

Vaughan and Marvell, Poets in a Dangerous Time

"The World" and "Bermudas"

VAUGHAN'S DISPLACED WORLDVIEW

- ANGLIO-WELSH: position in English society and government, but also a member of a colonized people who have never fully accepted English rule;
- ROYALIST: staunch supporter of the monarchy → hardships brought on by his disqualification from Commonwealth society and government position;
- ANGLICAN: his "conversion" is NOT from Anglicanism to Catholicism but refers rather to a RENEWAL of religious commitment to Anglicanism.

SO/ during the Commonwealth Vaughan is DISPLACED from all of the institutions and discourses that would provide a stable and comfortable identity.

"The World"

How is Vaughan's "displaced" perspective reflected in the poem?

Consider:

- The use of DICHOTOMY in the poem;
- The GEOGRAPHY of the poem (cosmic, political, social): E.g. see the references to "up"wardness and "down"wardness or "above" and "below," the references to Time and eternity.

What are the significance and effect of the quotation from *John Chap. 2. ver. 16, 17* at the end of the poem? How does this biblical reference relate to the SOCIAL and POLITICAL reality Vaughan describes in body of the poem?

MARVELL'S DISPLACED/REPLACED PERSPECTIVE

- Brief conversion to Catholicism in his youth;
- Briefly associated with **both** Royalist and Commonwealth causes;
- Worked for Cromwell (Secretary of Council of State) but also accepted the Restoration;
- Advocate of religious tolerance.

MARVELL and the NATURE in HUMAN NATURE

NATURAL RELIGION:

1. "a body of truths about God and our duty tha can be discovered by natural reason" which are sufficient for salvation (or would have been if not for Original Sin);
2. That which is "identified with humanity's original religion";
3. Emphasis on "God's existence, justice, benevolence, and providential government; in immortality; and in the dictates of common morality."

(The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy, 2nd Edition)

SO/ Natural Religion looks toward a church before the Church, a religious practice grounded in natural law rather than in the ritual and structure of the temporal institution.

MARVELL and the NATURE in HUMAN NATURE

NATURALIZATION: the process by which social practices, philosophical positions, religious beliefs etc. are asserted to be "natural," i.e. deriving from natural processes, or part of natural law.

- A system for JUSTIFYING or RATIFYING such practices and beliefs by way of an appeal to nature.

EG. Women are necessarily subordinate to men because they are NATURALLY more nurturing due to their association with childbirth.

→ Therefore, they must remain in the domestic space and deal with emotional and interpersonal, not rational and political, domains.

"Bermudas"

How is Marvell's situation in the precarious space of religio-political conflict reflected in "Bermudas?"

What role does nature play in the staging or resolution of such conflict?

Consider:

- The PASTORAL elements of the poem: EG. see the oranges shining in "eternal spring" (13);
- The stance taken by nature with regard to the sailor's needs;
- The "temple" hewn by the waves from the island's rocky shore (30-32).

What do "The World" and "Bermudas" have in common with regard to their representation of the relationship between human actions and institutions and the world in general? Do they share a worldview? How do they differ?
