Time, Guilt and Pleasure: A Note on Marvell's Nostalgia

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MARVELL, like other seventeenth-century poets, notably Herbert, shows a profound nostalgia for the lost Elizabethan order, and for the art in which this was embodied. This nostalgia must be linked with another, no less profound: for paradise and for childhood — the 'golden daies' of little T.C. in a prospect of flowers. The 'golden daies' are man's racial, national and individual past. Both Marvell and Herbert are alienated from their own world and seek to regress to a lost, idealized order. Their obsession with Time, while it should be related to Spenser's, is more personal, and may indeed be described as romantic, as in Herbert's 'Life':

> But Time did beckon to the flow'rs, and they
> By noon most cunningly did steal away
> And withered in my hand . . .

and in Marvell's 'The Picture of Little T.C. in a Prospect of Flowers':

> And roses of their thorns disarm;
> But most procure
> That violets may a longer age endure.

Herbert's sacred parody of Sidney's rejection of artificiality in writing about love is more than a literary nostalgia: it is social, moral and psychological. And if Herbert's sense of alienation may be defined by allusion to Sidney, Marvell's may be approached by allusion to Jonson,[1] whose poetry commands a deep sense of man's 'community', of man being joined to God and nature by the 'golden chaine' of love, as in his 'Epode' (*Forrest,* XI):

[1] In Jonson's 'Letter to Wroth' (*The Forrest* III) the shade is called 'courteous', an adjective Marvell uses for the briars in 'Appleton House'.

A forme more fresh then are the Eden bowers
And lasting, as her flowers.
(ii.57–8)

Jonson's 'Penshurst' offers a paradigm of man, God and nature in ideal harmony. Marvell alludes to the opening of this poem (with its Sidneian rejection of foreign artifice) in the opening of 'Appleton House'. Again, the nostalgia is both moral and patriotic. For Jonson, the Sidney estate offered a sense of moral and historical continuity, and embodied a non-repressive, essentially abundant order, like that of Eden. The fruits of the earth offer themselves freely and voluntarily, as in Virgil's second *Georgic*:[1] but the myth is now Christianized: 'every child may reach', for of such is the kingdom of heaven. In 'Appleton House', and in 'The Garden', the fruits also offer themselves freely and abundantly. This occurs again in 'Bermudas':

He makes the Figs our mouths to meet;
And throws the Melons at our feet.

So, too, in Herbert's 'Man', the herbs 'gladly cure our flesh'; the whole of nature still conspires to make man rich and happy:

Nothing we see, but means our good;
As our delight, or as our treasure:
The whole is either our cupboard of food
Or cabinet of pleasure.

The great moments in 'The Garden' and 'Appleton House' are those in which the poet dramatizes his attempt to regress behind the unsatisfied ego:

And now to the Abbyss I pass
Of that unfathomable Grass,
Where men like Grashoppers appear,
But Grashoppers are Gyants there:
They in their squeking Laugh, contemn
Us as we walk more low then them.
And from the Precipices tall
Of the green spir's, to us do call.

To see Men through this Meadow Dive,
We wonder how they rise alive.
As, under Water, none does know
Whether he fall through it or go.

[1] Quos rami fructus, quos ipsa volentia rura sponte tulere sua, carpsit . . . (ii, 500–1).

But as the Marriners that sound,
And show upon their Lead the Ground,
They bring up Flow'rs so to be seen,
And prove they've at the Bottom been.

(XLVII–XLVIII)

In the first line of the above passage, 'pass' is a kind of pun: it is both literary and psychological, the next item in the poem as catalogue, and the moment in which the poet experiments in losing his identity. Regression may be self-indulgent, and Marvell's poetry is often self-indulgent, but it also corresponds to a profound psychic need. The sense of tiredness and release is also important. One finds it in Herbert too, notably in 'The Pulley', which describes man's sense of restless alienation since losing the riches of Paradise (through the classical myth of Pandora's box). God here allows for the Fall by withholding from man the gift of rest (the idea comes from Augustine) so that man will ultimately regress through weariness not through goodness.

In 'The Garden', Marvell describes the regressive act in terms of the body, the mind and the soul. The body falls into the grass, exhausted with the strain of life. The mind withdraws into creative meditation. The soul glides into the tree in eager anticipation of the ultimate regression of death. But the tree refocuses our attention on the tree of knowledge (from which it has never been allowed to stray for long). 'We must eat again of the tree in order to fall back into the state of innocence.'[1] In Marvell the most sophisticated of all pleasures is the recreation of the Fall. Even the paradise of the Bermudas allows for this:

But Apples plants of such a price,
No Tree could ever bear them twice.

It is typical of Marvell to express the Fall in economic terms. The price of the re-entry into innocence is the price we paid for experience, and are still paying.

Man's presumptuousness in reaching to the tree of knowledge induces a compensating humility, expressed in the gaiety and laughter of nature in the 'Appleton House' stanzas. Man's sense that the grass must have been greener before the Fall induces an

[1] Quoted from von Kleist by H. Marcuse, *Eros and Civilisation*, 1956, ch. x.

envious nostalgia, producing in the imagination a cycle of pleasurable relief, followed by guilt and dissatisfaction. Milton pointed out that there was something ridiculous in the Fall; and the act of regression in 'The Garden' is slightly absurd, as the lines about stumbling on melons show.

Man's relationship with the natural order has been disturbed. In the 'Horatian Ode' Marvell recognized the inevitability of Cromwell: nature abhors a vacuum, and the confrontation between strong Cromwell and weak Charles re-dramatizes that between Bolingbroke and Richard and places the nostalgia historically. Justice 'pleads the ancient rights in vain', for the ruined order is that of Time itself, a fracturing of the continuum of history. Yet the word 'ruin' is also *ruina*, the Fall, as in 'The Mower's Song':

> And Flow'rs and Grass and I and all
> Will in one common Ruine fall.

Cromwell's 'highest plot' was originally to 'plant the Bergamot', and the pun on 'plot' associates gardening with revolution (the bergamot was a newly introduced variety). But even gardening was only a wholly innocent activity before the Fall, so that Cromwell was really preparing himself. (Eve started the Fall by criticizing prelapsarian gardening.) In 'Appleton House' garden imagery parodies military: 'and all the Garrisons were flowers' (see stanzas, XLII, XLIII). And when Cromwell came out of his retreat to ruin the great work of Time

> And cast the Kingdome old
> Into another Mold

the word 'mold' continues the punning association with gardening (cf. 'The First Anniversarie of the Government under O.C.', l. 160).

So ruined work of Time in both the England of the past and man himself, created in a timeless world from which he contrived his own inevitable expulsion and to which he has ever since, in fantasy, sought re-entry. The paradise he lost, when he fell into the world of Time and history, was God's world, in which there is no work, only play. This world re-appears briefly for us in the world of childhood. But after childhood man works, he becomes acquisitive, to try to accumulate his lost wealth, to

consume time. In Marvell's 'Garden' there is no competitiveness 'to win the Palm, the Oke or Bayes'. The imagery of 'Appleton House' is all of retreat into safety and sanctuary, into the womb (hence the meadows are like water), into the protection of nature, an anti-social act:

> How safe, methinks, and strong, behind
> These Trees have I incamp'd my Mind
> . . . Where the World no certain Shot
> Can make, or me it toucheth not.
> (LXXVI)

Again, there is military imagery. Alienated man is besieged. And it is not only the protection of nature that is sought, but also that of God. Marvell compares entering the wood to entering a sanctuary, a 'green yet growing Ark' (see LXI). If he is not yet back to the Fall here, he is at least back to the Flood, seeking the innocence of Noah who had divine approval, and also seeking a lost sense of sharing creation with the rest of God's creatures: 'and where all creatures might have shares', as they did both in Eden and in the Ark. But there is a sense in which *this* Ark is superior to the mythical one, for Marvell does not have to violate nature, as Noah did, by cutting down the trees. Art and the imagination create images of lost innocence more perfect than those of which they are a paradigm. Man is not only Adam the destroyer but God the creator. In the 'Dialogue Between the Soul and Body' the body has the last word:

> What but a Soul could have the wit
> To build me up for Sin so fit?
> So Architects do square and hew
> Green Trees that in the Forest grew.

Man has dragged innocent nature after him under the rule of time.

In 'The Garden' the race for power, sex and success is a race against time: Marvell actually uses the image of running, as at the end of 'To his Coy Mistress'. From this world we retreat into a superior world of pleasure, that of contemplation (Aristotle's *summum bonum*): the contemplation of our own lost innocence. The recreation of the Fall in the poem is not Milton's heroic act of daring, of baroque energy released in (and into) the world of time once and for all. It is rather a self-indulgent, languid,

auto-erotic act, a game which can be played over and over again; a return home, not a setting out. There is an almost sexual pleasure in moving through the poem, back behind the Ovidian metamorphoses (here used almost Miltonically) to that moment of sensuality on which all human experience pivots. The mind that creates 'far other worlds and other seas' imitates the creativity of God as an act of pure play, the filling of the vacuum in space-time, as in 'The Nymph Complaining for the Death of her Faun'

> Thenceforth I set myself to play
> My solitary time away.
>
> (ll.37–8)

The creative mind 'annihilates all that's made' because it is deliberately destroying the 'great work of time', and re-enacting the pure pleasure of primal creation. It is important that the poem ends by saying that time in the garden can as well be computed by the industrious bee as by man. The bee does not distinguish between 'work' and 'play': there is only the single natural activity.

In the 'Dialogue between the Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure' the soul's victory is presented as the ultimate and most sophisticated pleasure: that which God enjoys. There is no pleasure so exquisite as the prolonged resisting of pleasure. When the Soul answers Pleasure's siren-song about music with the words:

> Had I but any time to lose,
> On this I would it all dispose.
> Cease Tempter. None can chain a mind
> Whom this sweet Chordage cannot bind.

we are reminded of 'Had we but world enough and time' in the 'Coy Mistress'. But there is never enough time, as a result of Adam's guilt; just as (in another sense) there is always too much. In paradise before the Fall, man could spend or pass time without ever losing any. Paradise lost is time lost as well as time gained.

The soul also speaks as Christ spoke to Satan. The pun on 'Chordage' associates music (of all the secular arts, the one most closely determined by, and through, time) with the binding of Christ for the Passion (the attempt to imprison God in Time), and this hint offers a characteristic *frisson*, as in 'Appleton House',

where the poet asks masochistically for bondage from flowers in order to be held back from the enactment of the Fall:

> Bind me ye Woodbines in your 'twines,
> Curle 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 through.
> (LXXVII)

The poet seeks immunity from Time through imprisonment in the prelapsarian womb. But at the same time he wants to experience Christ's passion without being its guilty cause: he wants the atonement without the Fall. This may seem pure sophistication, but I see it as a brilliant attempt to find an image to express that obsessional guilt which determines the whole structure of man's psychic being. In Adam man suffers and is guilty; in Christ man suffers, and is innocent.

In this 'Dialogue' the soul has no time to lose, just as the ego has no time to lose in the 'Coy Mistress'. The possibilities of time are infinite (all guilt is the result of having to choose) but time itself is not. Thus from the same premise we may reach different conclusions: either 'as there is so little time, let us not waste it on sensuality'; or, 'as there is so little time, let us make love quickly'. The mind cannot be chained precisely because it is able to envisage alternatives of this kind. At the end of the 'Coy Mistress' the proposition put forward is an attempt to escape from the power of time: let us

> Rather at once our Time devour
> Than languish in his slow-chapt pow'r.

In 'Appleton House' the poet speaks of 'languishing at ease' as in 'The Garden'. The act of nostalgic regression can free us from the choice presented by Time — the choice being either to master it or be mastered by it. But either alternative involves admitting to a damaged relationship with the natural world. The tempo of human experience itself changed when the apple was eaten. Eve 'hasted' (*Paradise Lost*, VII, 555) to tell Adam of her first taste of

human experience. The coy mistress feigns innocence: the time-devouring ego demands the satisfactions of experience. Adam after the Fall, like Marvell's Cromwell, 'does both act and know.'

The temptation offered to the soul by pleasure, like that offered to the coy mistress, involves faking the phenomena of temporality:

> Hark how Musick then prepares
> For thy stay these charming Aires;
> Which the posting Winds recall
> And suspend the Rivers Fall.

But no Fall can really be suspended. Art interferes with and confuses nature as in Spenser's Bower of Bliss. In offering a delusion of victory over time, the lover in the 'Coy Mistress' is really conceding time's victory. And in the triumphal chorus which follows pleasure's temptation of the soul through art, Marvell again alludes to Spenser in his use of military imagery to describe the traditional conflict of reason and affection: but now the conqueror uses the language of the defeated.

> Earth cannot shew so brave a Sight
> As when a Single Soul does fence
> The Batteries of alluring Sense,
> And Heaven views it with delight . . .

Compare Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, II.iv.34:

> For when they (affections) once to perfect strength do grow,
> Strong warres they make, and cruel battry bend
> Gainst fort of Reason . . .

But what is striking about Marvell's lines is not the conventional military imagery but the fact that the defeat of sensuality is described in sensual language. The voyeurism of 'Earth cannot shew so brave a sight' (with its anticipation of Wordsworth) is the pleasure taken by God in just *looking* at Creation, in *Paradise Lost*:

> how it shewd
> In prospect from his Throne, how good, how fair,
> Answering his great Idea.
> (VII, 555)

This brings me to Marvell's love-poetry. His allusions to Sidneian Petrarchism are both wittily ironical and nostalgic (cf. 'The Definition of Love'). Herbert criticized (in 'Jordan I') the

allegorizing fantasies of Elizabethan erotic pastoral with its enchanted groves, purling streams and 'sense at two removes'. In the eighth song from Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* ('In a grove most rich of shade') the pastoral setting increases the poignancy of the impossible syndrome of repression and frustration in which the lovers have placed themselves. Donne resolved this Petrarchan dialogue in 'The Ecstasie' by using neoplatonic transcendentalism. Donne's poem leads on to Edward Herbert's great 'Ode upon a Question Moved, Whether Love Should Continue for ever?' Lord Herbert, like his brother, and like Marvell, is obsessed with the connection between sex and time. He looks forward, in tone as in metre, to the domesticated transcendentalism of Tennyson. He shares with Tennyson, and with Marvell, an obsession with 'sense':

> And shall our Love, so far behind
> That low and dying appetite,
> And which so chaste desires unite,
> Not hold in an eternal bond?
>
> Is it, because we should decline,
> And wholly from our thoughts exclude
> Objects that may the sense delude
> And study only the divine? . . .
>
> For if no use of sense remain
> When bodies once this life forsake,
> Or they could no delight partake,
> Why should they ever rise again?

In 'Daphnis and Chloe' Marvell returns with nostalgic irony to the Sidneian erotic dialogue. The poem's imagery wittily links the lover's refusal with the first guilty act of love which followed the Fall:

> But I will not now begin
> Such a Debt unto my Foe;
> Nor to my Departure owe
> What my Presence could not win.
>
> . . . Farewell therefore all the Fruit
> Which I could from love receive . . .

Daphnis refuses to enter the cycle of debt and guilt inaugurated by Eve. But the point of the poem is to reveal that Daphnis is getting sexual satisfaction elsewhere, so that the speech to Chloe

is a rhetorical game. The entire structure of the Petrarchan 'protestation' becomes absurd. Chloe's refusal makes the poem and also 'justifies' Daphnis's double standard of sexual duplicity. The poem explores modes of fallen sexuality: virginity and promiscuity are extremes of a lost 'norm'. Sex can only be discussed in terms of a conventional guilt-inducing propaganda, as contemporary writing on the subject amply demonstrates. We are frustrated if we repress, guilty if we consummate; sexually, we cannot win. Marvell's poem ironically brings out the schizophrenia implicit in the Sidneian attitude.

The connection between sex and time is characteristically expressed in Jonson's 'To Celia', which begins as an imitation of the fifth poem of Catullus ('Vivamus, mea Lesbia . . .'):

> Come, my Celia, let us prove
> While we may, the sports of love . . .

Marvell alludes to this text in the 'Coy Mistress', but in the Catullus–Jonson version the mistress is not being coy, merely careful. Since she was another man's wife social pressures existed as well as psychic ones. Jonson's poem, indeed, continues in a manner closer to the Ovidian first elegy of Donne:

> Cannot we delude the eyes
> Of a few poor household spyes
> Or his easier eares beguile . . .

Worrying about one's virginity is not the same as worrying about one's husband; the social situation is different. But the two can be related: in both cases the woman is concerned (I use the economic term deliberately) with the choice between 'saving' herself and giving herself. Coyness is a kind of sadism, and the characteristic relationship between lover and mistress in Sidney's or Spenser's love-sonnets is a sado-masochistic one. The poet is obliged to live on an image or an idea, to sublimate into a world of idealized fantasy which tries to create a compensating illusion of timelessness.

'To his Coy Mistress' is an ironic address (almost a game) in three parts. The first two explore a hypothesis which is rejected as unacceptable, leaving us in the final section with an inescapable paradox which we started out by dismissing. It is a favourite structure of both Donne and Herbert.

The first section makes a series of nostalgic jokes about Petrarchism: extravagant rhetoric, 'complaints', gestures, separations. There is even a parody of the traditional 'catalogue of the mistress' delights' like the one to Philoclea in Sidney's *Arcadia*, Bk. II, ch. II. The lines

> My vegetable Love should grow
> Vaster then Empires, and more slow

recall the pastoral eroticism of Virgil's last eclogue in which the rejected lover carves his mistress' name on trees (thereby misusing nature like the lovers in 'The Garden') and makes a joke about it

crescent illae [sc. arbores] crescetis, amores. (*Eclogue* x, 54)

But the 'vast empires' also represent a lost traditional order. The traditional tempo of love is no longer valid. Nor is the traditional price or contract. The famous line 'Nor would I love at lower rate' associates sex with time-as-value: it implies love at cut-price, which is what Daphnis settles for. But the nostalgia within the irony also suggests a bargain wrung from the seemingly reluctant heart, as in Herbert's 'The Pearl': in that poem, having rejected the worlds of learning, honour and pleasure the poet recognizes

> At what rate and price I have thy love[1].

Time is the enemy of lasting gratification, a fact of fallen nature which Spenser admits in the garden of Adonis in *Faerie Queene*, III.vi. Marvell too sees time as the dominant factor in man's psyche:

> But at my back I alwaies hear
> Times winged charriot hurrying near

Time is here personified visually as an allegorical image out of Petrarch's *trionfi,* but for the poet it is invisible. The visual image clashes with the aural because time exists both outside and inside the vault of our individual consciousness: the ambivalence is terrifying, which is why the poet does not turn round, and the aural image prepares for the later image of the poet's song

[1] T. S. Eliot, echoing Herbert in *Little Gidding*, v, sought
> A condition of complete simplicity
> Costing not less than everything.

echoing inaudibly in the vault of death (an aural equivalent of the paradox about the flower that wastes its sweetness on the desert air).

Time's victory having been logically established, the last section can begin 'Now therefore . . .' The hypothesis having been eliminated, there remains only one way. The violence of the ending reflects the social and political violence of the 'Horatian Ode'. In the modern age, sexuality too must be violent and be expressed in terms of man's acquisitive instinct (cf. the recent novel by Kingsley Amis, *I Want It Now*). The imagery becomes military (as in 'Daphnis and Chloe' with its reference to sieges). The round ball is both a cannonball and the world. This prepares us for the astronomical joke at the end

> Thus, though we cannot make our Sun
> Stand still, yet we will make him run.

This is Donneian: though we cannot make the sun stand still as it did in the Old Testament (an allusion back to the Flood and the Jews in the first section) love can work psychological miracles: 'we can eclipse and cloud him with a wink'. We can also make the sun run in the sense in which restless Cromwell

> through adventrous War
> Urged his active Star

Time that was experimentally slowed down in the first section of the poem is now speeded up, to the guilt-ridden tempo of the acquisitive society. Sexuality is expressed in the language of man the consumer: 'and now . . . our Time devour'. The association of sexual guilt with eating again takes us back to the Fall. The last section of the 'Coy Mistress' is spoken by Adam to Eve after eating the fruit. 'Now let us play,' says Milton's Adam, in a deluded parody of the God he thinks he has become: 'they their *fill* of Love and Loves *disport* / Took largely, of their mutual guilt the seal' (*Paradise Lost*, IX, 853). Thus Marvell describes sex in terms of play, consumption (of time) and violence. 'Sport' ironically concedes the sense of desperate urgency engendered by the Fall. The iron gates are man's exit from the golden world.

In his garden-poetry Marvell seeks to prolong indefinitely the exquisite sensations of retreat into Eden

> That I may never leave this place

Before Eve came, Adam contemplated nature narcissistically: it was his mirror, as it was God's. And Eve herself awoke into narcissistic self-contemplation: pure pleasure. But this was not the goal of man and woman: they had to seek elsewhere for a world to love. 'Imparadised in one another's arms' Adam and Eve experienced something God had not experienced: and it led to the Fall. In Marvell's Mower poems Juliana expresses the link between sexual guilt and the expulsion from Eden:

> For she my Mind hath so displac'd
> That I shall never find my home.

'Home' is the double paradise of contemplative solitude:

> Two Paradises twere in one
> To live in Paradise alone.

Guilt works retrospectively, so that this happiness is seen as having been 'too good to last'. Before Juliana dispossessed him the Mower, like Adam in *Paradise Lost,* VIII, looked upon the world of nature with delight:

> My Mind was once the true survey
> Of all these Medows fresh and gay,
> And in the greenness of the Grass
> Did see its Hopes as in a Glass.

Juliana is Eve, the sexual instrument of the Fall. The Mower now becomes subservient to her will: she does to him what he does to the grass. He cuts it down to make hay. Before he was dispossessed, his mowing was the 'pleasant task' of *Paradise Lost,* IX:

> For not to irksome toil but to delight
> He made us . . .
>
> (IX, 242)

But hay also means work and profit. When the Mower competes with the shepherd, we are reminded of rival lovers in a Virgilian pastoral contest, but the competitiveness is expressed in economic terms: 'I am richer far in hay' refers to the economy of Adam (naturally richer). The sun dries the Mower's sweat in 'Damon The Mower' as it dries the sweat of the newly-awakened Adam in *Paradise Lost*:

> Soft on the flourie herb I found me laid
> In balmie sweat, which with his Beames the sun
> Soon dried . . .
>
> (VIII, 254–5)

But the hay is not only nature's original cycle; it is also a dance, image of the lost gaity between man and nature; and the kiss in the hay, 'country pleasures'. The love of Juliana leads to guilt, work and death. Mowing becomes a matter of the time-profit ratio ('make hay while the sun shines'). Work becomes repressive sublimation. The scythe (pun on sighs) becomes blunt. Man begins to lose the long battle with Time. The grass that once represented hope for the future now represents grief for the past.

When the Mower mows himself he visits on himself the curse of Adam: man . . . 'shall soon be cut down like the grass.' The thistles that now appear in the meadow are guilt-symbols, and guilt, like Time, is cumulative. In 'The Mower Against Gardens' Marvell describes how man, after the Fall, seduced nature. The idea in that poem that a single tulip is worth a whole meadow illustrates the corrupt value-structure created by the acquisitive instinct. And man's experiments on nature are perversions: the 'forbidden mixtures' are the repetition throughout the fallen world of the original act in the garden of Eden. The garden in the poem is a 'seraglio': the fields outside the garden are nature as she was before the Fall. Marvell's language here again recalls Jonson's:

> Where willing Nature does to all dispence
> A wild and fragrant innocence.

The hectic tempo at the end of the 'Coy Mistress' must be associated with the feverish activity of the love-sick Mower. Mowing, formerly a symbol of man's harmony with nature, now becomes a sublimation-symbol: having 'made his pile', having turned time and energy into work and profit, the Mower destroys himself. What passes for an accident, a clumsiness with the scythe, becomes both self-castration and racial suicide, the wish to destroy man: cf. 'depopulating all the ground', or, in the words of Eve when proposing suicide to Adam in *Paradise Lost*, 'destruction with destruction to destroy' (x, 1006).

Marvell's apprehension of the guilt in pleasure is one of the most striking and persistent features of his work. And it is closely associated with his sense of Time: Time as the price man pays for the Fall, and the process by which he expiates his guilt through history. The quicker it passes, the quicker the unpayable debt

may perhaps be discharged. Even the doctrine of the *felix culpa* involves a further burden of guilt, for the death of God: 'the son of man shall be made as grass.' In 'The Coronet' the poet seeks 'with garlands to redress that wrong' (the crown of thorns) but in the flowers he picks, the Serpent 'disguised does fold / with wreaths of Fame and *Interest*'. The characteristic economic pun emphasizes the corruptness of all human motivation. In his images of a violent consumer-sexuality, too, Marvell describes the sickness of the human psyche. This is why his poetry is so extraordinarily modern in its range and direction, while remaining firmly rooted in the literary tradition of Spenser, Sidney, Donne and Jonson.

House

(Translated from the Finnish of Uuno Kailas)

In a single night my house arose
Whose work, God only knows.
Did he help shape the timber,
That Black Carpenter?

Its cold windows face
Nightwards: mine's a chill place.
An icy fire, desperate,
Burns in the grate.

No friends, no guests call
At my house at all.
Two doors are all I have,
Two: to dreams and death.

PHILIP RILEY