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"THY LORD DWELLS": MAN, SOCIETY, AND NATURE IN
SELECTED ENGLISH COUNTRY-HOUSE POEMS

BY

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A thesis submitted

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W.A.A.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

	Introduction	1
I	Jonson, Carew, Herrick and the Estate Community.	5
II	Humility and the Unity of Marvell's <i>Upon Appleton House</i>	26
III	Dryden's Detached Leader and Pope's Private Man.	47
	Bibliography	60

INTRODUCTION

This study examines seven country-house poems of the seventeenth century: Ben Jonson's "To Penshurst" and "To Sir Robert Wroth", Thomas Carew's "To My Friend G. N., From Wrest" and "To Saxham", Robert Herrick's "A Panegerick to Sir Lewis Pemberton", Andrew Marvell's *Upon Appleton House*, and John Dryden's "To My Honor'd Kinsman, John Driden of Chesterton". It also briefly takes up three poems of the early eighteenth century: Alexander Pope's "Second Satire of the Second Book of Horace, Paraphrased", his "Epistle to Bathurst", and his "Epistle to Burlington". All of the authors of these poems were very conscious of their cultural surroundings, so these country-house poems reflect a variety of influences: classical literary models, contemporary architectural styles, changes in social customs, and political, economic, and religious upheaval. A number of works analyze these influences very thoroughly, and I refer to these works extensively in this study.¹ The purpose of this study, however, is not to trace influences, but to examine the relationship of individuals to their surroundings in these poems. For in each poem, that relationship is somewhat different.

The poems of Jonson, Carew, and Herrick, which I take up in the first chapter, all describe and celebrate an ideal lord and his estate, and in doing so set forth a definition of the ideal relationship between the lord of the manor and his estate community. These poets all assume, in the moral and political tradition of Aristotle, that the ideal man can exist only as a part of a community, but none posits exactly the same relationship

between the individual and his society. In Jonson's poems, the estate community is every bit as ideal as the lord is, and the virtues and strengths of each nurture and support those of the other. To some extent in Carew's poems, and to an even greater extent in Herrick's, this mutual dependence of virtue is missing. In these poems the estate community is depicted as far less ideal than its lord, and depends almost entirely on his virtues for whatever good qualities it manifests. On the other hand, the lords' virtues in Carew's and Herrick's poems depend less and less on anything apart from the lord himself; thus, the mutual dependence between the lord and the estate community is absent in these poems partly because it is not required.

Unlike Jonson, Carew, and Herrick, Marvell in *Upon Appleton House* does not dwell at any great length on the ideal way for a lord to serve his estate community; indeed, Appleton House is less the active center of a community than it is a fortress from man's world, a means of retiring from the tribulations and uncertainties of man's world to the peace, order, and contentment of the natural world.² The themes and conventions that are so much a part of the poems of Jonson, Carew, and Herrick play a comparatively minor role in *Upon Appleton House*. In Chapter II I consider how the conventions fit into the poem's larger unity, and also what that unity is.

In the first part of Chapter III, I examine Dryden's "To My Honor'd Kinsman". In that poem, the estate is once again the active and open center of an estate community, and Dryden's ideal lord is actively involved in making the community function smoothly. But unlike poets in the earlier parts of the tradition, Dryden does not see the happy, contented life on a

country estate as an end in itself for a good man. Rather, such a life is the means for the good man to fulfill a more important role in life: the role of a national leader. Dryden demonstrates this different understanding of the value of estate life by substantially altering the themes and conventions of the estate-poem tradition. In the second part of Chapter III, I show how three poems by Alexander Pope reflect most of the same moral, political, and aesthetic assumptions that are apparent in Jonson's poems. However, these assumptions are dispersed throughout several of Pope's poems; they are no longer embodied in an integrated vision of an ideal lord living on an ideal country estate. In Pope, we see that the integrated vision, like the way of life that originally inspired it, is dead. Thus, each poet in this study uses the genre, its themes and conventions, and its moral assumptions to articulate and celebrate a different vision of the ideal relationship among the individual, the natural world, and the community of which he is a part.

NOTES FOR THE INTRODUCTION

¹ The studies of which I have made use in developing the approach and the scope of this study include: G. N. Hibbard, "The Country-House Poem of the Seventeenth Century", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 19 (1956), 159-177; William A. McClung, *The Country House in English Renaissance Poetry* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1977); Katheryn A. McEuen, *Classical Influence Upon the Tribe of Ben: A Study of Classical Elements in the Non-Dramatic Poetry of Ben Jonson and His Circle* (New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1968); Isabel Rivers, *The Poetry of Conservatism, 1600-1745: A Study of Poets and Public Affairs from Jonson to Pope* (Cambridge: Rivers Press, 1973); Maren-Sofric Røstvig, *The Happy Man, Vol. I* (Oslo: British Institute in the Univ. of Oslo, 1954); Frederick Hall Roth, "'Heaven's Center, Nature's Lap': A Study of the English Country-Estate Poem of the Seventeenth Century." Diss. Univ. of Virginia, 1973; and James G. Turner, *The Politics of Landscape: Rural Scenery and Society in English Poetry, 1630-1660* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1979); and Ruth Wallerstein, *Studies in Seventeenth Century Poetics* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1965).

² Røstvig (pp. 46-49) discusses how, in many of the retirement poems of the seventeenth century, poets attempt to re-establish a pre-lapsarian harmony between the individual and the natural world that excludes man's fallen world. That assumption is at work in *Upon Appleton House*, but it is only part of Marvell's purpose.

CHAPTER I

Jonson, Carew, Herrick, and the Estate Community

This chapter examines five poems by three different poets: Ben Jonson's "To Penshurst" and "To Sir Robert Wroth", Thomas Carew's "To Saxham" and "To My Friend G. N., From Wrest", and Robert Herrick's "A Panygyric to Sir Lewis Pemberton". Each poem sets forth a slightly different vision of an ideal country estate and the life it entails. Yet all are concerned with defining the relationship between the lord of the estate and the estate community. By "estate community", I mean everything that is on or connected with the country estate - its architecture, its natural beauty, its wealth, its people, its activities, its traditions, and its virtues - everything except its lord. Thus, in a broader sense these poems all attempt to define the ideal relationship between an individual and his surroundings.

In Jonson's world, this relationship is so deep and so close that it is virtually impossible to separate the good man from the good society of which he is a part; the one cannot exist without the other. Carew makes this connection a good deal less intimate by depicting a natural world that serves man while requiring no work, and an estate community that relies heavily upon its lord to make it ideal. And in Herrick's world the separation of the lord from his community is almost total: the lord's virtues are completely independent of the estate community, which is hardly ideal, and which at best merely reflects part of the lord's goodness. So

while the estates remain ideal throughout all of these poems, their virtues are not always due to the estate communities; to some extent in Carew's poems, and to a greater extent in Herrick's, their virtues are derived from the lords themselves.

I

Ben Jonson's "To Penshurst" contains a very detailed and comprehensive description of an ideal world. In it, Jonson offers us an economic and political system, a social hierarchy, a set of moral and aesthetic values, a number of ideal citizens, a historical tradition, and a means of transmitting the values and virtues of this ideal world from one generation to the next. It is a world based on the wealth and bounty of Nature, and is in sharp contrast to the world based on ambition, greed, and money which lies just beyond its boundaries.¹

Comprehensive as Jonson's description is, however, it does not include even a brief description of a very important part of the estate community: the lord of the manor. The phrase "thy lord" appears only three times in the entire poem, and the use usually indicates possession. In a related poem, "To Sir Robert Wroth", Jonson gives a very thorough description of the activities and virtues of the lord of an estate community, but this poem also seems to lack an important element - a house. As G. R. Hibbard points out: "The house as such hardly appears in the poem at all, and there is nothing whatever about its architecture."²

Yet neither of these omissions is at all bothersome, or even very noticeable, for in both poems the rest of Jonson's description makes clear what the missing element is supposed to be. Were the lord of Penshurst described, he would surely be a man rather like Robert Wroth; and were the house in which Wroth dwells described, it would surely be a place rather like Penshurst. Thus, nothing is really missing from either description;

each simply implies something which the other makes explicit. In that sense, the two poems are complements to one another.

But more links these two poems than the respective implications of each. The poems share a fundamental ethical assumption which implicitly links their subjects. Both rest on the premise that a necessary, reciprocal relationship derived from the connection between private and public virtue exists between man and his society: the good man, by doing good, contributes to the creation and maintenance of the good society; the good society, in turn, nurtures and encourages the good man's virtues. This reciprocity of virtue is evident in the world of Penshurst, for we see it in Jonson's description of the Sidney children:

They are, and have been taught religion: Thence
Their gentler spirits have suck'd innocence.
Each morne, and even, they are taught to pray,
With the whole household, and may every day,
Reade, in their vertuous parents noble parts,
The mysteries of manners, armes, and arts.³ ("To Penshurst", ll. 93-98)

To Penshurst the children contribute their moral goodness; from it they receive models of virtue, a sound education, and in general an environment that fosters goodness and piety.⁴

In a more complex way, the opening lines of "To Sir Robert Wroth" also illustrate this reciprocity of virtue:

How blest art thou, canst love the country, Wroth,
Whether by choice, or fate, or both;
And though so neere the citie and the court,
Art tane with neithers vice, nor sport: ("To Wroth", ll. 1-4)

Here Jonson mentions three possible motives for Wroth's preference of country life over city life: his own discernment ("choice"), his experience and luck ("fate"), or perhaps some combination of these ("both"). That "both" comes last indicates that it is probably the answer Jonson prefers,

and it also implies an intimate connection between public and private virtue.

Aristotle discusses this connection as it relates to an individual's choice and fate in a passage near the end of the *Nicomachean Ethics* :

But it is surely not enough that when...[people] are young they should get the right nurture and attention; since they must, even when they are grown up, practice and be habituated to...[the virtue], we shall need laws for this as well, and generally speaking to cover the whole of life; for most people obey necessity rather than argument....

This is why some think that legislators ought to stimulate men to virtue and urge them forward by the motive of the noble, on the assumption that those who have been well advanced by the formation of habits will attend to such influences....⁵

If by "laws" we understand not just the rules which govern a society, but also the institutions and authority that make and enforce those rules, "laws" in a broad sense is synonymous with society itself. This broad understanding of "laws" renders Aristotle's meaning quite clear: people generally accept as right that which is necessary much more readily than they accept that which they must be persuaded of; since this is so, people who have been habituated to virtue recognize virtue more easily than those who have not. Thus, a choice like Wroth's - to live in the country rather than the city - is easy for him to make because he is already habituated to the virtues of country living instead of to the court's vices. The point is that, for Jonson as for Aristotle, choosing virtue over vice depends as much upon one's society as on oneself.⁶

This ethical assumption is apparent in the themes which the two Jonson poems share: the individual reflects the society's virtues in a manner appropriate to an individual, and the society reflects the individual's virtues in a manner appropriate to it. For example, the first virtue which Jonson describes in "To Penshurst" is the unconventional lack of

ostentation in the house's design:

Thou art not, *Penshurst*, built to envious show,
Of touch, or marble; nor canst boast a row
Of polish'd pillars, or a roofof gold:
Thou hast no lanterne, whereof tales are told;
Or stayre, or courts; but stand'st an ancient pile,
And these grudg'd at, art reverenc'd the while ("To Penshurst", ll. 1-6)

Part of Penshurst's virtue thus lies in the quality it arouses in people who see it: reverence, rather than envy.⁷

Thus, Wroth, in a way appropriate to an individual, manifests this same unconventional restraint and dignity:

That at great times art no ambitious guest
Of Sheriffes dinner, or Majors feast.
Nor com'st to view the better cloth of state;
The richer hangins, or crowne-plate;
Nor throng'st (when masquing is) to have a sight
Of the short reverie of the night; ("To Wroth", ll. 5-10)

And just as Penshurst does not provoke the envy of others, Wroth does not envy great wealth or high social status. Both the man and the estate, then, each in an appropriate manner, stand as rare exceptions to the common vices of the day: ostentation, greed, envy, and social ambition.

A second theme that the poems share is the harmony with Nature that both the community and the individual enjoy. Instead of taking delight in such artifices as "polish'd pillars" or a "roofof golde", Penshurst "...joyst in the better markes, of soyle, of ayre,/ Of wood, of water: therein thou art faire." ("To Penshurst", ll. 7-8). Nature rewards Penshurst's joy very handsomely, for Nature grants her bounty to the use of the community as willingly as Penshurst's people do theirs. The ponds, for instance,

...pay thee tribute fish,
Fat, aged carps, that runne into thy net.
And pikes, now weary their own kinde to eat,
As loth, the second draught, or cast to stay,
Officiously, at first, themselves betray. ("To Penshurst", ll. 32-36)

The fish instinctively understand their obligations to the community, and willingly fulfill them. Even the estate's vegetable life has a sense of duty to the larger society, for the orchards contribute their fruit throughout the year:

The earely cherry, with the later plum,
Fig, grape, and quince, each in his time doth come:
The blushing apricot, and wooly peach
Hang on thy walls, that every child may reach. ("To Penshurst", II. 41-44)

Thus, Nature grants its bounty so liberally because the Penshurst community treats the natural world as part of functioning estate community.

Wroth also takes great delight in Nature, for he "...canst at home,
In thy securer rest,/ Live, with unbought provision blest." ("To Wroth", II. 13-14). And Nature rewards this individual's preference for her company in many ways: with food, with peaceful rest, with sport and fellowship, and mostly with the simple, honest pleasures of the seasons:

The whil'st, the severall seasons thou hast seene
Of flowerie fields, of cop'ces greene,
The mowed meadows, with the fleeced sheepe,
And feasts, that either shearers keepe;
The ripened eares, yet humble in their height,
And furrows laden with their weight;
The apple-harvest, that doth longer last;
The hogs return'd home fat from mast; ("To Wroth", II. 37-44)

For the individual, being out in the natural world is an end in itself, an essential part of the happy life. So on both the individual and the societal levels, Nature is an important member of Jonson's ideal estate community, and thus shares in the community's reciprocal and mutually dependent relationships. The community commits to Nature the time, the skills, indeed the very lives of its members, and treats Nature as one of them; Nature, in return, freely grants to the community her generous bounty, and to its individuals her innocent, wholesome pleasures.⁸

Hospitality is a third theme that is common to both poems.⁹ And as before, Jonson illustrates the characteristic in a way that is appropriate to the focus of each poem. The description in "To Penshurst" focuses on the willingness of the entire community to contribute to the already overflowing table:

But all come in, the farmer, and the clowne:
And no one empty-handed, to salute
Thy lord and lady, though they have no sute.

But what this (more then expresse their love)
Adde to thy free provisions, farre above
The neede of such? whose liberall board doth flow,
With all, that hospitalitic doth know!
Where comes no guest, but is allow'd to eate,
Without his feare, and of thy lords owne meate:

("To Penshurst", ll. 48-50, 57-62)

The description in "To Sir Robert Wroth", in contrast, dwells on the absence of class distinction at the table and the easy, care-free atmosphere in the hall:

The rout of rural folke come thronging in,
(Their rudenesse then is thought no sinne)
Thy noblest spouse affords them welcome grace;
And the great *Heroes*, of her race,
Sit mixt with losse of state, or reverence.
Freedome doth with degree dispense.

The jolly wassall walkes the often round,
And in their cups, their cares are drown'd: ("To Wroth", ll. 53-60)

But these are only differences of focus; the hospitality of Wroth and Penshurst is essentially the same. Both welcome all of their guests, regardless of their social class or financial status, and neither fosters any fear among the guests that enjoying themselves too much will be resented or reprimanded.

The implicit link between the poems' subjects is most clearly established in their conclusions. "To Penshurst" ends with a celebration of the Sidney family, which serves to ground the community's virtue firmly

in the virtue of its members:

These, *Penshurst*, are thy praise, and yet not all.
 Thy lady's noble, fruitfull, chaste withall.
 His children thy great lord may call his own:
 A fortune in this age, but rarely knowne. ("To Penshurst", ll. 89-92)

The same sentiments appear in the last few lines of the poem, but focus on one member of the community:

Now, *Penshurst*, they that will proportion thee
 With other edifices, when they see
 Those proud, ambitious heaps, and nothing else,
 May say, their lords have built, but thy lord dwells.
 ("To Penshurst", ll. 99-102)

Ultimately, then, *Penshurst*, the ideal estate community, is but a reflection of the ideal lord who inhabits it.

On the other hand, "To Sir Robert Wroth", which began with praise for Wroth's virtuous choice, ends with a discussion of man's state, thus:

Thy peace is made; and when a man's state is well,
 'Tis better if he there can dwell.
 God wisheth, none should wracke on a strange shelve:
 To him, man's dearer than t'himselfe.
 And, howsoever we may think things sweet,
 He always gives what he knowes meet;
 Which who can use is happy: Such be thou. ("To Wroth", ll. 93-99)

Jonson encourages Wroth to remain content with the country life he has just described, for only by living in this kind of ideal environment can a good man like Wroth maintain either his virtue or his happiness.

Thus, the thematic similarities between the poems stem from the philosophical link between them. The good man owes his virtues to the good society of which he is a part; the good society owes its virtues to the good individuals who inhabit it. To celebrate the one, then, is to celebrate implicitly the other, which is precisely what "To Penshurst" and "To Sir Robert Wroth" do.

II

Like Jonson's "To Penshurst", Thomas Carew's "To My Friend G. N., From Wrest" describes in great detail an ideal country estate without ever saying much (though always implying a good deal) about its lord.¹⁰ And as Jonson does in "To Sir Robert Wroth", Carew makes explicit some of what "From Wrest" only implies in "To Saxham", which, though ostensibly about an estate, describes more extensively some of its lord's virtues. But while Carew's poems resemble Jonson's in these respects, the ideal world that they describe is hardly identical to Jonson's. The connections which are so intimate in Jonson's world - between man and Nature, between private virtue and public virtue, and between the individual and his community - are all looser in Carew's world.

Nature, for example, is an important part of Carew's world, as the following passage on Wrest Park's natural beauty indicates:

Here, steeped in balmy dew, the pregnant earth
Sends from her teeming womb a flowery birth;
And, cherish'd with the warm sun's quickening heat,
Her porous bosom doth rich odours sweat; ¹¹ ("From Wrest", ll. 9-12)

The flowers contribute much to Wrest Park's beauty, but significantly, they require no care or nurturing from the people of the estate. Nature's contribution to the estate is in this case completely spontaneous.

Another passage in "From Wrest" describes one way that Nature and Art work skillfully together to produce an estate that is both useful and beautiful:

But where more bounteous Nature bears a part,
And guides her handmaid [art], if she but dispense
Fit mother, she with care and diligence

Employs her skill; for where the neighbor source
 Pours forth her waters, she directs their course,
 And entertains the flowing streams in deep
 And spacious channels, where they slowly creep
 In snaky windings, as the shelving ground
 leads them in circles, till they twice surround
 This island mansion... ("From Wrest", ll. 70-79)

But for Carew, describing the construction of a moat requires no description of artist-engineers designing and supervising, nor of laborers ploughing and digging, as one might expect in a Jonson poem. Instead, the moat at Wrest Park is built through a spontaneous, almost magical process in which two supernatural forces (Nature and Art) work together for the good of the estate.

Even in describing the landscaping around the moat, Carew only touches lightly on the work involved in producing so many benefits for the estate:

With various trees we fringe the water's brink
 Whose thirsty roots the soaking moisture drink;
 And whose extending boughs in equal ranks
 Yield fruit, and shade, and beauty to the banks.
 ("From Wrest", ll. 89-92)

All of this is not to say that no work ever needs to be done at Wrest Park, but rather that Carew does not see the same importance of human activity in the creation and maintenance of this estate that Jonson sees at Penshurst.¹²

Human labor is equally absent at Saxham Hall. Though the poem contains an extensive discussion of the estate's rich variety of animal life, there are no busy harvest scenes, no descriptions of hunting excursions or of fishermen netting carp and pike in the estate's ponds. Instead, there is this:

The pheasant, partridge, and the lark
 Flew to thy house, as to the Ark.
 The willing ox of himself came

Home to the slaughter with the lamb,
 And every beast did thither bring
 Himself, to be an offering.
 The scaly herd more pleasure took
 Bathed in thy dish than in the brook; ("To Saxham", II. 21-28)

These animals require no care and no coaxing to sacrifice themselves for the estate community. For they look on Saxham Hall as a refuge, and regard their fate as part of their obligation to the community. And again, this sense of obligation is not shared by the community, for nothing is required of it in return for Nature's commitment to the greater good.¹³

But perhaps Nature and the estate community are less intimately connected in Carew's world because the communities Carew depicts in both "To Saxham" and "From Wrest" are very weak and very poor; indeed, they can hardly be called "communities". In "To Saxham" this weakness is apparent in Carew's description of the hall's hospitality. The people who dine at Saxham Hall are not neighbors and friends of the lord who are sharing in a harvest feast; they are, rather, wandering strangers who, like the animals described above, seek refuge from a cold, dark, and frightening outside world:

Those cheerful beams send forth their light
 To all that wander in the night,
 And seem to beckon from aloof
 The weary pilgrim to thy roof,
 Where if, refresh'd, he will away,
 He's fairly welcome; or, if stay,
 Far more; which he shall hearty find
 Both from the master and the hind:
 The stranger's welcome each man there
 Stamp'd on his cheerful brow doth wear. ("To Saxham", II. 35-44)

For these people, Saxham Hall is a small bastion of warmth and comfort in an otherwise cheerless world. Moreover, the guests at Saxham bring

nothing, for they have nothing to bring. For them, eating is not a means of celebrating the community's essential unity, but a matter of life and death: "The cold and frozen air had sterved/ Much poor, if not by thee preserved," ("To Saxham", ll. 11-12). The people around the estate do not just enjoy the hospitality that Saxham Hall offers; they depend on it.

The community "From Wrest" depicts is in less desperate circumstances, so the hospitality that Wrest Park offers is less urgent and crucial than that of Saxham Hall. Nonetheless, the lord still supplies all of the food and drink for the meal, and the atmosphere at the table is restrained. Nor is the community either strong enough or close enough to withstand even a temporary breakdown of the class structure; class distinctions are, in fact, quite rigid:

Where, at large tables fill'd with wholesome meats,
 The servant, tenant, and kind neighbor eats.
 Some of that rank, spun of a finer thread,
 Are with the women, steward, and chaplain, fed
 With daintier cates; others of better note,
 Whom wealth, parts, office, or herald's coat
 Have sever'd from the common, freely sit
 At the lord's table, whose spread sides admit
 A large access of friends, to fill those seats
 Of his capacious circle, fill'd with meats
 Of choicest relish,... ("From Wrest", ll. 35-45)

Thus, hospitality in "From Wrest" is not, as it is in Jonson's poems, a means of celebrating the estate community's unity and mutual dependence; it is, instead, a way of illustrating a lord's kindness and generosity, and of reinforcing the distinctions of class within the estate community.¹⁴

But if Carew's estate communities are more dependent on the virtues of their lords, his lords are less dependent on the goodness of their communities. In one passage (from "To Saxham"), Carew suggests a way

that leading a virtuous country life has rewarded Saxham's lord:

...thy gates have bin
 Made only to let strangers in;
 Untaught to shut, they do not fear
 To stand wide open all the year,
 Careless who enters, for they know
 Thou never didst deserve a foe:
 And as for theives, thy bounty's such,
 They cannot steal, thou giv'st so much. ("To Saxham", ll. 51-58)

The lord's generosity is rewarded with a certain social and political stability within the community. Otherwise, Carew never mentions any benefits that the lord of either Saxham Hall or Wrest Park derives from living on a country estate. The communities receive their lords' virtues, but they neither return nor foster them.

In Carew's world, then, the dependence is not mutual and the obligations are not shared. Nature contributes its wealth and beauty to the estate community spontaneously, but requires nothing in return. The lord of the manor is generous and charitable to those around him, but receives little reward for his virtue. The estate community is too poor, too weak, and too distant to return the lord's kindness, or to foster Nature's bounty. In short, while Carew's lords are fully as ideal as Jonson's, the estate communities of which they are a part are much less so.

III

Robert Herrick's "A Panegerick to Sir Lewis Pemberton" widens the gaps - between the lord and his community, between public and private virtue, and between man and Nature - that Carew's poems open. Lewis Pemberton's virtues manifest themselves throughout his estate and benefit the surrounding community greatly, but they are completely independent of both. They do not require the care and nurture of the estate community. Indeed, for Herrick, the only role of the estate community is to provide Pemberton with the opportunity to use his virtues.

Herrick destroys, first, the connection between man and Nature that is so intimate in Jonson's world and is at least present in Carew's. Nature is utterly absent here. There are no descriptions of the estate's natural beauty, of the community's efforts to improve the natural world, or of Pemberton's outdoor activities. The activities Herrick does describe all take place inside of the house, and Nature has no part in them.

This does not mean that one is unaware of any world beyond the house; on the contrary, one is probably more aware of the outside world in this poem than in either Jonson's or Carew's poems.¹⁵ For the contrast between Pemberton's estate and the world just beyond its walls is sharper than it is in Jonson's or Carew's poems, and this world extends right up to Pemberton's front door. One is aware of it in Herrick's description of the house's homely, functional features:

...the worn Threshold, Porch, Hall, Parlour, Kitchen,
The fat-fed smoking Temple, which in
The wholesome savour of the mighty chimes

Invites to supper him who dines,
 Where laden spits, warp't with large Ribbs of Beeffe,
 Not represent, but give reliefe
 To the lanke-Stranger, and the sowre Swain; (ll. 5-11)

The purpose of this house is to provide comfort and relief to the many people who need it.¹⁷ Herrick sets Pemberton's estate against others near the end of the poem:

...since no Stud, no Stone, no Piece,
 Was rear'd up by the Poore-mans fleece:
 No Widowes Tenement was rackt to guild
 Or fret thy Seeling, or to build
 A *Sweating-Closset*, to anoint the silke-
 soft-skin, or bath in *Asses-milke*:
 No Orphans pittance, let him, serv'd to set
 The Pillars up of *lasting Jet*,
 For which their cryes might beate against thine eares,
 Or in the dampe Jet read their Teares. (ll. 117-126)

This passage explains why so many people seek the plain comforts that Pemberton's estate offers: the world outside is very ruthless in its pursuit of wealth and foolish pleasures, and does not hesitate to impoverish those who never had much in order to satisfy its greed and social ambition.

Unlike either Jonson or Carew, however, Herrick never equates the functional design of Pemberton's estate with aesthetic beauty. He seems quite content it should be plain, even homely, so long as it serves the purpose mentioned above. Nor does he argue that gilded ceilings or sweating closets are not nice to have; there are simply more important things to do with one's wealth. In Herrick's world, then, utility and moral obligation on the one hand, and physical beauty and pleasure on the other, are incompatible qualities. The good lord recognizes this, and always sacrifices the latter for the former.

An outside world as ruthless as this provides Pemberton with ample opportunity to display his principal lordly virtue - hospitality. The other than

importance of this virtue in Herrick's world cannot be overstated. The house, in contrast to other estates, is ideally suited for it. And also unlike other estates, Pemberton's household servants are well trained in providing it:

For no black-bearded *Vigil* from thy doore
 Beats with a button'd-staffe the poore:
 But from thy warm-love-hatching gates each may
 Take friendly morsels, and there stay
 To Sun his thin-clad members, if he likes,
 For thou no Porter keep'st who strikes.
 No commer to thy Roofe his *Guest-rite* wants;
 Or staying there, is scourg'd with taunts
 Of some rough Groom... (ll. 13-21)

The passage reveals more about the servants at other estates and about the people who seek Pemberton's hospitality than about Pemberton's servants. These people are used to being treated very badly by others' servants, which makes the treatment they receive at Pemberton's estate seem even better.

Hospitality also provides the basis for the historical and familial traditions of the estate, for Herrick compares this virtue in Pemberton to the civilized virtues of the ancient Romans, and expresses his assurance that these virtues will remain in the future:

And by the Armes-full (with a Brest unhid)
 As the old Race of mankind did,
 When eithers heart, and eithers hand did strive
 To be the nearer Relative:
 Thou do'st redeeme those times; and what was lost
 Of ancient honesty, may boast
 It keeps a growth in thee; and so will runne
 A course in thy Fames-pledge, *thy Sonne*.
 Thus, like a *Roman Tribune*, thou thy gate
 Early setts ope to feast, and late: (ll. 37-46)

Hospitality, then, is the quality that makes this estate ideal.¹⁸

Pemberton's hospitality, however, is of a particular kind. Like Carew's lords, Pemberton uses hospitality as a means of up-holding, rather than

temporarily setting aside, the class structure. Though the division is never oppressive, everyone is aware that Pemberton is the host, and this knowledge lends a certain restraint to everyone's behavior:

While Reverence, waiting at the bashfull board,
Honours my Lady and my Lord.
No scurrile jest; no open Sceane is laid
Here, for to make the face affraid;
But temp'rate mirth dealt forth, and so discreet-
ly that it makes the meat more sweet; (ll. 75-80)

The order stems from the respect for and deference to the lord that the guests have; he alone maintains an orderly structure at the table.

Indeed, Pemberton is the center of the entire banquet-hall scene. And he is a very active center. He is not, like the lord of Penshurst, a benevolent and passive on-looker at a scene of happy revelry. Pemberton is much more involved: pouring the wine, leading the dances, restraining the conversation, and in general setting an appropriate tone for the occasion - temperate without being stuffy or stiff:

No, thou know'st order Ethicks, and ha's read
All Oeconomicks, know'st to lead
A House-dance neatly, and can'st truly show,
How farre a Figure ought to go,
Forward, or backward, side-ward, and what pace
Can give, and what retract a grace; (ll. 89-94)

In Herrick's world, then, hospitality is an active, not a passive, quality, and practicing it requires good sense, good taste, thorough learning, and much work.

Significantly, however, neither Pemberton's hospitality nor any of his other virtues have their roots in the estate community. There is no reciprocity of virtue in Herrick's world. By itself, Pemberton's virtue holds this ideal estate together:

What *Genii* support thy rooffe,
 Goodnes and Greatnes; not the oaken Piles;
 For these, and marbles have their whiles
 To last, but not their ever: Vertues Hand
 It is, which builds 'gainst Fate to stand.
 Such is thy house, whose firme foundations trust
 Is more in thee, than in her dust, (ll. 98-104)

And in single-handedly up-holding the estate, Pemberton has needed no assistance from the estate community. It has not nurtured his virtue through its own. Indeed, Pemberton's virtue has been not so much nurtured as tempered by withstanding temptations of various sorts:

But fixt it [Pemberton's virtue] stands, by her own power,
 And well-laide bottome, on the iron and rock
 Which tryes, and counter-stands the shock,
 And *Ramme* of time and by vexation growes
 The stronger: *Virtue dies when foes*
Are wanting to her exercise, but great
And large she spreads by dust and sweat. (ll. 108-114)

Ironically, then, the bad estates that are found everywhere else do most to foster Pemberton's virtue; they strengthen his resolve by providing him with constant temptations to be less than the ideal lord he is.

This poem thus concerns the country house only insofar as it manifests Pemberton's preference for utility over ostentation, and for studied hospitality over ruthless neglect. It concerns the estate community only insofar as it provides Pemberton with opportunities to demonstrate his virtue. And it concerns the outside world as a means of strengthening Pemberton's resolve to be virtuous. Lewis Pemberton, then, is the center of Herricks' ideal estate, and the center of this poem.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER I

¹ Among the critics who have, to one extent or another, seen the poem in this way are: G. R. Hibbard, "The Country-House Poem of the Seventeenth Century," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 19 (1956), 163; Ann C. McGuire, "The Cavalier Country-House Poem: Mutations on a Jonsonian Tradition," *SEL*, 19 (1979), 93-94; J. G. Nichols, *The Poetry of Ben Jonson* (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1969), p. 120; Isabel Rivers, *The Poetry of Conservatism, 1600-1745: A Study of Poets and Public Affairs from Jonson to Pope* (Cambridge: Rivers Press, 1973), pp. 40-42; Frederick Hall Roth, "'Heaven's Center, Nature's Lap': A Study of the English Country-Estate Poem of the Seventeenth Century," Diss. Univ. of Virginia, 1973, pp. 55-57; Raymond Southall, *Literature and the Rise of Capitalism: Critical Essays Mainly on the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1973), p. 97; and Geoffrey Walton, "The Tone of Ben Jonson's Poetry," in *Seventeenth Century English Poets: Modern Essays in Criticism*, ed. William R. Keast (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1962), pp. 200-202.

² Hibbard, p. 165.

³ *The Complete Poetry of Ben Jonson*, ed. William B. Hunter, Jr. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1963), pp. 80-81. Subsequent references to both "To Penshurst" and "To Sir Robert Wroth" come from this edition, and will be noted in the text.

⁴ Rivers, p. 50; Roth, pp. 79-80.

⁵ *Nichomachean Ethics*, Book X, Chap. 9, 1180a.

⁶ Jonson's use of Aristotelian moral philosophy (whether conscious or not) in these lines does not in any way reduce his obvious debt in them to Horace and Martial. That debt is well documented by: Kathryn A. McEuen, *Classical Influences Upon the Tribe of Ben* (New York: Octagon books, Inc., 1968), pp. 21-23, and 82-83.

⁷ The following critics have all commented on the way that Penshurst's architecture reflects the community's moral values: William E. Cain, "The Place of the Poet in Jonson's 'To Penshurst' and 'To My Muse'," *Criticism*, 21 (1979), 38; Hibbard, pp. 164-165; McGuire, pp. 96-97; Nichols, p. 123; Rivers, pp. 41-42; Roth, pp. 61-63; Joseph Summers, *The Heirs of Donne and Jonson* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1970), p. 34; and James C. Turner, *The Politics of Landscape: Rural Scenery and Society in English Poetry, 1630-1660* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1979), p. 118.

⁸ Turner (pp. 38-39, and p. 144) claims that Jonson's real purpose in idealizing the liberality of both Nature and the lord is to reinforce the existing social hierarchy by making the lord's liberality seem "natural". This is undoubtedly true, but it is hardly surprising, since Jonson probably saw social distinctions as quite natural.

⁹ Among the critics who have commented on the hospitality theme in either "To Penshurst" or "To Sir Robert Wroth" are: Cain, p. 39; William A. McClung, *The Country House in English Renaissance Poetry* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1977), p. 126; McGuire, pp. 96-97; Rivers, p. 41; Roth, p. 88; Southall, p. 100; and Walton, pp. 202-203.

¹⁰ Some critics attribute the absence of a lord in "From Wrest" to Carew's detached and distant stance in the poem. These include: Rufus A. Blanschard, "Carew and Jonson," *Studies in Philology*, 52 (1955), 202; McClung, pp. 140-141; and Summers, p. 69. Carew is clearly more detached than Jonson, but this quality cannot, by itself, explain the lack of a lord.

¹¹ *The Poems of Thomas Carew*, ed. Arthur Vincent (London: George Routledge & Sons, Ltd., 1934), p. 120. All references to both "To My Friend G. N., From Wrest" and "To Saxham" come from this edition, and will be noted in the text.

¹² Turner (pp. 87-90, and 144-146) comments on the way Carew (among others) glosses over the labor of the estate's tenants.

¹³ McGuire (pp. 97-98) comments that the "economic symbiosis" of Penshurst is missing in "To Saxham". She refers to the relationship of the lord to the estate's tenants, but her point applies equally well to the relationship of the whole community to Nature.

¹⁴ Hibbard, p. 167; McClung, pp. 113-115; McGuire, pp. 98-99; and Lynn Sadler, *Thomas Carew* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1979), p. 112.

¹⁵ Roth (pp. 106-108) comments on how conscious Herrick makes us of the contrast between Pemberton's estate and other estates.

¹⁶ *The Poems of Robert Herrick*, ed. L. C. Martin (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965), p. 146. All references to "A Panegerick to Sir Lewis Pemberton" come from this edition, and will be noted in the text.

¹⁷ Rivers, p. 17; and McClung, pp. 113-114.

¹⁸ Hibbard, pp. 168-169; F. W. Moorman, *Robert Herrick: A Biographical and Critical Study* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1962), p. 230.

CHAPTER II

HUMILITY AND THE UNITY OF MARVELL'S *UPON APPLETON HOUSE*

Like the poems of Jonson, Carew, and Herrick, Andrew Marvell's *Upon Appleton House* describes and praises an individual (Lord Fairfax), the life he leads, and the estate (Nunappleton) on which he leads it.¹ But unlike the other poets, Marvell does much more than that in the poem. In the episode of the nuns, he creates a glorious, almost epic past for both Nunappleton and the Fairfax family. In the sections set in the meadow and the woods beyond the garden, he commends, not just Fairfax's retirement from an active political and military career, but the retired and contemplative life in general. And in the poem's final section, he praises Fairfax's daughter Maria and the many virtues she represents. Thus, the themes and conventions of the country-house poem are only one part of *Upon Appleton House*, and in order to understand how Marvell uses these themes and conventions, we must examine them in the context of his larger purpose in the poem.

I think *Upon Appleton House* is an attempt to illustrate and commend to us a virtue which I shall call humility. Other critics who have seen the poem as the definition of a virtue have given the virtue other names.² But whatever we call this particular quality, it shows up everywhere. It is, for Marvell, the outstanding virtue of Nunappleton's unostentatious design; it justifies Fairfax's retirement to his gardens; it causes the poet³ to withdraw into the woods when the chaos of the meadow becomes too unsettling to him; and it insures that Maria will never become too involved

in the disorderly world beyond Nunappleton's boundaries.

From the examples given above, it would be easy to think of the humility in *Upon Appleton House* as nothing more than a simple-minded desire to escape the tribulations and uncertainties of man's world, but it is not. For exactly the same virtue, I shall argue, justifies Fairfax's rescue of Isabel Thwaites from the nunnery, justifies Fairfax's past military and political exploits, and justifies Maria's marriage in the future. Humility also fails, and fails quite deliberately, as an ultimate justification for the poet's own retreat into the woods. Thus, this virtue is sometimes the basis for contemplation and retirement, and other times the basis for action and involvement.

How can a single virtue tie together such diverse (indeed, sometimes contradictory) actions? The question carries us to the heart of Marvell's subtle analysis of humility. For he illustrates again and again in the poem that this virtue does not dispose one to any single response to every moral dilemma. Rather, true humility for Marvell lies in making the appropriate choice to the variety of moral dilemmas in man's world. And an appropriate choice will vary according to each situation and its circumstances and context. Aristotle makes just this point in connection with a virtue similar to the one Marvell is dealing with:

We blame both the ambitious man as aiming at honors more than is right and from the wrong sources, and the unambitious man as not willing to be honoured even for noble reasons. But sometimes we praise the ambitious man as being manly and a lover of what is noble, and the unambitious man as being moderate and self-controlled.... Evidently, since 'fond of such-and-such an object' has more than one meaning, we do not assign the term 'ambition' or 'love of honour' always to the same thing, but when we praise the quality, we think of the man who loves honour more than most people, and when we blame it we think of him who loves it more than is right.... Relatively to ambition, it seems to be unambitiousness, and relatively to

unambitiousness it seems to be ambition, while *relatively to both severally it seems to be in a sense both together.*⁴

Upon Appleton House distinguishes true humility from both ambition and undue humility, and praises it as it is manifest in the estate, the career, the family history, the daughter, and the poet of Lord Fairfax.

Let us now examine *Upon Appleton House* and see how Marvell develops his praise. I shall divide the poem into six sections for this analysis: the discussion of Nunappleton's architecture (stanzas 1-10); the episode of the nunnery (stanzas 11-35); the picture of Fairfax in his garden (stanzas 36-46); the scene in the meadow (stanzas 47-60); the scene of Marvell in the woods (stanzas 61-81); and the appearance of Maria (stanzas 82-97).

The discussion of Nunappleton's architecture provides a good introduction to the poem because it introduces many of the themes and issues which Marvell develops later on. It also illustrates how Marvell uses the architectural conventions of the country-house poem tradition in a way that suits his larger purpose. Marvell must show that Nunappleton, despite its modest size and unpretentious design, is an appropriate place for a great man like Lord Fairfax to live. To do this, he follows the lead of Jonson, Herrick and Carew quite closely, arguing that a large house does not necessarily contain a great lord, and that a small house like Nunappleton is actually a more appropriate dwelling place for someone like Lord Fairfax.

Marvell first argues that an owner's vanity, rather than his greatness, is often manifested in a large house or an elaborate design:

Who of his great design in pain,
Did for a model vault his brain,
Whose columns should so high be raised

To open the brows that on them gaze.⁵ (II. 5-8)

And again,

But he [man], superflously spread
Demands more room alive than dead,
And in his hollow palace goes
Where winds (as he) themselves may lose; (II. 16-20)

The point in both of these passages is the same: the more a man struggles to prove his moral and social greatness through the size and grandeur of his estate, the more he will end up proving only how puny and vain he is.

But unlike the architecture of the rest of the tradition, the reserved and dignified design of Nunappleton is more than just a pleasant contrast to the ostentation of other estates; other qualities commend it on its own. For one thing, it imitates the order and closeness of the natural world: "But all things are composēd here/ Like Nature, orderly and near" (II. 25-26). It is thus more natural than the larger estates.

More importantly, its small size reflects the greatness of its lord in a way that big, ostentatious estates could never hope to: by forcing the lord to lower himself. Marvell states this paradox in two passages. In the first, he places Appleton House in the tradition of humble homes which house great men:

In which we the dimensions find
Of that more sober age and mind,
When larger sized men did stoop
To enter at a narrow loop;
As practising, in doors so strait,
To strain themselves through heaven's gate. (II. 27-32)

The last two lines of this passage state the paradox in terms of ultimate importance for Christians: salvation comes, not from seeking to raise oneself up to heaven, but from stooping and lowering oneself on earth. For Marvell, Appleton House serves to remind men of that important truth.

Marvell states the same paradox in somewhat different terms when he

ties the underlying virtue of the house to Fairfax's basic virtue:

Humility alone designs
 Those short but admirable lines
 By which, ungirt and unconstrained,
 Things greater in less contained. (ll. 41-44)

In the lines cited earlier, doors that force men to lower themselves ultimately allow them to be raised. Here, far from constraining or degrading Lord Fairfax, the "short but admirable lines" of Nunappleton serve to free him and to cast his virtue into sharper relief.

Both sorts of estates in this section, then, are perfectly appropriate for their respective owners. Large, pretentious estates accurately reflect the moral puniness and social insecurity of their lords. Appleton House is equally appropriate for its lord, for it well reflects his primary virtue - humility. As such, its size and style serve to accentuate his moral greatness, just as country estates traditionally have. The concepts and issues raised in this section will all be raised again in the poem, so the first section has established the poem's theme, its scope, and its roots in the estate-poem tradition.

In the next section, Marvell departs from the tradition, exploring the history of the estate, which was a nunnery prior to the dissolution of the monasteries. He praises William Fairfax for rescuing Isabel Thwaites from joining the nunnery, and for acquiring Appleton House, thereby changing it from a "wasting cloister" to a truly "religious house." The section is, in part, an "anti-conventual satire."⁶ But Marvell surely dislikes more about these nuns than their Catholicism.

He dislikes, first, the world the nuns live in and the way of life they offer Isabel Thwaites. Though it is orderly and secure, it is so in a sterile, dead way:

Here we, in shining armour white,
 Like virgin Amazons do fight.
 And our chaste lamps we hourly trim,
 Lest the Bridegroom find them dim.
 Our orient breaths perfumed are
 With incense of incessant prayer.
 And holy-water of our tears
 Most strangely our complexion clears. (ll. 105-112)

Something is radically wrong with the picture of life the nun describes to Isabel. First, the monastic life has not brought these women peace, for they fight "Like virgin Amazons." The action is utterly contrary to the ideal Christian life.

Moreover, the sensory images in the passage are artificial and lifeless: the colors are a little too white, the odors a little too sweet, the water a little too sanitary. The place seems more like a sepulcher than a nunnery. This same inorganic quality appears in the nun's description of the cloister's process of preserving fruit:

So through the mortal fruit we boil
 The sugar's uncorrupting oil:
 And that which perished while we pull
 Is thus preserved clear and full. (ll. 173-176)

They are not so much preserving the fruit as they are killing and embalming it.

Marvell links the images of lifelessness throughout this episode to the nun's way of life in the same way that he linked Nunappleton's virtues to Fairfax's in the preceding section. There we saw a house that sweats and a hall that stirs and grows to accommodate the stature of its lord. These qualities, Marvell showed us, both reflect and reinforce Fairfax's virtues. The nuns' physical surroundings do much the same thing to their vices. It would be hard to imagine the same house sweating or stirring to accommodate the nuns. Instead, the house is sterile and artificial because they lead sterile, artificial lives. They have withdrawn, not

(as they claim) from an imperfect life in man's world to a perfect life apart from it, but from a life that is really alive to one that is a living death. Thus, what the nuns praise as the purity and permanence of their lives, Marvell condemns as nothing more than sterility, the permanence of the grave. It is all, for him, an odious perversion of earthly life.⁷

Furthermore, humility is clearly absent from this nunnery. To persuade young Thwaites to enter the cloister, the nuns appeal to her vanity, arguing that it would be better if Fairfax were her worshipper, rather than her husband: "Ah, no! and 'twould more honor prove/ He your *devoto* were than love." (II. 151-152). They appeal, as well, to her ambition and pride, offering her power and prestige within the cloister during her life, and preeminence in heaven in the life to come:

Our abness too, now far in age,
Doth your succession near presage.
How soft the yoke on us would lie,
Might such fair hands as yours it tie!
Shall draw heaven nearer, raise us higher.
And your example, if our head,
Will soon us to perfection lead. (II. 157-164)

The last two lines, (concerning perfection) are, for Christians, blatantly false and expose the nuns as temptresses. For mortals cannot expect to achieve perfection in this world. The best they can hope for is to imitate, to the best of their respective abilities, the example of perfection given to them in Christ. Marvell knows this, and so does the nun who speaks the lines.⁸ Yet she speaks them anyway, for her real intention is not to nurture virtue in Isabel Thwaites, but to lure her, by whatever means, away from the world of men.

The nuns' way of life, then, is not worth having in the first place, and the motives for wanting it (pride and vanity) are quite misguided.

These are two good reasons for Isabel to reject the monastic life, but there is one which is even stronger than the other two. Isabel ought not withdraw from the active life because, in one sense, she *cannot*; her destiny lies in marriage, and she should embrace, not retreat from, that destiny.⁹ When Marvell describes William Fairfax storming the nunnery and rescuing Isabel Thwaites, he depicts Fairfax as an epic conqueror, one whose destiny nothing can obstruct or resist:

And
 Is not this he whose offspring fierce
 Shall fight through all the universe;
 And with successive valour try
 France, Poland, either Germany;
 Till one, as long since prophesied,
 His horse through conquered Britain ride?
 Yet, against fate, his spouse they kept
 And the great race would intercept. (ll. 241-248)

True humility, then, involves more than worthy ends and good intentions; it also involves the ability to see the direction in which one's destiny lies, and the willingness to accept that which is inevitable.

The nuns provide us with an example of false and misguided humility, of a retreat from man's world that is foolish and inappropriate. But significantly, for all of his harsh criticism of the nuns, Marvell never once attacks the notion of withdrawal from man's world in itself. He dislikes only the circumstances of *this particular withdrawal*: its unworthy ends, its misguided motives, and its inconsistency with destiny. Under different circumstances, then, the choice to withdraw from the active life might reflect virtue rather than vice. Marvell gives us just such a situation in the next episode, and the thematic purposes of both episodes become clear if we compare them.

The picture of Fairfax in his garden represents genuine humility. The fortress into which he withdraws - his garden - is every bit as secure

from the outside world as the cloister was, yet it is anything but sterile.

On the contrary, it teems with life and activity:

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 drums.
 Then flowers their drowsy eyelids raise,
 Their silken ensigns each displays,
 And dries its pan yet dank with dew,
 And fills its flask with odours new. (II. 289-296.)

And again in these lines:

See how the flowers, as at parade,
 Under their colours stand displayed:
 Each regiment in order grows,
 That of the tulip, pink, and rose. (II. 309-312)

The sensory images here contrast sharply with those in the nunnery episode. The garden's light comes, not from "chaste lamps", but from the sun in the day, and the stars at night; odors do not emanate from incense, but from the flowers; and instead of the starkness and barrenness of the nuns' white, there are the bright colors of the tulips and roses. So just as the imagery of the previous section suggested a sterile, dead world, completely inappropriate for a living person to inhabit, the imagery here suggests a world that is alive, active, and vibrant, one quite worthy of pursuit by a good man.

The motives here are also quite different. In their attempt to lure Isabel from her destiny, the nuns appeal to her vanity, ambition, and pride. In contrast, Fairfax's desire to nurture conscience, the individual's source of right thinking, is partly responsible for his decision to exchange the soldier's life for the gardener's: "For he did, with his utmost skill,/ Ambition weed, but conscience till." (II. 353-354). God, the ultimate source of right, also has a hand in Fairfax's choice:

And yet there walks one on the sod
 Who had it pleasēd him and God,
 Might once have made our gardens spring
 Fresh as his own and flourishing. (II. 345-348)

The passage shows that Fairfax's decision to retire from the world of affairs was a serious one, not without bad consequences for England, which would profit greatly from the further service of a good man like him.¹⁰ But it also indicates that Fairfax made the decision only after a good deal of thought and prayer, and that, though it might run contrary to conventional notions of right and wrong, it was not motivated by cowardice or selfishness. It was, instead, an act of conscience in accordance with God's will.

This gives the action a very high-minded motive; it also raises - and answers - a question about timing and destiny. Was this action appropriate because it was destined, as the rescue of Isabel from the convent was? The passage above indicates that the decision was part of God's plan, and that Fairfax was assenting to something inevitable. Another passage sheds further light on both the motives and the timing of Fairfax's choice:

From that blest bed the hero [Fairfax] came,
 Whom France and Poland yet does fame:
 Who, when retired here to peace,
 His warlike studies could not cease; (II. 281-284)

Here we see, first, that Fairfax has not been idle during his life, that he has already made a contribution to the world of affairs through his military exploits. For the time being, then, he has fulfilled his family's destiny. Moreover, he has not abandoned the qualities that made him a great soldier; rather, he has redirected them. Instead of using his knowledge and skill in military and political affairs, as he did when he

was serving the nation, he has chosen to apply them on a smaller, more intimate scale, by nurturing beauty and conscience as a gardener. Thus, Marvell is not pretending that no bad consequences have resulted from Fairfax's moral choice, but he is saying that the circumstances surrounding the choice - its worthy ends, its high-minded motives, and its appropriate timing - make it morally defensible. In short, Fairfax's decision to retire is morally defensible because it stems from virtue (humility) rather than from vice.

The next two sections, set in the meadow and the woods adjoining Nunappleton respectively, may seem superfluous, for neither appears to have anything to do with the Fairfaxes. Indeed, Ann Berthoff doubts that the poem needs the meadow section at all.¹¹ I think that precisely *because* the Fairfaxes are missing from these sections, they are important. For Marvell has defined and commended humility thus far only within the confines of Appleton House; the Fairfaxes have illustrated true humility, which is a virtue because the Fairfaxes have illustrated it. Marvell still needs to define and praise humility in more general terms, to establish it as a virtue independent of the Fairfaxes. The poem's first section contained a hint of how Marvell would do this: "But all things are composéd here,/ Like Nature, orderly and near" (ll. 25-26). I quoted the passage earlier as an illustration of the way Marvell links what is good to what is natural. In the next two sections, Marvell develops that theme.

The transition from the little world of the Fairfaxes to the world outside is marked by the line: "And now to the Abyss I pass" (l. 369). Marvell's word, "Abyss", suggests a chaotic and formless place, and the first scene he discovers in the world outside - the meadow - is rather

disconcerting to him. John Wallace thinks this scene "...represents the active life, not the contemplative order of retirement...";¹² Don Cameron Allen sees the scene as an allegory of the Civil War, and the succeeding scene (in which the meadow is flooded) as a political allegory of the Leveller Movement;¹³ Isabel MacCaffrey believes that the scene represents "...Marvell's efforts to describe the medium in which a rational amphibian must lead his life. We are amphibious not only between earth and heaven, but between the world within and the world without."¹⁴

I think the meadow represents something quite different. It is the antithesis of Marvell's conception of nature, for it is neither "orderly" or "near". On the contrary, identity and existence are very much in doubt here. Men seem to be grasshoppers; grasshoppers seem to be giants; mowers seem to be Israelites, then natural forces, the soldiers; cattle seem to be spots on a human face, then islands in the water. And when the meadow is flooded, order is completely overthrown:

Let others tell the paradox,
 How eels now bellow in the ox;
 How horses at their tails do kick,
 Turned as they hang to leeches quick;
 How boats can over bridges sail;
 And fishes do the stables scale.
 How salmons trespassing are found;
 And pikes are taken in the pound. (ll. 473-480)

Nor is anything's place in the meadow very secure. One group succeeds another quickly and incomprehensibly: "No scene that turns with engines strange/ Does oftener than these meadows change" (ll. 385-386).

The rails, for example, are in mortal danger no matter where they are:

Unhappy birds! What does it boot
 To build below the grass's root;
 When lowness is unsafe as height,
 And chance overtakes, what 'scapeth spite? (ll. 409-412)

And the "astonished cattle" are turned into islands by the flood almost as soon as they enter the meadow. The point of all this uncertainty and insecurity of existence is not, as Allen suggests, to remind Fairfax that "retirement is not safety,"¹⁵ but to illustrate the tenuous nature of one's position in the world of affairs, of which Fairfax (now safe in the fortress of his garden) is no longer a part.

Significantly, however, mankind causes all of the disorder and uncertainty that makes this little piece of nature so unsettling. Men mow the grass; women "pillage" it; men let their cattle loose on the stubble; and men open the floodgates on the field. Man has attempted to order and methodize nature here, and (at least in the short run) has failed in the attempt, for from the poet's vantage point, anarchy is the only result.

The whole scene bothers the poet so much that he retires from it to the "sanctuary of the wood" nearby. For the third time in the poem, then, we have an attempt to leave the active, busy life of the world for the solitary life apart from it; this effort begs for comparison with the previous two efforts to retire. And because it is still part of nature outside the world of Nunappleton, it also invites comparison with the meadow scene just discussed.

These woods are quite unlike either Fairfax's gardens or the nuns' cloister. The poet's fortress is not nearly as neat or tightly organized as the patron's, and the domesticated sensations of tulips and bees have been replaced by the sights, sounds, and smells of wild plants and animals. Nonetheless, the sensations come from nature. There is no smell of incense or embalmed fruit here; there are no dazzling whites, no stark contrasts of white against black. The woods have none of the order of

Fairfax's gardens, nor any of the barrenness or sterility of the nuns' cloister. They are distinct from both.

The place is equally distinct from the meadow Marvell has just left. Both scenes contain disorder, but the disorder of the woods is far less unsettling than that of the meadow. There, disorder results from the rapidity with which things happen: grasshoppers and rails give way to mowers, who give way to "pillaging" women, who give way to grazing cattle, who give way to eels and salmon. It all makes the mind spin. In contrast, the woods are not so much disordered as they are loosely structured, like the elaborate, luxurious capitals to which Marvell compares them: "And in as loose an order grows, / As the Corinthian porticoes" (ll. 507-508). And though there is death and destruction here, it is less threatening, for it is part of the natural order of things. Change comes gradually and perceptibly, with no strain on the observer. The poet watches a heron drop one of its chicks from the nest, a hawk catch woodmoths on the trunk of an oak tree, and a rotting oak fall to earth; and in all of these acts of destruction he sees an appropriateness and a form of justice that were clearly missing from the scenes of carnage in the meadow. For neither the chaos nor the death here strikes him as excessive; instead of being part of an order imposed upon nature by man, both are part of the natural order.

Yet for all the good effects the woods have on the poet, most commentators have felt that the scene is ultimately a negative example of withdrawal, an example of humility that is, in its own way, as misguided as the nuns' was. Isabel MacCaffrey expresses this view nicely:

The resolved soul, immune to the charm of music, cannot now submit to the ministrations of vegetable loves. The narrator of *Upon Appleton House* has found a refuge more salubrious than the artificial Eden of the nunnery, but he has pressed too far the idea of nature as a model, soberly recommended in the poem's opening stanzas. And he, like the nuns, thinks of his sanctuary as shutting out rather than encompassing.¹⁶

In general, critics have thought that the poet becomes too passive and self-indulgent in the woods.¹⁷

These critics are, to an extent, right: the poet cannot be regarded as the same positive example of withdrawal and true humility that Lord Fairfax is because he does not have the same strong, positive influence on his environment that Fairfax has. But at the same time, he is unlike the nuns, who exert a negative influence on their surroundings. The poet's withdrawal is thus distinct from either previous example, for the woods do much more to make him, both mentally and physically, a part of them than he does to transform them into something like him:

Thus I, easy philosopher,
Among the birds and trees confer.
And little now to make me wants
Or of the fowls, or of the plants:
Give me but wings as they, and I
Straight floating on the air shall fly:
Or turn me but, and you shall see
I was but an inverted tree. (ll. 561-568)

And again:

The oak leaves me embroider all,
Between which caterpillars crawl:
And Ivy, with familiar trails,
Me licks, and clasps, and curls, and hales. (ll. 587-590)

Where, then, does the poet fit into the moral spectrum? His delight in the woods tends toward indulgence and excessive passivity, but it manifests, nonetheless, a delight in nature and in the beauty of creation which we ought not overlook.¹⁸ This easy pleasure is more virtuous if we look at it, not just as one more example of withdrawal, but as a response

to the meadow scene which precedes it. There the poet watches scenes change with upsetting rapidity; here he is calmed by the comparative stability and order. There man does his utmost to impose his order upon nature, and the result, from the poet's perspective, is order gone mad. Here there is no such attempt to impose man's will upon nature, and the result is a sense of security which is nowhere to be found in the meadow:

How safe, methinks, and strong behind
 These trees have I encamped my mind:
 Where beauty, aiming at the heart,
 Bends in some tree its useless dart;
 And where the world no certain shot
 Can make, or me it toucheth not.
 But I on it securely play,
 And gall its horsemen all the day. (ll. 601-608)

The disgust with the world and the delight in nature which the poet expresses in this passage are exactly the qualities which, under different circumstances, cause Fairfax to withdraw, and which are the source of Fairfax's virtue.

We ought not, therefore, understand this section as just another example of excessive, misguided humility; it is more than that. The poet is clearly not the same outstanding example of humility that Fairfax is, but neither has he any of the destructive pride of the nuns or the keepers of the meadow. And morally, the poet's retirement here shares more with Fairfax's retirement than with the nuns'. For it is, first, the proper response of a reasonable man to the chaos of a world dominated by the schemes and whims of mankind. Moreover, it reflects a simple and honest delight in God's creation, which, though it can become excessive and indulgent, is a natural, useful emotion.

Having thus established and commended humility independent of the Fairfaxes, Marvell returns to them for the poem's final section. It

concerns the future, as represented by Lord Fairfax's daughter Maria.

Like her father, Maria exercises a strong positive influence over her environment; also like her father, she senses when the time is right for reflection, and when for action. Her entrance into the woods where the poet lounges passively whips order and activity into "loose nature" and into her tutor "...like a military commander reviewing slack troops."¹⁸

But she imparts more than mere neatness to the woods:

'Tis she that to these gardens gave
That wondrous beauty which they have;
She straightness on the woods bestows;
To her the meadow sweetness owes;
Nothing could make the river be
So crystal pure but only she; (II. 689-694)

Thus, just as Lord Fairfax gives to his house and gardens his soldierly virtues, so Maria imparts to the woods her maidenly virtues.

But Maria disdains any compliment to her physical beauty, seeking, instead, to be beautiful in a higher sense:

For she to higher beauties raised,
Disdains to be for lesser praised.
She counts her beauty to converse
In all the languages as hers;
Nor yet in those herself employs,
But for the wisdom, not the noise. (II. 705-710)

And she has been equally disdainful of suitors' compliments, for Marvell commends her for having seen their "ambush", and for having "... 'scaped the safe, but roughest way" (l. 720). In short, Maria is the latest, and perhaps the most refined, example of the old Fairfacian virtues. Like Isabel Thwaites, she has all of the maidenly virtues: beauty, moral "straightness", purity, and intelligence.²⁰ Like her father, she is capable of and destined for accomplishing great deeds, but is indifferent to - even contemptuous of - the conventional honors that go with such accomplish-

ments. Her interest is in higher honors.

Marvell cautions her to be wary of not just her suitors, but the world:

'Tis not what once it was, the world,
But a rude heap together hurled,
All negligently overthrown,
Gulfs, deserts, precipices, stone. (ll. 761-764)

This admonition raises the question of whether Maria's humility will lead her to action or to retirement. We have seen it lead Fairfaxes of the past sometimes to the one, and sometimes to the other, depending on the circumstances. Some critics have thought that Maria is posed for action, for the world outside of Nunappleton, in spite of Marvell's warning.²¹ That is true, in the sense that she is destined to marry, and thus to leave the confines of the estate: "(Till fate her worthily translates,/ And find a Fairfax for our Thwaites),) (ll. 747-748). But John Wallace reads the section in a way that is more in keeping with the general theme of the poem: "Retirement and action, like Maria's present virginity and future marriage, are only virtuous in their proper seasons and for the right people."²² She is therefore no more necessarily inclined toward an active, worldly life than she is toward a retired, contemplative one. The way she responds to the world will depend on what circumstances it presents to her, upon her destiny.

For the present, the poet, who is more inclined toward the retired life, encourages Maria toward the same, for the poem ends with him telling her: "Let's in: for the dark hemisphere/ Does like one of them [rational amphibians] appear." (ll. 775-776). For the poet, then, the world apart from Appleton House and the woods surrounding it is still the same jumbled, confused, and confusing place that it was when he was watching it unfold in

the meadow: one is never quite sure what anything or anyone is in such a place. But a tone of quiet confidence pervades the entire section, a sense that Maria will accomplish the deeds she is destined for in spite of the worsening state of man's world, for she knows when the time is appropriate for action in the world, and when for withdrawal from it. This ability to choose wisely and appropriately in such moral dilemmas is at the heart of Fairfacian humility.

Thus, the conventions and themes of the estate-poem are but a small part of a much larger unity in *Upon Appleton House*. The estate and the retired life that Fairfax leads on it are, like the family's history, like Fairfax's decision to return to his estate, like (to an extent) the poet's withdrawal into the woods, and like Maria and her future, manifestations of the humility that being a Fairfax entails. Good moral philosopher that he is, Marvell is never simple-minded about this virtue. He understands that it is difficult to practice, that it is contingent upon circumstances and situations, and that various men and women, with their various capabilities and shortcomings, can all demonstrate the same virtue in various actions. The poem is a subtle analysis, and a subtle innovation of the estate-poem's purpose.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

¹ Muriel C. Bradbrook, "Marvell and the Masque," in *Tercentenary Essays in Honor of Andrew Marvell*, ed. Kenneth Friedenreich (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1977), p. 214.

² Ann E. Berthoff, *The Resolved Soul: A Study of Marvell's Major Poem* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 163; Annabel Patterson, *Marvell and the Civic Clown* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), p. 102; Ruth Wallerstein, *Studies in Seventeenth Century Poetics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965), p. 296; and M. J. K. O'Loughlin, "This Sober Frame: A Reading of 'Upon Appleton House'," in *Andrew Marvell: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. George deF. Lord (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), p. 123. These critics are among those who think that a virtue (for which they each have a different name) structurally and thematically unifies the poem.

³ George deF. Lord, Introd., *Andrew Marvell: Complete Poetry*, ed. George deF. Lord (New York: Random House, 1968), pp. xxvi-xxvii. Lord says: "The 'I' of the poem is wholly dramatic, and the development of its argument is to be traced through the movement of his own thoughts and feelings." I think Lord is right about this distinction, and I think the distinction is more relevant in stanzas 47-97. Thus, when I speak of "the poet" in those sections, I am referring to the character who narrates the poem.

⁴ *Nichomachean Ethics*, Book IV, chap. 4, 1125b, emphasis added.

⁵ *Andrew Marvell: The Complete Poems*, ed. Elizabeth Story Donno (New York: Penguin Books, 1972), p. 75. Subsequent references will be noted in the text.

⁶ Patterson, pp. 102-103.

⁷ Berthoff, p. 196; and Wallerstein, p. 298. Both have pointed out Marvell's criticism of the perverse way that the nuns use their senses and their minds.

⁸ Isabel MacCaffrey, "The Scope of the Imagination in *Upon Appleton House*," in *Tercentenary Essays in Honor of Andrew Marvell*, ed. Kenneth Friedenreich (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1977), p. 228.

⁹ Joseph Summers, "Some Apocalyptic Strains in Marvell's Poetry in *Tercentenary Essays in Honor of Andrew Marvell*, ed. Kenneth Friedenreich (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1977), p. 189. Summers points out that the nuns are interfering with destiny by trying to lure Isabel away from her rightful role as mother of the "great race" of Fairfaxes.

10 Berthoff (pp. 170-71) argues that Marvell intended only to describe, not "...to justify nor, of course, to question explicitly his employer's choice...." Thus, she says, there is no moral argument here because Marvell never intended to offer one.

11 Indeed, Berthoff (p. 175) doubts that the poem needs the meadow scene at all, and turns her doubt into an argument against reading the section allegorically. But we need not dismiss the entire section just because we do not read it as an allegory.

12 John Wallace, *Destiny His Choice: The Loyatism of Andrew Marvell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. 246.

13 Don Cameron Allen, *Image and Meaning: Metaphoric Traditions in Renaissance Poetry* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1960), pp. 138-40.

14 MacCaffrey, pp. 235-36.

15 Allen, p. 140.

16 MacCaffrey, p. 239.

17 Among others expressing this view, or something rather like it are: Bradbrook, pp. 217-18; Lord, p. xxvi; O'Loughlin, pp. 134-35; Patterson, p. 106; Wallace, p. 250; and Wallerstein, pp. 317-18.

18 Many critics have noticed this innocent delight. Among them: Bradbrook, pp. 217-18; MacCaffrey, p. 237; O'Loughlin, pp. 132-34; Wallace, pp. 248-49; and Wallerstein, p. 318.

19 Patterson, p. 109.

20 In the catalogue for "Andrew Marvell, Poet & Politician, 1621-78: An exhibition to commemorate the tercentenary of his death" (Published for the British Library, 1978), p. 44, Hilton Kelliher has this to say about Mary Fairfax's beauty: "The image [of Mary] is of a plain-, even coarse - featured young woman, of whom Marvell, in the long passage dedicated to her in *Upon Appleton House*...tactfully observed that 'She, to higher Beauties rais'd, Disdains to be for lesser prais'd'."

21 Bradbrook, p. 218; MacCaffrey, pp. 240-41; O'Loughlin, pp. 140-41; and Summers, p. 194, are among the critics who hold this view.

22 Wallace, p. 252.

CHAPTER III

Dryden's Detached Leader and Pope's Private Man

i

G. R. Hibbard makes the following comments on John Dryden's "To My Honor'd Kinsman, John Driden of Chesterton":

...although Dryden praises his cousin for his hospitality, there is no true understanding of country life or feeling for it. Dryden's poem is something utterly different from any previous English poem that has its roots in Horace....There is hardly a hint in his poem that he is in any way aware of the values which the country house, and the estate had embodied for poets of the preceding generation.

These criticisms are, strictly speaking, unjustified. For first, "To My Honor'd Kinsman" is not "utterly different" from other country-estate poems; there are, in fact, a number of fairly significant similarities between this poem and the rest of the tradition. Like Jonson's Sir Robert Wroth, for example, Dryden's cousin is praised in the poem for being an active hunter and outdoorsman. Like Lewis Pemberton and Lord Fairfax, Driden infuses the entire estate community with his own virtues. Like the Sidneys and the Fairfaxes, he has behind him the support of a long and honorable family tradition. And like Penshurst, Saxham, and Wrest Park, Driden's estate is the active center (albeit a very different center) of an estate community.² In all these respects, Dryden's poem is very much within the country-house poem tradition.

To be sure, Dryden's understanding and appreciation of the country estate and the values it embodies are quite different from those of the other poets that we have examined.³ But then, no two poets have understood

or appreciated the estate in exactly the same way. Thus, whatever differences there might be between "To My Honor'd Kinsman" and the other poems in the tradition are not a sufficient justification for dismissing the poem from the estate-poem tradition, as Hibbard does. The poem is part of the tradition, and must be examined in that context.

In another, less specific sense, however, Hibbard's criticisms of the poem are perfectly correct. For all the good (if different) use that Dryden makes of the genre's themes and conventions, a certain hollowness echoes through his praise of the country life. Despite what he says, Dryden seems to lack the same earnest commitment to and sincere interest in the country estate that one finds in Jonson, Carew, Herrick, and Marvell. He is much more detached about estate life than any of these poets. That is not to say that he sees no value in this way of life; indeed, no one sees the country as a source of health to as great an extent as Dryden does. But that is all the value there is in country living for him, and in that respect he is unique in the tradition. For Dryden, the country estate and its way of life are very useful means for achieving an important end: a wise statesman working to restore the nation's health. Neither the estate nor the life it entails, however, is anything more than that; they are no longer ends in themselves.

Several points indicate that Dryden's commitment to estate life is not as strong as that of the other poets. First, the poem contains no description - nor even any mention - of a house. There is no discussion of architecture, and no contrast drawn (either explicitly or implicitly) between the simple, functional home and the ostentatious piles that surround it. A poem in praise of country estate life does not necessarily have to

include a detailed description of the estate; neither "To Sir Robert Wroth" nor "To Saxham" includes any such description. But the omission indicates that Dryden's purpose here does not include any consideration of the estate's architecture or its symbolic value.

Dryden also omits any scenes of revelry or feasting in the estate's great hall. As with the previous omission, Dryden is not alone in this one; Marvell's poem contains no such scene either. In all of the poems that do contain such scenes, however, the descriptions always illustrate many things: the liberality and hospitality of the lord, the essential unity of the estate community, and the important function that the estate itself serves in promoting such unity. Dryden's discussion of his cousin's generosity and hospitality is very short and simple: "No porter guards the passage of your door, / T'admit the wealthy, and exclude the poor;" (ll. 36-37).⁴ These lines reveal very little about either the modest estate itself or the surrounding community. Dryden also mentions his cousin's generosity in the following lines: "So free to many, to relations most, / You feed with manna your own Israel host." (ll. 48-49). Here Dryden is like a God, showering down benefits to the community from an exalted position. The image serves to divide Dryden from and raise him above his community, rather than unifying him with it. Thus, the two brief glimpses that we get of Dryden's hospitality serve a very different purpose than the elaborate descriptions in other poems.

Dryden describes some of his cousin's other virtues and other functions within the estate community more extensively. The following passage, for example, presents an image that we find in no other works in the estate-poem tradition: the lord of the manor acting as justice of the

peace:

Just, good, and wise, contending neighbors come,
 From your award to wait their final doom;
 And, foes before, return in friendship home.
 Without their cost, you terminate the cause,
 And save the expense of long litigious laws: (ll. 7-11)

For Dryden, then, the lord's truly important role within the estate community is not that of generous host, but of wise judge. Dryden depicts his cousin resolving disputes among his tenants and neighbors, meting out justice, and deciding people's "final doom"; thus, the virtues which impress us are Dryden's wisdom and justice - the virtues of a good judge, not those of a good host. This is a perfectly appropriate role for one who is, as we saw above, God-like in his hospitality because it demands detachment and distance from the community. That this scene functions as a replacement for the scenes in the great hall indicates how differently Dryden presents the lord's role and position within the estate community in this poem.

Like Jonson in "To Sir Robert Wroth", Dryden praises his cousin for the time he spends hunting, but the praise indicates that Dryden's reasons for hunting are quite different from Wroth's. Jonson's Wroth hunts to some extent for exercise, but mostly for the sheer enjoyment that he gets from being outdoors:

Or hawking at the river, or the bush,
 Or shooting at the greedie thrush,
 Thou dost with some delight the day out-weare,
 Although the coldest of the yeere!
 The whil'st, the severall seasons thou hast seene
 Of flowrie fields, of cop'ces greene,
 The mowed meddowes, with fleeced sheepe,
 And feasts, that either shearers keepe; ("To Wroth", ll. 33-40)

Wroth's hunting demonstrates his masculine vigor and his delight in simple,

honest pleasures. Driden also takes pleasure in hunting, though even his enjoyment is judicious and restrained:

This fiery game your active youth maintain'd,
Not yet by years extinguish'd, tho' restrain'd:
You season still with sports your serious hours;
For age but tastes of pleasures, youth devours. (II. 58-61)

In his prudent, moderate way, Driden enjoys himself while he is hunting, but the unrestrained delight in Nature that Wroth takes from the activity and the manly energy that it reflects are both missing here.

Moreover, pleasure is a comparatively minor motive in Driden's hunting. His sport, however delightful, has larger, more serious purposes, such as clearing his tenants' lands of predators to their livestock:

With crowds attended of your ancient race,
You seek the champion sports or sylvan chase;
With well-breath'd beagles you surround the wood,
Ev'n then industrious of the common good;
And often have you brought the wily fox
To suffer for the firstlings of the flocks;
Chas'd ev'n amid the folds, and made to bleed,
Like felons, where they did the murd'rous deed. (II. 50-57)

Even in his recreation, Driden acts as sheriff and judge, apprehending and punishing the fox for his crimes against the community. Thus, hunting is to some extent part of Driden's civic duty as lord.

The most important benefits (for Dryden) that Driden receives from hunting, however, are physical and moral health. Physical health is the benefit to which Dryden constantly returns, first after his attack on physicians:

Better to hunt in fields for health unbought
Than fee the doctor for a nauseous drought.
The wise for cure on exercise depend;
God never made his work for man to mend. (II. 92-95)

And again following his diatribe against apothecaries:

Let them but under their superiors kill,
 When doctors first have signed the bloody bill;
 He scapes the best, who, nature to repair,
 Draws physic from the fields, in draughts of vital air. (II. 113-116)

In this respect, then, hunting is a useful means of fostering the detachment and distance from the rest of man's world that is such an essential part of Driden's virtue.

Hunting also fosters Driden's moral health by reminding him of his own mortality. The hare that he hunts is the:

Emblem of human life, who runs the round;
 And after all his wand'ring ways are done,
 His circle fills and ends where he begun,
 Just as the setting meets the rising sun. (II. 63-66)

The circling hare is a *memento mori*, an emblem of the mutability and impermanence of this world.⁵ This emblem leads princes to reflect on their own transient and tenuous position in the world:

Thus princes ease their cares; but happier he
 Who seeks not pleasure thro' necessity,
 Than such as once on slipp'ry thrones were plac'd;
 And chasing, sigh to think themselves are chas'd. (II. 67-70)

Driden is not quite like these men, for he never feels compelled to seek the pleasures of hunting. Nonetheless, the chase forces him to remember that he is but a man, and is therefore being "chased" by death all the time. For a judge and a statesman like Driden, such a reminder is very healthy for it promotes an honest humility about oneself and diminishes one's interest in the things of this world.⁶ Hunting, then, is a good activity in the worlds of both Jonson and Dryden, but is so for very different reasons: in Jonson's world because it produces pleasure by allowing the hunter to experience the beauty of the natural world; and in Dryden's world because it provides a useful service to the community and helps the hunter to maintain his physical and moral health.

Why does Dryden use the themes and conventions of the country-house poem in ways so different from the rest of the tradition? Dryden's larger purpose in the poem provides a good answer. "To My Honor'd Kinsman" is a celebration not so much of country life as of an individual who leads it - John Driden of Chesterton.⁷ Moreover, Dryden praises his cousin not just because he leads a country life, but because leading that sort of life provides Driden with an excellent moral and political foundation for his more important career as a legislator and national leader. For only with such a foundation can Driden successfully "...steer betwixt the country and the court;" (I. 128).

In taking this view, Dryden is in no way belittling the role of the estate community or estate life as an ideal background for a wise, disinterested political leader. On the contrary, the estate community has nurtured and encouraged both Driden's wisdom and his disinterest. It has afforded him the opportunity to develop and refine his skills as a judge and an administrator; it has kept him from the dangerous entanglement of marriage; it has made him naturally robust and physically healthy; it has fostered a healthy recognition of the mutability of all things (including himself); and it has in general taught him to cultivate a serene, detached perspective by "...studying peace and shunning civil rage," (I.2). In short, Driden owes his virtue and wisdom to his life on the country estate, and Dryden acknowledges that debt in the following passage:

Where could they find another form'd so fit,
 To pose with solid sense a sprightly wit?
 Were these both wanting (as they both abound),
 Where could so firm integrity be found?
 Well-born, and wealthy, wanting no support,
 You steer betwixt the country and the court; (II. 123-128)

As the background, political foundation, and home of a man as virtuous

as John Driden, the role of the estate community is not small in Dryden's world.

Driden's purpose in life, however, is not leading a quiet country life. The country is the source of his virtue, his health, and his disinterested perspective, and he must return to it occasionally to renew these qualities. But his really important work in life is as a member of Parliament:

You hoard not health for your private use,
 But on the public spend the rich produce;
 When, often urg'd, unwilling to be great,
 Your country calls you from your lov'd retreat,
 And sends to senates, charg'd with common care,
 Which none more shuns, and none can better bear. (II. 117-122)

Significantly, Driden forsakes his life in the country for a life in Parliament not because he is unhappy or dissatisfied with the former, but because he understands that his duty lies in the latter. He recognizes his national obligation as a wise and virtuous man to fill a larger, more important role than that of country squire. Indeed, it is one mark of his virtue and his wisdom that he places such obligations above his personal preference for the retired life on his estate. To do anything less, Dryden states, would be "hoarding" a public resource for private, selfish use, which a good man like John Driden would never do.

ii

Dryden's understanding of the country estate as a means to a more important end, rather than as an end in itself, does not signal the death of the moral outlook that informed earlier country-house poets. Three poems by Alexander Pope - the "Second Satire of the Second Book of Horace Paraphrased", the "Epistle to Bathurst," and the "Epistle of Burlington" - together contain most of the philosophical tenets that one finds in "To Penshurst" and "To Sir Robert Wroth". Thus, Jonson's moral and aesthetic views, if not the genre he initiated, lived on into the eighteenth century.

In his "Paraphrase of Horace's Second Satire," for example, Pope himself illustrates the simple, peaceful country life that he praises through his prolocutor, Hugh Bethel. Bethel's sermon demonstrates that "To live on little with a cheerful heart," (l.2)⁸ is better than either a very extravagant or a very parsimonious life:

He knows to live, who keeps the middle state,
 And neither leans on this side, nor on that:
 Nor stops, for one bad Cork, his Butler's pay,
 Swears, like Albutius, a good Cook away;
 Nor lets, like Naevius, ev'ry error pass,
 The musty wine, foul cloth, or greasy glass. (ll. 61-66)

And Pope's life at Twickenham shows us what, in practical terms, this modest, temperate existence entails:

Content with little, I can piddle here
 On Broccoli and mutton, round the year;
 But ancient friends, (tho' poor, or out of play)
 That touch my Bell, I cannot turn away.
 'Tis true, no Turbots dignify my boards,
 But gudgeons, flounders, what my Thames affords.
 To Houndslow-heath I point, and Basted-down,
 Thence comes your mutton, and these chicks my own:
 From yon old walnut-tree a show'r shall fall;
 And grapes, long-lingring on my only wall,

And figs, from standard and Espalier join:
The dev'l is in you if you cannot dine. (ll. 137-148)

On a more modest scale, Pope's life here illustrates some of the virtues that Jonson praises in his poems: economic self-sufficiency, hospitality, plain but wholesome food and drink, and most importantly, the contentment that this life brings to the country dweller.

In his "Epistle to Bathurst", Pope's satiric norm is the Man of Ross, a country gentleman whose estate and actions within his community illustrate the proper use of wealth:

Who hung with woods yon mountain's sultry brow?
From the dry rock who bade the water flow?
Not to the skies in useless columns tost,
Or in proud falls, magnificently lost,
But clear and artless, pouring thro' the plain
Health to the sick, and solace to the swain.
Whose Cause-way parts the vale with shade rows?
Whose Seats the weary Traveller repose?
Who taught the heav'n-directed spire to rise?
The Man of Ross, each lisp'ing babe replies. (ll. 253-262)

The Man of Ross never accumulates wealth to satisfy his greed, nor uses it to satisfy his pride and social ambition, but always puts it to practical, virtuous use: bringing Nature's bounty to the community, providing relief for the poor and the sick, giving refreshment to the traveller, and glorifying God in the community. These are precisely the uses to which wealth is put in the Penshurst community, and the moral outlook which underlies this virtuous use of wealth remains the same in Ross: wealth is ultimately a public, not a private, resource, and should therefore be used to benefit the community, not satisfy an individual's vices.

The subject of Pope's "Epistle to Burlington" is beauty in architecture. According to Pope, Nature always provides the foundation for such beauty, and the architect's task is to improve Nature's beauty without ever letting his improvements be too conspicuous:

In all, let Nature never be forgot.
 But treat the Goddess like a modest fair,
 Nor over-dress, nor leave her wholly bare;
 Let not each beauty ev'ry where be spy'd,
 Where half the skill is decently to hide.
 He gains all points, who pleasingly confounds,
 Surprizes, varies, and conceals the Bounds. (II. 50-56)

Thus, an architect needs a sense of proportion and moderation to properly improve Nature's work. When this good sense is linked to an appropriate attitude about wealth - "'Tis Use alone that sanctifies Expençe," (I.179) - the result is not just a beautiful estate, but an ideal estate community:

His Father's Acres who enjoys in peace,
 Or makes his Neighbors glad, if he encrease;
 Whose chearful Tenants bless their yearly toil,
 Yet to their Lord owe more than to the soil;
 Whose ample Lawns are not asham'd to feed
 The milky heifer and deserving steed;
 Whose rising Forests, not for pride or show,
 But future Buildings, future Navies grow:
 Let his plantations stretch from down to down,
 First shade a Country, and then raise a Town. (II. 181-190)

For this sort of beauty both reflects and fosters peace and harmony: between man and Nature and between the estate's lord and his community. Pope's aesthetic theory, then, is tied to his larger moral philosophy in much the same way that Jonson's is: beauty and use, far from being mutually exclusive qualities, are ultimately necessary complements to one another.

But if Jonson's moral outlook lives on in Pope, the genre he initiated dies with Dryden. For unlike Jonson or any of the other poets in the tradition, Pope never articulates or embodies these views in the description of an ideal estate, an ideal lord, or an ideal community. His views on architecture, on the use of wealth, and on the happy, retired life are scattered throughout his poetry. They are small pieces of idealism in poems which are largely satiric and critical.⁹ And this disintegration is, in a way, perfectly appropriate: the moral values remain, but the vision

of life that unified and originally inspired them is dead.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER IV

¹ G. R. Hibbard, "The Country-House Poem of the Seventeenth Century," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 19 (1956), 172.

² Frederick Hall Roth, "'Heaven's Center, Nature's Lap'" A Study of the English Country-Estate Poem of the Seventeenth Century," Diss. Univ. of Virginia 1973, pp. 45-46.

³ Two scholars have discussed in some detail the ways in which Dryden alters and diverges from both Horace's *Second Book* and the English poetry that Horace's work inspired. These are: Jay Arnold Levine, "John Dryden's Epistle to John Dryden," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*; 63 (1964), 455-456; and Alan Roper, *Dryden's Poetic Kingdom* (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1965), p. 125.

⁴ *The Poetical Works of John Dryden*, ed. George R. Noyes (Chicago: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1909), p. 784. Subsequent references to this poem come from this edition, and will be noted in the text.

⁵ J. Douglas Canfield, "The Image of the Circle in Dryden's 'To My Honor'd Kinsman'," *Papers on Language and Literature*, 11 (1975), 169.

⁶ Among the critics who have commented on the moral and spiritual implications of hunting in this poem are: Elizabeth Duthie, "'A Memorial of My Own Principles': Dryden's 'To My Honor'd Kinsman'," *ELH*, 47 (1980), 688; Levine, p. 469; Earl Miner, *The Restoration Made from Milton to Dryden* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1974), pp. 152-156; Roper, p. 130.

⁷ James D. Garrison, *Dryden and the Tradition of the Panegyric* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1975), p. 248.

⁸ *The Poetry and Prose of Alexander Pope*, ed. Aubrey Williams (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, inc., 1969), p. 219. Subsequent references to all the poems by Pope come from this edition, and will be noted in the text.

⁹ Roth, p. 5, and p. 48-49.

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