National Central University Journal of Humanities
Vol. 39, July 2009, pp. 153-180
College of Liberal Arts, National Central University

From the Garden to the Grove: Aemilia Lanyer, Andrew Marvell, and the Pursuit of Privacy

Huey-ling Lee*
Email: ss2612@ncnu.edu.tw

Abstract

Although England is claimed to be "the birth place of privacy," historians also suggest that privacy as we know it today was difficult, if not virtually impossible, to attain in early modern England, especially in the country house. The lack of privacy in the country house resulted not so much from its conflation with domesticity as from the hierarchical social relations that both informed and were strengthened by architectural plans. In contrast, the garden and grove in the country estate, due to their lack of solid boundaries and rigid spatial organizations, were less restrictive, albeit no less artificial, spaces than the country house. They could also release the individual temporarily from the domestic hierarchy that regulated and monitored his conduct and interactions with others, and hence provide the opportunities for alternative forms of privacy that were unavailable in the country house.

Although relatively free from the hierarchical structure that rules the country house, the garden and grove were subject to the influences of other social and cultural customs or traditions. As illustrated in drama and love poetry, renaissance gardens had the reputation of being the site of erotic

* Assistant Professor, Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, National Chi Nan University
Received September 17, 2008; accepted November 12, 2008; last revised January 15, 2009.

encounters. By shielding potential sexual misdeeds from the public view, the garden constituted an ambivalent space whose privacy, however spiritually rewarding it might be, was simultaneously suspicious, if not dangerous, to the community. On the contrary, the grove due to its association with social rank and class privileges served as a better place where privacy could be constructed. By exploring the different social contexts of the garden and the grove, this article aims to examine the multiple meanings of privacy in different class and gender relations. While attending to the ambivalent representation of privacy in the garden, I hope to unveil the ways in which both Aemilia Lanyer's "The Description of Cooke-ham" and Andrew Marvell's "Upon Appleton House" locate privacy in the wood by construing it as a dimension of certain social practices in alternative social environments. Despite their different emphasis, the pursuit of privacy is not to assert the individual's right to be left alone, but to pave the way back to the community.

Keywords: country house poetry, gender, class, privacy, Aemilia Lanyer, Andrew Marvell

中央大學人文學報　第三十九期
2009 年 7 月　　　頁 153-180
中央大學文學院

從花園到樹林：蘭諾、馬莫與隱私的追尋*

李　慧　玲**
Email: ss2612@ncnu.edu.tw

摘　　要

英國號稱是「隱私的起源地」，歷史學家也認為現代所認定的隱私在前現代英國社會非隨手可得的奢侈品，這種情況在當時鄉村莊園的別墅更是如此。然而，鄉村別墅中之所以缺乏隱私並非因其為私領域，而是因為其建築空間的設計規劃是為了鞏固性別與階級之架構。相對之下，雖然莊園中其他如花園與樹林等之戶外空間亦為人造的產物，卻沒有如實體建築那樣有著難以逾越的界線，其空間動線有較多變化的可能，置身其中的個人也因此較得以暫時擺脫階級與性別差異的箝制，而不必像在室內一樣，舉手投足或日常互動都得小心翼翼，深怕逾矩跨界。也因此，花園與樹林似乎比鄉村別墅提供了較多隱私的可能。

雖然相對於鄉村別墅，花園與樹林較不受既有社會架構的約制，但並非因此免於其他社會文化之傳統習俗的影響。當時的戲劇與情詩就常常以花園為場景，使得文藝復興時期的花園常常被等同為情人偷情幽會的場所。當花園成為掩飾脫序性愛的潛在幫兇，不管其所提供的隱密空間有多麼有助於心靈的修養與淨化，不免引發可疑曖昧的連

---

* 本文為國科會計畫（NSC 96-2411-H-260 -009 -MY3）成果之一，感謝兩位匿名審查人的細心審閱與寶貴意見。

** 國立暨南國際大學外國語文學系助理教授

投稿日期：97.9.17；接受刊登日期：97.11.12；最後修訂日期：98.1.15

想。相對之下，由於樹林向來是特權顯貴彰顯地位、娛樂狩獵的場所，當時社會對其所提供的隱私亦有較正面的看法。透過探討花園與樹林在當時的呈現與文化脈絡，本文旨在檢視隱私的多重意義與性別、階級關係之間的互動。除了討論當時對花園中的隱私之曖昧態度對兩性不同的影響，同時探討蘭諾與馬莫如何在其的莊園詩中將樹林建構成另類的社會環境，且將隱私與文化活動習俗結合為一體。不同於現代隱私的概念，雖然兩詩所追尋的隱私形式因性別差異而有所不同，然而兩者都不完全是為了強調個人獨立的空間，而是為了能讓個人能脫離邊緣位置，而在主流社會中佔有一席之地。

關鍵詞：莊園詩、性別、階級、隱私、蘭諾、馬莫

According to Philippe Ariès, England is "the birth place of privacy."[1] Other historians generally agree, but they also suggest that privacy as we know it today was difficult, if not virtually impossible, to attain in early modern England.[2] While the analogy between the household and the state meant that "the early modern world allowed no separate private sphere (in the modern sense, no place where public activity did not intrude,"[3] architectural plans also made privacy both scarce and suspicious especially for those subordinate members of the household. As Lena Cown Orlin argues, as "privacy was a by-product of architectural ambition to protect and preserve records and objects of value," it was attainable only to the male householder rather than any other members of his household.[4] According to Alice F. Friedman, this was particularly true in the country house, where "the master alone had full access to all parts of the house and estate" while "each area carried a status designation and each 'belonged' to a specific group defined by gender . . . and degree."[5] For those of inferior class or gender, the country house was perhaps less a place of refuge than a locus of even more intensive control and surveillance.

As Linda A. Pollock points out, however, there are notable

---

[1] Philippe Ariès, introduction to *Passions of the Renaissance*, ed. Roger Chartier, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, vol. 3 of *A History of Private Life*, ed. Philippe Ariès and Georges Duby (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1989), 5.

[2] See, for example, Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 6-8; Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 10-11; Lena Cown Orlin, *Private Matters and Public Culture in Post-Reformation England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 1-8.

[3] David Cressy, "Response: Private Lives, Public Performance, and the Rites of Passage," in *Attending to Women in Early Modern England*, ed. Betty S. Travitsky and Adele F. Seeff (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1994), 187.

[4] Orlin, *Private Matters and Public Culture*, 185, 187.

[5] Alice Friedman, *House and Household in Elizabethan England: Wollaton Hall and the Willoughby Family* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 44.

deficiencies in the approach to the history of privacy when architectural evidence is over-emphasized, when the private is identified with the household.[6] As Erica Longfellow argues, although privacy was essentially a negative term before 1700, what was dangerous was not so much distinction between public space and private sphere as "action" like gossiping.[7] To borrow sociologists' phrase, then as now, privacy is "an interpersonal concept" that has more to do with how one interacts with others than with where one abides.[8] The lack of privacy in the country house, from this perspective, resulted not so much from its connection with domesticity as from the hierarchical social relations that both informed and were strengthened by architectural plans. In contrast, the garden and grove in the country estate, due to their lack of solid boundaries and rigid spatial organizations, were less restrictive, albeit no less artificial, spaces than the country house. Rather than creating a state of solitude, the garden and grove could release the individual temporarily from the domestic hierarchy that regulated and monitored his conduct and interactions with others, and provide the opportunities for alternative forms of privacy that were unavailable in the country house.[9]

---

[6] Linda A. Pollock, "Living on the State of the World: The Concept of Privacy among the Elite of Early Modern England," in *Rethinking Social History: English Society 1570-1920 and Its Interpretation*, ed. Adrian Wilson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 82.

[7] Erica Longfellow, "Public, Private, and the Household in Early Seventeenth-Century England," *The Journal of British Studies* 45, no. 2 (2006): 327.

[8] Robert S. Laufer and Maxine Wolfe, "Privacy as a Concept and a Social Issue: A Multidimensional Developmental Theory," *Journal of Social Issues* 33, no. 3 (1977): 33. Sociologist Barrington Moore similarly argues that "the need for privacy is a socially created need. Without society there would be no need for privacy." See *Privacy: Studies in Social and Cultural History* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1984), 73.

[9] Although focusing on the issue of privacy in modern America, Robert S. Laufer and Maxine Wolfe similarly find that suburban and rural children and adolescents who shared a bedroom and lived in a household with more than seven occupants often mentioned the outdoors as a possible and alternative place for privacy. See Laufer and Wolfe, 30.

Although relatively free from the hierarchical structure that ruled the country house, the garden and grove were subject to the influences of other social and cultural customs or traditions. As illustrated in drama and love poetry, renaissance gardens had the reputation of being the site of erotic encounters. By shielding potentially sexual misdeeds from the public view, the garden constituted an ambivalent space whose privacy, however spiritually rewarding it might be, was simultaneously suspicious, if not dangerous, to the community. On the contrary, the grove due to its association with social rank and class privileges served as a less controversial space where privacy could be constructed. By exploring the different social contexts of the garden and the grove, this article aims to examine the multiple meanings of privacy in different class and gender relations. While attending to the ambivalent representation of privacy in the garden, I hope to unveil the ways in which both Aemilia Lanyer's "The Description of Cooke-ham" and Andrew Marvell's "Upon Appleton House" locate privacy in the wood by construing it as a dimension of certain social practices in alternative social environments. Despite their class and gender differences, the pursuit of privacy is not to assert the individual's right to be left alone, but to pave the way back to the community.

I

Different from other country-house poems by male authors such as Ben Jonson's "To Penshurst," Lanyer's "The Description of Cooke-ham"[10] focuses on the lady instead of the estate and the lord. While it chiefly celebrates Margaret Clifford, Countess of Cumberland, it barely mentions the country house at all, but depicts the estate as a *locus amoemus*.[11] The silence

[10] Aemilia Lanyer, "The Description of Cooke-ham," in *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer*, ed. Sussane Woods (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 128-36, hereafter cited parenthetically by line number in the text.

[11] Barbara K. Lewalski, "The Lady of the Country House," in *The Fashioning and Functioning*

may be due to the growing isolation early modern women experienced in the private sphere in general and the constraints imposed on gentlewomen in the country house in particular. As Friedman argues, in the country house upper-class women's status in respect to physical space was far more limited than that of men——even those lower down in the household hierarchy.[12] Since the countess was not even a mistress but a visitor at Cooke-ham during her estrangement from her husband,[13] she might have even less control over the domestic space than other gentlewomen over their husband's house, not to mention the privacy enjoyed and taken for granted by (predominantly male) householders in their own estates. Given the constraints the countess might have suffered in the country house, it is perhaps not surprising that "the scenes of the poem take place exclusively outdoors, even when they involve activities that one would normally associate with the domestic interior, like reading, paying court, and praying."[14] Since the space within the walls is designed and organized not for her uses, the outdoor may provide an environment for activities that she may feel less comfortable to undertake in the house.

Whereas Lanyer's countess has no control of the domestic space primarily because of her gender, Marvell's speaker in "Upon Appleton House"[15] is denied access to privacy in William Fairfax's country house due to

---

of the British Country House, ed. Gervase Jackson-Stops, Gordon J. Schochet, Lena Cowen Orlin, and Elisabeth Blair MacDougall (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1999), 267.

12 Friedman, *House and Household in Elizabethan England*, 47.

13 As Lewalski puts it in "The Lady of the Country House," "Lanyer deals with Margaret Clifford's anomalous situation as estranged wife or widow (rather than lady of her husband's estate) by celebrating her as 'mistress' of a manor belonging to the crown, a place which she ——like anyone else——could only possess on a temporary basis," 265.

14 Kari Boyd McBride, *Country House Discourse in Early Modern England: A Cultural Study of Landscape and Legitimacy* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 112.

15 Andrew Marvell, "Upon Appleton House," *George Herbert and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Poets*, ed. Mario A. Di Cesare (New York: Norton, 1978), 117-37, hereafter cited parenthetically by line number in the text.

his subordinate position as a tutor in the household. Although the speaker praises that "all things [in the house] are composed . . . Like Nature, orderly and near" (25-6), the order is organized to suit not his, but its master's needs. When the house does "sweat," and its "swelling hall / Stirs, and the square grows spherical," it is more to accommodate "the Master great" (49-52) than the other members in the household. Even when he praises the lord for his hospitality, as Heather Dubrow suggests, the image of the "stately frontispiece of poor" that "adorns without the open Door" and the "daily new furniture of friends" that commends "the Rooms within" (65-6) implies how the generosity of this country house has become "mechanical," and its hospitality insincere.[16] In addition, this static representation reveals how each space in the house is carefully defined and regulated to ensure that no one would stray out of the place designated to him. As a tutor and a dependant in the Fairfax household, Marvell's speaker may enjoy more indoor freedom than other gentlewomen, but privacy is still something that he can hardly take for granted. Like Lanyer's countess, then, he too has to turn outdoors in search of a private space free of control and surveillance.

Nevertheless, not all outdoor spaces in the country estate show promise to the right kind of privacy. Although the garden was a popular feature of country estates during the early modern period, neither Lanyer nor Marvell treats it as an appropriate space to sojourn for long or at all. It is true that, as Keith Thomas writes, the popularity of the garden in early modern England had "a spiritual dimension," for it not only harkened back to the ancient conception of Paradise but possessed a religious significance as "a place for spiritual reverie, a reminder both of Eden and of Christ's agony at Gethsemane."[17] Nevertheless, even when it was an "accepted place for

---

[16] Heather Dubrow, "The Country-House Poem: A Study in Generic Development," *Genre* 12 (1979): 171.

[17] Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England, 1500-1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 236.

spiritual reflection" and "meditation,"[18] the garden was simultaneously associated with love and sexual temptation. While employed as a popular image in love poetry,[19] the garden often served as the site where illicit sexual liaisons take place in contemporary drama. In *The Spanish Tragedy*, for instance, it is in the "bower" where Horatio and Bel-imperia seek to spend their "pleasant hour" in secret and "in safety";[20] likewise, in *Measure for Measure* Angelo chooses to have his illicit sexual transaction with Isabella in "a garden circummur'd with brick / Whose western side is with a vineyard back'd."[21] The privacy in the garden, with its implication in sensual pleasures and secret dalliance, is construed as an object of suspicion and anxiety.

Although the privacy in gardens threatens to compromise the reputation of both men and women, they impact differentially on them. If contemporary literary culture painted women both as flower gatherers, flowers, and even gardens themselves,[22] such images only worked to define them as objects of delight for men to explore and enjoy on the one hand, and things of potential danger and unruliness that should be subject to suppression and control on the other.[23] Meanwhile, as Kari McBride writes, the discourse of

---

[18] Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, 236-7.

[19] For the garden image in love poetry, see Ilva Beretta, *"The World's a Garden": Garden Poetry of the English Renaissance* (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 1993), 143-62.

[20] Thomas Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy*, vol. 1, *Drama of the English Renaissance*, ed. Russell A. Fraser and Norman Rabkin (Upper Saddle River: Princeton Hall, 1976), 2.4.4-5.

[21] William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, ed. J. W. Lever (London: Methuen, 1965), 4.1.28-9.

[22] Rebecca Bushnell suggests that "[m]uch of what we know about women gardeners in this period comes from a literary culture that painted women both as flower gatherers and 'flowers' themselves." See Bushnell, *Green Desire: Imagining Early Modern English Gardens* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 109-10. For woman as gardens, see Beretta, 149-56.

[23] See, for example, Hamlet's comparison of Gertrude with "an unweeded garden" that is possessed by "things rank and gross in nature" (1.2.135-6) once deprived of Old Hamlet's

husbandry repeatedly portrayed the virtuous wife as central to the ideal estate and defined the husband's legitimacy in the invisibility of his cloistered wife.[24] The country house might have been the proper sphere of gentlewomen, but it was hardly appropriate for them to venture into the garden of the estate without supervision. As Philip Stubbs cautions in *Anatomie of Abuses*, husbands should beware what women do in "Gardens . . . Arbors and Bowers" because they could easily evade the surveillance of their husbands and "maie (and doubtlesse doe) many of them plaie the filthie persons."[25] It hardly matters whether a woman is there for meditation or for mischief. Her mere presence in the garden is enough to raise doubts about her virtue. To be found there with another man is almost tantamount to proving her guilt. Such is the case of Beatrice in *The Changeling*. For her husband, "the prospect from the garden [of her being with De Flores] has show'd / Enough for deep suspicion" of her chastity.[26] To be private in the garden, whether alone or with men outside of marriage, automatically implicates women in scandals of sexual deviation.

Nevertheless, even when women are in the garden with other women, their self-enclosure is still suspicious without male supervision. In "Upon Appleton House," for instance, Marvell imagines how dangerous it could be when a group of women lock themselves away from men. In his romantic tale of Willaim Fairfax (Lord Fairfax's great great grandfather) and Isabel Thwaites, one of the "subtle nuns" (94), trying to persuade Thwaites to join the convent instead of marrying Fairfax, says: "Nor is our Order yet so nice, / Delight to banish as a vice" (169-70). Interestingly, the "delight" or "sweet" "pleasure" (172, 171) that she promises Thwaites relate primarily to woman's

---

diligent gardening. I quote from William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. Harold Jenkins (New York: Methuen, 1982).

24 McBride, *Country House Discourse*, 5.

25 Philip Stubbs, *Anatomie of Abuses* (London, 1583), fol. 49v.

26 Thomas Middleton and William Rowley, *The Changeling*, ed. George W. Williams (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1966), 5.3.2-3.

role as a housewife. She talks about how the nuns gather flowers for the dressing of the alters, make confections out of fruit, draw "balms for the grieved," and make "pastes" as "baits for curious tastes" (173-82). They not only obtain most ingredients from their own "gardens" (219) like self-sufficient housewives, but also successfully transform those "natural materials into clean, orderly, culturally useful objects."[27] However skillful the nuns are in "handling Nature's finest parts," their "arts" (177-8) are disconcerting because none of them aims to uphold the marital and procreational imperatives of the male order, but to assert the nuns' independence and to help them get rid of men altogether — "What need is here of man?" (183). Michael Morgan Holmes writes that "such estimations of men's low value and women's ability to find solace and pleasure in each other's company runs dangerously counter to patriarchal gender ideology."[28] The nuns, as Sarah Monette comments, hence eloquently represent "the wrong kind of retirement, hypocritical and self-indulgent."[29] As their "gardens" become an insidious, dark enclosure, concealing the dangerous "fruit" yielded "by night" (219-20), so they become "hypocrite witches" (205) and "thieves" (207). Paradoxically, the nuns' insistence on privacy only serves to transform them into dangerous social outcasts threatening to disrupt the integrity of the household and to undermine the proprietary rights of men.

If women are open to suspicion whether they are alone or together in the garden, the privacy there is no less problematic to men. For example, Marvell's fantasy of a garden as a "paradise" in "The Garden"[30] says much

---

[27] Diane Purkiss, *The Witch in History: Early Modern and Twentieth-century Representations* (London: Routledge, 1996), 97.

[28] Michael Morgan Holmes, "The Love of Other Women: Rich Chains and Sweet Kisses," in *Aemilia Lanyer: Gender, Genre, and the Cannon*, ed. Marshall Grossman (Lexington, The UP of Kentucky: 1998), 171.

[29] Sarah Monette, "Speaking the Silent Women in *Upon Appleton House*," *SEL* 42 (2002): 160.

[30] Marvell, "The Garden," *George Herbert and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Poets*, ed. Mario A. Di Cesare (New York: Norton, 1978), 112-14, hereafter cited parenthetically by

about the male desire for and anxiety about privacy. As Ronald Huebert suggests, privacy is the central idea of the poem,[31] but the desire to get away from the "companies of men" (13) and to search for "solitude" (16) in the garden seems to be thwarted from the very beginning. As soon as Marvell's speaker enters the "garlands" of trees and flowers, instead of finding "repose" (8), he finds himself immersed in a place densely crisscrossed by traces of desire. Just as for him the garden's "lovely green" seems more "am'rous" than women, so the "cruel" marks on the trees bear witness to the "flame" of many "fond lovers" who linger there (17-20). More than a place where mortal "love . . . makes the best retreat," the garden is also where gods consummate with their "mortal beauty" (25-6). Despite his longing for "repose," when the speaker desires to "wound" the trees by engraving their names on the barks, he seems to be moved by passion no less intense than that of those "fond lovers" who carve their "mistress' name" on the trees. He may be alone in the garden, but the place, infiltrated by the fantasy of erotic transactions, hardly seems to be the place where "Quiet" and "Innocence" (8-10) can be found.

The "erotic fantasy," as Robert N. Watson observes, soon transmutes into "a fantasy of nature reciprocating our sensual appetite."[32] With "ripe apples" dropping about his head, the "luscious clusters of the vine" crushing their "wine" into his mouth, and the "nectarine, and curious peach" thrusting themselves into his hands, the speaker cannot help exclaiming what a "wond'rous life" he has in the garden (33-38). For his contemporaries, however, this endless fecundity and bounty could be a mere façade to mask the garden's potential to deceive and to corrupt men. This potential duplicity

---

line number in the text.

31 Ronald Huebert, "Privacy: The Early Modern Social History of a Word," *Sewanee Review* 105 (1997): 24.

32 Robert N. Watson, *Back to Nature: The Green and the Real in the Late Renaissance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 111.

is best illustrated by the Bower of Bliss in *The Faerie Queene*, where the "vine," similar to that in Marvell's garden, seeks to embrace and "entice / All passers by" with their bunches "to tast their lushious wine, / And [do] themselves into their hands incline, / As freely offering to be gathered."[33] Nevertheless, the gesture of proffering aims not to feed the passerbys for free, but to lure them into Acrasia's promiscuous enclosure for *her* consumption. If such a possibility remains implicit for Marvell's speaker, it seems to have a subtle impact on his experience of the garden. The space around him is shrinking rapidly as various fruits and plants eagerly, if not forcibly, crowd in on him. In the end, he becomes so entangled in the vegetation that he cannot help but stumbling on "melons"; "ensnared with flo'rs," he uncontrollably falls on "grass" (39-40). The "garlands" that are supposed to ensure his "repose" hence become a snare that entraps him and undermines his autonomy. As the quest of privacy in "The Garden" turns claustrophobic, whatever "pleasure" he had in the beginning also becomes "less" (41). Forced to escape from the material world, the speaker withdraws instead into the enclosure of the "mind" where he can invent a "happy Garden-state" free of any female influence and desire by "annihilating all that's made" to the rejuvenating, immaterial power of "a green thought in a green shade" (41, 57, 47-8).

Although such a "happy Garden-state" without women is "beyond a mortal's share" (61) in "The Garden," privacy becomes possible, if only for the privileged few. Once rid of those subtle nuns, the garden of Nunappleton is re-constructed "in the just figure of a fort," with "five bastions...aiming one for ev'ry sense" (284, 286-88), and becomes an extension of Lord Fairfax's "warlike studies" (284). As Dixon John Hunt notes, "the association of the garden with political authority and will was...constantly made throughout the

---

[33] Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, in *Edmund Spenser's Poetry*, ed. Hugh MacLean and Anne Lake Prescott, 1-491 (New York: W. W. Norton, 1993), 2.12.54.2-6.

English countryside long before it became *de rigueur* in court masque."[34] As the representation of Lord Fairfax's authority and will, the garden aims not so much to titillate the speaker's sensual appetite as to serve as a temporary stage on which dramas of political allegory can be unraveled. Thus, the garden, as T. Katharine Sheldahl Thomason suggests, becomes "the General's regiment, exquisitely ordered and dutiful."[35] As the flowers grow in such an orderly manner that they are like soldiers displaying their "silken ensigns" and standing "Under their *Colors*...displayed" "as at Parade" (294, 309-10), so they act like "gunmen" discharging their "fragrant volleys" to proclaim the arrival of "their *Governor*" and "to salute their *Governness*" (305, 297, 298). As the military display reconstitutes the garden as a space for formal rituals of power, so the presence of the "sweet *Militia*" (330) serves to assert Lord Fairfax's power and to declare the space his private territory. His privacy hence is predicated on and secured by his ability to put it on display.

Moreover, the garden functions as much to delight as to defend. Well fortified by its flower soldiers during the day, the garden is protected during the night by female bees, who act as the "sentinel," which "once stirred," will "[run] you through nor asks the word" (317-20). The vigilance aims not just to forestall potential invasion of the garden but to protect Lord Fairfax's daughter Maria, "the *Virgin Nymph*, who "seems with the flow'rs a flow'r to be" (301-2), from unwanted violation. The idealization of her as a "*Virgin Nymph*" helps purge the garden of its association with female body and sexuality; at the same time, the identification of her with the flower in an enclosed garden objectifies her as a piece of property reserved exclusively to the father and, once married, to her husband. Protected and empowered by his "sweet *Militia*," Lord Fairfax can rest assured that both his property and

---

[34] John Dixon Hunt, *Garden and Grove: The Italian Renaissance Garden in the English Imagination, 1600-1750* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvanian Press, 1996), 112.

[35] T. Katharine Sheldahl, "Marvell, His Bee-Like Cell: The Pastoral Hexagon of 'Upon Appleton House,'" *Genre* 16, no. 1 (1983): 46.

his status are secured. Others may find it more difficult, if not impossible, to do the same. Just as Maria, being an object of value indispensable to the fulfillment of her father's dynastic hopes, may find privacy "a deprivation and a luxury"[36] in the garden, so her tutor, like those flower soldiers or insect sentinels, constrained by the social roles imposed on them, can secure no privacy for himself. Privacy is as much a gender privilege as a class one.

II

Given the garden's ambivalent implications, it is perhaps expectable that both Lanyer and Marvell turn to the grove as an alternative space where both men and women, however socially marginal they are, could find a niche for themselves. As Thomas points out, similar to gardens, "forests had originally been synonymous with wildness and danger."[37] At the same time, since trees had been intensely managed as a valuable self-renewing resource since at least Norman times, many woods had already "ceased to be wild and hostile and had become domestic."[38] The growing economic values of timber were not the only reason that the attitude toward the wood changed in early modern England; the identification of royal forests and deer parks as "an important symbol of social rank" played a part, too.[39] By the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as many gentlemen removed their country houses to the center of a landscaped park to create "a sense of space and separation," so it had become fashionable to have a social "wilderness" in their estates, which was, as a contemporary preacher put it, "a multitude of thick bushes and trees, affection an ostentation of solitariness in midst of worldly pleasures."[40]

---

36 Elizabeth Mazzola and Corinne S. Abate, introduction to *Privacy, Domesticity, and Women in Early Modern England*, ed. Corinne S. Abate (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 4.

37 Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, 194.

38 Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, 198.

39 Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, 202-3.

40 Michael Jermin, *A Commentary, upon the Whole Booke of Ecclesiastes* (1639), 36. Quoted

Although increasingly the grove in many country estates was becoming no less a human artifact than the garden, due to its pretension of "wilderness," it was more associated with Nature than the latter. As such, it served as a more effective tool than the garden in naturalizing the social prestige and authenticity of their owners. As suggested by my reading of Lanyer's and Marvell's country poems, however, the grove is also more open than the garden to interpretations and appropriations especially by those who, due to their class or gender, are marginalized in the dominant society.

In "The Description of Cooke-ham," the countess was only a visitor to Cooke-ham, but Lanyer reformulates her relationship with Nature in such a way that it highlights her status and thereby endorses her right to privacy in the estate. As sociologists Robert S. Laufer and Maxine Wolfe suggest, privacy as "an interpersonal concept" is determined not just by the availability of physical space, but also by the "number and relationship of others who are or who potentially could be present" and "the role of the individual in the immediate group or in the larger social system."[41] Rather than treating the plants and creatures in the estate as insentient objects, the poem turns them into animate beings that constitute part of Cumberland's retinue: "The Walkes put on their summer Liveries, / And all things else did hold like similes" (21-2). Once they assume a subordinate position to the countess, they are also compelled by the rules of civility to surrender the control of their demeanour to her.[42] Despite the ordered response and obeisance of the flora and fauna to the countess, the latter hardly ever reciprocate their attention. As they keep themselves a pace from her, so she possesses "a comparatively inviolable personal space."[43] Although the "pretty Birds" come eagerly to

---

by Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, 207.

41 Laufer and Wolfe, "Privacy as a Concept and a Social Issue," 33, 34.

42 Anna Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility: Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 89.

43 Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility*, 89.

attend her, they immediately "flie away for feare" that they should "offend" her. The "little creaturs in the burrough by" would also come to "sport" them in her eyes, but they soon scurry away, "feareful of the Bowe in [her] fair hand" (47-50). This controlled interaction hence enables the countess to maintain a space of privacy even when she is surrounded by others, whose presence reinforces her privileged position by putting her nobility on display.

The legitimization of her authority and privacy culminate at the moment when she reaches the "Oake," "that stately Tree," at the highest point of the estate (55, 53). Although the oak represents "masculinity, vigour, strength and reliability"[44] in early modern England, here it is portrayed as a hospitable, protective host:

> Which seeming joyfull in receiving thee,
> Would like a Palme tree spread his armes abroad,
> Desirious that [she] there would abode:
> Whose faire greene leaves much like a comely vaile,
> Defend *Phebus* when he would assaile. (60-64)

Rather than highlighting her role as a guest at Cooke-ham, the tree next metamorphoses into a throne, and she, into a sovereign who surveys "thirteene shires" unfolding in front of her, "a Prospect fit to please the eyes of Kings" and a sight that even "Europe could not afford much more delight" (72-74). While the oak-throne elevates Cumberland to the "beauteous stature" that exceeds "all" (53, 55, 58), she is distanced farther from the "Hills, vales, and woods" as they appear "as if on bended knee" to "salute" (68-9) her. As a result, she is able to transcend symbolically the constraints imposed by her gender and to rise as high as, if not higher than, "Kings" at home and abroad. Only when she can secure her superiority in the political hierarchy in the world, can she finally engage in the private "meditation" (76) on the "Creators power" and the beauty of "all his Creatures" (79-80).

---

[44] Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, 220.

The elevation of Cumberland's secular power simultaneously enables her to gain entrance into the select community of the saints. Again, trees play an important role. Wheile the "faire tree," in which she places Christ's "holy Writ," enables her to "meditate" again "what [she] therein did see" (83-4), the "sweet woods" that she often walks provide a secluded space where she can "talk" with "Christ and his Apostles" (81-2). Although communal reading aloud was a widespread activity before the great spread of literacy in the eighteenth century, as Cecile M. Jagodzinski argues, during the seventeenth century, "the experience of reading seems to have become a highly personalized and physical activity."[45] Nevertheless, if the countess's private contemplation on the Bible "grants independence from all communal structures" and enables her to "develop a sense of self,"[46] such a private reading experience, as Patricia Meyer Spacks points out, also means that individual feeling and judgment could take place without witnesses, and therefore could readily evoke danger.[47] By invoking the figures in the Bible, however, the poem transforms the countess's private experience into a communal one. As she imagines herself conversing with Christ and his apostles, mounting the "holy Hill" with Moses, singing with David, performing charitable work with Joseph (85-92), she also gains entrance into an imaginative and moral community that values her intellectual and spiritual achievements regardless of her being a woman.

Rather than being imagined as a state of solitude, the privacy Lanyer constructs for her countess is therefore constantly hidden behind the public display and at the same time endorsed by it. Like other women writers of her time, Lanyer seems to share a "deep-seated ambivalence" about the kind of

[45] Cecile M. Jagodzinski, *Privacy and Print: Reading and Writing in Seventeenth Century England* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), 164.

[46] Jagodzinski, *Privacy and Print*, 2.

[47] Patricia Meyer Spacks, *Privacy: Concealing the Eighteenth-Century Self* (Chicago: University Press of Chicago, 2003), 10.

privacy conflated with the private sphere, which means not a place of security and rest, but one of isolation.[48] Instead of identifying privacy as physical solitude, she construes it as a dimension of social practices——be it the royal procession or communal service——that always involve the company of others. In doing so, she dissociates the countess's privacy from the private sphere, which was lauded by early modern teachings as the natural place for women, and re-defines it as a class privilege. Although the countess cannot take the flora and fauna at Cooke-ham away with her, as "a figure of legitimate authority who orders any landscape she inhabits,"[49] she is entitled to her personal space wherever she goes. By shifting focus from gender to class, Lanyer thus not only wards the countess's privacy from suspicion but also legitimizes her participation in public activities. Ironically, in doing so, she simultaneously reinforces the "difference" of "degree" (106) between the countess and herself that she seeks in vain to overcome.

If privacy in "The Description of Cooke-ham" serves to assert the countess' class position and to exert her influence beyond the limitation of gender, in "Upon Appleton House" it provides a sanctuary where Marvell's tutor can escape from the social relations and political upheavals that threaten to devour his individuality. Before he retreats into the "wood" (482), the tutor has to traverse the metaphoric landscape of the estate as he travels through the country manor, beyond the garden as the continuity of Fairfax's "warlike studies" (284), and across the field of meadow devastated by the mower's merciless "massacre" (394). Symbolically representing the "union" of the two "Pedigrees" of Fairfax and Veres, the wood seems to be no less an extension of Lord Fairfax's dominion than the garden. Nevertheless, traditionally associated with the idea of wilderness, it is organized by forces and rules different from those ruling the garden or the farm land. Like the

---

48 Ronald Huebert, "The Gendering of Privacy," *The Seventeenth Century Journal* 16 (2001): 59.

49 McBride, *Country House Discourse*, 109.

garden, the wood is an enclosed space that "stretches still so closely wedged / As if the Night within were hedged" (503-4). Unlike the fort-like garden, however, it functions as a "sanctuary" and a "temple" (511) that opens equally to "all creatures" (487), protecting them from the danger and threat of "the world" (605). Moreover, whereas the country house is organized in a "linear configuration" to permit "the infiltration of individuals,"[50] it "opens passable and thin" (506) within. It thus creates a labyrinthine space which, while forestalling any unobstructed view of one's surroundings, enables one to enjoy some privacy by preventing others from having complete visual access to oneself. The speaker hence can "espy" "the hatching throstle's shining eyes" (531-2) behind the hazels thick without alerting the bird. Free from the gaze of others, especially those superior to him, he also feels relaxed enough to tread "careless" on the "bed of gelid strawberries" (529-30) and to toss himself freely "On pallets swoln of velvet moss" (593-4) without worrying about violating any codes of civility and offending those on high.

More flexible in its spatial arrangement than the great house, the wood is also ordered by rules less rigid than those in other parts of the estate. Not only is Lord Fairfax absent from the wood, but his influence is hardly visible except in the heron's attempt to drop "the eldest of its young" as a "tribute" to him (533-6). In place of the lord are the oak trees, which far from exerting his power over the creatures in the wood, are willing to "stoop down" and "prick the ear" to the nightingale who sings "the trials of her voice" in "low shrubs" (513-8). Just as the small and junior can have their voices heard, so their judgment and labor are relied upon for maintaining the collective wellbeing of those who come from on high. However big and tall the oaks are, they depend on the Hewel, the tinny woodpecker, to be rid of the "wood-moths" from their barks and of the "Traitor-worm" that feeds on them. Capable of felling even the "tallest Oak" with "a feeble stroke" (551-2), the woodpecker differs from the mower who "commands the field" (418), hacking

[50] Felicity Heal, *Hospitality in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 163.

off whichever comes on his way and causing the untimely death of many. Instead, the bird only mines through the trees that have already corrupted within while allowing those "good" (545) ones to prosper. In return, he gets the "Worm" to feed his "young," and the oak, "viewing the treason's punishment," also "seems to fall content" (557-60). The social order is structured not by the kind of brutal equality that the Levellers proposed, but by reciprocity and cooperation between the high and the low. Those on the high, although still venerated for their status, no longer hold sway over all, but each individual, regardless of his position in the social hierarchy, is valued for his professional skills and unique perspective of things.

Such an egalitarian social atmosphere in the wood hence prepares Marvell's speaker for an intellectual and spiritual exploration, and enables him to establish an authoritative voice of his own. Although he is compelled to adopt the perspective of "we" (81, 83) in his relation of "the progress of this house's fate" (85) and to side with a collective "us" during the Civil War (369-78), once he retreats into the wood, he can finally look at things consistently from the perspective of "I." He adopts not just a new language but a new perception. On the one hand, as he begins to call in the "most learned original" and even resorts to the language of "signs" (570-1), so he converses as an "easy philosopher" (561) among the birds and trees. On the other, he is able to weave "strange Prophecies" "out of [the] scattered Sibyl's Leaves," to consume "in one history..., / Like Mexique paintings, all the Plumes" (577-80), and to read in the "Mosaic" of "light" the ancient wisdom of "Rome, Greece, Palestine" (581-2). Thus he transcends the limitations imposed by his native culture as he becomes a reader, an editor and ultimately an author of "Nature's mystic Book" (584). Only then can he present himself as "some great Prelate of the Grove" (592) with the authority to preach not just to the very fauna and flora that he derives his reading from but also indirectly to the "world" outside. If he was unable to assert his own opinion without being attacked by the "world," now he dares even "on it securely play, / And gall its horsemen all the day" (605, 607-8).

In his study of the gendering of privacy, Huebert argues that early modern female writers are more ambivalent about privacy than male writers, who having been taught that "the borderline between public and private is theirs to cross at will," "experience privacy as a socially sanctioned and temporary retreat."[51] Such a gender difference, as suggested by my reading of the poems by Lanyer and Mavell, also informs the different context where privacy is constructed for men and women. Although Lanyer's emphasis on Cumberland's status is more to admit her to a male-exclusive elite circle than to isolate her from all, it is not so much to assert her individuality as to allow her to participate in activities of pubic significance and to contribute to the construction of dominant discourse. On the contrary, since the public realm is by default men's domain, the main concern for Marvell's speaker is not so much participation in as distinction from a potentially oppressive and hostile world that threatens to devour his individuality. The withdrawal into the wood, rather than paving the way to an elite group, empowers him to establish an autonomous being who dares to rely on his own authority and to confront the world without fear.

[51] Huebert, "The Gendering of Privacy," 59.

Work Cited

Ariès, Philippe. Introduction to *Passions of the Renaissance*. Edited by Roger Chartier. Translated by Arthur Goldhammer. Vol. 3 of *A History of Private Life*, edited by Philippe Ariès and Georges Duby, 1-13. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1989.

Beretta, Ilva. *"The World's a Garden": Garden Poetry of the English Renaissance*. Uppsala: Uppsala University, 1993.

Bryson, Anna. *From Courtesy to Civility: Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1998.

Bushnell, Rebecca. *Green Desire: Imagining Early Modern English Gardens*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003.

Cressy, David. "Response: Private Lives, Public Performance and the Rites of Passage." In *Attending to Women in Early Modern England*, edited by Betty S. Travitsky and Dele F. Seeff, 187-97. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1994.

Dubrow, Heather. "The Country-House Poem: A Study in Generic Development." *Genre* 12 (1979): 153-79.

Friedman, Alice. *House and Household in Elizabethan England: Wollaton Hall and the Willoughby Family*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988.

Girouard, Mark. *Life in the English Country House*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978.

Heal, Felicity. *Hospitality in Early Modern England*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1990.

Huebert, Robert. "Privacy: The Early Modern Social History of a Word." *Sewanee Review* 105 (1997): 21-38.

———. "The Gendering of Privacy." *The Seventeenth Century Journal* 16 (2001): 37-66.

Holmes, Michael Morgan. "The Love of Other Women: Rich Chains and Sweet Kisses." In *Aemilia Lanyer: Gender, Genre, and the Cannon*,

edited by Marshall Grossman, 167-90. Lexington, University of Kentucky Press: 1998.

Hunt, John Dixon. *Garden and Grove: The Italian Renaissance Garden in the English Imagination, 1600-1750*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvanian Press, 1996.

Jagodzinski, Cecile M. *Privacy and Print: Reading and Writing in Seventeenth Century England*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999.

Jermin, Michael. *A Commentary, upon the Whole Booke of Ecclesiastes*. London, 1639.

Kyd, Thomas. *The Spanish Tragedy*. In *Drama of the English Renaissance: The Tudor Period*, edited by Russell A. Fraser and Norman Rabkin. Vol. 1 of *Drama of the English Renaissance*, edited by Russell A. Fraser and Norman Rabkin, 169-203. Upper Saddle River: Princeton Hall, 1976.

Lanyer, Aemilia. "The Description of Cooke-ham." In *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer*, edited by Sussane Woods, 128-36. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Laufer, Robert S., and Maxine Wolfe. "Privacy as a Concept and a Social Issue: A Multidimensional Developmental Theory." *Journal of Social Issues* 33, no. 3 (1977): 20-42.

Lewalski, Barbara K. "The Lady of the Country House." In *The Fashioning and Functioning of the British Country House*, edited by Gervase Jackson-Stops, Gordon J. Schochet, Lena Cowen Orlin, Elisabeth Blair MacDougall, 261-73. Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1999.

Longfellow, Erica. "Public, Private, and the Household in Early Seventeenth-Century England." *The Journal of British Studies* 45, no. 2 (2006): 313-34.

Marvell, Andrew. "The Garden." In *George Herbert and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Poets*, edited by Mario A. Di Cesare, 112-14. New York: Norton, 1978.

———. "Upon Appleton House." In *George Herbert and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Poets*, edited by Mario A. Di Cesare,

117-37. New York: Norton, 1978.

Mazzola, Elizabeth, and Corinne S. Abate. Introduction to *Privacy, Domesticity, and Women in Early Modern England*, edited by Corinne S. Abate, 1-20. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003.

McBride, Kari Boyd. *Country House Discourse in Early Modern England: A Cultural Study of Landscape and Legitimacy*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001.

Middleton, Thomas, and William Rowley. *The Changeling*. Edited by George W. Williams. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966.

Monette, Sarah. "Speaking the Silent Women in *Upon Appleton House*." *SEL* 42 (2002): 155-71.

Moore, Barrington. *Privacy: Studies in Social and Cultural History*. Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1984.

Pollock, Linda A. "Living on the State of the World: The Concept of Privacy among the Elite of Early Modern England." In *Rethinking Social History: English Society 1570-1920 and Its Interpretation*, edited by Adrian Wilson, 78-95. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993.

Purkiss, Diane. *The Witch in History: Early Modern and Twentieth-century Representations*. London: Routledge, 1996.

Orlin, Lena Cowen. *Private Matters and Public Culture in Post-Reformation England*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994.

Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*. Edited by Harold Jenkins. New York: Methuen, 1982.

———. *Measure for Measure*. Edited by J. W. Lever. London: Methuen, 1965.

Sheldahl, T. Katharine. "Marvell, His Bee-Like Cell: The Pastoral Hexagon of 'Upon Appleton House.'" *Genre* 16, no. 1 (1983): 39-56.

Spacks, Patricia Meyer. *Privacy: Concealing the Eighteenth-Century Self*. Chicago: University Press of Chicago, 2003.

Spenser, Edmund. *The Faerie Queene*. In *Edmund Spenser's Poetry*, edited by Hugh MacLean and Anne Lake Prescott, 1-491. New York: Norton, 1993.

Stone, Lawrence. *The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England, 1500-1800*.

New York: Harper & Row, 1977.

Stubbs, Philip. *Anatomie of Abuses*. London, 1583.

Thomas, Keith. *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England, 1500-1850*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1983.

Watson, Robert N. *Back to Nature: The Green and the Real in the Late Renaissance*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006.