miniaturization at play, as well as his perception of the artist as *imitator dei*; if the artist can re-capture the marvellous qualities of Corinna's eye, he is close to imitating God:

MAke me a heaven; and make me there Many a lesse and greater speare.	
Make me a Chariot, and a Sun; And let them through a Zodiac run:	5
Make me a Sun-set; and a Night: And then present the Mornings-light...	10
And when, wise Artist, that thou hast, With all that can be, this heaven grac't; Ah! what is then this curious skie, But onely my <i>Corinna's</i> eye?	15

In the intellectual climate in which he lived, there would be no need for Herrick to allude directly to his inclusion of God, poets and all other craftsmen in his use of "wise Artist" (l.14); and besides, this is the major tenet of his *silva*, consistently made plain by subtle and quietly cumulative means. One might remember in this context Herrick's comparison of Jesus at the Crucifixion to Roscius, a tragic actor in a medieval mystery play ("Good Friday: *Rex Tragicus*, or Christ going to

⁶¹ A.E. Berthoff, p.166.

His Crosse" [N-263]). Christ is here another kind of artist, and true to his craft:

The *Crosse* shall be Thy *Stage*; and Thou shalt there 17
The spacious field have for Thy *Theater*.

.....
And we (Thy Lovers) while we see Thee keep 36
The Lawes of Action, will both sigh and weep....

As Leah Marcus says, "Herrick vindicates his ritual transformation of New Testament history—and religious ceremonial in general—by positing Christ as its moral center, creator of the laws of action which govern its performance".⁶² This is an extension of Herrick's implicit view of man as "wise Artist" and *imitator dei*. In "His fare-well to Sack" (H-128), wisdom, art and nature are given equal value in their ability to foster inspiration:

'Tis thou [Sack], alone, who with thy Mistick Fan,
Work'st more then Wisdome, Art, or Nature can,
To rouze the sacred madnesse; and awake
The frost-bound-blood, and spirits; and to make
Them frantick with thy raptures, flashing through
The soule, like lightning, and as active too.

(11.23-28)

In his letter to "the Queenes Most Excellent Maiestie" at the beginning of his botanical treatise, *Paradisi in Sole, Paradisus Terrestris* (1629), John Parkinson refers to his book as "this speaking Garden".⁶³ In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, poetry, according to Rosemary Freeman, was regarded as a "speaking picture",⁶⁴

⁶² Leah Sinanoglou Marcus, "Herrick's *Noble Numbers* and the Politics of Playfulness", *English Literary Renaissance* 7 (1977), 122.

⁶³ John Parkinson, *Paradisi in Sole, Paradisus Terrestris* (London, 1629), p.**2. (*English Experience* 758).

⁶⁴ R. Freeman, *English Emblem Books*, p.5.

and like a garden, was potentially instructive to man. Parkinson's "Epistle to the Reader" elaborates on the garden as a metaphor for earthly life, seeing God as a "Planter", comparing virtuous men to sweet-smelling flowers, and using the garden to illustrate mutability.⁶⁵

A garden was held to be a place for recreation, of body, mind and soul. In particular, it was the ambience in which to cultivate the serenity of the soul, to heal it and restore it to harmony with God and nature.⁶⁶ This was thought to be possible through the appreciation of natural beauty, which would result in the elevation of mind and spirit to a contemplation of higher things. As Rosalie Colie says, "The recreative power of plants, celebrated in the ethical literature of retirement and husbandry, now metamorphoses into the creative power of poetry, as gradually the garden takes on more and more aspects of *hortus mentis*".⁶⁷ Terry Comito makes use of Marvell's image of the soul in the garden in speaking of "the play of the imagination in creation's various light",⁶⁸ and rightly says that it is the beauty of the garden which prepares man to see into the heart of things. A seventeenth-century "gardener in prose",⁶⁹ Ralph Austen, wrote a practical treatise on the growing of fruit trees, and appended to it a little volume entitled *The Spiritual Uses of an Orchard* (1637). As Rosalie Colie points out, this book makes clear "how seriously the

⁶⁵ Parkinson, pp.**3 and **4.

⁶⁶ R.L. Colie, "*My Echoing Song*", p.27.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.160.

⁶⁸ T. Comito, p.82.

⁶⁹ R.L. Colie, "*My Echoing Song*", p.27.

sense-experiences were regarded as recreative".⁷⁰

There is a sense in which Herrick's poem-garden is a place of grace, allowing for the process of regeneration, in much the same way as the pastoral world of *The Winter's Tale* does; it envisages the conjunction of art and life, of mind and nature, as Terry Comito remarks.⁷¹ Their subtle blending in *Hesperides* is an illustration of Polixenes' remark that

this is an art
Which does mend nature, change it rather, but
The art itself is nature.

(IV.iii.95-97)

Terry Comito sees this metaphysical aspect to the seventeenth-century idea of the garden:

What emerges most insistently...is a sense of the garden as a scene of those privileged moments when the self takes possession of the world, a sense of that interpenetration of self and world which is given its historically most definitive statement in the story of Eden.⁷²

She sees the "nostalgia for Paradise" as "the aspect of a single quest, a turning outward to the world, a search for an equilibrium in which mind and thing constitute one another in a creative blooming like that of the first Garden".⁷³ One might understand what she is saying by thinking in terms of the numinous, and we are conscious at particular moments of some kind of numinous atmosphere when we contemplate the

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.27.

⁷¹ T. Comito, p.xii.

⁷² Ibid., p.xi.

⁷³ Ibid., p.xi.

garden of *Hesperides*, particularly in the case of "*Corinna's* going a Maying" (H-178), and "To Groves" (H-449).⁷⁴ The latter, which follows closely on the fairy world of "*Oberons* Palace" (H-443), has an aura which is an extension of the magical in that poem, a sense of silence, reverence and the presence of the preternatural. The trees themselves are supernatural presences—"YEe silent shades"—and there is a blending of Christian and pagan, sacred and profane love. Though we may not feel this sense of the otherworld very often in *Hesperides*, it underlies poems such as "*Corinna's* going a Maying", where it can be felt in lines like these:

Come, my *Corinna*, come; and coming, marke
 How each field turns a street; each street a Parke
 Made green, and trimm'd with trees: see how
 Devotion gives each House a Bough,
 Or Branch: Each Porch, eache doore, ere this,
 An Arke a Tabernacle is...

(11.30-34)

Peacham encapsulates the Renaissance emblematic mode of thought by saying that the abstract and intangible requires the "helpe of earthly images",⁷⁵ and the images of garden and gardener are pregnant ones. For example, Herrick's sensuous concreteness of imagery in his "garden" is a way of adumbrating the abstract ideas of variety, beauty, diversity and change, while keeping their implications for human beings clear and coherent. An example of this is "Upon Mistresse *Elizabeth Wheeler*, under the name of *Amarillis*" (H-130). Here, the curiosity of the robin, and its concern for the apparently dead *Amarillis*, are

⁷⁴ See Curtius' remark, "Virgil's forest trembles with *numen*, the pervading presence of deity" (p.192).

⁷⁵ Quoted in R. Tuve, *Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery*, p.155.

realistically drawn in the lifelike detail; the bird

Brought leaves and mosse to cover her:
 But while he, perking, there did prie
 About the Arch of either eye;
 The lid began to let out day;
 At which poore *Robin* flew away: 10
 And seeing her not dead, but all disleav'd;
 He chirpt for joy, to see himself disceav'd.

The beauty of the girl is implicit in the suggestion that her eyes are so bright that, when they open, they pour out light, and in effect give life to those around her; the word "Arch" too conveys the finely moulded features of the girl. The poem is a celebration of the closeness of man and nature; Herrick is making use of the folk belief that the robin cares so much for man that he will bring leaves and moss to cover the body of a dead innocent he might find in the woods, and then will sing a dirge over the body. (Herrick provides these details in "To Robin Red-brest" [H-50]; in that poem, he seems to see himself, in his epitaphs in *Hesperides*, as just such an eponymous singer and mourner for the dead.) Examples of this belief are to be found in popular and courtly literature; a robin covers the babes in the wood with leaves in the eighteenth-century ballad; and, in *The White Devil*, Webster invokes the same belief:

Call for the robin redbreast and the wren,
 Since o'er shady groves they hover,
 And with leaves and flowers do cover
 The friendless bodies of unburied men.

(V.iv.100-04)

In "Upon Mistresse Elizabeth Wheeler...", this distinct allusion to death helps to create the lyric's sombre tone; we think of the sleep from which one day Amarillis will not awaken. The shape of the poem is a guide to this feeling; it is a reminder of the tomb or monument in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century paintings inscribed "*Et in Arcadia*

ego": I, Death, am present in Arcadia, too.⁷⁶ The girl's name, Amarillis (a conventional pastoral name for a shepherdess), and the setting show that Herrick is thinking in Arcadian terms. Fowler comments: "what we may call the 'nuclear' pastoral names seem to be used to set the generic mood....All pastoralists use some nuclear names: these do much to evoke the pastoral world for both writer and reader. They indicate pastoral unambiguously."⁷⁷

It is in ways like this, I would suggest, that Herrick's *locus amoenus* shows a somewhat different emphasis from that of the classical one. We are not invited to withdraw completely from the world; instead, the world is given room in the pleasant place and accommodated there. The poem "Farwell Frost, or welcome Spring" (H-642) will, I hope, be a further illustration of what I mean. In this joyous celebration of spring, evocative of freshness, greenness, birdsong and gentle warm breezes, there is nevertheless a recollection of winter, an ache in the mind first hinted at in the reference to the sufferings of Philomela-turned-nightingale. Images of present pleasure are given resonance and poignancy by allusions to frost, snow, sufferings, and the Northern Plunderer, the cold wind which strips

...the Trees and Fields, to their distresse,
Leaving them to a pittied nakednesse.

(11.11-12)

The anthropomorphizing of nature—the fields are clothed again, having

⁷⁶ I am grateful to Professor Harnett for having directed my attention to an essay by Erwin Panofsky on "*Et in Arcadia Ego*: Poussin and the Elegiac Tradition", in *Meaning in the Visual Arts* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), ch.7.

⁷⁷ Fowler, *Kinds*, p.77.

been distressed by their nakedness, the trees swagger in their spring finery, an oak bravely resists the tearing of the savage storm—serves to underline the vulnerability of all living things, including man, caught in the anguish of a civil war. The connection binding all nature and man can be felt in the duality delicately conveyed by the pun in "Leaving" (l.12). One receives through this an impression of bare boughs and desolate people. Although the poem is a welcome to spring, the joyful season that reigns in western man's imaginings of a blessed other world, the natural harshness of winter, human pain and the consequences of war keep haunting presence; and the hope that peace will come, just as spring follows winter, is tentatively expressed:

The gentle Dove may, when these turmoils cease,
Bring in her Bill, once more, *the Branch of Peace.*

(ll.21-2)

Perhaps there is an indication here that *Hesperides*, in its symbolic representation of England, differs in some respects from the paradisaical place envisaged by the Ancients. It has its natural beauties, its spring and its lovely girls, but the eye that appreciates these sees, too, a country in disorder, whose inhabitants are not all noble-natured, handsome creatures, that death and illness intrude on joy, that spring must give way at last to winter, as poems like "The old Wives Prayer" (H-473), "To Sir Clisebie Crew" (H-489), "The bad season makes the Poet sad" (H-612), and "To Fortune" (H-677) all make clear. With this realization goes the acknowledgement of hope; the poet looks at the good and the troublesome and rejoices at last in both, as part of what Rosalie Colie calls God's "*discordia concors*" or disorderly order, His "lucid whim".⁷⁸ To recognize this is to allow Herrick a deeper

⁷⁸ R.L. Colie, *Paradoxia Epidemica*, pp.303-4.

understanding than he is sometimes given credit for. However, as a garden is an emblem of universal harmony, a point made by Rosalie Colie,⁷⁹ and as the recreative power of plants and of nature in general was universally recognized, both in the sense of healing the spirit, and of allowing pleasure to the senses, Herrick's focus is more usually directed to the delights to be found in his garden. His early poems make this clear. The catalogue in "The Argument of his Book" (H-1) is weighted on the side of pleasurable, simple activities; in his remonstrance "To his Muse" (H-2), he enjoins the lady to "please/ The poore and private *Cottages*" with her piping, and to express "The Shepherds Fleecie happinesse" (ll.3-4, l.8). His poems are to be read, he says, when feasting and mirth are at their height, to provide added "Enchantment" ("When he would have his verses read" [H-8]).

Although it would be a misunderstanding of Herrick's emblematic mode of vision to imagine that he would like his readers to visualize a real garden, it is nevertheless enlightening, and I hope, permissible, to make metaphoric use of the analogy. Herrick's garden of poetry is a populous one, befitting an apparently sociable gentlemen, "much beloved by the Gentry...for his florid and witty Discourse".⁸⁰ It can be seen as a microcosm indeed, and a mirror of life, crowded with reference to the King, the Queen, and members of the nobility and gentry; Bishop Hall is honoured in a poem (H-168), and so is the faithful Prewdence Baldwin, Herrick's housekeeper (H-302, H-387, H-782).

⁷⁹ R.L. Colie, "*My Ecchoing Song*", p.498.

⁸⁰ Anthony Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses* (London: Knaplock, Midwinter & Tonson, 1721) (Douce W. subt.14), p.122; s.v. "Robert Heyrick".

Friends and relations are affectionately mentioned, as are some fourteen fair mistresses. These last are likely to be as fictional as the punningly named coarse, ignorant or criminal subjects of the "foul" epigrams, though their human counterparts no doubt could be found in London or in country parishes. In this garden, the air and the earth are also inhabited; small creatures, insects and household pets are visible (H-443, H-724); more dimly discernible are the *lares* or household geniuses (H-324, H-333, H-393, H-426); fairies (H-223, H-293A, H-354A, H-443, H-556, H-723, H-1080); witches (H-149A, H-643, H-1122); gods and goddesses (H-41, H-66, H-92). From the time of Homer, as Curtius makes clear, nature is always seen by poets to be inhabited nature,⁸¹ and this is true of Herrick's garden. His world is a sociable one, involving weddings and funerals, "*May-poles, Hock-carts, Wassails, Wakes*" (H-1). *Hesperides* is not a wilderness but a garden, and ceremony and order have, as we have noted, a prominent place, expressed in the Christmas and maying ceremonies, the weddings and the burials.⁸² Nevertheless, in spite of an impression of this garden's busy activity, one tends to agree with Thomas Clayton's observation that Herrick's work often "enacts the 'social life' of a person who finds much of his companionship in his imagination".⁸³ Above all, this is a garden of the mind, *hortus mentis*.

In common with the gardens of the time, *Hesperides* has its monuments in the form of epitaphs and reflections on death, to provide

⁸¹ Curtius, p.186.

⁸² See the studies of Herrick's use of ceremony in DeNeef and Robert H. Deming, *Ceremony and Art: Robert Herrick's Poetry* (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1974).

⁸³ Clayton, ed., *Cavalier Poetry*, p.xviii.

moments of meditation on greatness and transience. The counterpart of the classical statuary which embellished the Italian-inspired gardens of the great houses of England (some of which, including perhaps, the Duke of Buckingham's, Herrick may have visited) is to be found in Herrick's mythological poems involving Venus, Cupid and Bacchus, and in his anecdotes on "How Lillies came white" (See H-190). We pause to read each poem, to admire its graceful shape and to be entertained by the reminder of an ancient story. In representing in art these god-like forms, Herrick is suggesting also those invisible ones which inhabit the garden, unseen forms of deity.

Herrick's vividly vegetable world is full of flowers. Hardly a page is turned without the reader's having been invited to admire or pity or learn from such "Garden-glories" (H-522) as roses, lilies, violets, primroses, marigolds, wallflowers and cowslips. Trees flourish, too, particularly myrtles, sacred to Venus, and laurels, symbols of excellence and fame. Profusion and fecundity are present in the references to the orchard trees, bearing almonds, cherries, apples, plums, peaches and pears.

[Here] ev'ry tree a wealthy issue beares
 Of fragrant Apples, blushing Plums, or Peares....
 ("The Apparition of his Mistresse..." [H-575])

Some of Herrick's poems are cast in the form of pattern poetry, for example, the torn-heart-shaped "The Wounded Heart" (H-20), the altar-shaped "The Pillar of Fame" (H-1129), and the bed-shaped stanzas of "An Epithalamie to Sir *Thomas Southwell* and his Ladie" (H-149A). Many others, not so obviously sculpted, give the impression all the same of having been cut and shaped further to aid the meaning. An example is "A Ring presented to *Julia*" (H-172), where the pattern of two short lines followed by a longer line is repeated in each stanza,

and the effect is one of the slipping on of a ring over a knuckle:

Julia, I bring
 To thee this Ring,
 Made for thy finger fit;
 To show by this,
 That our love is
 (Or sho'd be) like to it.

(11.1-6)

In a way, this approach to poetry suggests the craft of topiary. Terry Comito considers the implications of seventeenth-century horticultural features of topiary and knot-gardens, and finds that they play a part,

humble but emblematic of a confidence in man's ability to discover in the external world, in nature as actually experienced, an order proportionate to his own aspirations. The topiary gardener, writes Pontano [(1426-1503) in *De hortis Hesperidum*], by uniting nurture and nature, human skill and the constructive processes of time, succeeds in converting 'the formless mass into shapes of beauty': in leading silva to its proper ornament.⁸⁴

I should like to conclude this consideration of *Hesperides* as a garden by looking in some detail at an important pastoral poem, "The Apparition of his Mistresse calling him to *Elizium*" (H-575), which I think illuminates our understanding of Herrick's concept of the earthly paradise in general and his *Hesperides* in particular. Its importance to the work as a whole can be inferred from its relationship to "The Argument of his Book" (H-1), to which, in its initial stages, it seems to be a companion piece. Both describe the fragrance and fertility of the countryside in spring, and are very similar in their atmosphere of celebration. "The Apparition of his Mistresse..."

⁸⁴ T. Comito, p.187.

begins by highlighting the ingredients of a paradisal world:

COme then, and like two Doves with silv'rie wings,
 Let our soules flie to'th'shades, where ever springs
 Sit smiling in the Meads; where Balme and Oile,
 Roses and Cassia crown the untill'd soyle. 5
 Where no disease raignes, or infection comes
 To blast the Aire, but *Amber-greece* and *Gums*.
 This, that, and ev'ry Thicket doth transpire
 More sweet, then Storax from the hallowed fire:
 Where ev'ry tree a wealthy issue beares 10
 Of fragrant Apples, blushing Plums, or Peares:
 And all the shrubs, with sparkling spangles, shew
 Like Morning-Sun-shine tinsilling the dew.
 Here in green Meddowes sits eternall May,
 Purfling the Margents, while perpetuall Day 15
 So double gilds the Aire, as that no night
 Can ever rust th'Enamel of the light.

So many terms suggestive of the goldsmith's art (sparkling, spangles, tinsilling, purfling, gilds, enamel) do not seem incongruous in this description of a heavenly and super-natural place. Herrick is following a tradition reinforced by Sylvester's translation of Du Bartas (1605), in which natural things are expressed in artificial terms. Susan Snyder explains what lies behind this: it "is more than affectation, as Du Bartas makes clear when he likens God viewing his creation to a painter looking over the finished work of art...".⁸⁵

[The cunning Painter, that with curious care,
 Limning a Land-scape, various, rich and rare,
 Hath set a Worke in all and every part,
 Invention, Judgement, Nature, Use, and Art;
 And hath at length (t'immortalize his name)
 With wearie Pencill perfected the same;
 Forgets his paines; and inly fill'd with glee,
 Still on his Picture gazeth greedilie.

(HLL, ii, 415-18)⁸⁶]

Susan Snyder goes on to say that "Only by seeing nature as God's art, in which each detail has significance and purpose, can we properly

⁸⁵ S. Snyder, ed., *The Divine Weeks and Works*, "Introduction", p.54.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p.294.

read the Creator in his works".⁸⁷ Douglas Bush sheds further light on the convention, in discussing an extract from *Paradise Lost*:

The nuptial bower of Adam and Eve is the perfection of natural beauty:

underfoot the violet,
Crocus, and Hyacinth with rich inlay
Broider'd the ground.

Incidentally, the artificial words "inlay" and "Broider'd" are employed precisely for their artificial value; the terms of sophisticated art emphasize the natural simplicity of Eden.⁸⁸

Rosemond Tuve makes a comment which is particularly apt in this context:

...the poet who imitates not the visible world but the intelligible as manifested in the visible will not consider that the use of artifice to emphasize form makes imagery less "true to Nature".⁸⁹

Without a realization of the literary convention behind Herrick's lines, and its connection with religious conviction, one might be misled into thinking that Herrick's "Elizium" is a purely pagan garden of delights. Instead, it can be seen to be an interesting variation on the view of God as artist, and of nature as His artistic creation. A similarly idyllic and piously depicted world is the earthly paradise which Herrick shows his brother enjoying in "A Country life..." (H-106), where again craftsmanship is noticed:

The damask't medowes, and the peebly streames
Sweeten, and make soft your dreames:
The Purling springs, groves, birds, and well-weav'd Bowrs,
With fields enameled with flowers,
Present their shapes; while fantasie discloses
Millions of *Lillies* mixt with *Roses*.

(11.43-48)

⁸⁷ Ibid., p.54.

⁸⁸ Douglas Bush, "Paradise Lost: The Poetical Texture" (1945) in *Milton's Epic Poetry*, ed. C.A. Patrides (London: Penguin, 1967) p.45.

⁸⁹ R. Tuve, *Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery*, p.60.

In returning to "The Apparition of his Mistresse...", one notices the reference to the Grove:

And here we'll sit on Primrose-banks, and see
 Love's *Chorus* led by *Cupid*; and we'll be
 Two loving followers too unto the Grove,
 Where Poets sing the stories of our love.

(11.21-24)

We know (or infer) that Herrick regarded his volume of verse as a "Sacred Grove"; in "TO THE QUEENE" (H-265), he writes:

Goddeesse of Youth, and Lady of the Spring,
(Most fit to be the Consort to a King)
 Be pleas'd to rest you in *This Sacred Grove*,
 Beset with *Mirtles*; whose each leafe drops Love.

(11.1-4)

In "To his peculiar friend Sir *Edward Fish*, Knight Baronet" (H-392), Herrick speaks of his "rich Plantation" (l.4) in which his friends are planted and grow to immortality, an obvious reference to his own garden of *Hesperides*, as Patrick notes.⁹⁰ Rollin gives a clear summing up of the significance of the sacred grove in Herrick's work:

This Sacred Grove is an appropriate metaphor for Herrick's book because the book comprises a world that is sacred to the Muses in the sense that it is the creation of a poet with an essentially religious dedication to his art. His *Hesperides* is a "grove" not only because it bears the golden fruits that are his poems, but because a grove is suggestive of the traditional pastoral setting as a whole where, as in Herrick's book, nature or life is transformed by art and a unique world, a world with an esthetic integrity of its own, is thereby created.⁹¹

In "The Apparition to his Mistresse...", there is a suggestion of divine afflatus and of Dionysian ceremony, appropriate to the sacred

⁹⁰ Patrick, p.206, n.2.

⁹¹ Rollin, p.31.

grove, and a reminder of the vatic role of the poet:

Ile bring thee *Herrick* to *Anacreon*,
 Quaffing his full-crown'd bowles of burning Wine,
 And in his Raptures speaking Lines of Thine,
 Like to His subject; and as his Frantick-
 Looks, shew him truly Bacchanalian like,
 Besmear'd with Grapes; welcome he shall thee thither,
 Where both may rage, both drink and dance together.

(11.32-38) ⁹²

As Fowler says, "As *vates* or poet-priest Herrick can in a sense confer life: if the book is true poetry, 'those therein' are poetically immortalized".⁹³ The length of the poem under discussion, and its iambic pentameter form (apart from the tetrameters of the closing couplet), suggest high seriousness, and a sense of the grandeur of the subject. Elysium, the gathering place of the blessed dead, is also the poets' paradise, and Herrick reverently enumerates his heroes: Homer, Anacreon, Martial, Beaumont, Fletcher and Jonson. We are indeed within the *Paean* gardens, and there are echoes of Apollo in his role as sun god in the reference to Ben Jonson "plac't,/ As in a Globe of Radiant fire" (1.57). That Jonson should have this place of honour is appropriate; Herrick in many poems professes his discipleship to him: in "Upon *Ben. Johnson*" (H-910), in "An Ode for him" (H-911) and especially in "His Prayer to *Ben. Johnson*" (H-660):

1. When I a Verse shall make,
 Know I have praid thee,
 For old *Religions* sake,
 Saint *Ben* to aide me.
2. Make the way smooth for me,
 When I, thy *Herrick*,
 Honouring thee on my knee
 Offer my *Lyrick*....

⁹² See, too, 11.23-28 of "His fare-well to Sack" (H-128), referred to on p.131 of this chapter.

⁹³ Fowler *RH*, p.250.

I take the reference to "old religion" here to mean those pagan and Dionysian ceremonies which lead to divine inspiration, rather than to "the ancient form of *pietas*", suggested by Patrick in his gloss.⁹⁴

We see Herrick's delineation of his *Hesperides* as a place, like Elysium, where dead poets are remembered, in the elegies he composes on Jonson and Tibullus, for example:

HEre lies *Johnson* with the rest
Of the Poets; but the Best.
Reader, wo'dst thou more have known?
Aske his Story, not this Stone.
That will speake what this can't tell
Of his glory. *So farewell.*

("Upon Ben. Johnson [H-910])

and:

Behold, *Tibullus* lies
Here burnt, whose smal return
Of ashes, scarce suffice
To fill a little Urne....

("To live merrily, and to trust to Good Verses"
[H-201], 11.41-44)

So, what then is Herrick's Hesperidean Garden as revealed in "The Apparition of his Mistresse..."? It is in many ways a terrestrial paradise, Arcadia, *locus amoenus*; a place to celebrate his friends and patrons, a setting for his mistresses and for his kind of love; a garden of sweet delights and flowers, of country festivals and jollity; a sacred grove, where nature teaches him through contemplation to accept the temporal and to rejoice in the eternal; a place to challenge the mind and the senses, to dazzle the visitor with light and shade, contrast and variety, metamorphosis and mystery. It is the milieu of the fairies and the numinous, where the presence of

⁹⁴ Patrick, p.283, n.1.

deity can be felt, in both pagan and Christian senses.

The fairies seem always to have been a part of English life, both in and out of doors, and Herrick probably assumes that his readers would not be surprised to find them inhabiting his house and garden. Even the learned Bishop Hall did not deny their existence; one may as well deny, he says, that "there were men living in those ages before us".⁹⁵ As we have seen already in Chapter I, for Herrick, they are cousins to Shakespeare's minute elves, and are also the equivalent at times of the Roman household geniuses or *lares*. Both of these kinds seem by their very presence to confer a blessing on the place. The *lares* are most at home beside the chimney in the kitchen, and they expect to be honoured with "chives of Garlick" and parsley garlands from the herb bed in the kitchen garden:

To Larr

NO more shall I, since I am driven hence,
 Devote to thee my graines of Frankinsence:
 No more shall I from mantle-trees hang downe,
 To honour thee, my little Parsly crown:
 No more shall I (I feare me) to thee bring
 My chives of Garlick for an offering:
 No more shall I, from henceforth, heare a quire
 Of merry Crickets by my Country fire.
 Go where I will, thou luckie *Larr* stay here,
 Warme by a glit'ring chimnie all the yeare.

5

(H-333)

The close relationship of the *lares* to nature, as represented by their "crowns of greenest Parsley/ And Garlick chives", is made clear also

⁹⁵ Hall, *The Invisible World, Works*, VI,496: "The times are not past the ken of our memory, since the frequent, and in some part true, reports of the familiar devils, fairies, and goblins, wherewith many places were commonly haunted....I doubt not, but there were many frauds intermixed...but he that shall detract from the truth of all, may as well deny there were men living in those ages before us".

in "A Hymn, to the *Lares*" (H-674). They are responsible too for warming the poet, and "gladding so my hearth here/ With inoffensive mirth here" (ll.5-8). Their convivial natures match Oberon's at his feast. The seventeenth century often seems to have felt that the fairies were a necessary part of the mythology of gardens, and their presence is part of the atmosphere of *numen* referred to on page 133 of this chapter.

In another way, the presence of the fairies in *Hesperides* is entirely fitting: they are a "fairification" (since "personification" will not do) of such elements of nature in the first Garden as love and primal innocence. In the small rituals of their daily lives, they celebrate nature, love and innocence, although apparently unaware that they do so, and so they are part of the poet's apperception of order in all things. Everything they engage in is a mirror image, through a reversed telescope, of the activities to which man, and Herrick in particular, gives importance: religious observance, harmless sensuous enjoyment, and love. As we survey, with benignity and interest, these minute and busy creatures, so, perhaps Herrick is suggesting, God casts his eye on our relatively insignificant scurryings. In allowing us to make this extrapolation, Herrick is exercising his prerogative of *imitator dei*.

I think it is true to say, as E.K. Chambers says of Shakespeare's fairies, that Herrick's are there with the symbolical purpose of standing for "the recognition of a mystery, an unexplained element in the ordinary course of human affairs on earth".⁹⁶ While his garden

⁹⁶ E.K. Chambers, ed., *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, The Warwick Shakespeare (London: Blackie, n.d.), p.24.

fairies, unlike Shakespeare's, do not seem to involve themselves actively with human beings, they are a link with the preternatural, in their numinous function, and they are a definable presence in the sacred grove.

The order which they embody can be observed in the carefully described liturgical trappings within the Fairy Temple. The fairies have, says Herrick, like us, their rubric and text, and their books of Canons, Articles and Homilies,

And other Scriptures, that designe
A short, but righteous discipline.

("The Fairie Temple..." [H-223]; 11.83-84)

Like their creator, Herrick, they are reconcilers of opposites, or apparent opposites; in "The Fairie Temple..." (H-223), there is a rich blend of magical practices, Roman Catholicism and classical worship, generously accommodated in an eclectic form of devotion, albeit with some satirical tones. Their kinship to human beings is stressed throughout, in the parallels, for example, between the fairy ritual and that of Catholics and Anglicans.

In exploring the fairy world, we are in effect obeying Herrick's frequent injunctions to look, to see, to "say, if one th'ast seen more fine/ Then this..." ("The Fairie Temple...", 11.5-6). We follow the poet through a metaphorical twilight garden, twisting through intricate mazes, brushing against cobwebs that cause a shudder, dimly discerning glimpses of a marvellous, strange world. It is often difficult to say whether we are indoors or out; nature is brought inside in the fairy ambience. Llewelyn Powys suggests that "Fairy lore testifies to the almost universal suspicion that the borders of our actual world are by

no means as substantial as they appear".⁹⁷ Even everyday English garden sights are, he adds, if thought about, found to be aspects of fairy life: for example, gossamer, foxgloves, cuckoo-spittle, ferns, dew and toadstools. The mounds and grottoes of seventeenth-century gardens would easily have passed for fairy hills and caves.

The presence of the fairies in Herrick's garden corresponds to the *jeux d'esprit* which inspires the *giochi d'acqua* of Italian gardens. One's sense of the curious, the rare and the surprising is engaged in the discovery of the fairies, as one reads through Herrick's book; three of the four long fairy poems appear after particularly repellent epigrams on members of the fallen world: "The Fairie Temple..." follows "Upon a Bleare-ey'd woman" (H-222); "Oberons Feast" follows "Upon *Shark*..." (H-292), the storer-up of stolen cutlery in his cod-piece; and "The Beggar to *Mab*..." follows "Upon *Lungs*" (H-637), whose breath is foul. It is pleasant to turn from these gross humans to the delicate and undeniably refined world of the fairies, who are clearly an integral and essential element of Herrick's garden.

I should like to conclude this study of the garden aspects of *Hesperides* with some thoughts by C.S. Lewis on the ancient associations we attach to the idea of gardens:

In some writers it [the garden] means Love.... But, of course, its classical and erotic models only partially account for it. Deeper than these lies the world-wide dream of the happy garden—the island of the Hesperides, the earthly paradise,

⁹⁷ Llewelyn Powys in an article on Herrick, "Herrick's Fairies", *Spectator* 151:77 (21 July 1933).

Tirnanogue. The machinery of allegory may always, if we please, be regarded as a system of conduit pipes which thus tap the deep, unfailing sources of poetry in the minds of the folk and convey their refreshments to lips which could not otherwise have found it.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ C.S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love* (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), p.119.

CHAPTER IV

CONCEALMENT AND REVELATION

Two phrases from Herrick's poems summing up his artistic vision could stand as epigraphs to this chapter: "conceal'd delight" (H-193) and "reflected light" (H-484). Owen Feltham puts into incomparable Elizabethan prose the philosophy behind much of Herrick's poetry in particular, and Renaissance thought generally:

Whatsoever is *rare*, and *passionate*, carries the *soule* to the thought of *Eternitie*. And by *contemplation*, gives it some *glympses* of more absolute *perfection*, then here 'tis capable of....When I see the most *enchanted* beauties, that *Earth* can shew me; I yet thinke, there is something farre more *glorious*: me thinkes I see a kinde of higher *perfection*, peeping through the *frailty* of a *face*.¹

I believe that, in almost every one of his descriptions of natural beauty, Herrick has his eye fixed upon a more distant beauty, of the kind described by Feltham. (Herrick's imagery is so often visual that one easily speaks in a similarly metaphorical way when considering his poetic values.) The first stanza from "A Nuptiall Song, or Epithalamie, on Sir *Clypeby Crew* and his Lady" (H-283) will illustrate

¹ Owen Feltham, "Of the worship of Admiration", *Resolves, A Duple Century* 3rd Edition (London, 1628), p. 42 (*English Experience* 734). I am indebted to Ronald Berman, "Herrick's Secular Poetry", *English Studies* 52 (1971), 20-30, for the association of this quotation with Herrick's vision, and for his suggestion that "Herrick's obsession with human beauty and its passing is not pagan... but an ardent and orthodox way of reaching the reality behind sensate appearances" (p.30).

interpretation, and the result is an exhilarating and spiritual expansion of the imagination: in George Herbert's image,

A man that looks on glass,
On it may stay his eye;
Or if he pleaseth, through it pass,
And then the heaven espy.⁴

Musgrove captures the alluring quality of such a metaphysical experience when he says of Herrick's flower poetry, "Behind the pale gold of daffodil and primrose there shines a more distant glory, the glint of which is caught in the shifting reflex of epithet and simile, in the sudden revelation of lucid heights and depths above and beneath the benign surface of the poem".⁵

One can imagine how important to this mode of thought the new optical instruments of the time were, as was the newly discovered art of perspective in painting. As Rosalie Colie says, Marvell was one poet who "internalized the functions of optical instruments as functions of the human mind".⁶ Herrick is another. Friedman shows how poets of the time might view perspective as a way of approaching truth: "...the perspective painting...relies on our consent to use illusions the better to reproduce an impression of beauty".⁷ Herrick's view of the world can be seen as a focussing through a lens, which gives a concentration and a magnification, a heightening of attention and consequently of perception. A lily in a garden attracts our notice

⁴ George Herbert, "The Elixir".

⁵ Musgrove, p.5.

⁶ R.L. Colie, *Paradoxia Epidemica*, p.284.

⁷ Friedman, p.308.

less, because it is one growing among many; but a lily under crystal absorbs our attention, and then it becomes a lens in itself through which we look towards an understanding of art and life, of permanence balanced against transience, of the immutable in contrast to the mutable. As Rosemond Tuve says, the artist's task is to imitate "not the visible world but the intelligible as manifested in the visible".⁸ Behind lifelike representation should be clearly visible an eternal truth. Berger quotes Ficino: "Unless one knows what a hieroglyph means, one cannot see what it says. But once one has acquired the relevant knowledge, 'unfolded' by more or less esoteric instruction, one can take pleasure in finding it 'infolded' in an esoteric image or sign". Berger adds, "To see the whole universe as a radiant hieroglyph, or rather to strip away the veil and see it all at once in angelic vision, was the goal of Ficino's philosophic quest".⁹ Herrick prefers to leave the veil in place, so that he may focus on the hieroglyphic aspect of the concrete in relation to the celestial, an aspect which we might now consider, taking as example the poem "To *Anthea* lying in bed" (H-104):

SO looks *Anthea*, when in bed she lyes,
Orecome, or halfe betray'd by Tiffanies:
Like to a Twi-light, or that simpring Dawn,
That Roses shew, when misted o're with Lawn.
Twilight is yet, till that her Lawnes give way;
Which done, that Dawne, turnes then to perfect day.

This is another poem in which Herrick seems less concerned with the erotic than with the aesthetic and the philosophic, although the erotic plays its part. *Anthea's* beauty, hidden beneath fine sheets, is

⁸ R. Tuve, *Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery*, p.36.

⁹ Berger, p.53.

subtly revealed or indicated;¹⁰ the promise of dazzling beauty soon to be displayed is implicit in the references to twilight and dawn, and to roses concealed under translucent lawn, which as we read, and met in the context of dawn and mist, seem to be shining through a surface of dew. There is awe in the presence of beauty in its ideal or Platonic sense, as well as the heightening of pleasurable anticipation by the use of concealment, in the comparison of Anthea's emerging from her sheets to the poet with the breaking on the world of "perfect day". We look beyond the loveliness of a girl to the revelation of the true light; the act of seeing with the eye is transformed to an act of further perception by the mind.

In "The Lawne" (H-416), the glowing colour, and the qualities of an almost celestial fineness, a translucence and purity of Julia's skin is compared with those of a veil of delicate cloth thrown over cherries:

WO'd I see Lawn, clear as the Heaven, and thin?
 It sho'd be onely in my *Julia's* skin:
 Which so betrayes her blood, as we discover
 The blush of cherries, when a Lawn's cast over.

The poet's fascination with the enhancement of beauty through partial concealment is shown in "To *Julia*, in her Dawn or Day-breake" (H-824); the girl will be as lovely as Eve in her nakedness, but even more appealing to the poet if her shyness compels her to hide her beauty beneath the transparency of lawn:

BY the next kindling of the day
 My *Julia* thou shalt see,

¹⁰ *Oxford English Dictionary*, "Betray" v.7: "To reveal incidentally; to exhibit, show signs of (a thing which there is no attempt to keep secret) (1697)".

Ere *Ave-Mary* thou canst say
 Ile come and visit thee.

Yet ere thou counsel'st with thy Glasse, 5
 Appeare thou to mine eyes
 As smooth, and nak't, as she that was
 The prime of *Paradice*.

If blush thou must, then blush thou through
 A Lawn, that thou mayst looke 10
 As purest Pearles, or Pebles do
 When peeping through a Brooke.

As Lillies shrin'd in Christall, so
 Do thou to me appeare,
 Or Damask Roses, when they grow 15
 To sweet acquaintance there.

Part of the appeal of this poem lies in the suggestions of innocence, purity and shyness in the references to prayers, to Eve, and to pearls and pebbles. Julia is "in her Dawn or Day-breake": the poet is privileged to be close to her before she dazzles the world with her beauty, and almost before she is conscious of it herself; before she has "counsel [led] with" her looking glass. Herrick seems to find the moments before revelation more exciting than revelation itself.

That reality can be given a greater significance not only by partial concealment, but also by artistic arrangement and juxtaposition, a phenomenon which Robert W. Halli calls resonance,¹¹ is clear from that important poem, "The Lilly in a Christal" (H-193). That we are within the realm of art is apparent from the first stanza:

YOu have beheld a smiling *Rose*
 When Virgins hands have drawn
 O'r it a Cobweb-Lawne:
 And here, you see, this Lilly shows,
 Tomb'd in a *Christal* stone,
 More faire in this transparent case, 5
 Then when it grew alone;
 And had but single grace.

¹¹ Robert William Halli, Jr, "A Study of Herrick's *Hesperides*", Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 1972 *DAI* 33 (1973) , 3585A.

The personified rose smiles like a young girl, conscious of beauty, but also of something else; the lawn drawn over it by the hands of virgins takes on the form of a shroud when seen together with the lily "Tomb'd in a Christall stone", the crystal representing a "transparent case" or casket. One cannot forget "The Funerall Rites of the Rose" (H-686), where a similarly smiling rose dies, and is concealed beneath a tomb of "Lawnie Loom". Art, of necessity, in raising an object to the artificial, removes it from everyday actuality; it enhances it, but cuts it off from the natural. The implications are however not pejorative; such objects are "more faire" than they were in their unadorned natural state, when they had "but single grace". Herrick prefers the complex to the simple; he seems to regard it as truer. Perhaps this is reflected in his enjoyment in creating the finely complicated surfaces of his fairy world and the complex juxtaposition of his variously generic poems.¹² Such an attitude to the truth is common to many Renaissance thinkers, and the contrast with poets like Clare and Wordsworth is marked. The whiteness of cream, Herrick goes on to say, is only fully appreciated when it is shown in contrast to the redness of a strawberry. Amber beneath running water is more alluring and sensuously satisfying than when it is gazed upon directly; it "gently stroaks the sight,/ With some conceal'd delight". Glass, "that cleane and subtile skin", enhances the natural beauty of grapes and cherries; all things, says Herrick, are more glamorous when the eye is somewhat deceived, when the senses are "juggled" with by

¹² These points and others in this chapter were made to me by Professor Harnett in conversation.

"Arts wise hand". The lesson for his mistress to learn is this:

So though y'are white as Swan, or Snow,
 And have the power to move 50
 A world of men to love:
 Yet when your Lawns and Silks shal flow;
 And that white cloud divide
 Into a doubtful Twi-light; then,
 Then will your hidden Pride 55
 Raise greater fires in men.

Kitty Scoular is characteristically enlightening in her comment on this stanza; she says: "The power of the lady operates not in the full blaze of day, but in the half-light which stands for mystery; the beauty of things consists not only in their order, but in the enfolding of one kind of excellence within another".¹³

"[T]he enfolding of one kind of excellence within another" is an apt description of the position of Herrick's fairy poetry within his *oeuvre* as a whole. The world of the fairies is veiled, not in lawn, but in a haunting half-light, a "doubtful Twi-light" (H-193) which in this case too "stands for mystery", and works in a similar way as a stimulation of our perception. The fairy world is one of optical play, and of a juggling of the senses, particularly the sense of sight. The shifting, changing, glimmering light is as numinous in its way as the "various light" of Marvell's garden of the soul; it removes the fairy world from the ordinary, deepens the perspective, and makes the observer pleasantly yet disturbingly aware that all is not as he is used to seeing it. H.R. Swardson speaks of a "permissive fairy light" in "The Night-piece, to *Julia*" (H-619),¹⁴ and this is a description too

¹³ K. Scoular, p.176.

¹⁴ H.R. Swardson, "*Herrick and the Ceremony of Mirth*", in *Poetry and the Fountain of Light: Observations on the Conflict between Christian and Classical Traditions in Seventeenth-Century Poetry*, (London: Allen & Unwin, 1962), p.41.

of the ambience of the fairy poetry.

That the fairies were sometimes thought to be transparent creatures is made clear in Robert Kirk's manuscript essay of 1691, entitled *The Secret Common-wealth: An Essay of the nature and actions of the Subterranean (and for the most part), Invisible People, heirtofor going under the names of ELVES, FAUNES and FAIRIES, or the like....*

According to his latest editor, Stewart Sanderson, Kirk gives directions for the recognition of the fairies:

They have, says Kirk, "light changable bodies, somewhat of the nature of a condens'd cloud, and best seen in twilight...."

"These bodies", he continues, "be so plyable, thorough the subtilty of the spirits that agitate them, that they can make them appear or disappear at pleasure." Elsewhere he speaks of their bodies as being of "congealed air... which when divided unites again".¹⁵

Kirk is obviously making use of the country beliefs of the Scottish Highlands regarding the fairies, and we can see how appealing their transparent nature would have been to Herrick, though this is a feature of fairy being that he does not mention, if indeed he knew of it. He certainly seems to invite us, in another sense, to look through the fairy world to the significance he has in mind.

His love of the concept of the diaphanous becomes the ideal analogy for his poetic vision. Near transparent, fine and beautiful, the diaphanous is a medium for the extension of perception, the penetration of a mystery. The sense of sight is engaged as a means of moving towards insight, towards a seeing into the heart of things. If, as I have suggested in Chapter I, the fairies are an intimation of

¹⁵ Stewart Sanderson, "A Prospect of Fairyland", *Folklore* 75 (1964), p.8.

the mysterious and the inexplicable in human affairs, and this seems to have been their origin in imagination or intuition long ago, then Herrick, with his passion for penetrating beyond the appearance of things, seems to be viewing his fairies in much the same light. The Anglican parson, eclectic as always, and serenely secure in his faith, embraces the world of the preternatural as an extension and an enriching of the world of the natural and perceivable round about him. Herrick's Hesperidean Isle seems "full of noises,/ Sounds and sweet airs that give delight, and hurt not", and it pleases him to represent these unseen presences visibly, as existing in a miniature Jacobean courtly world in which the focus is strangely angled. In an intriguing way, he can be seen to be once again using the actual (his fairy world on the page) to postulate the supernatural or metaphysical. Seen yet another way—so often the action of seeing is invoked in discussing Herrick's poetry—he is engaged in making almost palpable the unseen creatures of earth and air.

Like that of the lady of "The Lilly in a Christal" (H-193), the power of the fairies is at its strongest at twilight, the time of greatest attraction for Herrick himself. The magical reflecting qualities of light are seen at their best in the fairy twilight, as, for example, in this description of the fringe of the altar cloth in the fairy temple (H-223), in which a rather mundane apple skin is metamorphosed into a state of transcendent beauty:

The Fringe that circumbinds it too,
Is Spangle-work of trembling dew,
Which, gently gleaming, makes a show,
Like Frost-work glitt'ring on the Snow

(11.64-67)

Encapsulated here are the qualities which make Herrick the exceptional

fairy poet he is, and in them it is clear why the world of the fairies is his metaphor for suggesting his profoundest aesthetic values. He depicts here an almost indescribable play of light, and achieves, through description employing elements of nature, a transition to the realm of art and artifice. The supernatural translucence of fairy light is captured again a few lines later in the description of "the Trout-flies curious wings" (l.72) which grace the Psalter, and of the decoration of the altar rails which are "Hatcht, with the Silver-light of snails" (l.92). Oberon leaves his temple hidden in a luminous cloud of frankincense, and makes his way by the soft light of glow-worms to his feast.

In "Oberons Palace" (H-443), Herrick allows his imagination its fullest play in conjuring up the magical, silvery light of Fairyland; in Delattre's words, a "lumière mystérieuse".¹⁶ Oberon's grove, with its sacred and pagan associations, is "*Tinseld* with *Twilight*" (l.21), the italics showing the importance Herrick attaches to making clear his setting. (Throughout this poem with its visual emphasis, he seems to be exercising the control of a director of a play or masque.) The phosphorescent gleam of snail trails lights the little king and his attendants through the grove, where even the bank of moss is "Mildly disparkling" (l.29), the artificial and the natural combining in the description of the glitter shed from the bejewelled head-dresses of brides and from moon-reflecting drops of dew. (One wonders whether "those mites/ Of Candi'd dew" are not fireflies, metamorphosed from crystallized dew drops.) The fairy queen's chamber is equally

¹⁶ Delattre, *RH*, p.117.

glittery with the mysterious luminescent blues of snakeskin, peacock's feathers and "Trout- flies curious wings". Herrick gives us in extravagant detail other subtle means of lighting:

The glow-wormes eyes; the shining scales
Of silv'rie fish; wheat-strawes, the snailes
Soft Candle-light; the Kitling's eyne;
Corrupted wood....

(11.72-75)

The value of this soft, seductive light is stressed, in contrast with the harsh "ransack [ing]" strength of the "glaring light of bold-fac't Day,/ Or other over-radiant Ray" (11.76-78). The best light, Herrick implies, and demonstrates through his own art, is indirect, and achieved by multiple reflection from shiny surfaces. That daylight in its brashness is strongly excluded from fairy life is emphasized by the delicate reference to Mab as "Moon-tann'd" (1.84). Somehow, moonlight is allowed entrance into this underground chamber, but even then, its radiance is reduced to a suitable subtlety by the "*Spunge-like*" absorption of the woollen rug. A jewel-like glitter emanates from the tester, whose fringe is decorated with light-reflecting pearl-like tears. In the first lines of the poem, Herrick has promised his friend Thomas Shapcott that, after this equivalent of a magic lantern show, the light will be removed to allow the "great-little-kingly" figure his privacy, but it is difficult to extinguish the unearthly luminescence that Herrick has lit in our imaginations. It seems to be just to use the image of a magic lantern here. Although I have not seen it discussed in connection with Herrick's fairy poems, he may have known of the device, as Marvell too seems to have done. Rosalie Colie points out that "as early as 1618... [a magic lantern] performance had been put on at the English court by Cornelis Drebbel, and others had tried the trick subsequently.

Drebbel had projected pictures of himself in different costumes from beggar to king, one figure metamorphosing into the next through the social scale".¹⁷ The pictures so projected could have been in diminutive form, like that of the *camera obscura*. Because Herrick's mode of communication relies so heavily on the visual, it is likely that, in his conception of the fairy world, his imagination would have been stimulated by a device which took images from life and rendered them other and stranger than the actual. Another aspect of the enchantment wrought by the "magic" lantern is close to that of "glamour", which Katherine Briggs defines as a fairy method of deceiving the eyes and entrancing the vision: "It generally signified the mesmerism or enchantment cast over the senses, so that things were perceived or not perceived as the enchanter wished".¹⁸ Rosalie Colie elaborates: "Magic lantern performances exploit scalar shifts, projecting a tiny original as unbelievably huge.... [O]ne scene can be made to melt into another....The superposition of forms points to forms' ambiguities: nothing seems to be itself, or itself alone".¹⁹ A similarly disorientating effect can be experienced by the reader in moving through the world of Herrick's Oberon.

In order to see the closely woven correspondence between the world of the fairy poetry and that of the other lyrical poems, we might consider "The Night-piece, to *Julia*" (H-619). Kitty Scoular points

¹⁷ R.L. Colie, "*My Echoing Song*", p.211.

¹⁸ K.M. Briggs, *Dictionary*, p.191. See also the *Oxford English Dictionary*, "glamour 6.1. Magic, enchantment, spell.2. A magical or fictitious beauty attaching to any person or object; a delusive or alluring charm".

¹⁹ R.L. Colie, "*My Echoing Song*", p.212.

the way by calling the glow-worm of the piece a "fairy creature with a joyful office",²⁰ and the poem seems to be another in the fairy series, pulsing with mysterious illumination and starlight.

- HEr eyes the Glow-worme lend thee,
 The Shooting Starres attend thee;
 And the Elves also,
 Whose little eyes glow,
 Like the sparks of fire, befriend thee.
2. No *Will-o'-th'-Wisp*e mis-light thee;
 Nor Snake, or Slow-worme bite thee
 But on, on thy way
 Not making a stay,
 Since Ghost ther's none to affright thee.
3. Let not the darke thee cumber;
 What though the Moon do's slumber?
 The Starres of the night
 Will lend thee their light,
 Like Tapers cleare without number.
4. Then *Julia* let me wooe thee,
 Thus, thus to come unto me:
 And when I shall meet
 Thy silv'ry feet,
 My soule Ile poure into thee.

There is an unmistakable incantatory tone mixed into the attractive use of pastoral hyperbole here. We might see in Julia the fairy deity of the moonlight as Bridget is "Lady of this Fairie land", queen of the sunlit"...meddow verse..." (H-354A). Certainly, Julia's "silv'ry feet" are reminiscent of Bridget's, and it is such references that remind us of the silver light of the fairy poems, and show the subtle connections between the world of fairy and the world of human beings in *Hesperides*.

The human being given most prominence in *Hesperides* seems to be Julia.²¹ Of all the mistresses, she is chief, and she lights the way for our understanding of Herrick's deepest concerns; her powers, and those of the other mistresses, are metaphors which illuminate the

²⁰ K. Scoular, p.107.

²¹ John T. Shawcross discusses this in "The Names of Herrick's Mistresses in *Hesperides*", "Trust to Good Verses", pp.89-102.

Or glitter'd to my sight,
 As when the Beames
 Have their reflected light
 Daunc't by the Streames.

The spell-binding quality of beauty half-hidden finds an echo of "The Lilly in a Christal" (H-193) in "Upon *Julia's* washing herself in the river" (H-939):

So *Lillies* thorough Christall look:
 So purest pebbles in the brook:
 As in the River *Julia* did,
 Halfe with a Lawne of water hid....
 (ll.3-6)

It seems that celebrating the mistress, whether *Julia* or not, but especially *Julia*, is a strategy for celebrating the poet's favourite themes, a technique common in Petrarchan and Renaissance love poetry. For example, the idea that eternal or ideal beauty is encompassed and concealed within earthly beauty finds its most significant expression in Herrick's poems to his mistresses. Through the glowing beauty of his mistresses he evokes that heavenly light our minds can only imagine. "The Transfiguration" (H-819) demonstrates how well such a strategy succeeds:

Immortal clothing I put on,
 So soone as *Julia* I am gon
 To mine eternall Mansion.
 Thou, thou art here, to humane sight
 Cloth'd all with incorrupted light;
 But yet how more admir'dly bright
 Wilt thou appear, when thou art set
 In thy refulgent Thronelet,
 That shin'st thus in thy counterfeit?

Herrick manages to make his earthly "counterfeits" so vivid that they allow the reader the leap of imagination required to look beyond the concrete to the eternal. The means he uses is a form of glamour; he casts his spell over the reader by his art. Ultimately (he seems to be showing), in its transformation of the natural world, art itself makes use of glamour, that peculiarly fairy quality.

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