CHAPTER 3

The School of Beasts
Human and Animal Dwellings in Viret and Marvell

In his polemical prose treatise *The Rehearsall Transpros'd: The Second Part*, Andrew Marvell upbraids Samuel Parker, then Archdeacon of Canterbury, for his criticism of Marvell's former pamphlets.[1] Disagreeing principally about the tolerance of religious dissenters, Marvell, in a vitriolic display of poetic wit, accuses Parker of various physiological and intellectual shortcomings that cause him to misinterpret Marvell's writing. Calling Parker "a meer Word-pecker," Marvell address his political advisory's arrogance and corrupt humoral disposition:

> You have contrary to all Architecture and good Oeconomy made a Snow-house in your upper Room: which indeed was Philosophically done of you, seeing you bear your head so high as if it were in or above the middle Region, and so you thought it secure from melting. But you did not at the same time consider that your Brain is so hot, that the Wit is dissolv'd by it, and is always dripping away at the Icicles of your Nose. But it freezes again I confess as soon as it falls down, and hence it proceeds that there is no passage in my Book, deep or shallow, but with a chill and key-cold conceit you can ice it in a moment, and slide shere over it without scratches.[2]

Marvell's use of "Architecture and good Oeconomy" as a normative standard against which to judge Parker's various distortions coalesces the discourses of writing, architecture, climate, geography, physiology, disease, and humoral psychology.[3] In a gesture typical of his writing, Marvell transforms a relatively simple conceit into one of nearly impenetrable complexity: the "Snow-house" in Parker's head, which should be kept frozen by the height of his arrogance, melts because of his hot, wit-dissolving brain, and proceeds to drip from icicles hanging from his nose, which fall upon but do not damage passages in Marvell's book. Marvell thus evokes oeconomy's rhetorical meaning of proper decorum to criticize his opponent, while conspicuously disregarding proper linguistic oeconomy in his own prose.

I begin with this relatively obscure passage in *The Rehearsall Transpos'd: The Second Part* in order to illustrate a stylistic issue central to Marvell's

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poetry – the poet's equivocal relationship with linguistic oeconomy. Unlike Ben Jonson's writing, with its fidelity to classical decorum, or the poetry of Marvell's younger contemporary John Dryden, then Poet Laureate, Marvell persistently stretches conceits beyond representational plausibility. Arguing that his translation of Virgil conforms to both historical knowledge and contemporary observations, Dryden writes that "this Oeconomy must be observ'd in the minutest Parts of an Epick Poem, which, to a common Reader, seem to be detach'd from the Body, and almost independent of it."[4] Dryden thus suggests that even aspects of his translation that seem implausible and disconnected from the whole are in fact functions of proper literary oeconomy.

Marvell's relationship with literary oeconomy is ambivalent. While his poetry tends to flout oeconomy through its elaborate conceits, it also adheres to oeconomy in terms of poetic form. Unlike the formally experimental poems of Donne and Herbert, with whom Marvell is often grouped, Marvell's poetry tends to proceed in rhymed pentameter or (more commonly) tetrameter couplets.[5] In this way, Marvell's poetry seems formally closer to that of Jonson and Dryden than it does to the poems of Donne and Herbert. The issue of poetic oeconomy is, I argue, central to Marvell's "Upon Appleton House" (1651) – a poem that, like Jonson's "To Penshurst," uses architecture and household management to explore humankind's relationship with the nonhuman world. Like the conceit referenced earlier, Marvell uses extensively elaborate tropes in "Upon Appleton House" to envision nonhuman oeconomies and to look askance at human ones. Just as the aforementioned passage uses oeconomy to weave together the internal world of Parker's corrupt brain with the external world of geographic and climactic forces, Marvell's "Upon Appleton House" explores the parameters of and limits to human oeconomy as a way of understanding and interacting with the world.[6] The conspicuously regular structure of Marvell's poem, which unfolds in seemingly endless eight-line stanzas of tetrameter couplets – resulting in a heightened sense of artificiality – coupled with its dizzyingly complex conceits, formally mirrors (and thereby parodies) attempts to use human structures to comprehend nature. Marvell's poem uses poetic conceits to represent nature's exceedingly complex oeconomy, while positing the limits of human representation.

Ecocritical Marvell

As we saw in Chapter 2, in his seminal country house poem "To Penshurst," Jonson uses the opposing models of oeconomy and parasitism to

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explore both the structure of the natural world and the institution of patronage that defines the material conditions of poetic composition. Jonson's double vision of nature is hierarchical, organized, abundant, sustainable, thrifty; and at the same time excessive, gluttonous, opportunistic, and radically indifferent to hierarchy. Despite such tension, however, "To Penshurst," and the country house genre that it helped to inspire, remains predominantly anthropocentric in focus.[7] It is a genre concerned with nonhuman environments insofar as they nurture and sustain human life. Even if humanity enters a provisionally sustainable relationship with the natural world, oeconomy, as it is represented in the country house poem, remains centered on the human. Indeed, Raymond Williams famously describes how the "natural order" of the Jonsonian country house poem is "simply and decisively on the way to table."[8]

However, recent scholarship has demonstrated how Andrew Marvell's late addition to the genre, "Upon Appleton House," reconceives the country house poem in non-anthropocentric terms. Diane McColley begins her influential book *Poetry and Ecology in the Age of Milton and Marvell* by contrasting Jonson's "To Penshurst" with Marvell's "Upon Appleton House." McColley writes that Jonson's poem "compliments a well-ordered family and society, affirms man's dominion over nature by beginning and ending with hunting scenes (one of the hunters to whom the house is hospitable being the king), and describes ordered rows of fruit trees, well-fed and well-trained servants, and carp and pheasant eager to be eaten."[9] Marvell, on the other hand, represents the land surrounding Appleton House as "a habitat supporting connected lives."[10] The difference between Penshurst and Appleton House, according to McColley, is the difference between economy and ecology. While the tightly structured language of "To Penshurst" reinforces "man's dominion over nature," in "Upon Appleton House" "Marvell sought a kind of multiply connective language that is 'ecological' rather than 'economical.'"[11] It is an ecological vision based on "a monist and vitalist language that opposes dualism and the appropriative objectification of nature and which represents the kinship and reciprocity of human beings and other beings."[12] Central to McColley's ecocritical reading of Marvell are the ideas of multiplicity and reciprocity, evoked in Marvell's poetry both representationally and stylistically. The oneness of Jonson's human dominion contraposes the diversity of Marvell's creaturely habitats.

Although McColley's analysis of Marvell's poetics illuminates an important aspect of his representation of the natural world, her argument hinges upon the anachronistic identification of Marvell's verse as

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ecological. Situating McColley's argument historically entails a reconfiguration of terms. Rather than using the contrast between economy and ecology to conceptualize Marvell's poetics, I argue that both "To Penshurst" and "Upon Appleton House" are structured by the early modern concept of oeconomy, albeit in different ways. The difference in Marvell's representation is that it envisions oeconomy as detachable from the human sphere. Marvell, like Digby, takes a traditionally human concept and projects it onto the natural world, applying it to bird nests, animal dens, and tortoise shells, as well as to human architecture. Also like Digby, Marvell evokes nature's oeconomy as a response to the trauma of civil war. Digby and Marvell were, of course, aligned with different sides, each espousing distinct political and religious beliefs. However, both writers appeal to natural order as a response to human conflict. Contrasting humanity's destructive impulses, manifested in revolution and military conflict, the natural world becomes a sanctuary from the unoeconomic violence of human life. While humans and nonhumans share the same oeconomic impulses, humanity alone deviates from nature's oeconomy, inflicting violence on otherwise self-contained processes. For Marvell, this violence proceeds from physical interactions between humanity and the environment and, more fundamentally, from human perception itself. Explaining the early modern desire for unmediated access to divine knowledge, Robert Watson argues that in Marvell's poetry, "the hope of a redemptive return to the Garden fails . . . because the self-regarding reflex of the mind is always already bringing the fallen world back in."[13] While Watson focuses on cognition and theology, his observations apply also to husbandry and poetic representation, both of which fall under the rubric oeconomy. Marvell uses the authorial persona of "Upon Appleton House" to dramatize both the human desire to dwell in nature's oeconomy and the impossibility of this wish. Oeconomy is for Marvell (as it is for Thomas Hobbes and Pierre Viret, to whose work we shall turn shortly) an inimitable feature of nature rather than a human principle imposed on the world.

The Polities of Aristotle and Hobbes

The Civil War's influence on seventeenth-century conceptions of nature is most pronounced in the work of Digby's friend and fellow Parisian exile Thomas Hobbes. Hobbes developed much of his political thought in direct response to the English Civil War and its underlying political and religious conflicts. Unlike Aristotle, who understood the human as "a political animal" that above all sought "to be self-sufficing," Hobbes

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conceptualized human life in a state of nature as "a warre . . . of every man, against every man."[14] A central difference between Aristotle's conception of politics and Hobbes' is the issue of human equality. For Aristotle humankind naturally arranges itself into hierarchies – "master and slave, husband and wife, father and children" – and is therefore naturally amenable to government.[15] Hobbes, however, rejects Aristotle for making "some more worthy to Command," when in fact "NATURE hath made men so equal, in the faculties of body, and mind . . . [that] when all is reckoned together, the difference between man, and man, is not so considerable."[16]

For Hobbes, relative human equality problematizes the idea of private property in a state of nature, since all people seek after the same scarce resources. Hobbes writes that in nature, "there be no Propriety, no Dominion, no *Mine* and *Thine* distinct; but onely that to be every mans that he can get; and for so long, as he can keep it" (188). Without a government to protect property, husbandry too is impossible: "if one plant, sow, build, or possesse a convenient Seat, others may probably be expected to come prepared with forces united, to dispossesse, and deprive him, not only of the fruit of his labour, but also his life, or liberty" (184). While Aristotle understands oeconomy as fundamental to human politics – the origin of human polity as well as its fundamental unit – Hobbes contends that oeconomy is only achievable when people live "in awe" of a sovereign power (185). Painting a vivid picture of humanity's grim natural state, in one of the most famous passages of *Leviathan* (1651), Hobbes concludes that in a state of nature

> there is no place for Industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain: and consequently no Culture of the Earth; no Navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by Sea; no commodious building; no Instruments of moving, and removing such things as require much force; no Knowledge of the face of the Earth; no account of Time; no Arts; no Letters; no Society; and which is worst of all, continual feare, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short (186).

Negating human productivity in virtually all its forms, Hobbes illustrates the facets of human society (beginning with agriculture and husbandry) impossible in nature. For Hobbes, the only alternative to this dismal and unproductive state is to submit to the will of a sovereign.

In representing the impossibility of human oeconomy in a state of nature, Hobbes reverses Aristotle's understanding of oeconomy of the natural root of human polity. In *The Politics*, Aristotle begins his discussion

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of human politics with the family – an institution "originating in the bare needs of life" (1252b). Aristotle writes that, far from being a social construction, "[t]he family is the association established by nature for the supply of men's everyday wants" (1252b). Beyond connecting human politics to nature, the family also represents the fundamental building block of government. For Aristotle "the state is made up of households" gathered together into a larger political organization (1253a). However, this is not to say that the household precedes the state. Rather, for Aristotle, "the state is by nature clearly prior to the family and to the individual, since the whole is of necessity prior to the part" (1253a). Although "[a] social instinct is implanted in all man by nature," it is only under the governance of the state that the individual can become "self-sufficing" (1253a). The part presupposes the existence of the whole. Building upon this sentiment, Hobbes radicalizes Aristotle's account of politics, reversing not only the idea that human polity is rooted in nature, but also Aristotle's very conception of oeconomy as stable household government.

In *Philosophicall Rudiments Concerning Government and Society* (1651), an English translation of Hobbes' influential Latin treatise *De Cive* (1642), Hobbes counters Aristotle's speculations about natural oeconomy with an alternative historical account:

> in old time there was a manner of living, and as it were a certain oeconomy, which they called ληστρικήν, *living by Rapine,* which was neither against the law of nature, (things then so standing) nor voyd of glory to those who exercised it with valour, not with cruelty. Their custome was, taking away the rest, to spare life, and abstain from Oxen fit for plough, and every instrument serviceable to husbandry, which yet is not so to be taken, as if they were bound to doe thus by the law of nature.[17]

Explaining how people used to engage in a limited form of plunder that left intact the instruments of husbandry, Hobbes alters the Aristotelian notion of oeconomy as orderly household management. Instead, Hobbes idiosyncratically makes "oeconomy" the equivalent of the Greek ληστρικήν – "piratical," or, in Hobbes' gloss, "*living by Rapine*" – thus introducing conflict into Aristotle's peaceful account of the origins of human society.[18] In this way we can see how the religious and political turmoil of the seventeenth century influenced notions of oeconomy. While Digby positioned "the oeconomy of nature" as an alternative to the vicissitudes of human existence, Hobbes inscribed conflict within early notions of oeconomy, redefining the concept for his own purposes. For Hobbes (and for Marvell) the idea of natural oeconomy was no longer tenable in a world torn by religious and political strife.

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Hobbes further develops his critique of Aristotle through the consideration of nonhuman polity. Comparing human politics with corollaries in nature, Aristotle concludes that "man is more of a political animal than bees or any other gregarious animal."[19] Humankind's superior political abilities stem from "the gift of speech" (1253a). Nonhuman animals possess only "mere voice," which is "but an indication of pleasure and pain" (1253a). Because of the unique human capacity for speech, "he alone has any sense of good and evil, of just and unjust," virtues constitutive of civil government. Aristotle concludes, "man, when perfected, is the best of animals" (1253a). He does, however, concede that without virtue the human is "the most unholy and savage of animals, and the most full of lust and gluttony" (1253a). Aristotle thus represents the human as "a political animal" in opposition to the politics of nonhuman animals.

Hobbes seizes upon Aristotle's discussion of animal polity in order to accentuate humankind's resistance to political order. Hobbes writes that "*Aristotle* reckons among those animals, which he calls Politique, not man only, but divers others; as the *Ant,* the *Bee,* &c. which though they be destitute of reason, by which they may contract, and submit to government, notwithstanding by consenting, (that is to say) ensuing, or eschewing the same things, they so direct their actions to a common end, that their meetings are not obnoxious unto any seditions."[20] Following Aristotle, Hobbes argues that animals cannot be understood to have civil government, since their consent coalesces around "one object" rather than "one will" (77). Nevertheless, unlike Aristotle, Hobbes suggests that nonhuman animals achieve a quasi-political stability superior to human government: "It is very true that in those creatures, living only by sense and appetite, their *consent* of minds is so durable, as there is no need of any thing more to secure it, and (by consequence) to preserve peace among them, then barely their naturall inclination. But among men the case is otherwise" (77). Hobbes then goes on to catalogue the various ways in which human polity is more precarious and conflict-oriented than that of nonhuman creatures. Hobbes, for example, notes that the human pursuit of abstract virtues like honor and preferment (absent among nonhuman animals) leads to envy and ultimately sedition and war. Moreover, for Hobbes, human speech, the natural gift that Aristotle celebrates as constitutive of civil society, becomes "a trumpet of warre, and sedition" (78). Hobbes thus employs animal polity as a form of "zoographic critique" – to borrow Laurie Shannon's formulation.[21] While animal polity is rooted in natural consent, and thus tends to be durable and harmonious, human society is from its inception given to violence, sedition, and war.

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The Schoole of Beastes

Hobbes is not alone in his use of nonhuman animals in order to question human polity. Focusing on nonhuman oeconomy enables a number of seventeenth-century writers to explore problems with human society in the wake of the regicide and the English Civil War. Royalist poet Richard Lovelace, for example, writes of the lowly snail as a "Wise Emblem of our Politick World":

> But now I must (analys'd King)
> Thy Oeconomick Virtues sing;
> Thou great stay'd Husband still within,
> Thou, thee, that's thine dost Discipline.[22]

Lovelace's multiplying pronouns – "Thou, thee, [and] that's thine" – point to the ordered complexity of snail life. A singular being, the snail nevertheless contains within itself a fully staffed and well-ordered household, complete with all necessary things. The snail is both subject and object of household management – that which disciplines and that which is disciplined – as well as the proprietor of all that it possesses. In *The History of Four-Footed Beasts and Serpents* (1658), Edward Topsell likewise speaks of the "Oeconomick or houshold vertues" of bees, insects that exhibit "Parsimony," "sobriety," "freely impart[ed]" hospitality, "cleanliness," "temperance," and "chastity."[23] Far from existing as static emblems, Topsell's bees live complex social lives, carefully managing their collective household. Forward looking and morally conscious, the bees gather "a sufficient stock, or store of honey," but they "do not profusely lavish it, but sustain themselves with it in the winter."[24] They are not, however, so "sordidly parsimonious" as to hoard their wealth, but rather distribute it among "the number of their family."[25] Beyond serving as exemplars of human virtue, Lovelace's snail and Topsell's bees suggest that the institution of oeconomy is rooted in the natural world.

While most of the writers considered in this chapter composed their work in the middle decades of the seventeenth century, we shall now turn to the earlier example of Swiss Reformer Pierre Viret (1511–71). Viret's dialogue *The Schoole of Beastes; Intituled, the Good Householder, or the Oeconomickes*, translated into English in 1585, supplies perhaps the fullest early modern example of using the animal archive as a guide for human oeconomy. By incorporating animal oeconomy into the popular genre of the householder's manual, Viret both criticizes the genre's pretensions of human dominion and holds up animals as exemplars for human behavior.

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In the opening epistle, Viret concludes that animals are better than humans at procuring and conserving food and providing for their young: "I Have intituled this Dialogue, the good Householder, or the *Oeconomicks*, because I make comparison in the same, of the good and evil householders with the beastes, which knowe best to provide for their nourishment and conservation as well of them as of their young."[26] As Erica Fudge points out, Viret's text "reversed the trajectory that was in place in orthodox discussions of children" where "schooling was seen as a way of undoing the natural beastliness of humanity, of turning children into humans."[27] In *The Schoole of Beastes*, however, "humans are sent to school not in order to leave the beasts behind but in order to learn from them."[28] Indeed, unlike many of the texts explored in Shannon's *Accommodated Animal*, *The Schoole of Beastes* is principally positive in focus. Viret's beasts supply examples of how humans should conduct themselves in worldly life. This is not to say that Viret eschews critique, but rather that his animal examples illustrate practical techniques for Christian life.

The School of Beastes takes the form of a dialogue between Tobias, Theophrastus, and Ierome, who collectively extol the oeconomic wisdom of animals through biblical exegesis, classical philology, and careful observation. Throughout the dialogue Viret argues that beasts supply apt guides for human behavior because they instinctually follow God's will. Chastising humanity for not taking advantage of God's gifts, Theophrast argues for the superiority of animals: "For they haue none other master nor mystres to teach them, but the nature which God gaue the[m], with whiche they doo better keepe their estate, then men doo in that with which they were first created of God" (25). Without pedagogical hierarchies, beasts simply obey their divinely instilled natures. Humans learn from other humans, but beasts learn from God alone. Fudge explains that for Viret, "it is animals' possession of a *natural* reason that makes them superior to humans."[29] Humans, moreover, tend toward sins like gluttony and envy that distract from the proper governance of self and home. Since animals follow nature without deviation, they practice better management and restraint: "there is not only some of them in their kind, which gouerne them selues so, but al are so by nature, and followe it without doing any fault, because that they are not corrupted thorowe sin, as the me[n], which maketh them more beastes, then the beastes" (56). Playing on the pejorative connotations of "beast," Viret reverses traditional ontological hierarchies by valorizing humble creatures like spiders, ants, sparrows, and rabbits. Explaining why the meek make the best householders, Theophrastus concludes "gods prouidence, the which manifesteth it

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selfe in the nature the which he gaue vnto the creatures, it manifesteth it selfe, yet better in that, that the least amongst them, are those vnto whom he geueth most industrie and wysedome, to the ende that by the same they may recompence the force and strength whiche is wanting in them" (46). Strength may be a flashier physical virtue, but it is the "industrie and wysedome" of the humble that facilitate good oeconomy.

The animal archive offers Viret myriad examples of superior oeconomy. Beasts excel at constructing proportional dwellings, surviving harsh conditions, and caring for their young. Beyond conventional examples of industrious colony-dwelling creatures like ants and bees – celebrated in works like Virgil's *Georgics* and (later) Bernard Mandeville's *The Fable of Bees*; *or, Private Vices, Public Benefits* (1714) – Viret also points to the profound affective bonds formed by mammals, birds, and reptiles. Viret, for example, emphasizes how male and female partridges work together to hatch their eggs and raise their young (48). And while animal dwellings are humbler than those of humans, animals show greater skill at transforming and adapting to environments. Conies dwelling in rocky places, for example, "are such continuall diggers and scrapers, that they bring it to passe in the end, that they do cleaue a sunder and make hollow the stones and rockes, for to lodge them selues therein, and their young ones with the [m]" (27). The virtue of animal dwellings lies in their superior economy: their "careful management of resources; sparingness."[30] Animals make the best of scarce resources, transforming seemingly desolate places into habitable abodes, while humans live lavishly, wasting precious resources on unnecessary things.

While many of Viret's examples stem from the Bible and classical sources like Pliny, Plutarch, and Ovid, he also tests textual examples against everyday experience. Viret's character Ierome explains, "Whether al that whiche they haue written be true or no, I referre me to them selves. But yet neuerthelesse, I think that they haue not without some reason that they do testifie: Besids experie[n]ce witnesseth, at the least in some part, the thinges the whiche they do witnesse" (24). The juridical metaphor of testifying and bearing "witnesse" as a way of verifying textual examples displays the emergent scientific emphasis on empirical observation. Arguing that Viret is an important predecessor to Francis Bacon, Dana Jalobeanu suggests that "in elaborating a form of spiritual medicine, [Viret] gave prominence to the empirical and the 'anatomical' study of nature."[31] Jalobeanu explains that in Viret's writing "[t]he descriptive and empirical character of reading the Book of Nature ... is explicitly contrasted with the speculative discourse of the 'Epicureans and Atheists.'"[32] Empiricism

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became, in the work of Viret, a devotional practice aimed at using everyday experience to understand scripture. Raphaele Garrod likewise describes Viret's methodology as an "epistemology of 'familiarity'" that balances the study of scripture with the careful observation of natural phenomena.[33] Viret's writing "illustrates the superimposition of biblical literalism onto a natural particular and the 'naturalization' of the biblical referent it induces, whereas the latter instantiates the theological interpretation of up-to-date natural-historical knowledge."[34] Merging natural history with biblical exegesis, Viret's naturalism assumes a markedly anti-allegorical character. Although his birds, mammals, insects, and reptiles are often derived from textual sources, they are also the animals that surround us in everyday life. The language of scripture is identical to the Book of Nature. This is not to suggest the obsolescence of biblical knowledge, but rather that "the commonsensical experience of the world must be supplemented and elucidated by biblical hermeneutics."[35]

In *The Schoole of Beastes*, Viret insists upon the correspondence between textual examples and everyday experiences. For example, he uses the Ovidian story of Actaeon to criticize the excesses of early modern aristocratic hunting practices. Bruce Boehrer describes how "[t]he establishment of hunting as a distinctly aristocratic and military exercise led to its ritualization, which in turn translated into a kind of theater which sought on one hand to reaffirm traditional social relations, while on the other hand also offering participants and spectators a rare kind of personal diversion."[36] By King James' reign, however, the uneconomical nature of aristocratic hunting led to a scarcity of game, which necessitated new laws and regulations: "Over-hunting, driven by increasingly destructive methods of killing, lay at the heart of the problem. As a preparation and symbolic substitute for war, the hunt had achieved its most respected form in the pursuit of great game *par force de chiens*: i.e. by riders in the company of beaters and hounds, with weapons only employed at the end of the chase to dispatch the exhausted animals once they were cornered and at bay."[37] Transposing Ovid's allegorical myth onto everyday experience, Viret uses the story of Actaeon to foreground the unoeconomic nature of contemporary hunting.

In Ovid's account, Actaeon is hunting with his dogs when, in the valley Gargaphie, he stumbles upon the goddess Diana bathing naked with nymphs. Unable to find cover, Diana punishes Actaeon for the violation by throwing water in his face, magically transforming him into a stag. He is then pursued by his own dogs, which tear apart their former master at the urging of his unwitting friends.[38] Alluding to the story of Actaeon,

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Viret explains that hunters "must nurrish and feede a great companie of dogges, the which often-times eate vp their masters" (37). Explicating this point, Viret's character Ierome maps the story of Actaeon onto contemporary life:

> Although the hunters be not in very deede turned into hartes, yet there are a great many of whom one may rightly say, that their doggs haue eaten and deuoured the[m] ... For although the hunters com[m]itted none other fault, but in these that they giue vnto the dogges that which would nourishe, and feede a great many of poore people, that fault is great yenough for to prouoke vpon them, not the ire and wrath of *Diana*, as it is written of *Acteon*, but that of the liuing God. (37)

Like Thomas More's satirical description of sheep devouring men in Book 1 of *Utopia*, Viret's focus on uneconomical hunting as a figurative upheaval of the food chain provokes the reader to view familiar sociopolitical practices in a new light. Enclosure for sheep grazing and hunting with dogs both constitute a violations of the common good through the misuse of resources. Aristocratic hunting, Viret suggests, distracts from more productive forms of husbandry like tilling soil and planting grain. For Viret a more oeconomical example of hunting can be found in the homely spider, a model of industry and patience, whose webs form a household perfectly integrated with its function: "For what hunters are there more subtil, then the *Spider* for to lye in waite, and for to trappe and snare the beastes, and to make them to fall into their nettes, or more diligent to lay holde on them?" (35). By sending humans to the "schoole of beasts" to be educated in good oeconomy, Viret implies that oeconomic virtue is not a human invention, but a natural principle more available to the humble – creatures like birds, insects, and reptiles – than to the grand.

While Viret's instrumentalization of animals as models for human behavior might be seen as anthropocentrism, eliding difference in order to project human values onto nature, Viret takes pains to preserve the peculiarity of nonhuman creatures. Indeed, Viret's advice about educating children, gleaned partially from the unlikely source of the crocodile, may equally apply to the readers of his text: "we must goe by litle and litle ... it is in lyke maner very harde to vse them selues sodainely to one thing, to the which they haue not been vsed vnto, and chiefely when it is newe and strange. Wherefore it behoueth to keepe meanes, and to do by litle and litle that, that one cannot doe at once" (66). *The Schoole of Beastes* is not merely about pedagogical appropriation, but also opening ourselves to the otherness of the world. Recognizing human values, practices, and institutions in animal dwellings is uncanny in Freud's sense of

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unheimlech – literally "unhomely" – "something that is secretly familiar [*heimlich-heimisch*], which has undergone repression and then returned from it."[39] Observing human-like behavior in nonhuman creatures – "beasts," as Viret and his contemporaries tend to call them – forces us to recognize our own repressed animality, the profound and forgotten kinship between humans and nonhumans. The walls that we construct to separate ourselves from the world of nonhuman nature are, it turns out, not exclusive to the human domain.

Man Unruled

Like Viret, who beseeches his readers to look askance at nonhuman creatures, Andrew Marvell uses disorienting poetics to encourage readers to reconsider their assumptions about humanity's position in the world. I am not arguing for a direct line of filiation between Viret and Marvell, but rather noting structural similarities in how they articulate the relationship between human and animal dwellings. Just as Viret inverts the husbandry manual, centering his on bestial rather than human dwellings, Marvell reconfigures the seventeenth-century country house poem along non-anthropocentric lines. Oeconomy is for both Viret and Marvell a natural principle rather than a human invention. Scholars have long noted how Marvell uses "defamiliarization" and "sensory disorientation" to engender new ways of understanding the world.[40] David Carroll Simon and Joanna Picciotto both demonstrate how Marvell's "Upon Appleton House" facilitates emergent scientific methodologies. Simon sees the "careless receptivity" at the heart of "Upon Appleton House" as an early iteration of the ideal of scientific objectivity, and Picciotto recognizes in Marvell's poems the self-reflective experimentalism of the scientific observer "discovering . . . the reach of his own spectatorial agency."[41] As Picciotto points out, Marvell's unconventional employment of literary conventions produces an "alien experience of the familiar world."[42] Indeed, T. S. Eliot's famous observations about how metaphysical poetry is characterized by "rapid association of thought," "sudden contrasts," and "telescoping of images" aptly describe the disorienting effects of Marvell's "Upon Appleton House."[43] Moreover, "Upon Appleton House" disrupts the conventions of the Jonsonian country house poem, employing the genre only to invert its tropes and underlying values. As Kari Boyd McBride observes in her study of landscape arts and legitimacy, Marvell's poem "represents the bankruptcy of the country house discourse."[44] In addition to draining the genre of its legitimizing function,

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the poem also undermines the ostensible anthropocentrism of early modern country house poems by positioning oeconomy as a natural rather than a human virtue.

Like Viret, the opening stanzas of "Upon Appleton House" posit the superiority of bestial oeconomy. The second stanza pauses on the question of proportion in human and animal architecture:

> Why should of all things man unruled
> Such unproportioned dwellings build?
> The beasts are by their dens expressed:
> And birds contrive an equal nest;
> The low-roofed tortoises do dwell
> In cases fit of tortoise-shell:
> No creature loves an empty space;
> Their bodies measure out their place.[45]

Reversing the intuitive connection between humanity and architectural proportion, the poem's speaker derides human architecture for superseding the principles of biological necessity. The conflation of creaturely desire – the "love" that animals do not feel for emptiness – with the passive measuring of bodies implies a harmony of physical and affective experience. Animals do not experience the human anxiety of desires out of touch with bodily need. As Nigel Smith points out, the final line of this stanza represents "an animal version of the dictum that nature abhors a vacuum."[46] Evoking Aristotelian nature though creaturely dwelling, Marvell articulates the principles of natural architecture, which are alternatively followed and parodied in the proceeding description of Lord Fairfax's estate. Read in the context of the seventeenth-century country house poem, Marvell's focus on minimal animal dwellings constitutes a *reductio ad absurdum* – an attempt to push country house's celebrated austerity to its logical extreme.

The poem's images of animal dwellings – the beast's den, the bird's nest, and the tortoise's shell – have been read as emblems of "self-contained man": one who, like Romulus, eschews worldly superfluity in favor of Spartan austerity.[47] However, the images also reveal the paradox at the heart of humanity's relationship with nonhuman nature. Considering the pastoral mode of the poem, Paul Alpers writes that "[w]hen Marvell calls human dwellings unproportioned, his mode conveys a different sense of the way we inhabit our buildings and our poems."[48] In the poem, Marvell foregrounds both the imaginative inner life that renders humanity distinct from nature and the irreducibility of the physical environment in which human and nonhuman alike must find a home. In terms of poetics, Marvell explores the

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relationship between artifice and natural processes, at times affirming their concordance and at others highlighting the rift between them. Alpers suggests that the poem "is all in service of finding the human equivalent, in both the represented dwelling and the poem about it, of the birds contriving their equal nest."[49] And yet Marvell's "natural" contrivances repeatedly strike discordant notes, revealing not pastoral harmony but tragic separation. Indeed, the slant rhyme between "unruled" and "build" in the opening couplet of the aforementioned stanza – from the Italian for "room" – foregrounds the poet's own inability to build in proportion. And the line "cases fit of tortoise-shell" that captures the efficiency of animal dwellings reveals the violence of humankind's interactions with nonhuman nature. As Alpers observes, "[t]he wit [of the line] lies in the play on 'cases,' which in seventeenth-century English can directly mean the tortoises' shells, but which also, of course, refers to boxes made of tortoise shell."[50] Humanity transforms the perfect natural proportion of a tortoise's dwelling into a luxury object – a trinket to adorn a sprawling estate. Highlighting the double-bind at the heart of Marvell's poetry, Robert Watson writes that "[t]he epistemological work of the poem is as futile as the aesthetic work is superfluous. Nature measures time, manifests order, creates beauty – all the prime works of the lyric art – whether we attend to it or not."[51] The oeconomy of poetry, Marvell suggests, can never truly capture nature's oeconomy no matter how hard the poet tries.

Unlike animals, humans construct dwellings completely out of proportion with biological need. Evoking the biblical Tower of Babel, Marvell contrasts Fairfax's modest dwelling with larger and more ornate buildings:

III
But he, superfluously spread,
Demands more room alive then dead.
And in his hollow palace goes
Where winds as he themselves may lose.
What need of all this marble crust
T'impark the wanton mote of dust,
That thinks by breadth the world t'unite
Though the first builders failed in height?

IV
But all things are composèd here
Like Nature, orderly and near:
In which we the dimensions find
Of that more sober age and mind,

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> When larger-sizèd men did stoop
> To enter at a narrow loop;
> As practising, in doors so strait,
> To strain themselves through heaven's gate. (lines 17–32)

Nature "orderly and near," illustrated in the previous stanza though self-contained animal dwellings, counterpoises humanity "superfluously spread." Superfluous, literally "to overflow" (*super* + *fluere*) connotes the accidental destruction that humanity inflicts upon the world. The obvious biblical example is the flood in Genesis, a product of human sin, which nevertheless washed away human, animal, and plant alike. Marvell figures the flood in miniature in "Upon Appleton House" in the meadow scene of stanzas 47–60, when "Denton sets ope its cataracts; / And makes the meadow truly be / (What it but seemed before) a sea" (466–8). Despite the idealization of natural architecture, human attempts to dwell within nature produce not harmony but clumsy destruction, which can be seen in the poem's contradictions and ironic tensions. Although the speaker asserts in the poem's open stanza that we should expect "[w]ork of no foreign architect; / That unto caves the quarries drew" (2–3), we soon learn in fact that "all that neighbor-ruin shows / The quarries whence this dwelling rose" (87–8). Nor are animal dwellings as perfect as they first appear to be. Bird nests, we soon find out, are no defense against the accidental violence humankind inflicts on the world, as one of the mowers who "massacre the grass along," "unknowing, carves the rail, / Whose yet unfeathered quills her fail" (394, 395–6). But the bird's nest too was imperfect, clumsily built upon the ground where it is easily reached by predators or hapless mowers.

Those looking for harmony between humanity and nature in the poem gravitate toward the speaker, that "easy philosopher" who like Henry David Thoreau retreats from civilization into the sanctuary of the forest. Diane McColley, for example, considers how the speaker "contemplates the lives of other creatures empathetically and receives delight, sorrow, and new kinds of instruction from them."[52] On the opposite pole, Andrew McRae describes Marvell's vision of human culture's relationship to the natural world as "universally violent and acquisitive, inscribing its meanings and values upon the natural environment."[53] Arriving at a middle ground, Robert Markley suggests that the poem counterbalances representations of harmonious cohabitation with narratives of environmental destruction, highlighting "tensions between the competing ecological and economic models of the land that are repressed within progressivist narratives of modernity."[54] Even as the speaker attempts to dwell in harmony with the natural world, speaking with birds and trees in attempt to dwell as

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they do, his awkward physical presence and corrupt mind belie the possibility of harmonious union. Calling to birds in "their most learned original," the speaker captures the attention of one, noting that it "more attentive there doth sit / Then if she were with lime-twigs knit" (573–4). The speaker conceptualizes the attentive bird as a victim of birdlime, a trap used by hunters, suggesting that his seemingly harmonious experience is already tainted by the brutal reality of human–animal relations. His physical body too inadvertently damages the environment he admires. As the speaker first moves into the forest, he notes his steps: "Then as I careless on the bed / Of gelid *strawberries* do tread" (529–30). Marvell's almost comical image of harm through imperfect congruence between human and nature repeats a gesture seen in "The Garden" and a number of the Mower Poems. The speaker's very ease of mind, the innocence with which he tries to approach the forest, carelessly damages the foliage he admires. Marvell's speaker, like so many camera-toting tourists in America's national parks, runs the risk of "loving wilderness to death," eroding the natural world through his very enjoyment of it.[55]

The Rational Amphibian

Given the human penchant for casual destruction – rendered obvious by the poem's military imagery and context – Marvell depicts oeconomy as a feature of nature rather than human artifice. The mowers in the field are more bumbling than they are industrious. Rather Marvell most fully depicts natural oeconomy through the woodpecker's interactions with its forest "neighborhood" (499). Admiring the bird's industriousness, the speaker describes what we now recognize as the woodpecker's ecosystem in overtly oeconomic terms:

LXVIII
But most the hewel's wonders are,
Who here has the holt-felster's care.
He walks still upright from the root,
Meas'ring the timber with his foot;
And all the way, to keep it clean,
Doth from the bark the woodmoths glean.
He, with his beak, examines well
Which fit to stand and which to fell.

LXIX
The good he numbers up, and hacks;
As if he marked them with the axe.

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But where he, tinkling with his beak,
Does find the hollow oak to speak,
That for his building he designs,
And through the tainted side he mines.
Who could have thought the tallest oak
Should fall by such a feeble stroke!

LXX
Nor would it, had the tree not fed
A traitor-worm, within it bred.
(As first our flesh corrupt within
Tempts ignorant and bashful Sin.)
And yet that worm triumphs not long,
But serves to feed the hewel's young.
While the oak seems to fall content,
Viewing the treason's punishment. (537–60)

The hewel – a variation on hickwall, a green woodpecker native to Europe – displays human-like agency as he manages his dwelling in the forest: he "walks upright," "[m]eas'r[es]," "keep[s] [the timber] clean," "glean[s]," "examines," "numbers up," "designs," and "mines." Marvell's depiction of the woodpecker's oeconomy closely mirrors his earlier representations of the superior virtues of Fairfax's modest and well-proportioned estate. And yet for all of this personification, Marvell also closely examines and represents forest life. The oeconomy of the estate reveals what we now recognize as forest ecology. Like a field ecologist, the speaker closely observes and records the behavior of a woodpecker as it gathers food for its young from the bark of dying trees. While the poem's opening lines contrast human with animal dwellings, here the two betray uncanny similarities.

These lines also of course contain oblique reference to the execution of King Charles I – "the tallest oak," whose ironic fate it was to "fall by such a feeble stroke." The regicide, rendered bloodless by the arboreal metaphor, comes to be seen as an unfortunate fact of nature, inevitable as the fall of a dying tree. As John Rogers argues, in these lines "Marvell limns a vision of an alternative regicide that functions not as the result of purposive action but as a link in the causal chain of a natural course of events."[56] The poem's forest allegory thus envisions the very form of "organic revolution" advocated by radicals like Gerrard Winstanley even as Marvell strays away from overt political radicalism.[57] Read phenomenologically, the intrusion of political allegory into the forest sanctuary signals the speaker's inability to experience the natural world innocently without importing human

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conflict. The English Civil War that constitutes the poem's historical backdrop was not only environmentally destructive in a physical sense, but it also eroded notions of an innocent and harmonious nature.[58] If a natural harmony exists, it lies beyond the purview of corrupt human perception. Understanding Nun Appleton as "Paradise's only map" suggests that there is little hope of a redemptive return to natural innocence (768). Indeed, the speaker's apostrophe to forest plants, "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," with its misplaced Christian associations and short, strangulating couplets, represents a failed attempt to dwell within nature's oeconomy (609–12). The very form of the poem, with its neatly rhymed tetrameter couplets, heightens the sense of artificiality. Unlike Jonson's "To Penshurst," written in the so-called plain style, "Upon Appleton House" everywhere references its own constructedness. Topically and formally, Marvell's poetry suggests that nature's oeconomy exists, but not for us.

Marvell's combination of ideological projection and verisimilitude posits nature as epistemological and ontological problem. How can we experience the natural world without "annihilating all that's made / To a green thought in a green shade"?[59] The word "annihilating" in these much-discussed lines from "The Garden" carries obvious but underappreciated connotations of environmental destruction. And yet, as Diane McColley has demonstrated, Marvell's poetry is virtually unparalleled in its early poetic depictions of natural habitats. The irreconcilable tension between natural and human oeconomy coalesces in the image of the salmon-fishers at the end of the poem:

> But now the salmon-fishers moist
> Their leathern boats begin to hoist;
> And, like Antipodes in shoes,
> Have shod their heads in their canoes.
> How tortoise-like, but not so slow,
> These rational amphibii go!
> Let's in: for the dark hemisphere
> Does now like one of them appear. (769–76)

The "rational amphibii" are doubly amphibious, dwelling both on land and in the water, but also within and without the physical world. Like the poem itself, the image conjures the paradox at the heart of humanness – the still unsettled question of our own animality. If Marvell's poem shows animal behavior to be complex and human-like through the depiction of the woodpecker, it also displays the animal-like strangeness of humanity.

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The "tortoise-like" fishermen returning home with canoes on their backs recall the tortoise shells of the poem's opening lines, the ideal of security and self-sufficiency. Harry Berger, Jr. interprets the salmon-fishers as symbols for the human necessity of world-making: "it is as natural to man to create, to clothe himself in, and to inhabit a cosmos as it is for a turtle to secrete a shell, and in fact the image suggests that this alone can preserve man on the flood or chaos of his historico-natural environment."[60] And yet humans are hardly the only world-makers in the poem. The simple sheltering impulse of the salmon-fishers pales in comparison with the woodpecker's complex oeconomy. Indeed, by the end of the poem, humans have become an unsettlingly alien presence, prompting the speaker to retreat inside from them and the coming darkness in the final gesture of the poem. Viewed from a distance the human is as strange a presence as the animal, not a self-assured rational agent, but a hybrid creature, often controlled by forces from without.

In a typically Marvellian gesture of false closure, the poem seems to reach its conclusion in the final couplet of the penultimate stanza, "You, heaven's centre, Nature's lap. / And Paradise's only map" (767–8), suggesting that Nun Appleton provides the single extant model for prelapsarian existence. The poem, however, continues on, ending not with conclusions, but by looking askance at humanity itself. We thus return to the uncanny – Freud's *unheimlech* – the homely and unhomely realm of consciousness itself. Juxtaposing human and animal dwellings enables Marvell to explore the porous threshold of humanity. Marvell's animal represents what Timothy Morton (after Derrida) calls "the strange stranger" – beings unknowable in their unknowability.[61] For Morton, home is the locus on the ecological uncanny: "*Home* is the strangest place. It is strange in its very homeliness, as Freud observed. Indeed, *here* is strange in itself. To see a place in its strangeness is not just to see how it is permeated with otherness . . . Appreciating strangeness is seeing the very strangeness of similarity and familiarity. To reintroduce the uncanny into the poetics of the home (*oikos*, ecology, ecomimesis) is a political act."[62] The household is the physical structure that shelters us from the elements, creating the constitutive illusion that we are separate from the natural world; not animals, but something else. And yet for Marvell the gaze backfires, suggesting similarities in how humans and nonhumans inhabit the world. Giorgio Agamben, whose work on theological *oikonomia* supplies the critical framework for the next chapter, contends that "It is possible to oppose man to other living things, and at the same time to organize the complex – and not always edifying – economy of relations

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between men and animals, only because something like an animal life has been separated within man, only because his distance and proximity to the animal have been measured and recognized first of all in the closest and most intimate place."[63] Human oeconomy can conscript animals only because we are both animal and nonanimal. Marvell intuits a similar tension within the human subject and uses it to look askance at how humanity dwells in the world and how we understand our nonhuman neighbors.

When Ben Jonson ends "To Penshurst" with the phrase, "their lords have built, but thy lord dwells," dwelling suggests stable and productive existence. Marvell, however, seems to draw upon earlier meanings of the verb "to dwell" in his rambling mediations on what it means to make a home in the world. The word "dwell" comes from the Old English *dwęllan* meaning "to lead astray, hinder, delay," and thus the Oxford English Dictionary's first medieval definition of "dwell" is "To lead into error, mislead, delude; to stun, stupefy."[64] Only later does the word assume its recognizable modern definition: "To remain (in a house, country, etc.) as in a permanent residence; to have one's abode; to reside, 'live.'"[65] Spatially and temporally, the word "dwell" has come full circle – from being lost in the wilderness to finding one's permanent abode in the world. Marvell's wandering trek through the Lord Fairfax's estate seems closer to the former meaning of "dwell" than the latter. Marvell – who like Digby lived through a period of revolution, cultural upheaval, and civil war – ruminates on the human condition as that of wandering. To live in the world is to struggle to find a home. As we shall see in Chapter 4, George Herbert explores the theology of humankind's cosmic homelessness, highlighting the necessity of abandoning earthly oeconomies in favor of divine ones. Like Marvell, however, Herbert remains attached to earthly oeconomy, which remains central to his vision of devotional life.

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