

THE PASTORAL POETRY OF ANDREW MARVELL

by
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Introduction

In this dissertation it will be my aim to show that the pastoral poetry of Andrew Marvell is highly significant for the poetic pastoral tradition and innovative in that it extended the frontiers of the pastoral genre. It will be necessary, in pursuit of that aim, to relate his pastoral poetry to the period in which it was written, namely, the middle decades of the seventeenth century, taking note of the influences that affected him personally, the major events that impinged upon the lives of the English people, the tradition of English pastoral poetry and some of the trends within that tradition.

The pastoral poetry of Andrew Marvell - poems which make up a fair percentage of his poetic oeuvre - may be loosely divided into three sections. The poems that conform most closely to the traditional tenets of the genre will be examined first, and it will be shown that even in them a distinctive note is struck. Poems having what one might call a broadly pastoral ethos, but composed in a decidedly individual and innovative key, make up the second division and the so-called Mower poems comprise the third.

The dissertation opens with a short account of Andrew Marvell's life and background, focussing on those circumstances which could have had an impact on the writing of his pastoral poems. In chapter 2, I examine

the classical pastoral tradition insofar as it forms part of Marvell's cultural heritage, with an emphasis on his familiarity with the Greek and Latin prototypes and their later European modifications. Following that, I take a closer look at those of Marvell's pastoral poems which are the most traditionally complexed from the standpoint of both matter and manner. *Upon Appleton House* and *The Garden* are considered in chapter 4, less as pastoral poems in any strict sense than as poems with a rural background. Alluding to the status of *Upon Appleton House* as a poem of the Great House genre and recognizing that it embodies themes characteristic of that genre, I nonetheless concentrate on its pastoral elements while at the same time highlighting Marvell's departures from traditional pastoral norms and practice. I also take cognisance of the influence upon the poem of historical factors as well as of Marvell's personal circumstances at the time he wrote it. In dealing with *The Garden* I relate it to *Upon Appleton House*. I also bring to the fore its Golden Age echoes and its inscription within the long-standing tradition of the philosopher's garden, the garden 'apt for contemplation'. In my discussion of the Mower poems in the next chapter, I make mention of their classical echoes, but focus on Marvell's innovation in specifying a mower as his pastoral personage (as opposed to the stock figure of the shepherd or neatherd), and in his creation of a mood and an emotional register that introduces a new note into pastoral writing. Taking a New

Historicist position I conclude this chapter by asking whether there was something in the 1640s and 50s that can shed light on Marvell's choice of a mower as his pastoral personage.

In approaching the selected body of poems in terms of my pastoral 'brief', my preferred method of analysis is that of New Critical 'close reading', modified, when appropriate, by the introduction of biographical and historical information. If in the enquiry that follows there is any one impulse in my treatment of Marvell's pastoral poetry that takes precedence over others it is, as mentioned, the impulse to bring into focus Marvell's role as an innovator who extended the frontiers of the pastoral genre.

The edition of Marvell's poetry used in the writing of this dissertation is that of H.M. Margoliouth (still regarded as definitive), supplemented by the editions of Hugh Macdonald and George deF. Lord. The basis of all later editions of Marvell's poems is the 1681 Folio titled *Miscellaneous Poems* together with Bodleian MS "Eng. poet. d. 49", a 1681 Folio with extensive manuscript additions, some of doubtful provenance.

Chapter 1

Andrew Marvell: his life and background

The biographical details of Andrew Marvell's life reveal more of his public character and his political activities than his work as a poet, and for many years it was his public image that was esteemed while his lyric poetry was largely ignored. Little of his pastoral and rural poetry can be accurately dated but there are circumstances in his life which indicate the years when most of these poems were probably written. Much, however, remains conjectural for there are periods in his life about which little is known. All the evidence which can be garnered portrays a man rich in erudition, of great ability in many spheres and of a wide experience that tempered his beliefs, making his outlook moderate and tolerant.

The stability and the advantages of Andrew Marvell's early background must have contributed to the equilibrium with which he faced the dangers and the changing fortunes of later years. Born in Winestead-in-Holderness on 31 March 1621, he was the fourth child of a clergyman, Andrew Marvell, and his wife, Anne Pease, a Yorkshire woman. His family's move to Hull in 1624 must have been to his advantage. His father was appointed Lecturer at Holy Trinity Church and Andrew Marvell not only grew up in circumstances where a good grounding in Latin and Greek was regarded as essential, but he was able to be educated at

Hull Grammar School. This establishment had an excellent reputation and strong Cambridge connections (Craze 4) and it was natural that he should progress from there to Trinity College, Cambridge.

The years at Cambridge enriched Marvell in many ways. The Master of Trinity was Thomas Comber, who not only excelled in the ancient languages but was well conversant with French, Spanish and Italian. Marvell's affinity for the study of languages must have been fostered by the opportunities at Trinity College (Hunt 25). He contributed both Greek and Latin poems to the volume of verse presented in honour of the birth of Charles I's daughter in 1637. His knowledge of the classical pastoral tradition in Greek and Latin poetry was augmented by a familiarity with the strong English pastoral tradition. It is unknown whether or not Marvell wrote poetry in English while he was at Cambridge, but he associated with poets like Richard Lovelace who attended the university at the same time. There is a possibility that the earliest pastoral poem attributed to Marvell was written during his Cambridge days. A *Dialogue between Thyrsis and Dorinda* was set to music by William Lawes, one of Lovelace's Royalist acquaintances, and as Lawes was killed in 1645, while Marvell was travelling abroad, the poem must have been written prior to his departure. In 1638 Marvell was made a Scholar of Trinity College, but soon afterwards his personal life affected his studies. His mother died and his father remarried at the

end of the year. Briefly converted to Roman Catholicism, Marvell left Cambridge for London, but his father persuaded him to return.

The sudden death of his father caused him to leave Cambridge without completing the M.A. degree, and in the 1640s, probably from 1642 to 1646, he spent four years abroad. Marvell's decision to leave England at this time could reveal his unsettled mind, and a reluctance to take sides, as it was a strange and difficult time to leave the country, coinciding with the Civil War. Marvell had had friends at Cambridge who were Royalists but his family was moderately Puritan and he might have needed the distance in time and space to resolve his own beliefs. He travelled extensively in Holland, France, Italy and Spain, profiting by the experience and becoming more proficient in foreign languages. He came back to a troubled England. Events of the war which he had missed made a deep impression and he renewed friendship with several Royalist-minded men, prominent among them Richard Lovelace. In December 1647 he wrote a commendatory poem for Lovelace's manuscript book; in 1649 *Upon the Death of the Lord Hastings* was printed, and it is possible that some of Marvell's classical pastoral poetry was written at this time (Craze 12). The execution of Charles I, the Irish campaign and the rise to power of Oliver Cromwell, had a profound impact on the political situation in England, and the public upheaval was echoed by the personal turmoil faced by many. Marvell's Royalist feelings seem to have been bolstered by the

dignity and calmness with which Charles I faced execution, but with clear vision he acknowledged the competence of Oliver Cromwell and both criticism and commendation are to be found in *An Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland*, written in 1650.

Shortly afterwards he had the good fortune to become tutor to the daughter of Lord Fairfax, Lord General of the Parliamentary Army, who had resigned his position and had retired to the country as an expression of his disapproval of the execution of Charles I and the proposed Scottish campaign (Wilcher 107). Although Fairfax owned other property, some more pretentious, he chose Nunappleton in Yorkshire for his retreat, and this estate was to be Marvell's home for about two and a half years. The atmosphere in many of the great country houses was conducive to cultured contemplation and in such habitations interest in the arts and learning was fostered. Life in a country mansion could not be equated with rural peasant life, and pastoral poetry was written by educated men with city backgrounds, yet in England in the seventeenth century there was a close relationship between country and city which gave the city-bred poets an awareness of country conditions. The university terms were arranged to suit the harvesting calendar, the city was dependent on the country for its food, and great estates, in their management, had to be fully cognisant of rural conditions (Brooks 44). The Fairfax establishment in particular was advantageous for Marvell. Fairfax's decision to resign as general meant

that his retirement to the country would be of some duration. In an established country house, the education of children was held to be important. Fairfax had an only daughter and while well-born girls were not sent to schools or universities, they were generally very well educated at home. As tutor to Mary Fairfax, Marvell had a rewarding job in pleasant circumstances. In Mary, to whom he taught French and Italian, he had an apt pupil, his duties were not onerous, and both surroundings and company were congenial. This seems to have been a crucial time in Marvell's life, for he had the opportunity to think deeply and the leisure to write, and, although there is little evidence, a convincing hypothesis is that Marvell wrote most of his rural lyrics at Nunappleton. There is a personal, reflective element in his rural poetry that transfigures the poems: not simply cameos of country life, they endeavour to be serious explorations of larger issues. Marvell's life at Nunappleton and the poetry that was inspired by it answered to the part of him that was solitary and contemplative, and it may be that the personal nature of this poetry made him uninterested in its publication.

When his tutelage of Mary Fairfax ended, he was recommended by John Milton for the government post of Assistant Latin Secretary. This recommendation highlighted Marvell's erudition and proficiency in languages, Latin especially (Hunt 113). It can further be deduced from Milton's recommendation that Marvell had altered his

Royalist leanings to a moderate Puritan stance which he maintained after the Restoration, defending the imperilled Milton at some risk to himself. Once elected Member of Parliament for Hull in January 1659, the pendulum swung from a life of contemplation to a life of action. Although conclusive evidence is lacking, it seems that Marvell did not write lyric poetry from this time onwards. He was indefatigably busy and used his wits to confound his parliamentary and other adversaries and to escape the consequences. His satires were an integral part of his political life; his lyric poems were a personal expression. The pastoral ones among them are of especial importance for this ancient genre was manipulated by Marvell to express a new depth of thought, reflecting a personal (rather than generically conventional) perspective. When he died in 1678, his memory as a public figure was honoured, but the publication, through a lucky accident, of his lyric poetry three years later has left a priceless legacy to English literature.

Chapter 2

The classical pastoral motif viewed as part of Marvell's cultural heritage

Pastoral poetry is Dorian and Sicilian in its origin, and Theocritus was chiefly responsible for its inception. He was a Greek poet of the third century B.C., a native of Syracuse who spent much time in Alexandria and whose rural memories were transmuted into an image of perfection unattainable in his real life at the court of Ptolemy in the city. An element of realism can however be discerned in his poems, for the landscape which he idealized was the actual landscape of Sicily and in his youth he had known the shepherds and neatherds of the region but he remembered these from the perspective of the city-dweller (Wilcher 29). Amongst his *Idylls* are poems that became the pattern for different forms of the pastoral such as the love lament and the pastoral elegy.

Virgil was inspired by Theocritus, and his *Eclogues* were a significant step in the development of pastoral poetry. Ernst Robert Curtius writes:

...all study of Latin literature began with the first eclogue. It is not too much to say that anyone unfamiliar with that short poem lacks one key to the literary tradition of Europe. (190)

Virgil's vision of an ideal pastoral world was more elaborate than that of Theocritus, and for its setting he

chose Arcadia in Greece, a place which he had never visited and which was really a rugged mountainous region; but its very remoteness meant that the poetic imagination could transform it into an idyllic realm. The countryside was not the only aspect to be idealized. Human relationships were presented in stylized perfection and the image of the shepherd was further developed, coming to represent a simple, leisured, natural and, occasionally, contemplative way of life which contrasted with the complexities and vexations of city living, thereby bringing into sharper focus the opposition between these archetypal contraries. To the concept of an imagined place of unreal beauty and an idyllic way of life Virgil added a further dimension - that of time. The Golden Age was depicted as a time when all was perfect, peaceful and fruitful, a time that had existed in the very beginning and which, in the poet's prophetic vision, could return again. This, in briefest outline, was the Greek and Latin heritage with which Andrew Marvell was fully conversant and which had inspired a number of his fellow students at Cambridge to write pastoral poetry based on classical models.

Writing about rural life on the basis of such models rarely involved descriptions, nor was it concerned with harsh economies or winter landscapes. It pictured the ideal: beautiful, unspoilt surroundings and a simple, natural way of life. It showed an artlessness against which the sophistication of the city could be called in question. Pastoral representations had no validity without their

opposite, the city. It was the contrast between the busy, practical life of the city, manifested in the sophisticated outlook of its citizens, and the dream world of the pastoral imagination, that gave piquancy and allure to this genre.

The popularity of pastoral poetry increased rapidly during the Renaissance. In the early sixteenth century an Italian, Sannazaro, further developed the Arcadian theme. Love became the dominant thread, a love that was depicted as innocent naturalness within a context of country manners that were viewed through courtly, aristocratic eyes. The influence of Sannazaro's *Arcadia* was widespread in Europe and although Boccaccio's *Ameto*, written in 1342, has some of the requisite elements, the pastoral romance proper is held to date from Sannazaro's *Arcadia*. The continental version of the pastoral had a great effect on pastoral poetry in England, especially in the sixteenth century, and while the genre preserved its classical heritage it combined this with old country songs and customs. The stock figure of the shepherd retained its prominence (Wilcher 31). Many of the sixteenth century pastorals were set to music and this trend was continued in the seventeenth century by court musicians such as Henry Lawes. In the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries the pastoral dialogue enjoyed a vogue: Ben Jonson, Spenser and Herrick were among those who wrote them (Leishman 107). There was every opportunity for Marvell to acquire a familiarity with and understanding of the different facets of the pastoral.

His knowledge of European languages and his appreciation of the richness of his own English heritage complemented his mastery of the classical antecedents.

On the debit side, the artificiality of the pastoral provoked much adverse comment. It was so far removed from reality that the unrequited love, death, enmity and jealousy of shepherds and shepherdesses could not hold true poignancy. (There was, however, a peculiar virtue in this flattening of the emotions. It fulfilled a similar function to that of the conventions of ceremonies: funerals, weddings, celebrations, introductions - these all provide a formal setting for emotions, allowing human frailty to cope with overwhelming feeling. In this way, rhapsody is contained and sorrow is channelled into acceptance.) Still, when reality touched the classical, or neo-classical, pastoral its demise began. In the seventeenth century Guercino painted a picture of shepherds discovering a skull under which the words "Et in Arcadia ego" are inscribed (*The Oxford Companion to English Literature* 34). Projected against this grim reminder of mortality, the rococo artificiality of the pastoral form was thrust into sharp relief.

As a genre, classically-complexioned pastoral lasted well into the eighteenth century, but a deeper and more complex approach could be discerned in the seventeenth. This is especially apparent in Andrew Marvell's subtle treatment of the form. Robert Wilcher describes Marvell as being

drawn time and time again to the complex relationships between innocence and experience, nature and art, contemplation and action, withdrawal and commitment which lie at the core of cultivated man's yearning for escape into a less demanding mode of existence. (31)

Marvell's familiarity with the classical tradition meant that the freshness and clarity of the early pastorals - those written in Latin and Greek - tintured his poetry, while his knowledge of European languages and, above all, his interest and delight in the English tradition enabled him to infuse his pastoral poems with a new and original life. He wrote his poems at a critical time for pastoral poetry. Apart from a small neo-classical school, the eighteenth century would show a fading interest in the genre and the more realistic rural descriptive poetry of writers such as John Gay (*The Shepherd's Week*), James Thomson, Oliver Goldsmith and George Crabbe would gain in importance.

Andrew Marvell's poems such as *The Garden* and *Upon Appleton House* reveal an individual appreciation and treatment of rural life, yet he found in the classical form much that suited the proclivity of his mind. The use of dialogue, so much a feature of the classical pastoral, was a suitable medium for an intellect which gave reflective consideration to both sides of a question, and his delight in colour could find expression in the golden light and

green countryside of the pastoral scene.

It is the contention of many critics that the classical and neo-classical strain in pastoral poetry dwindled into oblivion in the eighteenth century when fundamental changes in country conditions altered the relationship between inhabitants of the town and country. Enclosure of land meant less emphasis on the work of the shepherd and there were fewer individual smallholdings. Commercial growing of crops saw many people, some recruited from the towns, working for one master, while rural people sought work in the city, and with this intermingling, the sharp distinction between city and country became blurred. The Arcadian vision accordingly seemed limited and irrelevant and so the form fell into disuse. Michael McKeon, however, in a recent essay: *The Pastoral Revolution* (in Sharpe and Zwicker 1998), argues that classical pastoral has not died but has been transmogrified. Referring to the "plasticity of the ancient genre" (267) and noting its historical adaptability, he holds that the underlying characteristic of classical pastoral poetry has survived, in somewhat altered form, as the modern principle that "Pastoral exists to oppose nature and art in such a way as to intimate simultaneously their interpenetration" (idem 271). To accommodate his conception of the perpetuation through "transfiguration" of classical pastoral poetry, McKeon has recourse to the notion of "macro-pastoralism", and in this context sees the ancient opposition between city and country, innocence and

sophistication, as echoed in a modern opposition between the settled, civilized country and the primitive, underdeveloped one (idem 286).

In contrast to McKeon who, in adopting a "macro-pastoral" standpoint, implies that any literary production with a rural background can count as pastoral, I take the view that not any and every literary production with a rural background can be accepted as pastoral - and certainly not as classical pastoral. I believe McKeon's position is too general and sweeping. I would argue that in order for a literary production to count as classical pastoral it should exhibit the following characteristics: the poet is sophisticated and educated; he writes about country affairs from a city outlook; classical names and themes are used; the use of dialogue is frequent; the focus is on people in the country and Golden Age 'cues' are inherent in the theme.

Where Marvell is concerned, his output embraces some poems which conform to the specifications of classical pastoral, and others which vary to a greater or lesser extent in their adherence to these specifications. In the following chapters these various poems are discussed.

Chapter 3

Marvell's use of the classical pastoral motif and an examination of the relevant poems

In considering the poems of Andrew Marvell which can be classed as classical pastoral, I intend to show that there is an originality in his approach which enriches the genre and halts its advance towards sterile artificiality. Furthermore, I propose to show the effect that conditions in England had upon his themes, and how the concept of Arcadia in his poetry was threatened with destruction.

A poem which Marvell must certainly have written before he went abroad in the early 1640s is *A Dialogue between Thyrsis and Dorinda*. This was published and set to music by William Lawes, who was killed in 1645, and its early date, together with the musical setting, should be kept in mind when considering the poem. George deF. Lord, as editor of an anthology of Marvell's poetry, places this poem in the category of doubtful authorship because it was excluded from the Bodleian Volume and because the idea of suicide expressed in the poem has no parallel in the rest of Marvell's poetry. J.B. Leishman has no qualms about Marvell's authorship and I think he convincingly points out that the theme was a common one with which Marvell must have been conversant, and which was chosen because of the popularity of the elegiac pastoral and not because of a preoccupation with suicide (112). The early date, with the popularity of collections of songs in the late sixteenth

and earlier seventeenth centuries, brings this poem closer in concept to the Elizabethan pastoral. The theme is simple and the expression idyllic, especially when Thyrsis describes *Elizium*:

There, birds sing Consorts, garlands grow,

Cool winds do whisper, springs do flow. (33-34)

Although the poem conforms closely to the Elizabethan pastoral, Marvell has introduced a greater realism into the dialogue. Dorinda and Thyrsis listen to each other, and the discussion ends in their mutual decision to die. Although the descriptions and the shepherd and shepherdess are Arcadian and *Elizium* conforms to the classic "locus amoenus" described by Curtius (195), the Christian belief in Heaven finds a parallel in the speakers' longing for a perfect after-life.

There is a similar closeness to the conventional pastoral form in two poems that can be accurately dated. They were written for a specific event in November 1657 and are entitled *Two Songs at the Marriage of the Lord Fauconberg and the Lady Mary Cromwell*. Because Marvell wrote these on request, there is little room for personal expression. The classic names, Endymion and Cynthia, are used to represent the bride and bridegroom, and these names in their turn evoke the legend of the shepherd and the moon. The setting in both poems is conventionally pastoral, there is dialogue, and the contrast between the country setting and the sophistication of the marriage is obvious. Where these two pastoral poems deviate from most poems of

the genre is in their specific relation to one event. This topicality is reinforced by the reference to Mary's sister, Frances, and her marriage a week earlier. In the second song the setting of the idyllic pastoral scene is tempered by the fact that the marriage took place in November - a time when flowers are not blooming. With ready wit, Marvell turns this into a compliment to the bride:

If thou would'st a Garland bring,
Phyllis you may wait the Spring:
They ha' chosen such an hour
When *She* is the only flow'r. (7-10)

He takes a wry and critical look at the image of the shepherd when Phyllis makes this comment on the bridegroom:

He so looks as fit to keep
Somewhat else then silly *Sheep*. (25-26)

In *Clorinda and Damon* can be found all the characteristics of the classical pastoral. The dialogue, the light tone, the theme of enticement to love, the shepherd and the shepherdess, an idyllic Arcadian scene and the introduction of music, together with the nomenclature of classical legend, make this a pastoral which, on the surface, is typical of the genre. However, cognisance must be taken of the other attributes of the poem which make it obvious that it is not of the ancient world nor yet an Elizabethan idyll, but a pastoral of the mid-seventeenth century. In it Marvell shows his awareness of the religious controversies of the time, and his familiarity with both Greek and Roman mythology and Christian doctrine. In the

poem Pan is represented both as the pagan god of ancient legend, and as a Christianized embodiment deriving from an identification between omnipotent Pan and Jesus Christ. These two conceptions of Pan had earlier appeared in Spenser's *The Shepherd's Calendar* ("July" 49-52 and "December" 7-8). *Clorinda and Damon* is moreover a poem that portrays Marvell's skill in using pastoral in order to check the tendency towards a too easy and obvious interpretation. He infuses the traditional form with originality and wit and through pastoral dialogue reveals the frailty and credulity of the human psyche.

The protagonists are a shepherd and shepherdess who feed their flocks in grassy pastures. One interpretation could show Clorinda as a wanton temptress and Damon as the pure man of strong morals. The biblical lines are clear: Clorinda tempts Damon as Eve tempted Adam. Damon invokes the idea of an all-seeing God and when he says:

Might a Soul bathe there and be clean,

Or slake its Drought? (15-16)

he refers to the Christian principle of baptism and to Christ's injunction to his disciples (Matt.26). In referring to Pan, he alludes to the Renaissance understanding of Pan as a synonym for Christ. In contrast to Damon, Clorinda is a joyous pagan, forthright and simple, the charming shepherdess of the classical pastoral. I think that Marvell framed the contrast deliberately. It is not only the shepherd and the shepherdess who are antagonists: it is the classical world of Greece and Rome

that is confronted by the mid-seventeenth century's passionate interest in religion provoked by the full force of the Puritan challenge to Anglican orthodoxy. Marvell presents the opposition between Arcadian and Puritan Christian ethics; and although Leishman suggests that the poem could be partly a reply to the amoral poems of Randolph (117), I think Marvell raises moral issues rather than providing answers to them. Damon does not exemplify the man of undoubted high principle who has embraced a new religion with understanding; instead, he is portrayed as a simple shepherd whose sudden conversion has bewildered him and who holds to the tenets of his new faith without full comprehension. On the other hand, Clorinda has an integrity that is unassailable. She has a naturalness that appeals greatly and a single-minded purpose. It is worthy of note that from line 1 to line 14 (apart from the quick riposte of "Seize the short Joyes then, ere they vade") Clorinda's speech has a continuing thread that makes sense without Damon's interruptions. She is the epitome of the pastoral person in a classic setting; however, the image she uses of the mediaeval shield was certainly not culled from Greek or Roman tradition:

I have a grassy Scutcheon spy'd,
Where *Flora* blazons all her pride. (3-4)

Leishman points out the similarity between this image and a passage from Spenser's *Faerie Queen* and suggests a further comparison in that Marvell would have known of the planting

of gardens in the form of coats-of-arms, so that this is an instance of "Nature in terms of art which we find in *Appleton House*" (119). Particular colours are not mentioned in the image of the "Scutcheon", but the mind immediately pictures the bright green grass and the blaze of colour from the flowers. Clorinda wears no mask. She is the shepherdess who cares for her sheep and desires Damon. The world-weariness with which Damon replies: "Grass withers; and the Flow'rs too fade" (7) is countered by Clorinda's cheerful reasoning: "Seize the short Joyes then, ere they vade" (8), a sentiment echoed in *To His Coy Mistress*: "Now let us sport us while we may" (37).

Marvell chooses words with particular care to show several shades of implication. This is especially evident in these lines:

C Seest thou that unfrequented Cave?

D. That den? C. Loves Shrine. D. But Virtue's Grave.

(9-10)

Four words are used for the same place, quickly and effectively suggesting different meanings. A cave is a natural place, inadvertently there, a shelter, but understood by both Clorinda and Damon to be a place for love-making. Damon at once counters with a word that has wild animal connotations, and here there is a hint of the argument between body and soul. Clorinda, in speaking of "Loves Shrine", enacts the romantic, pastoral ideas of Sannazaro, suggesting natural, voluptuous love, but Damon answers with the Puritan's voice: "But Virtue's Grave."

In addition, Marvell uses the structure of the poem to reinforce the conflict between them. In lines 1 to 14, Clorinda speaks at length with joyous delight while Damon's replies are abrupt, though lacking in the witty brusqueness with which Cynthia gives Endymion the brush-off in the first of the "Fauconberg" Songs. When Clorinda realizes that Damon has changed, her questions are tersely put, and Damon replies at length. Marvell thrusts the difference in their beliefs into prominence by contrasting their concepts of Pan. For Damon, Pan represents Christ; for Clorinda, he is "great Pan" of the ancient world. The male/female roles are also underlined in conventionally gendered terms: Clorinda is the emotional, pleasure-seeking female while Damon is the thinking man. He seems to be her superior, but Marvell questions this status when he reveals Damon's limitations. Damon is complacent in the sense that he is sure of his new faith and confident that he is right, yet he does not fully understand his new philosophy, and he accepts Clorinda as a fellow-worshipper without questioning her bona fides or wondering why she has joined him. Clorinda for her part does not deviate from her purpose. She wants Damon and she accepts his conditions with equanimity in order to bring their union about.

In this poem, the chorus fulfills its conventional purpose of resolving the debate. The voices of Clorinda and Damon join in chanting the praise of Pan. Within this resolution, Marvell leaves a question: are they praising the same Pan, or does their unison mark a difference in

outlook? In the "Fauconberg" Songs the chorus is the voice of scene-setting, celebration and compliment, and also the means for sealing the identification between the pastoral personages and the bride and bridegroom.

The focus on country people in *Ametas and Thestylis making Hay-Ropes* is a facet of the pastoral genre, as are the dialogue and the classical names, but there is a marked divergence from the usual theme in that Marvell does not invoke the pastoral beauty of Arcadia. *Ametas* and *Thestylis* are not shepherd and shepherdess, but labourers in the hayfield; they are not engaged in the pastoral care of sheep in an idyllic setting, but in the mundane activity of making bonds from hay.

In using this motif, Marvell departs from the artificiality that was becoming the key-note of the genre, replacing it with the realism of a country activity, but retaining the essential simplicity of emotion that furnishes a contrast with city sophistication. The hay-rope, as object and metaphorical resource, is central to the scene. It links *Ametas* and *Thestylis* who must face each other and yet be kept apart. The pauses in the alternate twisting of the hay find their correlation in the inter-stanzaic pauses of the dialogue, and it is in the dialogue that the original quality of Marvell's mind can be seen. He makes it a clever, well-considered argument that is attuned to the rope-making. The last lines of stanzas I, II and III resemble a refrain that rounds off each speaker's contribution (note the reiteration of the word 'hay' in a

terminal position), and the immediately-following inter-stanzaic breaks suggest a pause in which each speaker may be imagined to formulate a suitable reply. Ametas puts his proposition that love cannot last if it is unrequited. He will wear no willow for Thestylis. His analogy that love, like a haycock, cannot stand on its own, but must be bound, holds a weakness, for ropes made of hay are not very strong and this qualifies his declaration of love. Thestylis parries his argument by pointing out that even as opposition is necessary to make a rope, so too is it necessary in love. Still exploiting the hay-rope metaphor, Ametas inveighs against the inconstancy of all women. Thestylis capitulates, but she retains her independence. She may love, but she will not love with any constancy. Ametas's cheerful acceptance of this middle position resolves both the rope-making and the dialogue. According to Michael Craze, the last line contains a pun on the word, "Hay", which also alludes to a circular dance with which haymakers ended their day's work, and this dance ended with the partners kissing (167). He points out that this custom is mentioned in *Upon Appleton House*, thus proving Marvell's familiarity with it. I agree with Craze's interpretation because, besides being a logical explanation, it gives the poem the neat twist of meaning that Marvell often employed. The poem exhibits enough of the essentials to give it a place in the classical pastoral genre, but Marvell's modifications are significant: greater realism in the depiction of Ametas and Thestylis and the weaving of

English country customs into the classical fabric.

Quite different in form and theme is the poem, *The Nymph complaining for the death of her Faun*. Though not a dialogue, it fulfils most of the criteria of classical pastoral. It embodies Arcadian innocence in the character of the nymph, there are many classical allusions, and the setting is redolent with the flowers and sunshine of the Golden Age. It is a pastoral lament and there are precedents for the subject in Ovid's lament for Corinna's parrot and Catullus's for Lesbia's sparrow, both of which Marvell would certainly have known. It is the lament of a young girl, and Marvell conveys this in the language used and in her changes of thought and her reactions. The nymph is a seventeenth century girl, and though her home is in the country, it is plain that she is gently nurtured and that she lives in comfortable surroundings. There is a strong possibility that Marvell wrote this poem on his return from the continent, for he was then inclined towards the Cavalier cause and he could well have heard from his friends of an incident like the one he writes about. There is a topical immediacy to it. The Civil War in England was not confined to conflict between two armies. Every section of the populace, in both town and country, was affected. The opening of the lament is simple and direct; both vocabulary and register are in keeping with a young person's utterance:

The wanton Troopers riding by
Have shot my Faun and it will die. (1-2)

The lines emphasize the brutality of the deed while the reference to 'troopers' probably alludes to the Scottish Covenanting Army which in 1640 crossed into England in support of the Puritan cause. The shooting of the faun is the mindless action of men who are bent on destruction. In this first part of the poem, Marvell shows a sensitivity to, and understanding of sorrow. The confusion of emotion and the distressed bewilderment of the nymph are shown in the way she is torn between her Christian upbringing which says she should forgive, and her sense of justice which condemns such a wanton action. She sees the faun is dying, she is bewildered by the action of the troopers, she hopes her prayers and tears will intercede in heaven and that the faun will live, but even as she says this, she knows that it will die.

The next division of the poem (beginning at line 25) shows a calmer grief and a pastoral love story unfolds. The faun is still the focus, but the nymph recalls whose gift it was. Silvio has left her, and the line "quite regardless of my smart" (35), puts Silvio on the same callous level as the trooper. Though the faun is a reminder, if not an embodiment, of Silvio, the nymph has learnt to love it for itself. She turns from the hurt of Silvio to an Arcadian refuge. The emphasis on the whiteness of the faun and the lilies and the redness of the roses gives an intensity to the description of the faun. In his poetry, Marvell is always conscious of colour, but in this particular instance, what is not mentioned is as important. He does

not mention green, a favourite colour, nor hint at it as a background to the garden. Had he done so, the landscape would be too sylvan, too peaceful; keeping to the single colours of red and white, he paints his landscape with these, and while the red and white refer to lilies and roses, to the faun and his mouth besmeared with rosepetals, the colours jolt the attention from the Arcadian scene to the dying faun - to the limp, snow-white body and the red blood issuing from it. The faun dies calmly with great tears welling in its eyes. Marvell imparts a universal feeling of sadness in the serenely beautiful lines:

The brotherless *Heliades*

Melt in such Amber Tears as these, (99-100)

and the classical theme is renewed with the reference to 'Diana's Shrine' and the translation of the faun to Elizium.

The suggestion of Christian allegory, in which the faun bears Christ-like associations, which was broached by Bradbrook and Lloyd-Thomas and subsequently debated by critics such as E.S. Le Comte and Karina Williamson, is discussed by Michael Craze who concludes that Marvell "needed incident and variety and colour, but he needed no allegory at all" (78). I agree with this, for although the nymph herself speaks as a young Christian girl, Marvell is not concerned in this poem with Christian doctrine. What he does show in the poem is the destruction of Arcadia. The innocence of the nymph has been blighted by an act of pointless violence.

In the poems discussed in this chapter the criteria of classical pastoral poetry have in the main been met, yet these poems are not hackneyed versions of a well-worn theme, but hold a life and interest of their own. By infusing the dialogue with a sense of real discussion, of statement and rejoinder, by offering alternative solutions, and raising doubts that are not easily resolved, Marvell breathes new life into the ancient themes. The religious and political upheaval that racked seventeenth-century England is reflected in Marvell's pastoral poetry. During the Renaissance neo-classical pastoral had without great difficulty accommodated Christian belief but by the mid-seventeenth century Christianity in England had become too sectarian and militant. In *Clorinda and Damon*, Marvell gives both Arcadia and Christian belief a hearing, but Arcadian pleasures are elbowed out. There was too much joy and heedlessness in Arcadia for the stern Puritan outlook to countenance. The horror of the Civil War casts a shade over Arcadia in *The Nymph complaining for the death of her Faun*. In these poems Arcadian belief is threatened, and, after Marvell, it became an incredible and artificial fallacy. The sense of a lost Arcadia seems to haunt much of Marvell's poetry, and there is an intimation of this loss in *Upon Appleton House* which forms the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 4

Poetry with a rural background, in particular, *Upon Appleton House* and *The Garden*.

Upon Appleton House is classified primarily as a poem of the Great House genre, but Marvell uses this structure to explore and reveal a variety of themes. He considers the relative merits of retirement and the active life; the poem is intended to commend the personal virtues of Lord Fairfax, proprietor of the estate; the effect of the Civil War on England is implicitly decried; his young pupil, Maria Fairfax, is praised. The poem does not meet all the criteria demanded of classical pastoral poetry, but the rural setting is inseparable from many of the themes noted above, as well as others. Pastoral values can be discerned in the poem, and a new dimension is added to poetry with a country background through Marvell's innovative and original approach. In this chapter I intend to discuss the pastoral ethos of the poem and to show that *Upon Appleton House* is, among other things, also an adventure of Marvell's mind, and to suggest that although he does depart from the tenets of classical pastoral, *Upon Appleton House* remains, in a broad sense, a pastoral poem.

Although the poem, with regard to content, falls easily into sections, and there is a logical progression, I think that no part should be considered in isolation. I do not agree with the significance Maren-Sofie Rostvig

attaches to the divisions, between two of which she discovers a mathematical ratio that suggests "that the family history harmonizes with the history of the scheme of redemption" (*Sphere History* 234). Though I believe no particular importance need be attached to the length of each section, each is vital to the poem as a whole. Marvell advances from one phase of the poem's 'story-line' to the next with a fluidity that accentuates the cohesive character of the work. He creates the illusion of a diurnal time-frame: *Upon Appleton House* seems to have the framework of a day's stroll around the house and its precincts, but that stroll incorporates the different seasons, the past history of the Fairfax family, present circumstances, and projected future history. The place is Appleton House, in Yorkshire, but the vision is of England, of battlefields past and present, of an at times surrealistic world. The religious ethos is that of a Puritan family, but Marvell tempers this with his knowledge of the Roman Catholic Church, of Greek and Roman mythology, of the ancient customs and rites of the country. In this poem, written in the Great House genre in order to commend a great Puritan leader who was also his employer, Marvell invokes the perfection of the Golden Age of Arcadia and sees this threatened with destruction, confronts the attractions of the contemplative life with the claims of the life of action, and examines confinement and freedom, shelter and vulnerability, personal values and public duty - not all

of which, to be sure, are 'unalloyed' pastoral themes.

From the first stanza (the first of 97 eight-line stanzas) the poem asserts the value of individuality and natural attributes rather than of artifice and a fashionable sophistication. Appleton House is a country house and its simplicity is preferred to the ostentation of buildings that ape the grandeur of city living. The contrast between country and city, a capital feature of pastoral poetry, is highlighted. The questioning of city values is emphasized by means of a negative locution:

Within this sober Frame expect

Work of no Forrain Architect; (I 1-2)

Such features as unnecessarily lofty columns and the embellishment of marble are scorned in a way reminiscent of Jonson's stance in *To Penshurst*:

Thou art not, Penshurst, built to envious show,

Of touch, or marble: nor canst boast a row

Of polish'd pillars, or a roof of gold: (1-3).

It is the natural aspect of the house that Marvell emphasizes when he gives it his highest praise:

But all things are composed here

Like Nature, orderly and near: (IV 1-2)

and in assessing the suitability of Appleton House to its purpose, he considers the habitations of the creatures of the natural world. In granting more than usual importance to the place of beasts and birds in nature, he moves away from the conventional pastoral in which the human figures

occupy centre-stage, while sheep or cows figure simply as part of the conventional decor of the setting, of no interest in themselves.

Because *Upon Appleton House* was partly intended as a tribute to Lord Fairfax, family history is retold and the story of Isabel Thwaites and the nuns has its place in the poem. Marvell's imaginative ability to see things through someone else's eyes (which is evident in *The Nymph complaining for the death of her Faun*) comes to the fore in the nun's attempts to persuade Isabel to join their order, but the emphasis in this section is away from the pastoral. The convent seems to fold in upon itself and to remain untouched by its country setting.

When Marvell moves to the garden of Appleton House (stanza XXXVII) the military history of the Fairfaxes is reflected in martial images. Isabel's sons have been introduced as valiant soldiers and mention is made of the military success in England of Marvell's employer. The garden has been laid out in the shape of a fort. It would have been an enclosed area distinct from the rest of the grounds and the plan was a variation of the common practice of designing a garden in the shape of the family coat-of-arms (Leishman 119). There is a strange ambivalence in the depiction of Fairfax's fort-garden and Marvell's appraisal of it. In *The Mower against Gardens* the unnaturalness of the enclosed, cultivated garden is condemned. But in *Upon Appleton House* Marvell delights in the design although the deviation from nature has been

taken a step further in the lay-out of the Appleton House garden where the fort design with its five bastions (XXXVI 5-7) intensifies the effect of enclosure. Yet, for all the martial imagery and the sophistication of the military conceit, a genuine pastoral mood is evoked in these stanzas. Despite the garden's being laid out like a fort, Marvell's handling of the military images is such as to deconstruct military ideals and military bravado; the real horrors of war are circumvented and instead, through the martial images themselves an atmosphere of harmony, charm and innocent delight is created and conveyed. How does Marvell achieve these effects? To begin with, the five bastions of the fort are imagined as representing the five senses - a far cry from the alarms and excursions of war and violence. The plants in the garden are seen as being steadfast for peace. The only volleys they release are discharges of fragrance. The military terms are laden with beautiful and delightful intimations, as in these lines:

When in the *East* the *Morning* Ray
Hangs out the Colours of the Day,
The Bee through these known Alleys hums,
Beating the *Dian* with its *Drumms*.
Then Flow'rs their drowsie Eylids raise,
Their Silken Ensigns each displays,
And dries its Pan yet dank with Dew,
And fills its Flask with Odours new

These, as their *Governour* goes by,
In fragrant Vollyes they let fly;
.....
See how the Flow'rs, as at *Parade*,
Under their *Colours* stand displaid:
Each *Regiment* in order grows,
That of the Tulip Pinke and Rose.

(XXXVII; XXXVIII 1-2; XXXIX 5-8)

There is nothing threatening here, and the mock war-like scene is visited not only by the soldier, Fairfax, but by his wife and daughter, facts which serve to emphasize Fairfax's peaceful pursuits following his retirement from military service. In this charming world of mock-military playfulness, almost Arcadian in its mood, a child can move freely, and it is possible, through the commendation of Maria's beauty which is in harmony with that of the flowers, to place at a distance the ravages of the Civil War. Marvell has created a poetic fantasy that at one and the same time accords with Fairfax's profession and sets it on its head, and there is a feeling that Marvell delights in his invention (and inventiveness). The military metaphor, so dextrously sustained throughout the section, shows Marvell's metaphysical wit at its ingenious best. He glories in the elaborations and extensions of the conceit and in stanza XL he expands it to take in the whole universe:

But when the vigilant *Patroul*
Of Stars walks round about the *Pole*,

Their Leaves, that to the stalks are curl'd,
Seem to their Staves the *Ensigns* furl'd.
Then in some Flow'rs beloved Hut
Each Bee as Sentinel is shut;
And sleeps so too: but, if once stir'd,
She runs you through, or asks the *Word*. (XL)

Michael Long very aptly describes the garden section of the poem as "a festival of *homo poeticus*" (204).

The Arcadian innocence and charm of Fairfax's garden finds its parallel in England as it was before the Civil War. Here there are echoes of a lost Golden Age, a motif to which pastoral poetry is no stranger. There was a time when England seemed to be a paradise on earth and Marvell wonders whether this could be again, or whether Arcadia is lost for ever. Sombre regret is expressed in stanza XLI:

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;
What luckless Apple did we taste,
To make us Mortal, and Thee Waste?

Earlier civil wars, while wreaking havoc in parts of England, had not ravaged the whole country as did the Civil War of the mid-seventeenth century. There is a tragic intensity in stanzas XLI and XLII, the effect of

which is the more telling because of the contrast with the lightheartedness of the preceding stanzas. In stanzas XLI and XLII, the pastoral ideal, which always valorizes peace, works to call in question the phenomenon of war in much the same way that pastoral innocence and simplicity are used to call in question the complexities and vexations of city life. Earlier poets had looked to a return of the Golden Age. Marvell wonders, sceptically, whether that could happen again in England (considered as an analogue of Fairfax's garden):

Unhappy! shall we never more
That sweet *Militia* restore,
When Gardens only had their towrs,
And all the Garrisons were Flowrs,
When Roses only Arms might bear,
And Men did rosie Garlands wear? (XLII 1-6)

Nun Appleton has elements of an Arcadian sanctuary, but the echoes of war invade this refuge, and Marvell would have been aware that the battlefields of the Civil War were not too far away from the peaceful environs of Fairfax's estate. It is in making room for the intrusive shadow of war that Marvell deviates from pastoral tradition. England-Arcadia is no longer that inviolable place from which all harm can be excluded. It once was an island paradise, its sea-moat preventing the outside world from troubling it, but now that its inhabitants have turned upon one another, have the better days of the past gone forever?

I think it reasonable to suppose that Marvell is speaking about himself when he says in stanza XLVII "And now to the Abyss I pass"; the introduction of this 'I' heralds the entry of a more personal note in the poem. Marvell passes from the immediate precincts of the house to the lower meadows and his concern now is with his own experience rather than with the fortunes of the Fairfax family. The meadows appear to be an abyss separating the house and the secluded garden from the wilderness of the woods. This should be pastoral territory, inhabited by the pastoral figures of antiquity, the shepherds and shepherdesses, their innocent activities described with simplicity, the background always one of golden (but not torrid) summer. Marvell brilliantly converts those pastoral possibilities into something quite different. He describes a world as different from city sophistication as Arcadia is, but at the same time different also from that of conventional pastoral. Classical pastoral is always concerned with the land, with farmland, with countryside. Marvell introduces a watery motif, a consciousness of seascape that has the effect of transforming the meadows. He uses the sea-image to reveal the hidden mysteries, the unsuspected possibilities, of the scene. This is already suggested in the second line of stanza XLVII when he speaks of "that unfathomable grass". Then the limitless depths of the sea are invoked, and the men who dive through the grass are hidden in a

boundless country. There are uncertainties and hidden purposes in this world of aquatic meadow which, in terms of the Arcadian model, can be viewed as foreign elements. Marvell's wit and ingenuity are on display when he takes a familiar natural phenomenon and transforms it into a surreal vision of the world. From his position on the higher land at the rim of the garden, perspective changes the men below to puny figures who dip up and down in the tall grass like grasshoppers jumping. The real grasshoppers for their part have climbed to the top of the grass. This reversal is extended by Marvell to reveal a world where nothing is as it should be, a world

Where men like grasshoppers appear,

But Grasshoppers are Gyants there: (XLVII 3-4)

There is a departure here from the close view and particularity of the classical pastoral. What we have instead is a panoramic survey in which the human figure loses its central position and strange insects share the limelight. A further innovation is the personification of the grasshopper. Non-human creatures in pastoral are generally static and always subsidiary to the human figure. The sheep of classical pastoral are simply part of the conventional furniture of the scene, not actors in their own right. Marvell's grasshoppers , however,

...in their squeaking Laugh, contemn

Us as we walk more low then them:

And, from the Precipices tall

Of the green spir's, to us do call. (XLVII 5-8)

The dream-like atmosphere is reinforced by mention of the changing scenes of a masque:

No Scene that turns with Engines strange

Does oftner then these Meadows change. (XLIX 1-2)

The bounty of summer changes to the harvest of autumn, and, like actors, the figures in the field change to mowers. The mower, an important figure in Marvell's pastoral poetry, has a radically different quality from the traditional shepherd. First, he is not a pastoralist, concerned with herds and flocks, but a worker on the land. Second, the implements that he uses are of a mechanical character, not derived, like the shepherd's staff, from a natural source. Furthermore, there is the symbolic status of the scythe as a personification of Death or Time. The mowers in *Upon Appleton House* are given biblical associations: Marvell speaks of them "Walking on foot through a green Sea" (XLIX 6), an allusion to the Children of Israel crossing the Red Sea on dry land. The poet clearly is confident that any reader of the time would appreciate both the parallel and its distortion. It is in the account of the mower's activity that a more sombre note appears, a note inimical to the serene quality of true pastoral. The mower's scythe kills the rail and the deed is given poignancy because the mower regrets his action and knows that his fate could be the same - an unnecessary and untimely death. The predatory Thestylis, however, has no such inhibiting thoughts. She grabs the rail as a source of

food. Her name, from classical legend, recalls the personages of ancient pastoral, but in Marvell's poem she is a practical peasant who seizes what she can. The meadows depicted in these stanzas are a far cry from the classical "locus amoenus", the 'pleasance' with its shade-giving trees, brook, flowers, breezes and birdsong (Curtius 195). Instead we have something analogous to a battlefield with the women haymakers as the pillagers. The scene changes swiftly, again like the change of scenes in a masque. The field, with its hay, seems to be a sea again, with the haycocks rearing up like rocks, and then it becomes a level plain which, when the cattle come to feed on the stubble, makes them appear small and insignificant. It is indeed a very different landscape from that of classical Arcadia, but neither is it straightforward descriptive rural poetry.

Marvell brings back the real world in stanza LIX. The meadows are flooded and the previously imagined sea now turns into an actual sheet of water. The frightening images of death that have preceded the flood are banished. The surreal atmosphere still lingers, but it is countered by the wit of the images:

How boats can over Bridges sail;
And Fishes do the Stables scale.
How *Salmons* trespassing are found;
And Pikes are taken in the Pound. (LX 5-8)

The pun (the double meaning of 'scale' in line 6), a hint

of irony, and the imaginative buoyancy of Marvell's vision, draw us back to a recognizably normal world whose familiar items the flood has comically repositioned.

When Marvell enters the wood it is in the pastoral spirit of a retreat to a secluded, peaceful sanctuary. The wood is a place of retirement, a place which affords an opportunity for contemplation, and this set-up clearly accords with the classical pastoral paradigm of philosophical retirement (cf Sir Philip Sidney's *Oh Sweet Woods*). Visualizing the wood as a refuge from the watery meadows, Marvell wittily represents it as an ark, which again underlines the wood's role as a sanctuary, one composed of several elements. It seems to have been planted in such a way as to make the two avenues intertwine, thereby miming the history of the houses of Fairfax and Vere. Close and dark as the wood might appear at first, within it opens out and shady glades and groves, similar to the classical 'locus amoenus', are discovered. Birdsong is an integral part of the scene. The nightingale provides the traditional music of the grove and the stock-doves recall classical pastoral lovers. However, Marvell departs from the conventional model in which birds, while contributing to the agreeableness of the 'pleasance', are neither individualized nor given a chance to stand out. In *Upon Appleton House* Marvell brings several species of birds into sharp, detailed and even individualized focus in a way that reveals his practical familiarity with the

countryside and its wildlife. He speaks indeed as an amateur naturalist with a keen eye for detail. This is nowhere better seen than in his description of the hewel:

But most the Hewel's wonders are,
Who here has the *Holt-felsters* care.
He walks still upright from the Root,
Meas'ring the Timber with his Foot;
And all the way, to keep it clean,
Doth from the Bark the Wood-moths glean.
He, with his beak, examines well
Which fit to stand and which to fell. (LXVIII)

This is the testimony of a naturalist who has noted the hewel's habits and knows why it pecks the bark; the hewel, moreover, is granted a centre-stage position that no bird in traditional pastoral enjoys. In the last two lines of the stanza the poet gives the bird the faculty of judgement, and this leads to a philosophizing comparison with human behaviour which permits him to consider himself an "Easie Philosopher" (LXXI 1) because, from his sanctuary, he can view the surrounds with a detached interest. The reference to 'easie philosopher' suggests that the wood bears some kinship to the pastoral 'philosopher's garden' as a place apt for contemplation. However, observer-naturalist and detached philosopher are left behind when Marvell moves into a closer relationship with nature. He assimilates the characteristics of the birds (stanza LXXI); he becomes so much one with his surroundings that all his knowledge is part of it and its

mysterious lore part of him. A comparable distillation of everything to an essence of thought is found in stanza VI of *The Garden*. In keeping with his new quasi-sacerdotal office he puts on vestments proper to the task of reading 'Nature's mystic book' (LXXIII 8). Like a masque character, he is swathed in a cape of oak-leaves and ivy. As a "*Prelate of the Grove*" (LXXIV 7-8), he recalls the ancient Druid priests who "choose oak-woods for their sacred groves and perform no sacred rites without oak-leaves" (Frazer 862) and whose "old word for a sanctuary seems to be identical in origin and meaning with the Latin *nemus*, a grove or woodland glade" (idem 145). The intensity with which Marvell immerses himself in his green sanctuary acquires sensual, even erotic, overtones. This is particularly seen in the lines:

And Ivy, with familiar trails,
Me licks, and clasps, and curls, and hales.

(LXXIV 1-2)

It is as if his desire to be completely at one with nature is shared by the ivy which knowingly gathers him into its embrace and caresses him. Likewise, in stanza LXXVII he begs to be enmeshed by the creepers, seemingly fascinated by the exuberant growth of the woodbine and vine and wanting to be overpowered and held by the plants. Amidst all the emotion and sensual delight, Marvell does not quite lose hold of the practical knowledge of the naturalist. He knows the slender vines have delicate tendrils which could be broken, so he turns

to the sturdy brambles and briars with their thorns. But, in general, one may justifiably affirm that nowhere in classical pastoral poetry will one find plant life interacting with, even threatening to submerge, the human figure in the way that Marvell describes in some of the stanzas of the wood-as-sanctuary section. In those stanzas, the 'Prelate of the Grove', the priest of nature who understands the secret life of the woods, can be said to have become the voluptuary of the grove, surrendering himself to sensual pleasure. Consider the impression of voluptuous hedonism conveyed by the lines:

Then, languishing with ease, I toss

On Pallets swoln of Velvet Moss (LXXV 2)

an impression that has little in common with the conventional pastoral setting whose hallmarks are freshness and geniality.

When Marvell leaves the woods he finds that the meadows wear a different look. The colours are clearer and cleaner, and they have lost their mystical quality. They are meadows

Whose Grass, with moister colour dasht,

Seems as green Silks but newly washt. (LXXIX 1-4)

The sojourn in the woods has been an intense experience, but as he turns again to the meadows and the river, the social life and the active life reclaim his attention. In contrast to *The Garden*, in which Marvell is concerned throughout with solitude, in *Upon Appleton House* it is only in the stanzas on the woods that this theme is

explored and the positive value of solitude affirmed. To ease the transition from the sensuous, and sensual, 'highs' of his experience in the wood, there is a descent to something more like simple pleasure in the spectacle of the new-washed meadows. (In *The Garden*, of course, the movement is in the opposite direction: "Mean while the Mind, from pleasure less,/ Withdraws into its happiness" VI 1-2). With the arrival on the scene of his pupil, Maria Fairfax, Marvell attributes to her an extraordinary power over nature:

The *Sun* himself of *Her* aware,
 Seems to descend with greater Care; (LXXXIII 5-6)

 'Tis *She* that to these Gardens gave
 That wondrous Beauty which they have;
She streightness on the woods bestows;
 To *Her* the Meadow sweetness owes;
 Nothing could make the River be
 So Chrystal-pure but only *She*;
She yet more Pure, Sweet, Streight, and Fair,
 Then Gardens, Woods, Meads, Rivers are. (LXXXVII)

Such exaggerated praise is an instance of what Leishman terms 'pastoral hyperbole' (80) according to which nature takes its cue from the human object of the poet's celebration.

With the arrival of evening, Marvell's stroll through the estate comes to an end. He returns to familiar territory. Nonetheless, in his final stanza he

cheekily reinstates the ambience of his earlier rather surreal Arcadia when he describes the grotesque silhouette presented by the salmon-fishers seen carrying their canoes on their heads against the backdrop of the setting sun:

But now the *Salmon-Fishers* moist
Their *Leathern Boats* begin to hoist;
And, like *Antipodes* in *Shoes*,
Have shod their *Heads* in their *Canoos*.
How *Tortoise* like, but not so slow,
These rational *Amphibii* go? (LXXXXVII 1-6)

In contrast to *Upon Appleton House* with its several themes and its alternating scenes of solitude and social activity, *The Garden* unfolds as a mainly introspective appraisal of the values of solitude and contemplation and in this way fits the paradigm of the pastoral of philosophical retirement, a pastoral species of ancient provenance with probable roots in the debate (with which Marvell very likely was familiar) between the Stoics and the Epicureans about the relative merits of the active, public life and the secluded contemplative one. Leishman's conclusion is that "the ancient philosophers ... on the whole recommended a life of retirement" (303). For Epicurus himself, no setting better served the objective of philosophical retirement than a garden:

For this reason Epicurus passed his Life
wholly in his Garden; there he studied,
there he Exercised, there he Taught his

Philosophy; and indeed, no other sort of
Abode seems to contribute so much, to both
the Tranquillity of Mind, and Indolence
of Body, which he made his Chief End.

(Sir William Temple, 1685; in Leishman 303)

The philosopher's garden, the garden 'apt for
contemplation', is, then, a retreat, a place for
conscious withdrawal from the outside world. As such it
should exhibit some at least of the idyllic attributes of
the 'pleasance': equable climate, sweet air, pleasant
fruits and plants, shade-giving trees, purling waters.
All these things can be found in *The Garden*.

The desirability of solitude for purposes of
contemplative retirement is the poem's central topic and
as George deF. Lord says: "The most emphatic rejection of
the world and the most imaginative celebration of the
values of retirement occur, of course, in *The Garden* "
(57). But they occur elsewhere too, if not at so elevated
a level: the section of *Upon Appleton House* in which the
speaker retires to the woods (stanzas LXI - LXXXI) has
clear affinities with the mood and temper of *The
Garden*. There too the speaker is alone and rejoices in
the fact, but in *Upon Appleton House*, the sojourn in the
woods is but a stage in a diurnal journey, whereas in *The
Garden*, the whole poem is played out in one place. The
secludedness and serenity of the garden serve as both
setting and trigger for a rich, contemplative experience,
the various facets of which are explored in the poem.

The active life is called in question in the very first lines by considering its rewards. There is a paradox in recognizing the toil and striving of an active life with the garlands made from the leaves of trees, for trees seem to be emblems of repose and quiet. Then a new dimension opens up: repudiation of the active life is extended to include the repudiation of all human company in the garden. Cultivated society, which should encourage thought, cannot do so to the same extent as "this delicious Solitude" (II-8). Other forms of pleasurable society are considered, amorous relationships for example. In turning his back on these, Marvell uses the symbolism of colour. White and red, the traditional colours of a beautiful face, are not nearly as beguiling as the intense greenness of his pastoral retreat:

No white nor red was ever seen

So am'rous as this lovely green. (III 1-2)

In using the word 'am'rous' Marvell points to the surpassingly satisfying character of his pastoral seclusion which contains all of love's joys - but experienced at a higher pitch of pleasure. And when amorous pleasures - "passion's heat" - have been exhausted, "Love hither makes his best retreat" (IV 2). There is, then, no aridity in Marvell's conception of solitude. The plenteousness of nature enthralls him; its vitality and ability to fulfil are stressed.

In stanza V the abundance and perfection of nature's bounty are described in the idiom and imagery of Golden Age pastoral:

What wond'rous Life in this I lead!
Ripe Apples drop about my head;
The Luscious Clusters of the Vine
Upon my Mouth do crush their Wine;
The Nectaren, and curious Peach,
Into my hands themselves do reach;
Stumbling on Melons, as I pass,

Insar'd with Flow'rs, I fall on Grass. (V)

These are the delights of the Golden Age in which nature, unbidden, showers its bounty upon unfallen human beneficiaries. That is why, at the end of the stanza, the speaker makes a point of saying that he falls "on grass". This is a gentle and innocent fall, in contrast to the fateful fall of Adam and Eve that implicitly is being invoked; similarly, the speaker falls "Insar'd with Flow'rs" - not by a serpent. The Golden Age 'glow' of stanza V recurs in *Bermudas*, in the evocative lines:

He makes the Figs our mouths to meet;

And throws the Melons at our feet. (21-22)

In like manner, the welcome embrace of the flowers in stanza V of *The Garden* - "Insar'd with Flow'rs" - calls to mind the wood-as-sanctuary section of *Upon Appleton House* where the ivy "licks, and clasps, and curls, and haies" the speaker (LXXIV 6).

From the sensuous delights catalogued in stanza V

Marvell advances to the higher plane of the mind. Everything coalesces into a saturatedness of thought, and with this concentration comes a new dimension of understanding. It is in this light that the enigmatic lines of stanza VI should be considered:

Annihilating all that's made

To a green Thought in a green Shade. (VI 7-8)

The creative imagination can transcend lesser, that is, sensuous, pleasures; knowledge and erudition are surpassed by something approaching imaginative ecstasy, and the double insistence on the word, 'green' underscores the pastoral underpinnings of the experience. By way of affirming the same point, Pierre Legouis, refuting Frank Kermode's interpretation of the lines

My Soul into the boughs does glide:

There like a Bird it sits, and sings,

Then whets, and combs its silver Wings (VII 4-6)

stresses "the impression of the poet's identification with Nature that Marvell's metaphor gives" (Carey:271).

The comparison with Paradise in stanza VIII emphasises the purity and exaltedness of the poet's garden experience. In alluding, teasingly, to the perfection of the solitary state prior to Eve's creation, Marvell perhaps follows in other footsteps (those of the Epicureans of ancient Greece, for a start) when he conjectures that the highest state of being was, and is, that of contemplative solitude. He makes the point with lively wit in the lines:

Two Paradises 'twere in one

To live in Paradise alone. (VIII 7-8)

Upon Appleton House, as a poem with a rural background, is largely descriptive. It is an account of a diversified, delightful and delighted journey through the grounds of a great country house and it serves at the same time as a celebratory history of the Fairfax family. In this poem Marvell seems also to point to his own dilemma: the choice between an active life in society and a retired contemplative one. Its great significance in the domain of pastoral poetry is that it is a poem which, while showing strong links with the classical pastoral tradition, is nonetheless transformed by Marvell in ways that bring freshness, vividness, and an eye for realistic detail to a genre that was becoming overworked and artificial. In it, the mower becomes the central pastoral personage, displacing the stock figure of the shepherd, and one consequence of that is a more empirical, less idealized perspective on the creatures of the countryside and the relationship of country people with them (the 'massacre' of the rails and 'bloody Thestylis'). In his account of the fort-garden of Appleton House, Marvell is at the top of his form, controlling the extended military conceit with complete poise and mastery. And when he seeks the solitude of the woods he adds a sensuous, and at times, sensual richness to the described experience. In *The Garden*, which has a more uniformly pastoral

character than *Upon Appleton House*, he celebrates the perfection of the contemplative life. He imparts to the traditional theme of contemplative retirement a richness and resonance that are the product both of his erudition and of his imaginative levitation. Seen against the backdrop of pastoral poetry written in the conventional classical key, both *Upon Appleton House* and *The Garden* can be said to break new ground.

Chapter 5

The Mower Poems

I want to state at the outset that my argument in this chapter is significantly indebted to the analyses of Robert Wilcher, Michael Long and, to a lesser extent, J.B. Leishman.

The Mower poems conform to the genre of classical pastoral poetry in that in them the central figure is a rural character placed in an appropriate country setting while the values of simplicity and innocence are contrasted with those of sophistication and worldliness - an aspect of the overarching Nature vs. Art binary, so pervasive in Renaissance literature, including Renaissance pastoral writings. Working within this general framework, Marvell has made innovative changes that reflect the turbulence of the 1640s and 50s (the period of the Civil Wars and the execution of Charles I), the closer, more practical relationship between country and city people, and the conflicting moral, religious and political views that made the mid-seventeenth century such a bewildering era. His central figure is a mower, who displaces the traditional shepherd, and this brings to pastoral poetry a different outlook, a shifting of the focus. Because of his occupation, the mower inhabits a more restricted pastoral scene, a very particular landscape. He is not a herdsman and cannot range with his beasts into the hills, nor can he seek solitude amongst

the groves. He is tied to the land he mows and this land of field and meadow makes for a more social setting than the hills and the woods. The task of the herdsman affords opportunity for contemplation. Watching over his sheep he sits alone with his thoughts. The mower is by contrast a more active pastoral figure and a more sociable one. His thoughts move to the rhythm of the scythe, and he works in the company of others. He has a more primitive affinity with the land than the shepherd, and as a result is more affected by the impact on rural patterns of life of new trends and developments, both agricultural and social.

Although the dates of composition of the four Mower poems are unknown, the order in which they were printed in the 1681 Folio has been kept in most editions, and Wilcher argues that

their full significance is only released by attending to the process of disorientation that transforms the confident champion of pastoral values in *The Mower against Gardens* into the alienated dealer of death in *The Mower's Song*. (89)

In other words, Wilcher suggests that a rudimentary, though submerged, narrative is inscribed in the very sequence of the Mower poems. I agree with this, and accordingly propose to examine the four poems in their Folio order. In the exposition that follows I intend to highlight Marvell's departures from conventional pastoral

in the Mower sequence.

There is a significant departure from tradition in *The Mower against Gardens* in that the *mower himself* compares city and country values, and hence the claims of Art over against those of Nature. He has an awareness of the implicit confrontation between those value-systems which is not found in earlier pastoral characters. Traditionally, the poet, either in his own person or through an educated persona, led his readers or listeners to examine critically the quality of city life by presenting them with a cameo of rural pastimes. The pastoral characters themselves, however, were not 'commissioned' to evaluate comparatively the opposed value-systems of city and country. It is, perhaps, the mower's physical proximity to the cultivated gardens of country estates that increases his awareness of urban-bred artifice and causes him to feel threatened. The perspective he brings to bear upon the enclosed garden is completely different from that of the speaker in *Upon Appleton House*. The delightful, enclosed garden described in *Upon Appleton House* preserves the pastoral aura of innocent peace, despite the poet's witty use of military conceits (see the discussion in the preceding chapter). The carefully tended flowers and the meticulously planned design are assuredly not the product of the haphazard hand of nature and yet the Appleton House garden has a beauty and tranquillity that make it a natural retreat.

Marvell's choice of the mower as his pastoral

personage may have stemmed from his observation of the mowers in the meadows at Nun Appleton. In *Upon Appleton House* the tension of the mower's position is strikingly seen, for the meadows he labours in lie between the garden and the woods, between the wild and the cultivated. But the Nun Appleton garden preserves a pastoral ethos. Not so the garden of *The Mower against Gardens* where the walled enclosure is placed in opposition to the pastoral ideal and the mower himself indicates the opposition between the two. As suggested earlier, it was perhaps the proximity of the open fields to the cultivated enclosures, as well as the encroachment of cultivation upon those very fields, that furnished a plausible occasion for the mower to become an outspoken critic instead of remaining the mute figure that the conventional pastoral formula would have reduced him to.

The Puritan influence of the era is evident in the condemnation of loose love with which the mower opens his diatribe:

Luxurious Man, to bring his Vice in use,

Did after him the World seduce: (1-2)

These lines, too, show how the broadening of horizons, scientific progress and the growth of commerce have affected the writing of pastoral poetry. The shepherds and shepherdesses of old had lived in a natural setting which they could not change. In juxtaposition to this was the life of the city, but that barely impinged upon their existence. The mower, though a simple labourer, sees

plainly enough how his own natural setting can be claimed and changed by sophisticated men and made by them into something artificial. He resents the havoc wrought upon nature by horticultural experiments for which the cultivated garden serves as a laboratory; he feels that the contrast between the natural fields and the walled garden is not just a contrast between nature and artifice. It is a contrast between something wholesome and something so contrived that it stultifies and suffocates:

He first enclos'd within the Garden's square

A dead and standing pool of Air:

And a more luscious Earth for them did knead,

Which stupif'd them while it fed. (5-8)

The gardens, enclosed by walls that stop the breezes, are like stagnant ponds. The enriched earth which stuffs food into the plants limits their attractiveness while it increases their size. It is evident that the age-old relationship between nature and artifice registers a new complexity because it is no longer just a matter of garden design and layout; now the simple flowers of the field themselves have suffered change and have become artificial, unnatural. The mower's world having altered, this pastoral personage understandably feels threatened and there is a defensive tone that pervades all four poems but which is expressed in *The Mower against Gardens* in a passionate outburst against the perpetrators - meddling, presumably city-bred, men. This is in contrast

to the more equable tone of classical pastoral poetry where the picture of rural simplicity is in and of itself expected to lead city-dwellers to reassess their values. For three quarters of the poem, the mower lists the perversions of nature:

With strange perfumes he did the Roses taint.
And Flow'rs themselves were taught to paint.
.....
No Plant now knew the Stock from which it came;
He grafts upon the Wild the Tame:
.....
And in the Cherry he does Nature vex,
To procreate without a Sex.

(11-12, 23-24, 29-30)

Through all this runs the double thread of human perfidy. Human corruption and the corruption of nature feed, and feed off, each other. The gardens apt for love (the antithesis of the Philosopher's Garden, which forms the setting for Marvell's famous poem) were often secret places of assignation for clandestine love affairs, with the accent more on lust than love. The cultivated colours and forced fragrances of the flowers in the Mower poem are reminiscent of the painted disguise and heightened colouring of a woman bent on a secret rendezvous in a garden apt for love.

The Tulip, white, did for complexion seek;

And learn'd to interline its cheek: (13-14)

Because the mower is aware of the sophisticated world, it

is plausible for him to have knowledge of new ways and discoveries. His strongest condemnation is reserved for the changes that are made to the intrinsic nature of plants, changes seen as symbolizing the erosion of country values by city perversions:

He grafts upon the Wild the Tame:

That the uncertain and adult'rate fruit

Might put the Palate in dispute. (24-26)

It is when the mower turns to his own fields that his tone loses the condemnatory edge in which his resentment of, and scorn for, artificiality has been expressed. There is a note of regretful longing, almost despair in:

While the sweet Fields do lye forgot:

Where willing Nature does to all dispence

A wild and fragrant Innocence: (32-34)

and the Golden Age echoes in these and the following lines are countered by the mower's consciousness of the challenge the cultivated gardens pose to a natural simplicity. Marvell's departures from the conventional pastoral formula can be seen to the greatest effect in *The Mower against Gardens* but it is also reflected in the three other Mower poems. The natural world is no longer viewed as the epitome of idyllic and untouched perfection but as something which can be manipulated and transformed by man. The pastoral personage steps out of his storybook frame and is shaken and confused by sophisticated values. This imparts to the mower, the pastoral personage of the

sequence, a degree of interest as a vessel of frustrations and of emotional turbulence that distinguishes him from the more conventionalized, less 'really human' figures of the complaining shepherd and love-lorn swain.

In *The Mower against Gardens* the mower is, all things considered, still in command of himself and his situation. He is conscious of the menace to his world but is confident of his values and the superiority of his meadows:

But howso'ere the Figures do excel,

The Gods themselves with us do dwell. (39-40)

In the other three mower poems he becomes increasingly unsure of himself. *Damon the Mower* is a pastoral romance which has many typical features of the classical pastoral where blighted love was a common enough theme; however, in *Damon the Mower* the mower questions his own identity and the pastoral scene itself is affected. An anonymous frame-narrator introduces the poem and immediately the setting plays a prominent role, providing a valid reason for the choice of a mower instead of a shepherd. Having a close connection with open countryside, the mower's work in the meadows particularly exposes him to the heat of the sun; nor can he escape to the cool groves of the 'pleasance' as a shepherd can. The narrator's introduction covers the main themes.

Heark how the Mower *Damon* Sung,
With love of *Juliana* stung!

While ev'rything did seem to paint
The Scene more fit for his complaint.
Like her fair Eyes the day was fair;
But scorching like his am'rous Care.
Sharp like his Sythe his Sorrow was,
And wither'd like his Hopes the Grass. (I 1-8)

It is the character of Juliana that is opposed to the mower. Although she is a shepherdess, she possesses an unwonted degree of sophistication which becomes apparent even though her own voice is never heard in the poems. It is not only the mower whom she rejects but the fields where he works. Wilcher points out that much of stanza II derives from Virgil's Second Eclogue but that in Marvell's poem Damon ascribes the heat to Juliana herself (95). The mower, then, accuses the shepherdess, a conventional fixture of pastoral poetry, of altering the pastoral setting. In stanza V Marvell again inserts something new. This is the rejection of simplicity. The gifts that the mower offers Juliana admittedly have a ludicrous character when compared with traditional gifts of love. He offers her a snake, chameleons and oak leaves, which, with sophisticated disdain, she rejects as beneath notice. However, the condescending amusement of the reader is stilled when the mower says:

Yet Thou ungrateful hast not sought
Nor what they are, nor who them brought. (V 7-8)

The small gifts of innocence are despised, and while one may smile at the mower's ineffectual attempt at winning

Juliana's affection with such inappropriate tokens, it really is she who is censured because she cannot see the emblematic value of the gifts that the mower is offering. They have worth in their simplicity and simplicity is a cornerstone of the pastoral ethos. Accordingly, Juliana's rejection of Damon's simple gifts amounts, by synecdoche, to a rejection of the pastoral ethos as a whole. No longer the simple shepherdess, Juliana has acquired a veneer of sophistication. One may read in her decline from the ideal an erosion of the purity and simplicity of Arcadia, along with an increasing disinclination in the mid-seventeenth century to take seriously so artificial an ideal, glimpses of which can however be seen in the mower. So the mower becomes the vehicle of traditional pastoral value and he seeks on that basis to affirm his identity and his worth:

I am the Mower *Damon*, known

Through all the Meadows I have mown. (VI 1-2)

This affirmation is impressive and dignified. He is a credible pastoral figure, but this image is undermined later in the poem. In the last two stanzas the frame-narrator resumes the account and tells how by a chance carelessness the mower cuts his own ankle. Throughout, the mower's scythe is an integral part of his personality, the tool which proves his usefulness in rural life, and now this has failed him and he cannot function efficiently. Amidst the seriousness of the mower's injury, a wry, indeed, satiric note, not often

encountered in traditional pastoral, is introduced in the line:

By his own Sythe, the Mower mown. (X 8)

So the mower has been made to look incompetent in the use of his own tools as a result of his infatuation with the sophisticated Juliana, and this undermines his credibility as a pastoral 'practised hand' by striking a blow at his 'professionalism'.

In *The Mower to the Glo-Worms* Marvell again lets the mower speak for himself. It is a delicate poem which incorporates the true simplicity of the countryside, the importance of lowly creatures, Marvell's powers of observation and country legends concerning glowworms. But these 'lines of force' converge on a *personal* crisis that finds expression in the poem's key statement:

Your courteous Lights in vain you waste. (IV 1)

The mower here comes close to denying his pastoral identity and rootedness. He no longer feels sure of his mastery of the traditional country paths. Juliana has so unsettled him that he becomes like a wandering, homeless soul:

For She my Mind hath so displac'd

That I shall never find my home. (IV 3-4)

According to Wilcher's hypothesis, Marvell in this short poem shows the increasing disorientation, even displacement, of the mower, but it is *The Mower's Song* that seems to foretell the end of pastoral poetry in the traditional key.

The last mower poem belies its title of *The Mower's Song*. It is too much a poem of disillusionment to be a 'Song', too much a poem of bitter thoughts running through the mind of the mower as he works, thoughts hammered home by the refrain (the only time this device is used in Marvell's poetic oeuvre) at the end of every stanza: "What I do to the Grass, [she] does to my Thoughts and Me" - an alexandrine that mimes the rhythm of the long, steady sweep of the scythe. The poem opens with the Arcadian ideal, the green summer meadows and a pastoral personage in tune with his surroundings, life fresh and clear and uncomplicated:

My Mind was once the true survey
Of all these Meadows fresh and gay;
And in the greenness of the Grass
Did see its Hopes as in a glass; (I 1-4)

Only the word 'once' shows that all this now belongs to the past; and the loss is irreversible. In stanza III the mower registers his alienation from his surroundings. He feels rejected, spurned by his own 'natural habitat', his meadows, and he evinces not only hurt but anger:

Unthankful Meadows, could you so
A fellowship so true forego,
And in your gaudy May-games meet,
While I lay trodden under feet? (III 1-4)

In a reversal of the traditional pastoral perspective on country and city, the former is seen as if through the sophisticated and scornful eyes of Juliana. The mower

clearly is no longer at one with his surroundings. The empathy between pastoral personage and countryside that formed the basis of the vitality and identity of country folk is no longer operative for the mower. Unable to regain his lost innocence, peace of mind and pastoral 'rootedness', the mower, in his pain, seeks, Samson-like, to destroy his whole pastoral world, in order to deny Juliana a triumph:

And Flow'rs, and Grass, and I and all,
Will in one common Ruine fall. (IV 3-4)

But he knows in his heart that this defeat is futile. What he does or does not do is of no consequence to the implacable Juliana, any more than it is of consequence to her that his pastoral world is crumbling about him.

In the Mower poems one observes a transition from the classical pastoral model with its remote, idealized shepherds and shepherdesses to a genre in which rural people exhibit a more earthy reality. At the same time as the Mower poems look back to classical pastoral they also look forward to the poetic descriptions of rural people in the next century, in such productions as Stephen Duck's "Thresher" poems or George Crabbe's *The Village*. The territory of the mower lies between the wild hills and woods and the cultivated gardens, and the mower himself is in a corresponding state of tension. A simple and primitive figure, he is yet aware that unwelcome, sophisticated ways are intruding upon him and his surroundings. In the mid-seventeenth century civil war,

political upheaval and religious dissension brought doubts and disillusionment to many. Viewed against that backdrop Marvell's mowers are perhaps symptomatic - reflections and expressions of the passing of innocence. In the neo-classical pastoral poetry written in the early decades of the eighteenth century, one cannot escape a sense of stultifying, unsustainable artificiality, so it comes as no surprise that rural poetry was to develop along different lines in the later decades of the century. In the history of that development Marvell's mower takes his place as a significant transitional figure.

Conclusion

Developments in classical pastoral poetry during the centuries prior to the seventeenth century had resulted in modifications to the genre, but in England at least, none of these had proved to be radical. But in the 1640s and 1650s, with English society experiencing unprecedented social, political and religious upheaval, pastoral poetry in the traditional key came to seem extraordinarily artificial and contrived. Reacting perhaps to this quality, sensing a need for a renovation of the genre, sensing as well the opportunities such a renovation offered, Marvell took up the challenge, producing a dozen or so poems of a pastoral, or at least, a rural character, of which the best bear a memorably individual and innovative stamp. One could speculate that Marvell's intervention in the development of the pastoral genre temporarily halted its decline and, had his lead been followed, a further modification of classical pastoral might have taken place which could have improved the genre's chances of survival in a form at least reminiscent of the traditional one.

If we consider how even in those of his pastoral poems that follow the classical tradition most closely (*A Dialogue between Thyrsis and Dorinda*, *Clorinda and Damon*, *Ametas and Thestylis Making Hay-Ropes*), Marvell manages to transform the conventionalized dialogue of shepherd pastoral into a lively debate, we get an idea of his

success in breathing new life into this form. In the more ambitious pieces such as *Upon Appleton House*, Marvell dextrously adjusts the traditional pastoral register in order to take account of Lord Fairfax's personal biography as a military man, as seen in the fort shape of his garden and Civil War reverberations. In both this poem and *The Garden* a new dimension of richness and sensuousness is given to the pastoral of contemplative solitude. But it is in the Mower poems that one finds the emergence of Classical Pastoral in a new key, as it were. The most striking innovation, even more striking than the choice of the mower as the poems' protagonist, is the mower's consciousness of the country/city opposition and the ramifications ensuing therefrom. In a paradoxical way, it is precisely because the mower sees that Arcadia is being destroyed that its values are brought into focus. Forming a suite of poems with an implicit narrative thread, the Mower sequence constitutes "Marvell's most sustained and richly human treatment of the cost and necessity of making the transition from the state of innocence to the state of experience" (Wilcher 89). In the Mower poems Marvell delves deeper into human emotions, and grants his rural protagonist a more resonant and more feelingly human voice than had previously been attempted in pastoral poetry, the pastoral elegy excepted.

As things turned out, Andrew Marvell had little influence on the poets of the generation that immediately

followed him, but I consider that his poetry is, nevertheless, highly significant for the poetic pastoral tradition viewed in the long term. He wrote poems which, while conforming in broad terms to the tenets of classical pastoral, were infused with freshness, originality and wit. He wrote poems that looked at nature with the keen eye of the amateur naturalist rather than with the jaded one of the conventional practitioner of pastoral verse. He invested his rural figures with more substance, more credibility, more individuality and more human reality than any English pastoral poet before him had done.

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