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Hunting the Hunter: Fowling and Interpretive Entrapment in *Upon Appleton House*

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Focusing on *Upon Appleton House*, this article seeks to illumine Marvell's communication to audiences (or to the idea of audience) and thereby to find an embodied authenticity. Examining the relationship between narrative and surface-level appeals, the article excavates stanzas that represent common hunting practices and thereby figure the interpreter's entrapment. It focuses on the following intertexts: Gervase Markham's *Hungers Prevention* (1621), a fowling text where Marvell found his "inverted tree"; *Culex*, a brief mock epic attributed to Virgil that locates Marvell's comedic gestures in grand poetic ambition; and Augustine's *Confessions*, which in its metaphorical treatment of birdlime helps us to understand Marvell's investment in poetry to be a suspension in the self-conscious pleasure of a recursive embodied process.



How wide they dream! The Indian slaves
 That dive for pearl through seas profound,
 Would find her tears yet deeper waves,
 And not of one the bottom sound.

I yet my silent judgement keep ...

Andrew Marvell, "Mourning" (29–33)¹

How wide dream those who hope to sound Chlora's tears. Enslaved pearl divers—who in untold numbers died—finding her tears, would find deeper depths and finding no bottom drown.² Interpretable but unknowable, they seem to mean something to our poet, who like the tears refuses disclosure. He watches but "keep[s]" his "silent judgement," like a god scouring a world. Readers of Marvell know this perch: having displayed poetic authority and interpretive agency, he watches us fumble for either in meadows of signs and ironies. Chlora's tears are drowning pools, and so are the judgments he keeps. What malign eye watches as we wade into them?

Marvell was a virtuosic rhetor, philologist, and aesthete. His elegant handwriting, in diplomatic manuscripts, flowed from labor, critique, erasure, revision, and care—not without circumspection and shrewdness.³ Poetry was for him less an expressive than a meditative process that involved the patient, time-intensive threading of language (often other people's) into work of striking originality. To understand Marvell deeply, we must be hermeneutically amphibious. Perhaps if we seek Marvell at once in water (like wary divers with modern equipment) and on land (responding to surface narrative and poetics), we can find the young man writing *Upon Appleton House*.

While not a speech act, *Upon Appleton House* can be considered an extension of the body through writing: an utterance without beginning, cause, or purpose; a materialization of process (including interpretive and editorial processes) that ends when it appears. In *Upon Appleton House*, we can access much about Marvell's craft in his proliferating intertexts. The reader of Nigel Smith's edition of Marvell's poetry may

¹ All references to Marvell's poetry refer to Nigel Smith, ed., *The Poems of Andrew Marvell* (Harlow: Pearson, 2007). Line numbers will appear in parentheses.

² For a discussion of the history of the Caribbean pearl diving industry, and the fact that pearl divers during Marvell's time were exclusively African, see Blaine Greteman, "White Tears and Indian Slaves in Marvell's 'Mourning,'" *Marvell Studies* 7, no. 1 (2022): 1–12.

³ See Nicholas von Maltzahn, "Andrew Marvell, the Lord Maynard and the Ballastage Office," *The Seventeenth Century* 28, no. 4 (2013): 311–21; "Andrew Marvell's Paper Work: The Earl of Carlisle's Baltic Embassy (1664)," *Marvell Studies* 3, no. 1 (2018): 2, 1–30; and "Marvell and Patronage," in *The Oxford Handbook of Andrew Marvell*, ed. Martin Dzelzainis and Edward Holberton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 60. See also Edward Holberton, "Marvell and Diplomacy," in *The Oxford Handbook of Andrew Marvell*, 100.

choose to inspect dozens of footnotes—which suggest intertexts, point to scholarly perspectives, and identify textual variants—while attempting to absorb a poem’s lines. As such, its pages visualize a division between surface and sub-surface, sometimes like semiotic icebergs. The accumulation of references may appear gratuitous, but Smith could have gone further: intertextuality was so integral to Marvell’s craft that we can dive into its waves and return with pearls and rubies “Till the conversion of the Jews” (“To His Coy Mistress,” 10). As Martin Dzelzainis cautions, “allusions cannot always bear the evidentiary weight placed on them.”⁴ Intertexts confidently proposed—like those in this article—will be dubious to some.⁵

Despite all this intertextuality and semiotic possibility, Marvell will locate the body or present character or figure of the poet within his lyric scenes. In “The Picture of Little T. C. in a Prospect of Flowers,” he imagines his burial in the margins of a scene he has set: “Let me be laid, / Where I may see thy glories from some shade” (23–24). “The Garden” shows a poetic speaker “Insnared with flow’rs ... fall on grass” (40). Derek Hirst and Steven N. Zwicker contend that, through its titular hero, “The Unfortunate Lover” stages Marvell’s own primordial psychic and bodily trauma, which plays out repeatedly as a “literary life” in his poetry.⁶ *Upon Appleton House* displays an author-like poet most openly and extensively. We accompany his progress through the estate, following the work of his imagination through a series of sometimes awkward movements and postures. At one point, a minor character of the mowing camp, Thestylis, gathers dead birds and cries out: “He”—who wrote the poem but is also walking past at that moment—“called us Israelites” (406). Referring to a simile from sixteen lines prior, she places him in the scene that he creates.

How do we understand verse that foregrounds the poet, character of his wandering narrative, while riding a welter of semiotic information, much of which lurks beyond the reader’s immediate reach? How do we engage this figure when he reaches out to us?

In the following pages, I focus on two episodes in *Upon Appleton House* where poet and audience are figured according to common hunting practices. Given their discursive and

⁴ Martin Dzelzainis, “A Greater Error in Chronology’: Issues of Dating in Marvell,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Andrew Marvell*, 325; see also James Loxley, “Echoes as Evidence in the Poetry of Andrew Marvell,” *Studies in English Literature*, 50, no. 1 (2012): 165–85; and Annabel Patterson, *Marvell: The Author in Public Life* (New York: Longman, 1995), 4–5.

⁵ See Patrick J. McGrath, “Marvell’s Allusions,” *Marvell Studies* 5, no. 1 (2020): 1–26. McGrath distinguishes between Marvell’s allusions and echoes. He argues that allusions connect meaningfully with contextual structures in a way that can be rigorously analyzed, whereas echoes are less conscious and more reflexive while yielding less meaning because not connected with contextual structures (3–4). See also Nigel Smith, “‘To His Coy Mistress’: The Greek Anthology and the History of Poetry,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Andrew Marvell*, 339–356; and Estelle Haan, “Marvell’s Latin Poetry and the Art of Punning,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Andrew Marvell*, 463–80.

⁶ Derek Hirst and Steven N. Zwicker, *Andrew Marvell: Orphan of the Hurricane* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 74–102.

textual life in the seventeenth century, these practices—fowling and angling—allow us to analyze variations on a relationship between surface and (in this case intertextual) sub-surface in Marvell’s poetics. Since their figuration in *Upon Appleton House* theorizes, in part, dilemmas of interpretation, they further allow us to psychologize how Marvell writes to an idea of audience, to recover something of the man threaded into the poem, perhaps despite his efforts. The next section, “Fowler Poet,” details a scene of hunting that lurks beneath pleasant conversation with a bird.⁷ Marvell builds it, in part, from a 1621 fowling tract, Gervase Markham’s *Hungers Prevention*. Then, “Angler Poet” focuses on a leisurely fishing episode that reveals a serious underlying meditation on poetic agency and destiny. Here, Marvell thematizes writing by way of *Culex* (“The Gnat”), a mock-epic then attributed to Virgil. These episodes appeal directly to our senses and interest in narrative; at the same time, they produce misinterpretation and bag us. As we traverse the Nunappleton landscape with the poet, is Andrew Marvell hunting us?

In the final section, “Bird Poet,” I return to the fowling scene to consider that Marvell, audience of his own song, evinces, through the scene’s engagement with Augustine’s *Confessions*, concern about being entrapped by worldly pleasure.⁸ This pleasure is not primarily to be found in the represented phenomenal world; rather, the aesthetic process—a sustained semiotic immersion, where phenomenal appeals are built from within through language—is its upsetting source. Given its ironies, copiousness, and ambiguities of context, the poem has been an engine of scholarly production. And yet, it reiteratively enacts poetry and its interpretation as acts of pleasure that are perilous and potentially useless.

Fowler Poet

We do not know who, if anyone, read *Upon Appleton House* before Marvell died in 1678. He began it in summer 1651, and, like most of his poems, it first appeared in *Miscellaneous Poems of Mr. Andrew Marvell, Esq.* in 1681.⁹ We cannot be certain that significant revisions and additions were not made during these decades. Although the poem’s lines echo and turn phrases from many contemporary texts, its epideictic positioning and extended

⁷ For a critique of ecocritical approaches to Marvell, see Brendan Prawdzyk, “Greenwashing Marvell,” *Marvell Studies* 4, no. 1 (2019): 1–28.

⁸ Marvell demonstrates that his knowledge of Augustine’s work surpasses Samuel Parker’s in *The Rehearsal Transpros’d* (1672) and *The Rehearsal Transpros’d, Part 2* (1673). See *The Rehearsal Transpros’d* and *The Rehearsal Transpros’d, Part 2*, in *The Prose Works of Andrew Marvell*, vol. 1, ed. Martin Dzelzainis, Annabel Patterson, Nicholas von Maltzahn, and Neil Howard Keeble (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 147–48, 425–26.

⁹ Derek Hirst and Steven N. Zwicker, “High Summer at Nun Appleton, 1651: Andrew Marvell and Lord Fairfax’s Occasions,” *The Historical Journal* 36, no. 2 (1993): 247–69.

treatment of the Fairfax family past, present, and future make coterie readership implausible.¹⁰ It is likelier that the Fairfaxes would have received it, perhaps as a gift to father and daughter. Were we privy to Nunappleton's library, we might be able to discern a pedagogical purpose, as the language, imagery, and intertextuality of *Upon Appleton House* would have helped to have sharpened Maria's knowledge of English and foreign languages, history, philosophy, poetry, art, nature, the Bible, and Presbyterian morality. If we embrace a Fairfax audience, we must still contend with the fact that the poem includes moments that suggest, under application, masturbation and sapphic sensuality (650).¹¹ These suggestions and the sustained focus on the poet himself in the middle sections further caution from fixing an intended audience. There is no evidence that the poem was written for a general reading public.

Our uncertainty about audience is achingly ironic, given the extent to which *Upon Appleton House* gestures toward the interpreting reader. The poem speaks warnings: Isabella Thwaites is "sucked ... in" by a "nun's smooth tongue" (200). A woodpecker breaches the oak's "tainted side" (550), within which is bred a "traitor-worm" (554). A bumblebee, figured as a "sentinel" (318) napping in a flower, endangers the ambler: "if once stirred, / She runs you through, nor asks the word" (319–20). The poem also indicates the dangers of interpretive projection: the "polished grass" (457) of the pasture is like a "looking-glass" (458), and the mud of a receding irrigation flood becomes a "crystal mirror slick; / Where all things gaze themselves, and doubt / If they be in it or without" (636–38). The meadow's receding "little Nile" (630) appears to be a "serpent new" (629) only if "itself you will mistake, / Among these meads the only snake" (631–32). The poem is so hermeneutically perilous that interpretive error manifests the serpent itself.

Stanzas 71–72 depict a moment when the poet, playing imaginatively in the Nunappleton woods, appears to communicate with a bird who sits upon a branch listening. These stanzas offer rest from the poem's vertigo: the verse slows midst commas and coaxes with simpler words and syntax. We are lulled into a scene of poet, trees, fresh air, and birds that hammocks across two stanzas. In leisurely meditation, the poet chats:

Thus I, easy philosopher,
 Among the birds and trees confer:
 And little now to make me, wants

¹⁰ See Nicholas McDowell, *Poetry and Allegiance in the English Civil Wars: Marvell and the Cause of Wit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 227–29, 259.

¹¹ See John Garrison, "Eros and Objecthood in 'Upon Appleton House,'" *Marvell Studies* 4, no. 1 (2019), 1–27; and Derek Hirst and Steven N. Zwicker, "Eros and Abuse: Imagining Andrew Marvell," *ELH* 74, no. 2 (2007): 371–95, esp. 387–91.

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. (561–68)

“Contemplating the birds and plants,” writes Diane Kelsey McColley, the easy philosopher “learns their own language (not the ornithologists’ and botanists’) and has nearly the means to become a bird or a plant himself ... The speaker ... enters their kind of being.”¹² “Even the diction,” to Ann E. Berthoff, “warns us away from gravity, and the imagery is nowhere in the poem more lighthearted.”¹³

The next stanza turns to the attending fowls, particularly to one rapt listener:

Already I begin to call
 In their most learned original:
 And where I language want, my signs
 The bird upon the bough divines;
 And more attentive there doth sit
 Than if she were with lime-twigs knit.
 No leaf does tremble in the wind
 Which I returning cannot find. (569–76)

The poet claims access to the language with which man first communed with beast.¹⁴ He is so in tune with the surroundings that, returning tomorrow, he could locate each leaf that trembles today. Though the poet claims to “confer,” the bird’s strict attention—she “more attentive there doth sit / Than if she were with lime-twigs knit”—suggests one-sided rhetorical or poetic force. Here, active attention is compared to being stuck to a branch with birdlime.

¹² Diane Kelsey McColley, *Poetry and Ecology in the Age of Milton and Marvell* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 34. See also William J. Fitzhenry, “Ecocritical Readings of Marvell’s Fairfax Poems,” *Papers on Language and Literature* 53, no. 3 (2017): 252–53.

¹³ Ann E. Berthoff, *The Resolved Soul: A Study of Marvell’s Major Poems* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 183.

¹⁴ See Jeffrey Wollock, “John Bulwer and the Quest for a Universal Language, 1641–1644,” *Historiographia Linguistica* 38, no. 1 (2011): 37–84; and William Poole, “The Divine and the Grammarian: Theological disputes in the 17th-century universal language movement,” *Historiographia Linguistica* 30, no. 3 (2003): 273–300.

Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century books instructed readers in the art of birdliming.¹⁵ According to John Smith, author of *The Experience'd Fowler* (1697), birdlime is “a Clammy or Glewey substance” concocted from material such as tree sap, animal grease, and weed and grass clippings.¹⁶ The bark or berries of the holly tree are traditional ingredients. In *The Natural History*, Pliny the Elder details how to make lime with mistletoe berries.¹⁷ A bird that touched the lime and could not immediately withdraw would become increasingly stuck and, eventually, paralyzed: “poore birds, more entangled with lime-twiggs, whilest for feare they flutter and seeke to get out.”¹⁸ Limed fowl would most often be taken for food. They could also be deployed as stales: decoys, quick or dead, used to lure other birds.¹⁹ In the 1621 *Hungers Prevention*, Gervase Markham explains how the bird finds its fate: “as soone as [the bushes] doe once touch the more they are strugled with, the more fast they doe intangle and wrappe & catch about euery feather that moueth and holds the foule so fast from stirring that he is not able to go or creep through any chyncke.”²⁰ Limed birds could be lost or forgotten or, to escape, could tear from their feathers, wings, or legs.²¹

The stanzas are reconstituted in part from Markham’s *Hungers Prevention*, which Marvell might well have found in Fairfax’s library.²² Sections plagiarized from

¹⁵ These include Juliana Berners, *Hawking, Hunting, Fouling, and Fishing, with the True Measures of Blowing* (London: Richard Oliver, 1596), first printed 1486 and known as the “Book of Saint Albans,” published in numerous editions under different titles with alterations of content; Gervase Markham, *Hungers Prevention, or, The Whole Arte of Fowling by Water and Land* (London: Anne Helme and Thomas Langley, 1621); John Ray, *The Ornithology of Francis Willughby* (London: John Martyn, 1678); John Smith, *The Experience'd Fowler: Or, the Gentleman, Citizen, and Country-man's Pleasant and Profitable Recreation* (London: Jo. Smith, 1697); R. W., *A Necessary Family-Book both for the City & Country, in Two Parts* (London: John Harris, 1688); and John Worlidge, *Systema Agriculturae: The Mystery of Husbandry* (London: Samuel Speed, 1669); Ray cites as an influence Giovanni Pietro Olina, *Uccelliera, ovvero discorso della natura e proprietà di diversi uccelli, e in particolare di quelli che cantano, con il modo di prendergli* (Rome: Andrea Fei, 1622).

¹⁶ Smith, *The Experience'd Fowler*, 64–65;

¹⁷ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, Volume II, Books 3–7, trans. Harris Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 8.248 ff. See also Markham, *Hungers Prevention*, 125, 279–85; Ray, *The Ornithology of Francis Willughby*, 49–50; R. W., *A Necessary Family-Book*, 55–56; and Worlidge, *Systema Agriculturae*, 238–40.

¹⁸ Jeremias Drexel, *The School of Patience* (London: Thomas Harper, 1640), 378.

¹⁹ Markham, *Hungers Prevention*, notes that “when you have gathered up al your foule, slain such as you please, and saved those you thinke meete for Stales, and so bagged them, severally, you shall then gather vp your Rods and bundel them vp together and so carry them where they may lye safely” (30). See also 132–33, 197; Smith, *The Experience'd Fowler*, 14–20; and Ray, *The Ornithology of Francis Willughby*, 41.

²⁰ Markham, *Hungers Prevention*, 221–22.

²¹ John Spencer, *Kaina Kai Palaia: Things New and Old* (London: John Spencer, 1658), 580–81.

²² *Hungers Prevention* might have attracted Fairfax’s interest in the Virginia colony. Markham dedicates it to “To the Honorable Knight Sir. Edwin Sands, and to his much honourd and worthy friends Mr. Thomas Gibbs Esquire, Mr. Theodore Gulston Doctor of Physicke, and Mr. Samuel Rotte Esquire, Adventurers, and Noble favorers of the blessed Plantation of Virginia” (A3).

Hungers Prevention appeared in later seventeenth-century fowling guides, though only Markham's original includes the full set of resources whence Marvell borrows. Markham's literary achievements—including an adaptation of the Song of Solomon into eclogue, a reworking of Sidney's *Arcadia*, and translations of Ariosto—have mostly been passed over. Markham also published guidebooks on skills such as archery, household management, gardening, and veterinary medicine.²³ One of his gardening books, the *Certaine Excellent and New Invented Knots and Mazes* (1623), capitalized on a vogue for knot designs, which resembled embroidery patterns, for English pleasure gardens.²⁴ Fairfax would have known Markham's books on horsemanship, including the popular *Cavalatrice, or The English Horseman* (1607) and *The Complete Farriar* (1639). Several of Markham's heirs were soldiers and naval officers.²⁵ His 1625 *Souldiers Accidence* declares itself “an Introduction into Military Discipline, Containing the first Principles and necessary knowledge meete for Captaines, Muster Masters, and all young Souldiers of the Infantrie, or Foote Bandes.”²⁶ Both Markham and Fairfax's father, Ferdinando, received military instruction under Sir Francis Vere, whose daughter Anne would marry Ferdinando and mother Marvell's patron.²⁷

To excavate the stanzas' structures of birdliming, we should start with the most straightforward evidence, the phrase “with lime-twigs knit” (574). The phrase is part of a simile that describes the bird as she listens to the poet, who “call[s]” in her “most learned original” (569) so that she can “divine” his meaning.²⁸ As such, the bird's participation in cross-species communication is described as entanglement by lime brushed upon a branch. If “knit” means “fastened,” then the bird's listening experience is compared to a plight of unthinkable torture: held “so fast ... that [she] is not able to go or creep through any chyncke.” “Knit” derives from the Old English *cnotta*, whence “knot.”²⁹ Thus, to be “knit” is to be entangled until knotted down, like the birds that Markham describes as flying into a limed bush, which “doe[s] intangle and wrappe & catch about euery feather that moueth.”

²³ See Wendy Wall, *Staging Domesticity: Household Work and English Identity in Early Modern Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 29–52. It is possible that Fairfax, an amateur poet of religious and hermetic verse, would have taken interest in Markham's translations.

²⁴ See Rebecca Bushnell, *Green Desire: Imagining Early Modern English Gardens* (Ithaca, NY: 2003), 70–72, 166–67.

²⁵ Matthew Steggle, “Markham, Gervase (1568?–1637), author,” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017). <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/>.

²⁶ Markham, *The Souldiers Accidence; Or, an Introduction into Military Discipline* (London: John Bellamie, 1625), title page.

²⁷ Markham's descendent, Sir Clements Markham, published Fairfax's first biography, *A Life of the Great Lord Fairfax, Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Parliament in England* (1870).

²⁸ See Martin Dzelzainis, “Marvell and Science,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Andrew Marvell*, 204.

²⁹ *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), s.v. “knit (v.),” “knot (n.) 1,” accessed 19 December 2017, www.oed.com.ezaccess.libraries.psu.edu.

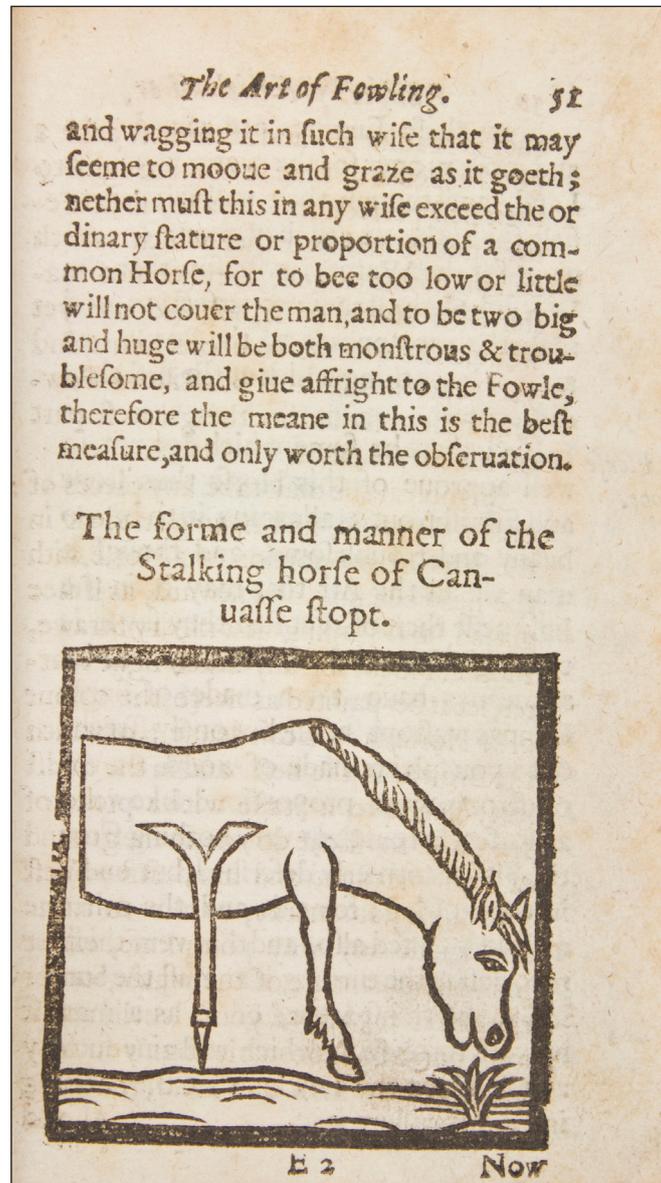


Figure 1: Image of an artificial horse built to conceal the fowler, from Gervase Markham, *Hungers Prevention, or, The Whole Arte of Fowling by Water and Land*. London: Anne Helme and Thomas Langley, 1621, pg. 51. William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, UCLA. Reprinted with permission.

According to Markham, animal forms (Figure 1) and “secret bushes” can be built by the fowler. *Hungers Prevention* includes woodcut images depicting the “forme and fashion of the Lyme-bush for Pheasants” and the “forme and manner of the Bushe Engine to stalke with.”³⁰ Once the fowler has applied the lime and concealed himself,

³⁰ Markham, *Hungers Prevention*, 223, 62. See also Smith, *The Experience'd Fowler*, 51–56.

“you shall then if you can (and the Arte is easily learned) with your lippes and Tongue beginne to chirppe ... altering your notes as your fancy pleaseth.”³¹ In Marvell, the communication between poet and bird is described as a “call” in the bird’s “own” language. Not only does “learned original” gesture toward the universal language movement of the 1640s, but it also implies that the “learned” or refined language is originally the bird’s and that this “original” has been “learned” by the poet. When he “already begin[s] to call,” he is also, according to the liming substructure, exercising an art of deception upon prey. Thomas Heywood warns, “Whilst Fowlers play upon their pipes, and sing, / Th’unwary fowle into their nets they bring.”³²

“This Arte,” writes Markham, “is a little hard and curious,” and “no words in writing can expresse the true sound thereof.”³³ The would-be fowler is encouraged to “goe into the Field where these Birds doe haunt, and there making their notes, chyrps, and whistels, practise as neare as hee can to in the field to counterfeit the same”—until becoming such “an absolute Master in the Arte” that birds will “gather bout him where he lyes, and sitting on the branches above him, harken and listen to the sounds he uttereth.”³⁴ According to this logic, the bird would gather to the poet’s “learned” mimicry of the “original” call. In a manner reminiscent of Cicero’s instructions on *actio* or *pronuntiatio*, the poet trains himself physically to present a bird in song and gesture.³⁵ This bird, like a talking stale, communicates to deceive, to trap the responding audience; it is an alienating maneuver that allows him to engage while protecting his intention.

Numerous early modern poems and plays refer to birdliming to figure the dynamic between assailant and victim. In William Shakespeare’s *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Proteus instructs Thurio to “lay lime to tangle [Sylvia’s] desires / By wailful sonnets.”³⁶ In the *Spanish Tragedy*, Horatio is accused by Balthazar—himself the stock predatory Petrarchan—of speaking “pleasing words” that harbor “sweet conceits ... limed with sly deceits.”³⁷ In *The Rape of Lucrece*, Shakespeare implies that Lucrece is a bird who, in her hospitality to Tarquin, approaches a limed bush:

³¹ Markham, *Hungers Prevention*, 128.

³² Thomas Heywood, *Pleasant Dialogues and Drammas, Selected Out of Lucian, Erasmus, Textor, Ovid, &c. with Sundry Emblems* (London: Thomas Slater, 1637), 218.

³³ Markham, *Hungers Prevention*, 128.

³⁴ Markham, *Hungers Prevention*, 128–29. See also Charles Estienne, *Maison Rustique, Or the Countrey Farme*, trans. Gervase Markham (London: Bonham Norton, 1616), 731; and Worlidge, *Systema Agriculturæ*, 246–47.

³⁵ See Brendan Prawdzik, *Theatrical Milton: Politics and Poetics of the Staged Body* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 3–4, 16–21.

³⁶ William Shakespeare, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, in *The Norton Shakespeare: Based on the Oxford Edition*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), 3.2.68–69. All references to Shakespeare’s works are to this edition. For other references to birdliming in the plays see *All’s Well that Ends Well*, 3.5.23; *Much Ado about Nothing*, 3.1.1101–82; *Macbeth*, 4.2.34; *2 Henry VI*, 1.3.479–82, 2.4.52–56; *Othello*, 2.1.1028–31; and *The Tempest*, 4.1.193, 256 and 5.7–14.

³⁷ Thomas Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy*, in *English Renaissance Drama: A Norton Anthology*, ed. David Bevington et al. (New

Birds never limed no secret bushes fear,
 So guiltless she securely gives good cheer
 And reverent welcome to her princely guest,
 Whose inward ill no outward harm expressed.³⁸

She “securely” moves to greet him with “welcome” and “good cheer.” Tarquin seems guileless, and, encouraged, Lucrece engages in a deadly dialectic.³⁹ Authors of fowling literature often describe their art in terms of seduction: “Fowling,” writes Markham, “is an Art of discerning and understanding how to take all manner of Fowl ... either by enchantment, or enticement, by winning or wooing.”⁴⁰ In Thomas Dekker’s *Westward Ho!*, a character named Birdlime serves, in the words of Michelle M. Dowd, as a “go-between for sexual liaisons.”⁴¹

In *A Maske Presented at Ludlow Castle*, John Milton epitomizes this tradition in applying birdlime to concretize the enchanter Comus’s rhetorical entanglement of the Lady. She is affixed to “an enchanted Chair” that is “smear’d with gumms of glutenous heat.”⁴² “Gumms” refers most directly to botanical secretion—as in tree sap—that, at first viscous and capable of being applied with a brush, hardens when dried.⁴³ “Glutenous” describes any sticky substance that hardens or stiffens.⁴⁴ “Gluten” is synonymous with “gum.”⁴⁵ In English, “glue” first referred to birdlime.⁴⁶ In the *Maske*, the glutinous gums are hot (“heate”) because the concoction needed to be softened by heat and stirring before applied.⁴⁷

York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2002). 2.1.125-26. See also Lorenzo’s account of his betrayal of Pedringano: “I set the trap, he breaks the worthless twigs, / And sees not that wherewith the bird was limed. / Thus hopeful men that mean to hold their own / Must look like fowlers to their dearest friends” (3.4.41-44).

³⁸ Shakespeare, *The Rape of Lucrece*, 88–91.

³⁹ See Heywood, *Pleasant Dialogues*, 210.

⁴⁰ Markham, *Hungers Prevention*, 1.

⁴¹ Michelle M. Dowd, “Leaning Too Hard upon the Pen: Suburb Wenches and City Wives in *Westward Ho!*,” *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 15 (2003): 232.

⁴² John Milton, *A Maske Presented at Ludlow Castle*, in *The Works of John Milton*, vol. 1, pt. 1, ed. Frank Allen Patterson et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), 658sd, 917. All references to Milton’s poetry are to this edition. For discussions of this moment, see Prawdzik, *Theatrical Milton*, 68–69; Michael Gillum, “Yet Once More, ‘Gumms of Glutenous Heat,’” *Milton Quarterly* 44, no. 1 (2010): 47–51; and Debora Shuger, “‘Gums of Glutenous Heat’ and the Stream of Consciousness: Theology in Milton’s *Maske*,” *Representations* 60 (1997): 1–21.

⁴³ OED, s.v. “gum (n.) 2,” accessed 6 September 2017, www.oed.com.ezaccess.libraries.psu.edu.

⁴⁴ OED, s.v. “glutinous (adj.),” accessed 12 December 2017, www.oed.com.ezaccess.libraries.psu.edu.

⁴⁵ OED, s.v. “gluten (n.) 1.a,” accessed 12 December 2017, www.oed.com.ezaccess.libraries.psu.edu.

⁴⁶ OED, s.v. “glue (n.) 1,” accessed 12 December 2017, www.oed.com.ezaccess.libraries.psu.edu.

⁴⁷ As described in Markham, *Hungers Prevention*, 281–82: “Now when you have occasion to use your Lyme, you shall take of it such a quantitie as you shall think fit, and putting it into an earthen pipkin, with a third part of Hogges-grease, Capons-grease of Goose-grease, finely clarified (but Capons-grease or Goose-grease is the best) and set it one a very gentle fire and there let them melt together, and stirre them continually, till they be both incorporated together, and that you cannot discerne any seperation of the bodies, but all one entire and perfit substance, then take it from the fire and coole it, stirring it still till it be cold.”

The scene literalizes the Attendant Spirit's prior warning to the Lady's brothers that she will by then have "Enter'd the very lime-twigs of [Comus's] spells."⁴⁸ Like a lured bird, the Lady becomes entangled in the Petrarchan rhetoric of the Cavalier seducer until seized.

During the fowling sequence of *Upon Appleton House*, the poet's duplicity converges upon a celebrated couplet: "Or turn me but, and you shall see / I was but an inverted tree" (567–568). We could, greenly, assume that the poet so fully immerses himself in nature that he has, as it were, become a tree. In other words, "If you turn me up-side-down, you'll see that my legs are branches and that my hands and fingers are roots. My head may seem in the air, but it's rooted in the earth. I have merged into the land and its creatures." McColley sees in the phrase "you shall see, / I was" an "inversion of syntax" that "is an instance of organic form."⁴⁹ Further, "the shifting from nature as object of our gaze to ourselves as nature disputes attempts to separate and objectify it."⁵⁰ McColley conjures this chiasm by conflating the physical scene with the language itself, which supposedly mimics ecological form. In fact, the stanzas are a simulation intended to generate sympathy with "nature as object" in the attempt to capture the reader within the bird's subject position. Such is the use of decoys in fowling with lime: "A live Owl," suggests J. Smith, "or the figure of her exactly painted is a good Stale to draw them to wonder at, and in the heat of persecuting her, they will be taken by Twigs."⁵¹ Similitude elicits sympathy that enables the subject's capture and incorporation by the predator.

Sources for the idea of an inverted tree can be found elsewhere: Plato, Aristotle, and Dante, for instance. However, Markham's *Hungers Prevention* offers the most explanatory source; near at hand, it offered the materials and techniques whence he could arrange the scene's visual appeals. "Inverted" can simply mean "artificial." It can also mean "twisted around," as opposed to "turned up-side-down," which is how it is commonly glossed.⁵² We can glimpse behind the similitude of the tree by "turn[ing]" or twisting it upon a vertical axis. Now, we can begin to see behind the semblance, behind the "tree" that the poet has seemed to be. In fact, Markham instructs us how to build the false tree that Marvell has in mind, the actual inverted tree:

an artificiall Tree ... may bee made of small Wandes, or thinne Splinters foulded together in the shape or body of a Tree, and so couerd with Canuasse and painted like the barke of the Tree represents or figures ... you shall in certaine holes made on the

⁴⁸ Milton, *Maske*, 645.

⁴⁹ Diane Kelsey McColley, *Poetry and Ecology in the Age of Milton and Marvell* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 122.

⁵⁰ McColley, *Poetry and Ecology*, 34.

⁵¹ J. Smith, *The Experience'd Fowler*, 86.

⁵² OED, s.v. "invert (v.)," accessed 19 December 2017, www.oed.com.ezaccess.libraries.psu.edu.

toppe for that purpose, sticke in the boughes and true naturall brauches of the Tree which you would figure in such sorte as they growe at that season ...⁵³



Figure 2: Image of an artificial tree built to conceal the fowler, from Gervase Markham, *Hungers Prevention, or, The Whole Arte of Fowling by Water and Land*. London: Anne Helme and Thomas Langley, 1621, pg. 62. William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, UCLA. Reprinted with permission.

Markham includes an illustration of this tree, which I suspect was close at hand when Marvell wrote *Upon Appleton House* (**Figure 2**). Sticks and wood-strips are covered with canvas, which is painted to resemble bark. Upon this trunk is added “true naturall

⁵³ Markham, *Hungers Prevention*, 60–61.

branches” that “growe at that season.” Beneath is a pointed stake, which pins the tree to earth. The stake gives immediate sense to “turn,” since the tree could pivot upon it to reveal the fowler behind. The stake also literalizes the poet’s request, several stanzas later, to “stake me down” (624) in the meadow: as though he is asking us to carry him, with his “tree to stalke with,” into the meadow to be staked down and released to wander at eventide.

No reader of record has caught the trap. When the poet employs imperative voice—“Turn me but”—he challenges us directly to discover what has been happening before our reading eyes: “Turn me” (now) “and you shall see” (in the immediate future) that “I was” (in the past) “but” (only) a “tree,” which had been (all the while) “inverted.” “Turn me but,” as in just a bit, and the scene and its implications change entirely. Stamped onto or behind the scene of interspecies communication is a fully worked-out scene of birdliming. The poet, following “an Art of discerning and understanding how to take all manner of Fowl ... either by enchantment, or enticement, by winning or wooing,” calls from behind the stalking tree: birds will “gather about him where he lyes and sitting on the branches above him, harken and listen to the sounds he uttereth.

The hunting of the bird with lime does not end until it has been found (if it has not ripped its body free or been lost or left to die obscurely). When the poet asserts that, upon returning, he could find any leaf moved by the breeze today, we are invited to think about our bird’s fate. Contemporary guides always addressed the challenge of recovering limed fowl—which, trembling, could fall to earth and stagger away lost like dead leaves in the wind. Stanza 73 suggests that Marvell has not, indeed, forgotten her. Now his “fancy weaves” “Strange prophecies” (577–78)—moments of Biblical and ancient history—from the “sibyl’s leaves” (577) of “Nature’s mystic book” (584). These prophecies are rendered from two materials: “scattered sybil’s leaves” (577) and feathers. In these prophecies, the poet’s fancy “consumes”—as do “Mexique paintings,” which incorporated feathers—“all the plumes” (580).⁵⁴ The noun marker “the” in “the plumes” suggests that readers should know the feathers in question. The poem’s shadow, pointing to our bird, points also to us.

Angler Poet

When we next find plumes, the poet is dangling them into the water to catch fish. The fowling stanzas entice us to watch Marvell interact with a bird as a character, without

⁵⁴ See John Tradescant, *Musæum Tradescantianum: Or, A Collection of Rarities* (London: Nathaniel Brooke, 1656), 41; Thomas Powell, *The History of Most Curious Manual Arts and Inventions* (London: S. n., 1675), 99–101.

realizing that we, the readers, are being caught by Marvell the writer. As such, those stanzas foreground his activity as a poet whose lines anticipate the reader's responses. During the angling episode, the figure of Marvell the poet again lurks behind amusing and intriguing lines. Though the poet appears nowhere as comical as in this scene, he is also nowhere grander.

If in stanzas 72–73 we were limed, gathered, plucked, woven into prophecy, and scattered, then we were out-interpreted by a guarded and perhaps hostile author. The game of conceal and reveal tickled us into his hands. We face a similar challenge in stanzas 81–82, where we accompany the poet streamside. Having left the scenes of sylvan pastoral, the tutor-poet idles in piscatorial (pastoral with fish).

Oh what a pleasure 'tis to hedge
My temples here with heavy sedge;
Abandoning my lazy side,
Stretched as a bank unto the tide;
Or to suspend my sliding foot
On th'osier's underminèd root,
And in its branches tough to hang,
While at my lines the fishes twang! (641–48)

It is a “pleasure,” first, to set his head within the thick grass or “sedge” that grows upon the bank, while the rest of his body bends and stretches down the bank towards or into the water. His body “hedge[s]” or doubles as a hedge. Alternately—“Or”—he hooks his foot into the exposed root of an osier bush, hanging over it, his chest supported by its resilient (“tough”) branches as his arms dangle; from his hands a fishing line dips into water. His body and the line are almost indivisible from the osier; its branches served for children's fishing rods.⁵⁵ As Lynn Enterline observes, the stanza describes “a series of figures that nearly blend the speaker into the landscape, dissolving the difference between human and vegetal life.”⁵⁶

Marvell's child-like figure blends easily into the botany even as it remains openly displayed and available for discovery. Glimpsing Maria, Fairfax's daughter, he hurries to conceal himself:

⁵⁵ As indicated by the song “The Angler's Progress”: Pierce Egan, *Pierce Egan's Book of Sports, and Mirror of Life* (London: William Tegg Co., 1832), 92. The song first appeared as Herman Boaz, *A New Song, Called “The Angler's Progress”* (London: Herman Boaz, 1789).

⁵⁶ Lynn Enterline, “Instructive Nymphs: Andrew Marvell on Pedagogy and Puberty,” in *A Companion to Renaissance Poetry*, ed. Catherine Bates (London: Blackwell Press, 2018), 40.

But now away my hooks, my quills,
 And angles, idle utensils.
 The young Maria walks tonight:
 Hide trifling youth thy pleasures slight.
 'Twere shame that such judicious eyes
 Should with such toys a man surprise;
 She that already is the law
 Of all her sex, her age's awe. (649–56)

The oxymoron “idle utensils” may be part of a joke about masturbation: in this scenario, he would fear to be “surprised” with “such toys”—specifically, as he plays with a useless penis, his “pleasures slight.”⁵⁷ The epigram “Upon a Eunuch” answered efforts to emasculate Marvell in Restoration polemic and seems consonant with the “danger of annihilation, wounds, and incapacity” that, to Hirst and Zwicker, “dominate” his poetry’s “litany of heterosexual encounters.”⁵⁸ They write of the “idle utensils”:

It could not but have been apparent to Lord Fairfax as Marvell’s actual or imagined reader that autobiography was folded here, as at other points, into the fiction of the narrator, underscoring the poet’s barrenness at an age—nearly thirty—when Fairfax had both won glory and become a father. The narrator’s foolish embarrassment deliberately confesses a failure not only of moral purpose but also of personal capacity.⁵⁹

The dangling rod is part of a network of words and images that associate Marvell’s flaccidity with childishness, idleness, and impotency. One would not expect a discerning poet to represent himself masturbating in a poem written for General Lord Thomas Fairfax or his thirteen-year-old daughter: yet the implication cannot be unseen.

Like most of the poem, this scene by the river plays out in the present tense voice.⁶⁰ The lines give us two options for how we visualize the present. First, the poet rests with head in the grass, his body “Stretched as a bank unto the tide” (644). Then we are given

⁵⁷ Both “Eyes” and “toys” can be the subject of the verb “surprise”; her eyes can surprise the poet who has his toys, or the poet can surprise her eyes with his toys; “pleasures.”

⁵⁸ Hirst and Zwicker, *Orphan of the Hurricane*, 97.

⁵⁹ Hirst and Zwicker, *Orphan of the Hurricane*, 37–38. See also N. Smith, *Andrew Marvell: The Chameleon* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012), 11, 343.

⁶⁰ Of the poem’s temporalities, see Rosalie L. Colie, “My Ecchoing Song”; *Marvell’s Poetry of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 252–53.

a more interesting choice: “Or” the poet “suspend[s his] sliding foot / On th’osier’s underminèd root” (645–46). “Or” subverts the illusion of immediacy. The present tense describes a reconstructed habit; it selects from the poet’s wonted recreations to instantiate a micronarrative. As we read, the poet performs both either—possible because we are dealing with text. “Oh what a pleasure” (641) places us with him in-the-moment, as do several deictics, like “here” and “now”: “But now away my hooks” (649). Both actions occur and only one occurs; “Or” turns us from the recumbent poet to his strange posture upon the osier tree as he angles. We turn to this immediacy, which appeals to our sensory imagination.

With “liquid foot” (674), Marvell kicks up a key Virgilian intertext. The phrase (as also “fountain’s sliding foot” (49) in “The Garden”) derives from a crucial moment in *Culex*, an epyllion or brief mock epic poem about a shepherd saved from a snake by a gnat.⁶¹ The shepherd impetuously kills the midge, which visits his dreams as a ghost passing through Hades. The shepherd then builds a mound of earth to commemorate it. In the Renaissance, the poem was ascribed to Virgil’s juvenilia, though its prophetic intimations about his future career and relationship with Augustus, as well as its crude Ovidian style, owe to a hoaxer’s lower craft.⁶²

The allusion to *Culex* in “liquid foot” (*liquido pede* [17]) is significant for two reasons. First, *Culex* was enjoyed by early moderns because it foreshadowed the Virgilian career path (with which Milton and Edmund Spenser sometimes identified their trajectories).⁶³ It posits the young Virgil’s endearing immaturity within an arc that culminates in epic: the hoaxer integrates material from the *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, and *Aeneid*. Moreover, the poem closely links concerns about poetic maturity to the patronage relationship between Virgil and Augustus. When Spenser translated the poem in 1591, the gnat’s complaint alluded to his own troubled relationship with patron Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester.⁶⁴ As such, the allusion to *Culex* brings into focus Marvell’s discomfiture with his idleness, juvenility, and dependency on Fairfax while looking to grander poetic ambitions.⁶⁵

⁶¹ *Culex*, in *Appendix Vergiliana*, ed. Armanus Salvatore, Arcturus de Vivo, Lucianus Nicastris, Joannes Polara (Rome: Typis Officinae Polygraphicae, 1997), 25–70. Subsequent references to *Culex* are to this edition. Line numbers will appear in parentheses. “See also Scott McGill, “The *Appendix Vergiliana*,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil*, ed. Fiachra Mac Góráin and Charles Martindale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 67–69.

⁶² See Jeanne Dion, “*Auguste et virgile: L’Enigme du culex*,” *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum* 55, no. 1 (2008): 283–96.

⁶³ See William P. Weaver, “Paraphrase and Patronage in Virgil’s *Gnat*,” *Spenser Studies* 25 (2010): 247–61.

⁶⁴ See Bruce Danner, “Retrospective Fiction-Making and the ‘Secrete’ of the 1591 *Virgils Gnat*,” *Spenser Studies* 25 (2010): 214–45.

⁶⁵ See Hirst and Zwicker, *Orphan of the Hurricane*, 36.

The specific context of *liquido pede* in *Culex* locates Marvell's "pleasures slight" within or in ironic relation to the tradition of Apollonian—and further, Christian—prophetic poetry. In the introductory address to Augustus, the Virgilian poet promises that, despite the poem's silly matter, his later verse will be divinely inspired and grand. He imagines that Apollo might then be found bathing in the Castalian Spring, whose waters descend *sonans liquido pede* (17) ("with liquid foot resounding" [my translation]) below the brow of Mount Parnassus.⁶⁶ The spring refreshed pilgrims on their approach to the Delphic oracle. If the fowling stanzas ended with reference to the Delphic sibyl's prophecies, the second sequence brings us close to the shrine. Shortly hereafter, Marvell will describe dusk at Nunappleton in apocalyptic terms. His country house poem, itself part epyllion, expresses the full generic diversity of the Virgilian career, melding pastoral, epic, and georgic modes. Beneath Marvell's arguably lewd, self-deprecatory idleness is poetry writ large.

The "idle utensils" (650) further combine otiosity and prophecy, embodiment and textuality. They are gear not only to angle but also to write the "toys" and "pleasures slight" of "trifling youth."⁶⁷ "I have my quills" (649): he has feathers for tackle (they were used to make flies), but he also has them for pens.⁶⁸ He has "hooks" (649) to catch fish, but "hooks" are also a distinctive feature of his penmanship: they feature prominently in the "A" and "M" of his signature.⁶⁹ "Angles" (650) refers to fishhooks, too, though it also suggests nooks, retreats, or hiding places: perhaps niches in the Nunappleton landscape or small, out-of-the-way rooms in the house where the poet wrote privately.⁷⁰ "Idle utensils" carries us from the displayed body at the creek to the poet's obscure desk, where he pens *Upon Appleton House*. The effect is more immediate if we note that pre-1681 audiences (if there were any) might have read the ink directly from Marvell's hand.

The poet has emerged from the riverbed. He has endeared himself by inviting us into his space of retreat and through clumsy, comical movements and postures. He has delighted us with self-deprecation and pleasant imagery. Here is the poet himself,

⁶⁶ For the geography of the Castalian spring, see H. W. Park and D. E. W. Wormell, *The Delphic Oracle*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1956), 1.1–5.

⁶⁷ See Paul Davis, "Marvell and Manuscript Culture," in *The Oxford Handbook of Andrew Marvell*, 213–15.

⁶⁸ See Izaak Walton, *The Compleat Angler Or, the Contemplative Man's Recreation* (London: Richard Marriot, 1653); Thomas Barker, *The Country-Mans Recreation, Or the Art of Planting, Graffing, and Gardening*, (London: T. Mabb, 1654), III, 5–8; and Robert Venables, *The Experienc'd Angler, Or, Angling Improv'd* (London: Richard Marriot, 1662), 23–34.

⁶⁹ OED, s.v. "hook (n.) 1.10.a," accessed 17 July 2020, www.oed.com.ezaccess.libraries.psu.edu. For Marvell's handwriting, see Nicholas von Maltzahn, *Andrew Marvell Chronology* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 4; "Marvell and Maniban," *Explorations in Renaissance Culture* 35, no. 1 (2009): 30–31.

⁷⁰ OED, s.v. "angle (n.) 2.1.a," accessed 17 July 2020, www.oed.com.ezaccess.libraries.psu.edu.

exposed: idle, childish, and dependent. Yet the closer that we move in, the further that his body seems to disintegrate into a swallowing semiotic depth. As the mirage recedes, we find Marvell's signature: when the illusion of ecological communion dissolved in stanzas 72–73, we were left with glue and a bird carcass; here, we turn stanzas with hook in eye. "At my lines," he writes, "the fishes twang!" (648).

The proximity of aesthetic process to the thematization of that process is not coincidental. Rather, the immersive, time-intensive, recursive, and often obsessive nature of advanced poetic technique threads, as though inevitably, into what it labors to think and express. Heather Dubrow suggests that "the meditative solitude" so often significant in early modern verse "mimes the conditions of production in that poets often spent time alone when writing, especially if they are working with the sort of vexing metric and stanzaic forms in which Renaissance writers delighted."⁷¹ Though in *Upon Appleton House* Marvell was not contending with vexing metric and stanzaic forms, he was working intricate thematic, figurative, and textual threads. The compacted metaphorical surplus of many stanzas and the intricate threading of figuration across them suggest something of the time and care that he put into them.

Bird Poet

This article's reading of the angling and fowling sequences supposed an audience pulled unawares into deception that, if found ("Turn me but, and you shall see") shows interpretation to be the act of taking the bait of simulation. In the angling episode, we saw displayed a poet whose bodily play at once concealed and opened access to a meditation on poetic ambition that further illumined the poem's mock-epic character. Most deeply, the subject of these stanzas is Marvell's poetry: its sensory allure, guardedness, playfulness, deceptiveness, power, and possibility. The subject is Marvell's immersion in craft and relentless scrutiny of its process.

Recall that we cannot confirm that *Upon Appleton House* was read before 1681, two years after Marvell's death. The variety of audience appeals cannot be reduced to a single person or to a coterie. We do not know the span of the poem's composition, and revisions may have occurred over decades. The poet's visibility in *Upon Appleton House* as an object of analysis manifests, in its way, intensive self-scrutiny as much as it does rhetorical appeal. The idea of scrutinizing audiences winds around the poet as he disciplines his craft to challenge and outthink them. Performance for them, over time

⁷¹ Heather Dubrow, *The Challenges of Orpheus: Lyric Poetry and Early Modern England* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2008), 82–83.

and intensive work, prepares for the artist a deep dive into self-absorption. Birdlime, earlier seen to manipulate and entrap the audience, also figures the poet's dilemma with himself and his poetry. In this scenario, overseeing his forked communication with audience, the poet becomes that limed audience.

Beyond the sources mentioned above, the figure of birdliming appeared in scores of sermons and tracts of moral theology. In the conventional configuration, the Christian (bird) cannot soar heavenward (sky) because entangled in worldly care (lime). As writes Anglican cleric Joseph Cooper,

If others will Flag and Flutter here below, and be Intangled with the Bird-lime of Wordly Cares, let them: But be sure that you Soar a-loft, getting above the Cares of the World, and Flying as with Wings like a Dove, to the Windows of the Temple of God, in the heavenly Sion. It becomes not you, that are the Off-spring of Heaven, to lye Grovelling upon the Earth.⁷²

Cooper and contemporary clergy and theologians drew directly from Augustine of Hippo, who in the *Confessions* uses the figure of birdliming to dramatize his spiritual struggle and to warn how terrene pleasures captivate the unresolved believer entirely.⁷³ Augustine narrates young struggles among societies of learners: "In their mouths were demonic snares and birdlime [*viscum*]."⁷⁴ When his friend Alypius tried to convince him to adopt Pauline celibacy, "He was surprised at me because he held me in high regard, and yet I was so stuck in the glue-trap [*visco*, 'glue'] of that particular pleasure."⁷⁵ Earth is wholly be-limed: "Now [God] let my soul cleave to you, now that you have stripped it of the glue-trap [*visco tam tenaci*, or "so tenaciously clinging lime" (my translation)] which is death."⁷⁶ The figure allows Marvell to bridge the Augustinian

⁷² Joseph Cooper, *Misthoskopia: A Prospect of Heavenly Glory for the Comfort of Sion's Mourners* (London: John Cooper and Joseph Cooper, 1700), xiv.

⁷³ See Gunner Mikkelsen, "Augustine and His Sources: 'The Devil's Snares and Birdlime' in the Mouths of the Manichaeans in East and West," in *In Search of Truth: Augustine, Manichaeism and other Gnosticism*, ed. Jacob Albert van den Berg et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 421–23. Edmund Calamy draws upon the figure to promote the spiritual work required to escape the fatal grip of sin. See Calamy, *The Art of Divine Meditation* (London: Thomas Parkhurst, 1680), 155: "Labour to get a heart disengaged and disintangled from the world ... a man that is intangled in the lime-twigs of the world, it is in vain to bid this man mount up in Meditation."

⁷⁴ Augustine, *Confessions*, Books 1–8, trans. Carolyn J.-B. Hammond. Loeb Classical Library 26 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 105: "in ... ore laquei diaboli et viscum confectum" (104).

⁷⁵ Augustine, *Confessions*, 281: "Cum enim me ille miraretur quem non parvi penderit, ita haerere visco illius voluptatis" (280). Anglican cleric, Edward Kellett, following Augustine, sermonizes: "the soul, so soon as it is tied to the body, should be caught like a bird with a lime-bush, and bound up in corruption as in a bundle." See Kellett, *Miscellanies of Divinitie Divided into Three Books* (Cambridge: Robert Allot, 1635), 108.

⁷⁶ Augustine, *Confessions*, 255.

opposition between the limed world and the spirit's upper reaches—thus, also, mind/soul and matter/phenomena, asceticism and pleasure.

Pastoral opens the imagination and permits it to work creatively upon the world at leisure and distance. Of course, this leisure was often part of a sophisticated game of commentary upon the social and political world. Its pleasures can make entrapment desirable: “The cloister outward shuts its gates” (103). In *Upon Appleton House*, the space of sylvan pastoral replaces the nunnery that restrained the destined Isabel Thwaites, whose seizure by Fairfax enacts in miniature the English Reformation.⁷⁷ Marvell reworks their predominant activity in the cloister—embroidery—into the forest, indeed into his very body, which is suspended between desire to stay (*otium*) and purpose to leave (*negotium*). In fact, the string implied by “knit” in the fowling episode—quickly succeeded by fancy’s weaving of prophecies and an embroidered biotic “antic cope” (591)—is called upon to restrain the poet from being an agent in the world:

Bind me ye woodbines in your twines,
Curl me about ye gadding vines,
And oh so close your circles lace,
That I may never leave this place:
But, lest your fetters prove too weak,
Ere I your silken bondage break,
Do you, O brambles, chain me too,
And courteous briars nail me though. (609–16)

The implied string of “with lime-twigs knit” (597)—evoking the bird’s “entanglement” and the limed strings often used in fowling—are now suggested in “twine,” “lace,” and “silken.” The poet’s request to be bound and nailed configures him as Christ suffering, as though, through radical passivity, he can fulfill time typologically and reject the labor awaiting the Christian agent at this tenuous historical moment. Several scholars have suggested that the poem’s representation of the dialectic between *otium* (leisurely retirement) and *negotium* (social and political engagement) speaks to Fairfax’s dilemma as the recently retired general of the Parliamentary forces, even as the war continued but miles away. Further, the dialectic is enacted by Marvell himself, particularly throughout the forest episode. Like a limed bird groveling upon the earth,

⁷⁷ See Paul Hammond, “Marvell’s Sexuality,” *The Seventeenth Century* 11, no. 1 (2013): 101–3. See also Hirst and Zwicker, *Orphan of the Hurricane*, 98; and Michael John DiSanto, “Andrew Marvell’s Ambivalence Toward Adult Sexuality,” *Studies in English Literature* 48, no. 1 (2008): 165–182, esp. 173–75.

Marvell appears entangled in sensuous fancy; and yet, he calls to be restrained from the larger world described by Augustine as covered *visco tam tenaci*.

Can the poetic process reconcile the Augustinian divide between terrene pleasure and spiritual otherworldliness? Marvell directly associates poetic process with carnality in “The Coronet,” which conveys a failure to transcend worldliness even while extolling Christ. Danger attends his inductive method: “Through every garden, every mead, / I gather flowers (my fruits are only flowers)” (5–6). But when he weaves a garland for Christ,

Alas, I find the serpent old
That, twining in his speckled breast,
About the flow'rs disguised does fold
With wreaths of fame and interest. (13–16)

The serpent’s “twining” motion implies the entangling work of earthly desire. Whereas Augustine sought strength in God’s love and in his love for God, Marvell—recalling Donne—seeks immediate release through grace:

But Thou who only could'st the serpent tame,
Either his slipp'ry knots at once untie,
And disentangle all his winding snare
Or shatter too with him my curious frame:
And let these wither (19–23)

Since his garlands for Christ contain the serpent, the poet can only reverse them, can only “disentangle all [the serpent’s] winding snare.” He can strip away the poem until it disappears or have his “curious frame” “shatter’d” by God’s foot.

To what extent does *Upon Appleton House* look back upon its own meticulous crafting—the poetic corollary of his bodily play—as a self-indulgent waste of time? Is not talking to trees and birds, or torturing oneself over poetic stanzas about talking to them, a self-indulgent waste of time? Does the poem’s eschatological thrust engage seriously and meaningfully with the world, or does it rather emboss Marvell’s uselessness and idleness—and, worse, his pleasure in writing?

In Marvell’s “The Garden,” we see a poet who draws inward from worldly attachments until immersed in meditation. His soul turns from the world’s reflection in the ocean of ideas to wing heavenward. In this higher position, it basks in natural and spiritual light as a bird sitting upon a tree branch. But it is not yet “prepared for longer

flight” (55) and instead continues to inhabit a state carefully balanced between this world and the next.

Here at the fountain’s sliding foot
Or at some fruit-tree’s mossy root,
Casting the body’s vest aside,
My soul into the boughs does glide;
There like a bird it sits, and sings,
Then whets, and combs its silver wings;
And, till prepared for longer flight,
Waves in its plumes the various light. (49–56)

Echoes to “sliding foot” and “root” recall the angling sequence of *Upon Appleton House*, which marked the poet’s Virgilian aspirations and concerns about otiosity. The poet imagines himself to remove the body (as though clothing) and to infuse his spirit into a fountain or into the root of a fruit tree. The spirit, it is implied, then moves upward through the tree like sap to produce or, rather, becomes able to fly directly onto the branch. The figure allows Marvell to bridge the Augustinian opposition between the world and the spirit’s upper reaches—and thus, also, the divide between mind/soul and matter/phenomena, asceticism and pleasure. Marvell complicates Augustinian flight: poetry is tenuously poised between wasteful, worldly self-indulgence and both political and spiritual engagement. On the branch, we escape the world’s baits without leaving it. The balance is achieved within the aesthetic process, which also, in its pleasures and wastefulness, can belime. Indeed, the process of art is as much body as mind and is body before mind.

When, in “A Dialogue, Between the Resolved Soul, and Created Pleasure,” Pleasure tempts the Resolved Soul with “the souls of fruits and flowers” (15), the latter adheres to Augustine: “I sup above, and cannot stay / So long to bait upon the way” (17–18). The phrase “to bait upon the way” suggests what horses do: they feed during breaks along the road.⁷⁸ But the Resolved Soul intends vertical pilgrimage: “I sup above.” To “bait” here, speaking with Pleasure, is to feed on “bait” as a bird. Pleasure suggests that one can send feathers to heaven while resting on earth: “On these downy pillows lie, / Whose soft plumes will thither fly” (19–20). It is implied that one’s spirit can ascend to heaven if it rests upon “downy pillows.” This resolution of pleasure with the Augustinian imperative to spurn worldly entanglement strives for the pneumatic suspension in

⁷⁸ OED, s.v. “bait (v.), II.5,” accessed 27 August 2021, www.oed.com.ezaccess.libraries.psu.edu.

aesthetic pleasure that we saw in “The Garden,” where the soul, “till prepared for longer flight, / Waves in its plumes the various light” (55–56).⁷⁹ The impotent progenitor, this juvenile Virgil, sleeps upon pillow poetry. The phrase “downy pillows” captures this suspension remarkably. Whereas “pillow” suggests a support that pushes upward on the head, “downy” suggests not just softness but downward pull. “Pillow” does not just imply upward pushing but also, again, downward “pull”: preceded by Middle Dutch *pulowe*, Old Saxon *puli* (hence “pulley”), and Latin *pulvinus*.⁸⁰ If the downward pull seems to have disproportionate force, the meter strengthens this sense, given the strong stresses on “down” and “pil” (“pull”).

Towards the close of *Upon Appleton House*, “The modest halcyon comes in sight, / Flying betwixt the day and night” (669–70). “Emblematically,” notes Smith, “the halcyon represented the good king who brings peace and prosperity.” Further, “in alchemical theory, the halcyon was believed to calm seas by making them solid with a substance called *halcyonium* (solidified sea foam).”⁸¹ The “jellying” (675) of the stream leads to the fancy that “Nature is wholly vitrified” (688). Figuring Revelations 15:2 (KJV)—“And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God”—the claim that the natural world has been “vitrified” or turned to glass by heat implies that, here, the kingfisher prefigures or symbolizes the Apocalypse and return of Christ as millennial king. At the same time, Marvell also exploits the bird’s association—in a variety of creation myths and, especially, in lay versions of the Bible—with the recession of the Great Flood. In one account, the halcyon is dispatched from the Ark and finds land but forgets to return.⁸² The kingfisher, “flying betwixt the day and night,” fits neatly within the poem’s sequence of references to the Pentateuch. It logically appears while Nunappleton’s stream, elsewhere described as the Flood itself, dries. Its hovering represents neither end nor beginning but a suspension between them; and between them, too, are Jesus and the apostles, fishers of men. The poem ends by releasing us into a middle of history that—despite mapping Biblical history—does not end. Desire to be suspended between day and night, land and sky, compels Marvell (repeatedly) back into his poem, so that he might never leave the delicately, tenuously poised pleasure of his artistic process. Marvell desired suspension in body and spirit; his mind and body are coiled in the loops of his manuscript.

⁷⁹ See Gordon Teskey, “Greenland: Marvell’s ‘The Garden,’” in *The Oxford Handbook of Andrew Marvell*, 367–70.

⁸⁰ OED, “pillow (n.),” accessed 3 June 2022, <https://www.oed.com.ezaccess.libraries.psu.edu/>.

⁸¹ N. Smith, *Poems of Andrew Marvell*, 238.

⁸² Ildiko Szabo, *Kingfisher* (London: Reaktion Books, 2019), 135–40.

In these pages, we backtracked from habituated eagerness to embrace surface-level phenomenal appeals. Zeroing in on hunting scenes that appeared to foreground a relationship between author and reader, we deeply excavated two pairs of stanzas, in the process discerning much about Marvell's compositional techniques as well as about their thematization. Digging deeper, we found evidence from contemporary verse that Marvell sought in his craft a middle air between the terrestrial flesh and heavenly purity and love. Chiseling our way to the poet at his desk, we recovered concerns about exorbitant trifling as he flirted at once with hermetic withdrawal into aesthetic pleasure and total release from the pleasures of the flesh. We saw that, given the uselessness of his time- and self-consuming craft, poetry could be figured either as, on one hand, reconciling the Augustinian opposition between world and heaven, flesh and spirit or, on the other, entangling oneself in a different, more solitary pleasure.

In this article's quest to conceptualize the Marvellian poetic text, we considered how information in its sub-surface intertextual welter commented upon the surface-level phenomenal appeals. In the passages examined from *Upon Appleton House*, we saw that this information not only unsettled the poetic line's immediate sense but also commented upon the processes of its composition and reception. The poem's warnings about the dangers of its (and the world's) phenomenal appeals, as well as the poem's very complexity—an outcome of extraordinary process—complicates any attempt to locate intention or indeed anything about the author. Nonetheless, in his verse, given opportunity, we can see poetics anchored in body, in the recursiveness of poetic craft. Within the temporal and physical system whence emerged *Upon Appleton House*, we find not only the author's dissimulation but also concerns about the value of his writing and wastefulness of his craft.

The poem achieves a potently surcharged suspension between significant oppositions and attempts to hover through artistic investment in a suspended present: centered upon a precariously balanced writing body.

Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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