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It was the purpose of this study to examine in a selection of Andrew Marvell's lyric poems, various aspects of temporal life against the background of the Elizabethan concept of universal cosmic order. The poems included in the selection are "The Garden," "The Coronet," "On a Drop of Dew," "The Mower against Gardens," "Damon the Mower," "The Mower to the Glo-Worms," and "The Mower's Song."

The poems were considered in terms of theme and Marvell's poetic treatment. The three major themes examined are harmony between man and God, harmony between man and nature, and woman's place within the cosmic order.

All of the poems were found to operate within the framework of man's ideal position within the seventeenth-century cosmology. All reflect Marvell's characteristic poetic dualism. He presents the conflicts, but offers only limited solutions, and no resolutions.

BALANCE AND COUNTERBALANCE
IN ANDREW MARVELL'S PASTORAL POEMS

by

Anne Bryson Allen

A Thesis Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
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Approved by

Amy R. Charles
Thesis Adviser

APPROVAL PAGE

This thesis has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. This is possible. I also appreciate Dr. Denise Baker's and Dr. Donald Darnell's suggestions which were invaluable in preparing the final draft.

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CHAPTER I

 This page is in appreciation of Dr. Amy M. Charles whose time, patience, and guidance made this thesis possible. I also appreciate Dr. Denise Baker's and Dr. Donald Darnell's suggestions which were invaluable in preparing the final draft.

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of the burgeoning "new-science" of Copernicus, Kepler, Descartes, and Harvey.³ Attempts to reconcile the new theories with the old order occupied poets as well as theologians and philosophers. God was the creator and the center of the universe in seventeenth-century cosmology. Man's task was to keep himself

1. C. Bradbrook and M. G. Lloyds Thomas, *Andrew Marvell* (Cambridge: University Press, 1961), p. 60.

2. M. W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (New York: MacMillan Co., 1943), p. 11.

Marjorie Hope Nicolson expands on this point in *The Breaking of the Circle* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 122. "The world of Aristotle, of Ptolemy, of Augustine and Dante, of Shakespeare, was gone. In its place was only a lesser planet, turning upon its axis, taking its orderly way among other planets, moving about the Sun that had usurped the 'proud centre' that for centuries had been the world of man."

INTRODUCTION

Andrew Marvell's lyric poetry reflects a range of style and ideas as varied and as complex as the age it represents. During the years from 1645 to 1660, the period to which scholars generally assign these poems,¹ the Elizabethan concept of cosmic order, refined and simplified, but essentially intact from the Middle Ages, was still valid.² It was faith in this order that had been unquestioningly accepted for so long that was jolted by theories of the burgeoning "new-science" of Copernicus, Kepler, Descartes, and Harvey.³ Attempts to reconcile the new theories with the old order occupied poets as well as theologians and philosophers.

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in balance with the macrocosm in order that his soul could ultimately be re-united with God.⁴ E. M. W. Tillyard explains the ideal position of man in this cosmology:

He was the nodal point, and his double nature, though the source of internal conflict, had the unique function of binding together all creation, of bridging the greatest cosmic chasm, that between matter and spirit. During the whole period when the notion of the chain of being was prevalent, from Pythagorean philosophy to Pope, it was man's key position in creation...that so greatly exercised the human imagination.⁵

Marvell concentrates on the internal conflicts arising from man's struggle to maintain this ideal position. The main aspects of disharmony that he explores in his poetry are the attempt to balance passion with reason and the dilemma of the soul when balance is not achieved in the microcosm.

Marvell's poems are best classified as being metaphysical,⁶ but classical tone and technique as well as pastoral and cavalier themes all function in them—sometimes singularly and sometimes together. His lyric voice, unlike the voice he uses in his fiery political satires, is always detached. A. Alvarez defines this detachment as poetic "judgment":

⁴Nicolson, p. 7.

⁵Tillyard, p. 66.

⁶T. S. Eliot, "Andrew Marvell," The Times Literary Supplement, March 31, 1921, p. 4.

By judgment I mean a quality which presents, balances, and evaluates a whole situation, seeing all the implications and never attempting to simplify them. The poet's whole effort is directed towards a full and delicate sanity, so that what he finally achieves is a kind of personal impersonality.⁷

"Impersonality" is an important facet of Marvell's poetic dualism. A definite point of view by the speaker in one poem is counterbalanced by an equally definite, but opposing point of view in another.

Considering the controversies raging in the early part of the seventeenth-century, Marvell's moderate position is remarkable. His lyric poems were all written during a period marked by extreme economic, political, and religious conflicts. Marvell was the only Calvinist among the major poets of the metaphysical school,⁸ but it is impossible to isolate an exclusively puritan tone in his lyric work. Pierre Legouis, his most thorough biographer, theorizes that for all the puritan influences in his life, his sympathy during the Civil War was more with the royalists and the elegant cavalier spirit epitomized in the dashing young Richard Lovelace.⁹ "To His Coy Mistress," one of Marvell's

⁷A. Alvarez, The School of Donne (New York: Pantheon Books, 1961), p. 114.

⁸Pierre Legouis, Andrew Marvell, Poet, Puritan, Patriot (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), p. 13.

⁹Legouis, pp. 13-14. Legouis agrees with H. J. C. Grierson's theory in Metaphysical Lyrics & Poems of the Seventeenth Century (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1921), pp. xiii-xxxviii; reprinted in Seventeenth Century English Poetry ed. William R. Keast (Oxford: University Press, 1971), p. 15.

best known poems, is in the classical carpe diem tradition that was so much in vogue with Lovelace and the other cavalier poets.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine in a selection of Marvell's lyric poems various aspects of temporal life against the background of the Elizabethan concept of cosmic order. There is a continuing theme running through these poems of man out of harmony with the order. Disharmony results from man's failure to balance passion and reason effectively. Only when the microcosm itself is in balance can a true synthesis of matter and spirit result to enable man to fulfill his proper place in the order.

All of the poems in this selection can be classified as pastoral in the sense that all deal with the reciprocal relationships between man and nature or between the soul and nature. Marvell's dualism is readily apparent in his treatment of nature. Nature functions as a symbol of spiritual values in some of the poems, and as a symbol of worldly values in others.

The tone in all of the poems is characteristically impersonal and the various aspects of man's disharmony are explored from a number of perspectives. Marvell is always the medium between the reader and the personae, who speak from limited and personal points of view.

The poems included in this study are "The Garden," "The Coronet," "On a Drop of Dew," "The Mower against

Gardens," "Damon the Mower," "The Mower to the Glo-Worms," and "The Mower's Song." The poems will be considered in terms of theme and poetic treatment. Three major themes in the poems are: harmony between man and God; harmony between man and nature; and woman's place in the order.

There is general agreement among critics concerning the explication of all the poems in this selection with the exception of "The Garden." With this poem the critical tendency has been to strive for a reading that unifies all the images, conceits, and allusions. These readings are variously based upon classical sources, the Bible, Augustinian philosophy, Hermeticism, or genre classifications.¹⁰ I believe that to accept any one reading that forces at least a part of the poem into a ready mold is to rob it of much of its richness. Marvell used allusions that fit into the work--juxtaposing Christian, classical, neo-platonic, and other philosophical images without regard for any exclusive source. He thus created a poem in which the sometimes antithetical allusions intensify one another and impress the reader more deeply with every successive reading.

¹⁰The following selection of studies exemplifies this problem: Maren-Sofie Røstvig, The Happy Man (Oslo, Norway: Norwegian Universities Press, 1962); Pierre Legouis, "Marvell and the New Critics," RES, 8 (1957), 382-89; Stanley Stewart, The Enclosed Garden (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966); Milton Klonsky, "A Guide through the Garden," Sewanee Review, 58 (1950), 16-35; Frank Kermode, "The Argument of Marvell's Garden," in Seventeenth Century English Poetry, ed. William Keast, pp. 333-47; and Ruth Wallerstein, Studies in Seventeenth Century Poetic (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965), pp. 318-34.

In this study I shall treat "The Garden" from this eclectic critical viewpoint.

The text used throughout is H. M. Margoliouth's edition of The Poems and Letters of Andrew Marvell revised by Pierre Legouis and E. E. Duncan-Jones (Oxford, 1971). Line numbers are given parenthetically following quotations.

HARMONY WITH GOD

Courage my Soul, now learn to wield
The weight of thine immortal Shield.
Close on thy Head thy Helmet bright.
Ballance thy Sword against the Fight.
See where an Army, strong as fair,
With silken Banners spreads the Air.
Now, if thou bee'st that thing Divine,
In this day's Combat let it shine:
And shew that Nature wants an Art
To conquer one resolved Heart. (ll. 1-10)

The significance of the soul is dramatically illustrated in the opening stanza of Marvell's "A Dialogue, between The Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure." For man to attain ultimate harmony with God, his soul must remain untarnished during life in the temporal world. For the soul to remain pure, balance between passion and reason must be reached and maintained within the microcosm.

Marvell is concerned with this balance in "On a Drop of Dew," "The Coronet," and "The Garden." These three poems reflect not only his concern for equipoise within the microcosm, but also his characteristic poetic duality.

Marvell presents two solutions for the soul's dilemma. In "On a Drop of Dew," the soul is controlled by pure reason that allows for no distraction from passion. In "The Coronet" and "The Garden," the mind becomes an instrument of mediation between passion and reason in order to attain harmony within the microcosm.

In these three poems, Marvell explores the problem of preserving the soul's original purity while it is imprisoned in an imperfect copy of an imperfect world. "On a Drop of Dew," in forty concise lines, presents the soul's original problem, difficulties, and final triumph. It is an impersonal over-view, or summary, of the progress of the soul that Marvell examines from a more personal perspective in "The Coronet," and a variety of particular perspectives in "The Garden."

The tone is significantly more detached in "On a Drop of Dew" than in the other two poems. It is a formal description of the soul's journey from God, through the world of time and change, to its final triumphant return to God.¹ The first eight lines set the controlling image, the theme, and the soul's solution leading to its triumph:²

See how the Orient Dew,
Shed from the Bosom of the Morn
Into the blowing Roses,

¹Ruth Wallerstein, Studies in Seventeenth-Century Poetic (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1950), writes: "the poem is a formal statement of the soul's place in the universe in an extreme neo-platonic view. The soul of man ... enters reluctantly into bodily life. To enter is a corruption, for to do so the soul leaves the world of pure intelligence and the contemplation of the One (or the Good)" (p. 162).

²Harold Toliver, Marvell's Ironic Vision (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), argues that there is little triumph in the soul's return to its proper sphere because it is "passively 'exhaled' back by the pitying sun." (p. 73). I suggest that the return is as much the result of the soul's vigilance as it is of grace.

Yet careless of its Mansion new;
 For the clear Region where 'twas born
 Round in its self incloses:
 And in its little Globes Extent,
 Frames as it can its native Element. (ll. 1-8)

The image of the dewdrop as an emblem for the soul and the theme of its response to temporality are established in the first six lines. The rhyme scheme (abcabc) emphasizes the reciprocal image relationships that remain essentially unchanged throughout the poem. The soul concentrates itself inwardly as it "incloses" upon itself, but "incloses" also echoes the natural reaction of roses with dewdrops in their petals.

The most crucial relationship of imagery to the progress of the poem is that between the "Orient Dew" and its "Mansion new." The "Mansion new" is the rose, the soft new body for the new and shining soul. The two are not, however, equivalent, as Ann E. Berthoff sees them,³ because only the dewdrop-soul has a chance to return to God. The rose will inevitably wither and die. The image is one of disharmony because the immortal is imprisoned within the mortal for its journey through the world of time and change.

The soul's reaction to its predicament is crystallized in the couplet rhyme of lines seven and eight. It will preserve some of its "Native Element" until, like the

³Ann E. Berthoff, The Resolved Soul (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), writes that "A term such as 'mansion' provides a sounding board for the poem's conceptual resonance, establishing the equivalence of the dewdrop and the embodied soul" (p. 29).

sacred manna, it can ascend:

White, and intire, though congeal'd and chill.
Congeal'd on Earth: but does, dissolving, run
Into the Glories of th' Almighty Sun. (ll. 38-40)

Marvell uses diction to emphasize the difficulty that the soul experiences in its struggle to remain pure. It is "Restless," "unsecure," and "Trembling." The purple color of the rose indicates worldly temptations that are always near.⁴ But the dew-drop soul is able to transcend worldly soil by concentrating its thoughts skyward:

Scarce touching where it lyes,
But gazing back upon the Skies,
Shines with a mournful Light (ll. 10-12).

The soul does not reach the sun, or God,⁵ entirely by its own efforts, but is dependent upon the sun's pity, or divine grace:

Restless it roules and unsecure,
Trembling lest it grow impure:
Till the warm Sun pittty it's Pain,
And to the Skies exhale it back again. (ll. 15-18)

Remaining pure by allowing reason to have control and by shunning the passions engendered by contact with the rose keeps the soul in a state of grace. This is the triumph in

⁴Wallerstein writes: "In the exquisite line on the 'sweet leaves and blossoms green,' the rose might seem to belong in the garden of Nun Appleton. But purple is symbolic of the pomp and luxury of the world. It stands in direct contrast with the adjectives which have unmistakable religious and philosophical symbolism with reference to divine purity and to the circle of divine unity" (p. 163).

⁵Dennis Davison, Andrew Marvell (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1952), p. 44 and Wallerstein, p. 163.

its return to God.

The rhythm, imagery, and intellectual progression of "On a Drop of Dew" combine to accentuate the spherical movement of the poem. The poem itself is an emblem of the circle of divine unity, an emblem demonstrating the reciprocal relationship of microcosm and macrocosm functioning one within the other harmoniously.

Marvell used these same poetic devices to create a similar movement in "The Coronet," but the tone here is more personal. This poem is an expression of the speaker's wish to present the savior a gift. His wish results in the revelation of his own impure motives and his personal desire for redemption. The speaker strives to balance passion with reason to cleanse his blemished soul.

The poem revolves around the central image of a wreath, or floral crown, the image becoming a focus for a meditation on Christ's glory.⁶ As the wreath itself functions as a symbol for Christian glory, so the flowers comprising it symbolize poetic efforts.⁷ They function doubly

⁶Bruce King, "A Reading of Marvell's 'The Coronet,'" MLR 68:4 (October, 1973), 741.

⁷Ann E. Berthoff believes that Marvell is not at all concerned with art in this poem. She writes that "Marvell nowhere exhibits any degree of self-consciousness as an artist, or any interest in himself as a creator of beauty; he nowhere expresses any conflict, pride, devotion or fear concerning his art" (p. 46). This view is refuted not only by a careful reading of the poem, but also by Bruce King, p. 742; Rosalie Colie, My Ecchoing Song (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 40 and pp. 78-80; and Dennis Davison, pp. 44-45.

in this poem, standing both for poetic verses and worldly beauty:

Through every Garden, every Mead,
I gather flow'rs (my fruits are only flow'rs).
(ll. 5-6)

The poem unfolds in contrasts. The controlling image, the coronet, stands for Christ's earthly and heavenly crowns.⁸ The earthly crown is of thorns, and signifies humility and patience within the temporal world. The heavenly crown is the crown of glory that Christ received through his resurrection and ascension. Image contrasts that support the controlling image are those between earthly and heavenly beauty and between mortal and celestial glory.

Marvell again uses rhyme to echo and underline the conceptual development of the poem. In the first twelve lines, the rhyme scheme is regular (abba cddc effe). Each of the three groups of four lines with its enclosed couplet presents a complete thought.⁹

The background of the speaker's sins, or "thorns," his resolution to "redress that wrong," as well as the method of retribution, the "Garlands," form the conceptual core of the first group:

⁸King, 741.

⁹Toliver notes that "As part of the poem's strategy, Marvell weaves the curious frame as tightly as he can. The opening quatrains, equivalent to the composition of place in a three-part meditation, present the problem and the poet's reaction to it" (p. 97).

When for the Thorns with which I long, too long,
 With many a piercing wound,
 My Saviors head have crown'd,
 I seek with Garlands to redress that wrong
 (ll. 1-4).

Optimism shines as he gathers his "store" in the second group, only to dissolve as the mediation of intellect forces the realization of self-deception:

Through every Garden, every Mead,
 I gather flow'rs (my fruits are only flow'rs)
 Dismantling all the fragrant Towers
 That once adorn'd my Shepherdesses head.
 And now when I have summ'd up all my store,
 Thinking (so I my self deceive)
 So rich a Chaplet thence to weave
 As never yet the King of Glory wore... (ll. 5-12).

In the next four lines, the rhyme becomes interwoven as it follows the more complex syntax to underline the dramatic discovery of evil camouflaged amid the beauty of the flowers:

Alas I find the Serpent old
 That, twining in his speckled breast,
 About the flow'rs disguised does fold,
 With wreaths of Fame and Interest. (ll. 13-16)

The speaker is saved from his own folly by the recognition of evil inherent in his intended gift. He is able to comprehend the relative value of worldly fame in relation to the more important value of his own soul:

Ah, foolish Man, that would'st debase with them,
 And mortal Glory, Heavens Diadem! (ll. 17-18)

These lines are reminiscent of Milton's description of St. Peter's denunciation of fame in Lycidas:

"Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
 Nor in the glistening foil

Set off to th' world, nor in broad rumor lies,
 But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes
 And perfect witness of all-judging Jove;
 As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
 Of so much fame in heav'n expect thy meed."¹⁰

Marvell's recognition of the insignificance of fame against the greater value of heavenly glory is similar to Milton's. Both resolve feelings of personal mortality into a philosophy of hope based on the expectation of heavenly glory that is won through humility. The wish for fame is a passion, and it can be tempered by reason.

The final eight lines form a direct address, or prayer, to Christ. Only through his mercy can evil be overcome in the microcosm as well as in the macrocosm:

But thou who only could'st the Serpent tame,
 Either his slipp'ry knots at once untie,
 And disintangle all his winding Snare:
 Or shatter too with him my curious frame:
 And let these wither, so that he may die,
 Though set with Skill and chosen out with Care.
 That they, while Thou on both their Spoils dost tread,
 May crown thy feet, that could not crown thy Head.
 (ll. 19-26)

The language in these lines reflects the sum of all the conflicts in the poem, and the speaker's desire for order, order in himself and order in his world.

The theme of the poem is a gift, or sacrifice, to Christ. As the gift is from man, it is naturally of the world. It is not, however, unacceptable for being worldly, but because impure motives prompt it. The speaker understands

¹⁰John Milton, The Complete Poetical Works of John Milton, ed. Douglas Bush (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1965), p. 144.

the presumptuousness of his attempt to weave a heavenly crown, yet as Harold E. Toliver explains, "Fame and interest shatter the pastoral daydream, but the pastoral artist discovers a valid use for his art"¹¹ by bridging the distance between matter and spirit in giving his poem, his "curious frame" as an emblem of Christ's worldly crown and of his own humility.

In "The Coronet," Marvell sorts out the complex relationships among the soul, the passions, and the reason as well as the relationships between man and nature and between man and God. By the end of the poem, he achieves a tenuous equilibrium for all of these, but the balance depends upon tension, and is not gained without regret. The gift becomes one of humility rather than of the glory the speaker had intended. The danger of evil is always present; passions must be tempered by reason. The speaker finds that constant vigilance is necessary to balance his own passion and reason: he must purify his already tarnished soul and protect it from further contamination before he can realize heavenly glory, or ultimate union with God.

Marvell explores the balance between things of matter and things of spirit in more detail in "The Garden." The theme, once again, is the soul's dilemma. Through the multiple perspectives of the speaker's position, Marvell is able to strike a tone less detached than in "On a Drop of

¹¹Toliver, p. 98.

Dew," and less personal than in "The Coronet." As in "The Coronet," the speaker's mind must mediate between his soul and his passions. He is secluded within an enclosed garden where he progresses from sensual pleasure, through intellectual happiness, to a complete synthesis of passion and reason. The formal order of the Horatian ode reinforces the theme.

The first three stanzas set the tone. The complicated puns (vainly, amaze, Labours, Toyles, upbraid), along with the dialectical development conduct speaker and reader together further and further within the cool green shades of quiet and contemplation. Marvell creates the mood in a manner strikingly like the "composition of place" in a formal meditation.¹² Stanzas four, five, six, and seven form the heart of the poem, describing an experience of a brief union between matter and spirit. The final two stanzas reflect peace and renewed strength, the results of the soul's refreshment.¹³

Following an introduction to worldly beauty—

No white nor red was ever seen
So am'rous as this lovely green. (ll. 17, 18)

—the speaker shifts to conflicts between worldly and

¹²Louis L. Martz, The Poetry of Meditation (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), pp. 25-32.

¹³Davison explains that "Marvell thinks naturally in terms of the flight of the soul after death, but in fact he is preparing his soul for the arduous flight back into the 'busie companies of men'" (p. 60).

spiritual love. Nature and solitude represent the spiritual in this garden where the two loves blend with the metamorphosis of the gods:

Apollo hunted Daphne so,
Only that She might Laurel grow.
And Pan did after Syrinx speed,
Not as a Nymph, but for a Reed. (ll. 29-32)

The gods also function as allusions to poetry and music, two important vehicles of expressing both kinds of love.¹⁴ This metamorphosis of spiritual and sensual love is likewise expressed in the speaker's description of innocent sensual enjoyment, an almost sexual merging of man and nature, of matter and spirit:

What wond'rous Life is this I lead!
Ripe Apples drop about my head;
The Luscious Clusters of the Vine
Upon my Mouth do crush their Wine. (ll. 33-36)

The dazzling wealth of allusion within these lines so tightly packed with sensual imagery suggests the complex blending of matter and spirit developed through the remainder of the poem. While describing an immediate experience, the lines also echo the garden in the Canticles, the Garden of Eden, the Hermetic action of nature (nature provides sensual love), and the classical "Golden Age."

The intangled feet of the speaker remind him of the

¹⁴Donald M. Friedman, Marvell's Pastoral Art (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), writes that "Apollo hunted Daphne for the laurel crown of poetry and Pan sped after Syrinx to capture music. Desire is only to be quieted in the permanence of art" (p. 158).

limitations of the flesh:

Stumbling on Melons, as I pass,
Insнар'd with Flow'rs, I fall on Grass. (ll. 39,40)

Whether or not "Melons" refers to the apple of the Fall,¹⁵ the lines more than hint at man's inability to be completely responsible for the salvation of his own soul. "Stumbling" and "Insнар'd" reflect the struggle. "Flow'rs," as in "On a Drop of Dew" and "The Coronet," refers to worldly—if not carnal—temptations.¹⁶ Mutability of the flesh is dramatically underscored by the regular rhythm of the monosyllables in the second half of the final line. The words themselves tumble downward to land on the final "Grass."

Gorged and sated with pleasure, the speaker pauses to consider his mind. The ordering function of the mind operates as it "Withdraws" from "pleasure less," "into its happiness" (ll. 41,42). Because it has power to transform sensual experience and create a spiritual environment, the mind can act as the mediator between the body and the soul:

Mean while the Mind, from pleasure less,
Withdraws into its happiness:
The Mind, that Ocean where each kind
Does streight its own resemblance find;
Yet it creates, transcending these,
Far other Worlds, and other Seas;
Annihilating all that's made
To a green Thought in a green Shade. (ll. 41-48)

¹⁵Friedman, pp. 161-162.

¹⁶It is conceivable that flowers could also stand for devotional poetry here as they do in "The Coronet." This is reasonable considering the allusion to music and poetry in stanza four.

Marvell reinforces the importance of the mediating action of the mind by placing this stanza between stanza five with its rich array of sensual delights and stanza seven with its description of rare spiritual happiness.

The soul is receptive to the mood of peace and tranquility only after reason has transformed sensual pleasure into quiet reflection. "Pleasure" evolves into "happiness." The microcosm is in balance, all aspects in proper perspective.¹⁷ Like the dewdrop-soul, "recollecting its own Light," the speaker's soul is, at least momentarily, released from the body's domination.¹⁸

Here at the Fountain's sliding foot,
Or at some Fruit-trees mossy root,
Casting the Bodies Vest aside,
My soul into the boughs does glide:
There like a Bird it sits, and sings,
Then whets, and combs its silver wings;
And, till prepar'd for longer flight,
Waves in its Plumes the various Light. (ll. 49-56)

Again Marvell combines images from various philosophies into the language. "Fountains" and "Fruit-trees" suggest, as M. C. Bradbrook and M. G. Lloyd Thomas point out,

¹⁷Friedman notes that "poets and philosophers who accepted the assumptions of Christian Platonism were at one in believing that the mind could achieve its proper end and function only by turning from the distractions of sense" (p. 165).

¹⁸Maren-Sofie Røstvig, in The Happy Man (Oslo, Norway: Norwegian Universities Press, 1962) observes "Once the proper degree of bodily repose has been achieved, pure mind reasserts its superiority over matter, and it becomes possible for it to 'Withdraw into its happiness,' that is, to withdraw into that part of creation which is God by dismissing 'the bodies Vest'" (p. 168).

"the baptismal fountain and the tree of knowledge."¹⁹ Baptism implies the conception of grace; as in "On a Drop of Dew" and "The Coronet," it is a reminder of the soul's reliance upon divine assistance. The tree conjures up images not only of the Garden of Eden, but also of the tradition of the Jesse Tree,²⁰ Christ as the second Adam, and the promise inherent in the crucifixion. Platonic and Judaeo-Christian traditions are brought to mind by the simile of the soul-bird,²¹ and allusions to Roman Catholic, hermetic, and Neoplatonic ideas combine in the phrase, "various Light."²² The allusions play against one another and enrich the description of ecstasy without interrupting the development of the poem.

The soul is refreshed by its experience of momentary release, and while remaining well within bounds of the temporal

¹⁹M. C. Bradbrook and M. G. Lloyd Thomas, Andrew Marvell (Cambridge, England: The University Press, 1961), p. 62.

²⁰Stanley Stewart, The Enclosed Garden (Milwaukee: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966), pp. 80-85.

²¹Rosalie L. Colie, My Ecchoing Song (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 165.

²²The "various light" could be analogous to the "great light of faith" that St. John of the Cross finds necessary for final union of the soul with God. The Poems of St. John of the Cross, trans. Willis Barnstone, rpt. 1972 (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1968). Røstvig writes that "After death, the mind puts on a fiery coat, fire being its proper element. In this Hermetic concept one may possibly find an explanation of the 'various light'" (pp. 168-169); Ruth Wallerstein (p. 329), and Rosalie Colie (p. 166), agree that the "various light" must be from the Neoplatonic concept of the various facets of the pure light of creation being reflected in nature.

world, is able to bask, as time becomes suspended, in the pure light of creation. Because the microcosm is in balance, the soul can safely relax and absorb the beauty and the love manifested in nature.

Emerging from his reverie, the speaker reflects on Adam's innocent rapport with nature before Eve and the Fall.²³ As he returns to full awareness of his present time and place, he is able to recognize worldly and spiritual beauty harmoniously blended, to perceive the harmony of the world because the spiritual and sensual aspects of his own human nature are in balance:

How well the skilful Gardner drew
Of flow'rs and herbes this dial new;
Where from above the milder Sun
Does through a fragrant Zodiack run;
And, as it works, th' industrious Bee
Computes its time as well as we.
How could such sweet and wholesome Hours
Be reckon'd but with herbs and flow'rs! (ll. 65-72)

He sees the sundial, a metaphor for the temporal world, through new eyes, or eyes newly opened. This metaphor is rich in layered meaning, as Rosalie Colie explains:

the dial itself is "new" and renewing, since it is a garden; not only does it keep time by its shape and by the seasonal nature of its plants... but also it renews itself, gives hope for the future even as it marks the passage of time.²⁴

The speaker's perception of order in the scene is illustrated by Marvell's choice of adjectives. The sun is

²³Røstvig, pp. 162-163.

²⁴Colie, p. 169.

"milder," the zodiac design is "fragrant," the bee is "industrious," and the hours "sweet and wholesome." The refreshed quality of the speaker's perceptions are more dramatic in view of the contrast of these adjectives that complement artist ("th' skilful Gardner"), artifice ("a fragrant Zodiack"), and labor ("th' industrious Bee") to those in the two opening stanzas of the poem, where all of these activities are modified pejoratively.

The soul's "immortal Shield" shines brightly in the resolution of each of the three poems, but the inevitable tarnish it develops through worldly contact is the problem concerning the three speakers. In each poem, Marvell forces awareness of disharmony upon his speaker. The speaker must exercise his mind, his controlling reason, to attain equilibrium between his temporal and his spiritual selves. Only after equilibrium is achieved is the soul capable of receiving divine grace. The effect of grace is immediate in "On a Drop of Dew," where the dewdrop-soul is "exhaled" back by the "warm Sun." In "The Coronet," the resolution is not as straightforward; the balance between passion and reason depends upon humility. The soul progresses to the point of readiness to receive grace, but does not achieve the desired union. The mind "creates" and "transcends" in "The Garden." The soul in perfect harmony within the microcosm receives grace and returns to its worldly home--refreshed as from the Eucharist.

The soul shuns the temporal world and its temptations in "On a Drop of Dew," and its reunion with God is triumphant and successful. Reason and passion interact in "The Coronet" and "The Garden," but only the speaker in "The Garden" is able to achieve the perfect balance necessary for his soul's eventual union with God. In all three poems, Marvell emphasizes the danger to the soul from worldly contact. Though the mind can mediate between passion and reason, man cannot reach perfect union with God without grace.

Marvell considers man's responsibilities in his relationship to vegetable, or inanimate nature. In "The Garden" and "The Mower against Gardens," though the two poems seem to be written from totally adverse points of view, each concludes with the gardener achieving a proper balance within himself.

There is not really such a gap for comparison between the mower's lament that the gardener's

...first enclosed within the garden's square
A dead and standing pool of Air (ll. 3, 6)

and these lines of praise from "The Garden":

Now will the skillful Gardener draw
Of flow'rs and herbs this Dial new (ll. 45, 46)

Does Marvell feel that it is proper and desirable for man to take the role of "gardener" upon himself? Is he saying that the gardener is a reflection in miniature of the Creator?

1. E. W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture*
New York: Macmillan Co., 1933, p. 53.

HARMONY WITH NATURE

Inanimate nature is one manifestation of the creative power of God. Ideally, man serves as a link between matter, or nature, and pure spirit, which is God.¹ Man in his ideal position is a synthesis of matter and spirit. This harmony results when reason and passion are properly balanced within the microcosm.

Marvell considers man's responsibilities in his relationship to vegetable, or inanimate nature, in "The Garden" and "The Mower against Gardens." Though the two poems seem to be written from totally adverse points of view, each concludes with the persona achieving a proper balance within himself.

There is not really much room for compromise between the mower's lament that the gardener:

...first enclos'd within the Garden's square
A dead and standing pool of Air (ll. 5,6)

and these lines of praise from "The Garden":

How well the skilful Gardner drew
Of flow'rs and herbes this Dial new (ll. 65,66).

Does Marvell feel that it is proper and desirable for man to take the role of "gardener" upon himself? Is he saying that the gardener is a reflection in miniature of the Creator,

¹E. M. W. Tillyard, The Elizabethan World Picture (New York: MacMillan Co., 1945), p. 66.

or does he really sympathize with the mower (Damon), who claims that the gardener is "Luxurious" (decadent), heedless of natural balance, a self-glorified sultan in his own "green Seraglio"?

It is impossible to assign either of these opposing points of view exclusively to Andrew Marvell, poet. The two poems considered together serve as a dramatic illustration of Marvell's power of poetic detachment. Polarized in viewpoint as they are, the poems reflect something of the duality that exists in all of his verse. This duality, though unresolved, is not confused.² He creates the individual voices and lets each speak from its own perspective. This difference in the personae of the two poems is the key to understanding Marvell's depiction of the reciprocal relationship between man and nature.

The mower's position is that man, having thoroughly debauched himself, out of boredom, or "to bring his Vice in use" (l. 1), set himself likewise to debauch the earth. He is describing a ravishing, a rape. He is lamenting man in total control, the unnatural or city man, insensitive to natural rhythms. Unspoiled human nature—such as his own—is still able to appreciate the "sweet Fields."

In contrast, the speaker in "The Garden" is also weary of man and his "uncessant Labours." He too regrets

²T. S. Eliot, Selected Essays (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1932), p. 262.

the perversion of nature by man:³

Fond Lovers, cruel as their Flame,
Cut in these trees their Mistress name.
Little, Alas, they know, or heed,
How far these Beauties Hers exceed! (ll. 19-22)

He recognizes the vanity and emptiness of the worldly fame that takes its symbols, "the Palm, the Oke, or Bayes" (l.2), from nature. But the speaker in "The Garden" is thinking of "men" in a universal sense rather than in categories of spoiled and unspoiled. In the personal pronoun we, he includes himself in the family of mankind through his recognition of inevitable lusts inspired by worldly beauties, "When we have run our Passion's heat" (l.25).

The mower is, like Shakespeare's Corin, a rustic. Harold Toliver describes him as "an articulate and lyrical Diogenes striking out against the arts of horticulture, which represent all sophistication and artful complexity."⁴ His values, though simple, are uncompromising. Unnatural, "Forbidden mixtures" are abhorrent to him—the worst, of course, being those mixtures obtained by grafting:⁵

And yet these Rarities might be allow'd
To Man, that sov'raign thing and proud;
Had he not dealt between the Bark and Tree,
Forbidden mixtures there to see. (ll. 19-22)

³Donald M. Friedman, Marvell's Pastoral Art (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), p. 157.

⁴Harold Toliver, Marvell's Ironic Vision (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), p. 104.

⁵Stanley Stewart, The Enclosed Garden (Milwaukee and London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966), p. 122.

Marvell uses language and syntax in these lines to accentuate the mower's honest outrage. Irony is evidently his intention in his use of "sov'raign." Man is degraded beneath all nature to a "thing." The adjective "proud," suspended at the end of the clause, adds the decisive contempt. The following lines begin in the same tone, but soften with the mower's change of mood:

'Tis all enforc'd; the Fountain and the Grot;
 While the sweet Fields do lie forgot;
 Where willing nature does to all dispense
 A Wild and fragrant Innocence. (ll. 31-34)

The marked caesura of line thirty-one gives emphasis to the emotion behind "enforc'd,"⁶ while the assonance heightens the weight of the pronouncement. The tone of this line contrasts with that of the following three, indicating a softening of mood as the mower considers nature as he believes it should be. The liquid "l's" and the slight sibilance underscore the sweetness described in the lines. The "w's" slow the pace just perceptibly as the speaker relishes his vision. With his unyielding ideas of right and wrong concerning man's relationship to nature, the mower would not be capable of understanding the other's appreciation of "this Dial new."⁷

⁶Friedman, p. 127.

⁷George Williamson, The Proper Wit of Poetry (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), writes that "The 'Dial new' is a replica of the original Garden; it is not the work of vice found in 'The Mower against Gardens.' Here there is

The speaker in "The Garden" is a sophisticate, his personality echoed by the formal structure and diction of the poem. He has had his share of worldly experience, and his experience has taught him the value of withdrawal into nature. The mower, on the other hand, lacks experience in society, and thus his knowledge of human nature is more limited. The meadow, sweet and unspoiled, is his idea of perfect natural innocence. He apparently forgets, in honest self-deception, that as a mower he also alters the natural growth, and does so with a violence that at least parallels the tampering of the gardener.

In Upon Appleton House, to my Lord Fairfax, Marvell uses more pointed diction to emphasize the mower's marks upon nature:

With whistling sithe, and Elbow strong,
These Massacre the Grass along;
While one, unknowing, carves the Rail,
Whose yet unfeather'd Quills her fail. (ll. 393-396)

These mowers wreak more havoc in the meadow than all the gardener's experiments cause the fruits and flowers. Here, it is the mower who is "sov'raign":

The Mower now commands the Field;
In Whose new Traverse seemeth wrought
A camp of Battail newly fought:
Where, as the Meads with Hay, the plain
Lyes quilted ore with Bodies slain:

?(continued) none of 'passion's heat' or 'flame,' but a 'milder Sun' that runs through a yearly dial of flowers and herbs, which reckon best the rewards of time—the 'sweet and wholesome Hours' of the original Garden. The development in depth of this poem is characteristic of Marvell's wit." (p. 103).

The women that with forks it fling,
Do represent the Pillaging. (AH, ll. 416-422)

These lines indicate the irony in Marvell's treatment of Damon, and demonstrate yet another facet of the dualism in his poetry.

Nature is necessarily altered by man, but more important is the fact that man is altered by nature. The mower who sees only seduction and evil in the formal garden, while overlooking its beauty, recognizes an innocence transcending all human virtue in the fields and meadows. The speaker in "The Garden" enjoys the tranquillity of nature and engulfs himself in its sensual beauties.⁸ When, through his reason, he re-gains his equilibrium, he is able to release his soul to commune with nature on a purely spiritual level.

The mower's efforts to achieve harmony within his world are limited by his intellect, but as long as he has no external interferences, he is able to find order in the fields. The speaker in "The Garden" has used his mind to consider, transform, and balance all aspects of his relationship to nature, and thus his equilibrium is more secure. He might conceivably appreciate the meadows and fields as well as the garden.

Though approached from opposing angles, nature is treated similarly in both poems. Nature must have an effect on man, and that effect is always refreshing and beneficial.

⁸Toliver, p. 145.

Dennis Davison's summation that "it is not that Marvell imparts symbols into Nature, but that he is unable to view Nature except as a process of which man is inextricably a part"⁹ emphasizes this interaction between man and nature.

Though the mower is limited by a narrow range of experience that results in self-deception, he is able to balance his passion (anger), in his contemplation of the fields and meadows. The speaker in "The Garden" progresses from passion, through reason, to arrive at a perfect synthesis of the two. As the mower is inextricably a part of the rural world of fields and meadows, so the speaker in "The Garden" merges into and becomes one with the more refined nature of the enclosed garden. By the resolution of each poem, the persona is ready to fill man's ideal position in the cosmology, but the mower's equilibrium is less secure.

⁹Dennis Davison, Andrew Marvell (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1952), p. 54.

WOMAN'S PLACE

The theme of human sexual love is important in Marvell's lyric poems, and is present in varying degrees in all but three of them.¹ But at no time is his poetic dualism and detachment more apparent—or more exasperating—than when he touches on this theme. Though woman's traditional place in the seventeenth-century conception of cosmic order was only one step below man's, Marvell finds difficulty defining her proper function in what Harold Toliver designates as the "ideal world of natural cooperation and moral order."² Is it that he identifies all women as daughters of Eve, betrayers of man? There are strong hints to this effect throughout the poems, but Marvell delivers them with such wit and detachment that the enigma of his true feelings remains.

Marvell's treatment ranges from the cavalier in "To his Coy Mistress," where he breathes new intensity into a well-worn genre, to the series of mower poems where Juliana behaves as the scornful rural beauty in true pastoral tradition. The women in his poems are always "reluctant," but

¹These three are "On a Drop of Dew," "Ros," and "Bermudas."

²Harold Toliver, Marvell's Ironic Vision (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), p. 110.

his speakers' attitudes range from intense pursuit, as in "To his Coy Mistress," to complete rejection of women as in "The Garden."

Marvell simply refuses to resolve the apparent conflict between soul and body, never conceding that perfect synthesis that John Donne achieves in "The Extasie":

To' our bodies turne wee then, that so
 Weake men on love reveal'd may looke;
 Loves mysteries in soules doe grow,
 But yet the body is his booke.
 And if some lover, such as wee,
 Have heard this dialogue of one,
 Let him still marke us, he shall see
 Small change, when we' are to bodies gone.³

Though not strong enough to be considered a resolution, a general theme throughout Marvell's lyric poems is that passion is incompatible with spiritual purity. It is, moreover, one of the greatest obstacles to the soul's eventual union with God.

In "A Dialogue between the Soul and Body," the soul yearns for total freedom:

O who shall, from this Dungeon, raise
 A Soul inslav'd so many wayes?
 With bolts of Bones, that fetter'd stands
 In Feet; and manacled in Hands.
 Here blinded with an Eye; and there
 Deaf with the drumming of an Ear.
 A Soul hung up, as 'twere, in Chains

³John Donne, "The Extasie" in John Donne: The Elegies and the Songs and Sonnets, ed. Helen Gardner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), pp. 59-61. Donne reaches this same synthesis of body and soul in many of his poems—enough to justify a generalization. This theme is especially notable in "The Canonization," "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning," and "The Relique."

Of Nerves, and Arteries, and Veins.
 Tortur'd, besides each other part,
 In a vain Head, and double Heart. (ll. 1-10)

The body replies, in language equally paradoxical, with a plea for deliverance from the "Tyrannic Soul." Marvell speaks for each in this dramatic dialogue, but only to present the conditions of temporal life from each perspective. He does not offer even an illusion of resolution.

In the mower poems and "The Garden," Marvell examines woman's disruptive influence on man's relationship with nature and with God. In "The Garden," the speaker achieves a synthesis of passion and reason by isolating himself from women. The mower (Damon), loses harmony and even his knowledge of his own place within the cosmic order by the intrusion of Juliana and the inevitable passions occasioned by her presence. His downfall is unmistakable through the series of mower poems.⁴

Damon enjoys a balanced relationship with nature in his own ideal and unfallen world until the fateful appearance of Juliana.⁵ He recognizes her as a disruption in his life and an impediment to his harmony with the "sweet fields"

⁴Toliver writes that "it is impossible to say whether or not the mower poems were meant to be taken as a series, but in the original folio order (retained by Margoliouth) the progress in the mower's dilemma up to this point of self-destruction is unmistakable" (p. 104).

⁵Although Damon rails against gardeners, he is still in harmony with his fields and meadows until Juliana totally upsets his order.

and meadows. As he tries to understand his feelings and regain his comfortable place in the cosmic order, his description of the meadow, changed by Juliana's intrusion, becomes an image of his own emotions:

Heark how the Mower Damon Sung,
With love of Juliana stung!
While ev'ry thing 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. (ll. 1-8)

The fall of the rhythm in line seven as well as the pun on "Sythe" are the first indications of Damon's eventual ruin.⁶ Like this shifted rhythm, the use of the pathetic fallacy dramatizes Damon's growing disenchantment with the fields.⁷

Even the creatures of the meadow are affected by the extreme heat of Damon's passion:

O what unusual Heats are here,
Which thus our Sun-burn'd Meadows sear!
The Grass-hopper its pipe gives ore;
And hamstring'd Frogs can dance no more.
But in the brook the green Frog wades;
And Grass-hoppers seek out the shades.
Only the Snake, that kept within,
Now glitters in its second skin. (ll. 9-16)

The frog and the grass-hopper, like the speaker in "The Garden," withdraw and escape, but the snake, symbol of evil, "glitters" and even undergoes a kind of rebirth in the heat of sinful

⁶Donald M. Friedman, Marvell's Pastoral Art (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), p. 130.

⁷Toliver, p. 106.

passion.⁸ Damon wishes to escape also, but the disruption, though caused by Juliana, is within himself, and he finds no haven.

Even in Juliana's company he can find no compensation for his loss of harmony with nature, because she has rejected him along with his offerings of love:

How long wilt Thou, fair Shepheardess,
Esteem me, and my Presents less?
To Thee the harmless Snake I bring,
Disarmed of its teeth and sting.
To Thee Chameleons changing-hue,
And Oak leaves tipt with hony dew.
Yet Thou ungrateful hast not sought
Nor what they are, nor who them brought.
(ll. 33-40)

Donald Friedman sees the "harmless snake" as a "mockery of the serpent of stanza II with its fangs and venom removed,"⁹ but Damon, up to this point in the poem, still nourished hopes of transforming his passion into a milder love to be shared with Juliana and nature.¹⁰

With his unequivocal rejection confirmed by the rejection of his gifts, Damon remembers his former identity with nature:

I am the Mower Damon, known
Through all the Meadows I have mown.
On me the Morn her dew distills
Before her darling Daffadils.
And, if at Noon my toil me heat,

⁸Lawrence W. Hyman, Andrew Marvell TEAS, No. 4 (New York: Twayne Publishers Inc., 1964), p. 21.

⁹Friedman, p. 132.

¹⁰Hyman, p. 22.

The Sun himself licks off my Sweat.
While, going home, the Ev'ning sweet
In cowslip-water bathes my feet. (ll. 41-48)

Peter Berek notes that "for the Mower, the world is totally anthropocentric, if not egocentric; in nature's mystic book he reads lessons about the centrality and purposefulness of his own life and love."¹¹ He is able to console himself somewhat with these assurances of his own importance to the land, and he finds no fault in his own image:

Nor am I so deform'd to sight,
If in my Sithe I looked right;
In which I see my Picture done,
As in a crescent Moon the Sun. (ll. 57-60)

Though Donald Friedman and Harold Toliver agree that the "picture" is Damon's reflected face in the blade of the "Sithe,"¹² the image of the raised "Sithe" with its curved blade framing the mower's head also presents itself. Damon sees himself in this attitude through his imagination. This image is strengthened by the following line, "As in a crescent Moon the Sun."

Damon identifies with the sun, remembering his domination over the fields and meadows:

The deathless Fairyes take me oft
To lead them in their Danses soft;

¹¹Peter Berek, "The Voices of Marvell's Lyrics," *MLQ*, 64 (June 1971), 150.

¹²Donald Friedman writes that "The second couplet is obviously an image of the truncated reflection of his face in the curved blade of the scythe..." (p. 133). Harold Toliver agrees, "He is totally absorbed in his task, mirrored in his scythe 'As in a Crescent Moon the Sun' (an especially revealing simile because he gives the mirror whatever light it has)" (p. 108).

And, when I tune my self to sing,
About me they contract their Ring. (ll. 61-64)

These innocent pleasures exist no more for Damon, who is completely out of harmony with his world. His song is finished, and the circle, deprived of its center, broken.

Because of his loss of harmony, Damon's work becomes unhappy "labour" combined with pain, and his scythe is an image of his grief:

But when the Iron blunter grows,
Sighing I whet my Sythe and Woes. (ll. 71,72)

Marvell reinforces the image with the pun, repeated from the first stanza, on "sigh" and "Sythe." Unable to regain a relationship within his world, Damon wields his scythe with vengeance, unwittingly mowing himself along with the grass:

The edged Stele by careless chance
Did into his own Ankle glance;
And there among the Grass fell down,
By his own Sythe, the Mower mown. (ll. 77-80)

He falls with the grass, a reminder of the flesh that is susceptible to the heat of passion. The actual cut is slight, but the larger significance of his fall, magnified by the double imagery of the scythe and the grass, is that death alone can cure his wound of unresolved love:

Alas! said He, these hurts are slight
To those that dye by Loves despight.
With Shepherds-purse and Clowns-all-heal,
The Blood I stanch, and Wound I seal.
Only for him no Cure is found,
Whom Julianas Eyes do wound.
'Tis death alone that this must do:
For Death thou art a Mower too. (ll. 81-88)

His identity shattered and his protective circle of custom broken, Damon merges with death, the grim reaper and

mower of men. But the death that Damon suffers is of the spirit. He falls into darkness, darkness of ignorance, self-deception, and sin. His passion is sinful because he is unable to control his physical desire, and his brief hope of transforming his lust into a milder love has been killed by Juliana herself. He is left forlorn and ignorant, unable to assimilate desire into the natural environment that has always been a part of him.

The resolution of "Damon the Mower" leaves Damon lost in the darkness, but in "The Mower to the Glo-Worms," he finds some comfort in the tiny lights afforded by the insects of the fields. Marvell compresses universal cosmic order into the smaller order of Damon's simple world:

Ye Country Comets, that portend
No War, nor Princes funeral,
Shining unto no higher end
Than to presage the Grasses fall;
Ye Glo-worms, whose officious Flame
To wandring Mowers shows the way,
That in the Night have lost their aim,
And after foolish Fires do stray; (ll. 5-12).

Damon's "wandring" aimlessness is all the more terrible because of his unshaken faith in the egocentric nature of his world. The disorder inherent in the darkness is emphasized by Donald Friedman:

Darkness stands always for disorder and evil; and it must be remembered that the glowworms are only nature's guides. They give off too little light to dissipate the all-embracing night of the world of temptation; and the world itself is full of "foolish fires," misleading parodies of the light of nature, shining with the allure that leads only into greater darkness.¹³

¹³Friedman, p. 137.

The "foolish fires" kindled by Juliana effectively blind Damon to the innocent guides of nature. He remains confused and alone in the darkness:

Your courteous Lights in vain you wast,
 Since Juliana here is come,
 For She my Mind hath so displac'd
 That I shall never find my home. (ll. 13-16)

Here, nature is neither hostile nor is it a wasteland. Her benefits, light from the glowworms, are readily available. Marvell even gives the initiative to nature rather than to man with the adjective "officious," in line nine, but Damon is unable to receive the gift.

In "The Mower's Song," Marvell uses the refrain to reflect Damon's submission to his spiritual death in the regular—almost automatic—swing of the scythe. Damon remembers the time before Juliana, when he and the meadows were as one:

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;
 When Juliana came, and She
 What I do to the Grass, does to my thoughts and Me.
 (ll. 1-6)

The wound he suffers in "Damon the Mower" remains open; Juliana continues to cut through his thoughts. The meadows, like Damon's emotions, grow out of bounds. Physical death is the only relief for the living spiritual death that he suffers:

But these, while I with Sorrow pine,
 Grew more luxuriant still and fine;

That not one Blade of Grass you spy'd,
 But had a Flower on either side;
 When Juliana came, and She
 What I do to the Grass, does to my Thoughts and Me.
 (ll. 7-12)

Though Marvell uses the pathetic fallacy effectively in this poem, I cannot agree with Lawrence W. Hyman that "the 'Blade of Grass' can easily be seen as a phallic symbol, and the lover's desires can be cut down by the consummation of sexuality as well as by its denial."¹⁴ "Grass," here as in the other poems, stands for the flesh. The "Blade of Grass" could possibly be an individual. If Damon has become alienated from nature by his desire, then consummation of that desire, rather than restoring him to his place, can only remove him further. The respite gained by consummation of desire is, after all, only temporary.

Feeling betrayed by the flourishing meadows that should have fallen with him in sympathy, Damon turns his frustration on nature herself:

But what you in Compassion ought,
 Shall now by my Revenge be wrought:
 And Flow'rs, and Grass, and I and all,
 Will in one common Ruine Fall. (ll. 19-22)

Marvell emphasizes Damon's deadly determination by the regular rhythm and marked caesuras of line twenty-one. Only in death will he and the meadows be re-united.

And thus, ye Meadows, which have been
 Companions of my thoughts more green,

¹⁴Hyman, p. 20.

Shall now the Heraldry become
 With which I shall adorn my Tomb;
 For Juliana comes, and She
 What I do to the Grass, does to my Thoughts and Me.
 (ll. 25-30)

The mown grass and flowers of the meadows will be Damon's "Heraldry," symbols of his fall. With the appearance of Juliana, he has ironically become more and more like the gardener whom he despises in "The Mower against Gardens." He is unable to relate to his fields and meadows, and finds them growing "luxurious" along with his own mind. In a vain and final effort to regain some unity with nature, he becomes her seducer and destroyer.

Unlike Damon, the speaker in "The Garden" has experienced, but overcome his passion. He seeks solitude in the garden to regain his spiritual strength, for within its enclosed shade, as Lawrence Hyman points out, is freedom from "sexual passion, labor, and mortality—the consequences of the creation of Eve."¹⁵

Fair quiet, have I found thee here,
 And Innocence thy Sister dear!
 Mistaken long, I sought you then
 In busie Companies of Men. (ll. 9-12)

Safe within the haven of the enclosed garden, the speaker relegates feminine beauty to a position far below the natural beauty of the trees:

No white nor red was ever seen
 So am'rous as this lovely green. (ll. 17,18)

¹⁵Hyman, p. 66

Marvell easily reduces feminine beauty to the two colors, and "implies a judgment," as Donald Friedman notes, "on both these worlds (beauty and passion) in so far as they can be reduced so easily to their trivial components."¹⁶

The speaker laments the careless folly of lovers who disfigure growing trees:

Fond Lovers, cruel as their Flame,
Cut in these Trees their Mistress name,
Little, Alas, they know, or heed.
How far these Beauties Hers exceed! (ll. 19-22)

The cruel flame of passion corresponds to the "foolish fires" that lead the mower astray. The speaker, purged of his own passion, pledges to honor the trees with their own names:

Fair Trees! where s'eer your barks I wound,
No name shall but your own be found. (ll. 23,24)

These lines are also an indication of the speaker's wish to identify with the androgynous Adam,¹⁷ who enjoyed dominion over the Garden of Eden, and named the plants and animals before the creation of Eve. With his acceptance of the inevitability of passion,¹⁸ however, it is apparent that he realizes the impossibility of returning to the "unfallen"

¹⁶ Friedman, p. 156.

¹⁷ Maren-Sofie Røstvig, The Happy Man (Oslo, Norway: Norwegian Universities Press, 1962) pp. 162-163.

¹⁸ Ruth Wallerstein, Studies in Seventeenth-Century Poetic (Madison and Milwaukee: University of Wisconsin Press, 1950), p. 175. She explains Marvell's technique and meaning in the "heat image": "Wordplay and image in Marvell are closely involved with each other and are alike in method. They are equally precise. The heat image sets together a precise metaphor of the life of the senses and a precise criticism of it as the surrender to passion."

garden:

When we have run our Passion's heat,
 Love hither makes his best retreat,
 The Gods that mortal Beauty chase,
 Still in a Tree did end their race.
Apollo hunted Daphne so,
 Only that she might Laurel grow.
 And Pan did after Syrinx speed,
 Not as a Nymph, but for a Reed. (ll. 25-32)

This love in retreat is the milder love that Damon seeks, but never attains. It is exemplified in the gods; their transformation is a consummation of an innocent love relationship with nature. The speaker enjoys a similar relationship as the fruits and flowers freely offer themselves to him, but his reason cannot allow him to be immersed in purely sensual pleasure—innocent though it may be—for very long. With the sensual aspect of his nature under control and in perfect balance with his spirit, he enjoys a brief, rapturous moment; his soul merging into the garden, basking in the pure light of creation. He imagines his brief world of ecstasy to have been the normal realm of Adam before Eve and the Fall.¹⁹

Such was that happy Garden-state,
 While Man there walk'd without a Mate:
 After a Place so pure, and sweet,
 What other Help could yet be meet! (ll. 57-60)

¹⁹Hyman gives a convincingly plausible interpretation of the speaker's thoughts at this point in the poem. "The garden is the Garden of Innocence; it is, the place where man 'walk'd without a mate.'" But the poet who is looking at it, although he can imagine himself to be the innocent Adam, knows all along that he is the fallen Adam. Because he is both Adams, he can make 'The Garden' a microcosm of the sinful world as well as a symbol of Eden" (p. 71).

Before Juliana disrupts his life, Damon is also like the "unfallen" Adam. Master of his innocent world of fields and meadows, he enjoys an intimate and loving relationship with nature. Juliana is his Eve, and he is left with no hope of redemption from his fall. The speaker in "The Garden" enjoys redemption from previous passionate experiences, and regains a full and loving relationship with nature, but he does so, not by resolving his feelings, but by denying them. He withdraws into the garden where women and temptation are shut out. Neither he nor Damon is able to incorporate sexual passion into the order of their respective worlds. This failure of the two personae, however, is not to be seen as a failure of Marvell. Each of the personae is limited, and each speaks from his own limited point of view.

Marvell shows man out of harmony with the cosmic order in the failure to balance passion and reason effectively in his relationships with women. Damon is destroyed by his failure—not by Juliana. The speaker in "The Garden" is able to keep passion and reason in balance, just as Damon could in "The Mower against Gardens," only as long as he is not confronted by temptation.

CONCLUSION

Operating within the framework of man's ideal position within the seventeenth-century cosmology, Marvell's lyric poems reflect man's internal conflicts arising from the wish to reach and maintain the ideal perfection, to bridge the gap between matter and spirit.¹ In each poem, he presents some aspect of man—his persona is always masculine²—out of harmony with the order and experiencing despair and frustration when he fails to fill the chasm between matter and spirit. Perfection, in the temporal world at least, is impossible, and Marvell's personae succeed in some limited ways, but fail in others. In all of the poems, Marvell is simply the medium between his speaker and the reader. Presenting opposing viewpoints with characteristically unemotional dualism, he remains omnisciently aloof from the fray.

The problem in the poems concerned with reaching a perfect accord between the soul and God is the danger to the soul from worldly contact because the soul must remain pure

¹E. M. W. Tillyard, The Elizabethan World Picture (New York: Macmillan, 1944), p. 11.

²"On a Drop of Dew" is the only possible exception, but the disdain with which the dewdrop views the rose, often a symbol for feminine beauty, hints towards a masculine soul.

in order to return to God. Marvell presents the soul two solutions: it can either shun temporal life altogether, as it does in "On a Drop of Dew," or it can interact in conjunction with the mind, as in "The Coronet" and "The Garden," to maintain within the microcosm of man a harmony in balance with the macrocosm of the universe. Only after balance is achieved can the soul receive grace, the promise of the ultimate union.

Man's search for harmony between himself and nature, God's creation, is also dependent to a large extent upon the intellect. Man can enjoy a harmonious and loving relationship with nature if his own human nature is free from emotional conflicts.

The mower, though somewhat more narrowly limited than the speaker in "The Garden," finds the innocence and peace that he feels within himself reflected in the "unspoiled" fields. The speaker in "The Garden" progresses through a series of balances and counter-balances before he is wholly able to immerse himself unselfconsciously into a loving communion with nature. The relationship between man and nature, though sometimes fragile, is always reciprocal. Every action of one results in a corresponding reaction from the other. Both man and nature are inextricably involved in life of the temporal world.

In Marvell's poetry, man is never more out of harmony with the order of the universe than when confronted by

woman, or even the idea of woman. His tenuous security so laboriously attained in his relationships with God and with nature crumble with the first indications of her presence. In the mower series, as well as in "The Garden," woman is identified with Eve and betrayal. She becomes a metaphor for the temporal world; her love is temporal rather than spiritual, and becomes lust if not carefully balanced by reason.

Juliana engenders unfamiliar passions in Damon, at first complicating, and finally destroying his comfortable relationship with nature. His passions force him into an unaccustomed awareness of time and mortality, his own mortality as well as that of the fields.

Although the speaker in "The Garden" may transcend woman and the passions she engenders, he remains uneasily aware of her existence—outside the safe enclosure of the garden. He achieves an ideal balance between matter and spirit, but the reader realizes that his order would quickly become chaos if another Eve should violate his peaceful domain.

A theme that recurs in nearly every poem in this pastoral selection is that a balance of passion and reason must be achieved before harmony with the universe is possible. Marvell presents the conflicts, but does not attempt any resolutions. Perhaps his meaning lies in the very fact of his refusal to judge, thereby communicating an impossibility

of any lasting perfection in the temporal world. Though the Elizabethan concept of cosmic order was still valid in the seventeenth-century, the "new science" was raising serious doubts. Possibly Marvell, the poet of judgment, is admitting the practical error of an outgrown ideal. His refusal to resolve the conflicts that he creates is his awareness of the always uncertain future.

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