

Andrew Marvell (1621- 1678)

Life- Andrew Marvell's fame as a poet is largely posthumous. He was chiefly known in his own time for his political achievements. He was born in Yorkshire and studied in Hull Grammar School. His father was a parson with Calvinist leanings. He was sent to Cambridge at the age of twelve. Marvell wrote his first Horatian Ode in Latin and Greek in honour of the King. He left Trinity College in 1641 after his father's death and went to London. It is believed that he spent the next four years travelling around Europe, though it is not affirmed whether he went as a tutor or a government agent. However, he made good use of his travels by learning a number of foreign tongues, specially, Spanish, Italian, French and Dutch. He is supposed to have composed his satirical verses about Richard Flecknoe in 1645-46 during his sojourn in Rome. His elegy for Lord Francis Villiers, killed in the civil unrest of 1648, points to his presence in London at this tumultuous phase in English history. Marvell went back to Yorkshire in 1650 as tutor to the Parliamentary general, Lord Fairfax's daughter. Lord Fairfax's decision to settle down in his country estate, found a mixed response in Marvell, as brought out in the poem, 'Upon Appleton House'. Marvell's own feelings about contemporary events, chiefly, Cromwell's assumption of power are unclear. His scholarly poem, 'An Ode on Cromwell's Return from Ireland' is not a statement of his personal political position. 'The Garden' and the series of Mower poems were possibly written during his stay in Nun Appleton (Fairfax's home). From 1653 he stayed in Eton and was tutor to William Dutton, a ward of Cromwell. In 1657, Marvell was appointed Latin Secretary to the Council of State. He had been earlier recommended to this post by Milton. Marvell became Member of Parliament for Hull in 1658, and again in 1660. He was unscathed by the change of guard and continued to represent Hull till his death. Between 1663 and 1665 he was Secretary to the Earl of Carlisle in Russia, Sweden, and Denmark. In 1667, he wrote 'The Last Instructions to a Painter' and 'Clarendon's Housewarming'. He published 'The Rehearsal Transposed' Part 1, anonymously, and Part 2, acknowledging his authorship. 'An Account of the Growth of Popery and Arbitrary Government' was published anonymously, voicing his concern about plans to catholicize England. The cause of his death in 1678 is shrouded in mystery and so is his marital status. Despite claims by one Mary Palmer that he had kept his marriage to her a secret, doubts persist for lack of evidence. 'Miscellaneous Poems' was published in 1681.

Marvell's reputation as a poet started growing in the eighteenth century, chiefly on the basis of his satirical verses. As with the other Metaphysical poets, it was only in the twentieth century that Marvell came to be recognised as a major poet in the history of literature. Marvell's poetry is marked by an urbaneness and scholarly wit which sets him apart. His delicate handling of gross, sensual details is unsurpassed, as brought out in 'To His Coy Mistress'. At the same time, he is keenly sensitive to the world of nature as revealed in poems such as 'The Garden'. His concern with fundamental philosophical complexities finds typical 'metaphysical' treatment in 'A Dialogue between Body and Soul'. His poems represent his ability to assimilate diverse interests and experiences in a strikingly individual manner.

'To his coy Mistress'

The poem begins with an argument, which is the chief point of interest.

'Had we but world enough and time

This coyness, lady, would be no crime.'

This dramatic focus on the lady's coyness leads to the series of witty, humorous, philosophical and scholarly arguments placed by the poet to convince her into capitulating. The theme of 'carpe diem' (seize the day), popularised by Robert Herrick's poem, 'Gather ye rosebuds while ye may', finds a metaphysical rendering in Marvell's poem. Here, the argument is the chief point of interest, despite the dramatic quality of the utterance. The speaker is trying to impress upon the lady the urgency of their union by emphasising the evanescent quality of time. If they had sufficient time at their disposal, they 'would sit down, and think which way/ To walk, and pass our long love's day'. There is a veiled irony in the word 'long', with reference to the protracted courtship required by the conventions of love. Then, the lady could seek for jewels by the side of the Ganges while he waited by the tide of Humber. These are not merely offhand references, but contain a great deal of intellectual precision. India is traditionally famous for precious stones ('rubies'). Marvell grew up within sight of the river Humber. Further, these two rivers span between them the entire civilised world as believed by Classical scholars. Ganges is believed to be the eastern most boundary of the world. The last Roman outpost was near the Humber. These two rivers define the 'world' of the first line. And 'time' is defined thus—

‘I would  
Love you ten years before the flood:  
And you should, if you please, refuse  
Till the conversion of the Jews.’

Marvell’s tone is courtly in a tongue-in-cheek manner. The wit comes through in the impossible points of reference. The ‘flood’ indicates the farthest point in the mythical past—to Noah’s story in the Old Testament, while it is also a metaphor for physical consummation of love, as a man and a woman were the two survivors of the Classical flood. The reference to the conversion of the Jews sets the other impossible limit to future time because it was something that would never happen, according to popular belief. So, if the lovers had this ‘world’ and ‘time’, the lady could continue to ‘refuse’ while he could ‘complain’ endlessly, while pleading with her, recalling for us the conventions of courtly love.

In a logical sequence of thought, Marvell now lists the manner in which he would proceed in his courtship, if he had all the ‘world’ and ‘time’.

‘My vegetable love should grow  
Vaster than empires, and more slow.’

The adjective ‘vegetable’ produces a comic effect in the context of courtly love, indicating the physical character of their attachment. The most immediate point of comparison is the very slow growth. In a manner similar to that of Petrarch, the speaker now draws out an elaborate time-chart of the years he would spend admiring individual aspects of her beauty –

‘An hundred years should go to praise  
Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze.  
Two hundred to adore each breast:  
But thirty thousand to the rest.  
An age at least to every part,  
And the last age should your heart.’

The tongue-in-cheek arithmetic progression from hundred to thousand years in his catalogue of traditional charms brings out the absurdity of the entire exercise. That he is aware of all this signifying mere ritual is brought out in the next two lines—

‘For, Lady, you deserve this state;  
Nor would I love at lower rate.’

The purpose is to highlight the absurdity of the conventions which restrict the lady from reciprocating his ardour.

There is a sudden and decisive tonal change after this, which is one of the characteristic features of metaphysical poetry.

‘But at my back I always hear  
Time’s winged chariot hurrying near:  
And yonder all before us lie  
Deserts of vast eternity.’

The ‘but’ follows the syllogistic structure introduced by the conditional verb, ‘had’, in the first line. The hectic, breathless pace of these lines serves as contrast to the easy-going, light-hearted, humourous tone of the preceding lines. The contrast brings out the rhetorical strategy through which the speaker is trying to overcome the lady’s coyness, which is the chief concern in the poem. The rhythm realises all the excitement and terror of the frightening pursuit of time of its destined victims. The image is strange and disquieting in its dramatic representation of the abstract concept of time. The concern with time and eternity is in itself a metaphysical subject. Both time and eternity are concretised, making the impending end to physical existence all the more palpable. With these lines, the focus is suddenly enlarged, going beyond usual associations of time and eternity. Time is the relentless pursuer and we are the fugitives on the run as brought out through the words ‘always’ and ‘at our backs’. Time is generally considered as being endless, but, here it signifies death, waging war on humanity, ‘chariot’ possibly denoting war-chariots. Perhaps, Marvell had in mind Xenophon’s account in ‘Anabasis’, about chariots with projecting blades seen by a group of men from Greece on a mercenary expedition to Persia. This could be associated with the medieval idea of Death the mower and the image of time as winged. Thus, with death so close behind, the image of eternity is that of an endless

desert, signifying unending loneliness. This is not a Christian idea, but rather the idea of an epicurean. To drive home the harsh reality of the future, the speaker now brings before the lady, the grim future awaiting her.

‘Thy beauty shall no more be found:  
Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound  
My echoing sound: then worms shall try  
That long preserved virginity.

Here the tone is clearly ironical. The courtliness of the opening stanza is completely missing. Ruthlessly, he is pointing out to her that her ‘quaint sense of honour’, which is making her so protective of her virgin state, will not be able to prevent her body being ravaged by ‘worms’. The word ‘quaint’ suggests that her idea of chastity is odd and out of date. In a four-line poem in ‘The Greek Anthology’ (Book V, Poem no. 85) there is a similar thought— ‘In Acheron, dear Virgin, we shall lie as bone and dust’. The harsh wit contained in the lines, ‘The grave’s a fine and private place,/ But none, I think, do there embrace’ is reinforced by the clinching effect of the rhyme. With this thought the poem moves on to the ‘carpe diem’ theme worked out in the final section.

There is a shift from the ironical tone of the preceding section. Here, suddenly there is an urgent, emotional appeal in the conclusion of the logical syllogism in the words, ‘Now, therefore’. While the lady is still young and capable of passion, and her ‘willing soul transpires/ At every pore with instant fires’, the speaker urges her to concede to his appeal—‘Now let us sport us while we may;’. This is the theme of Herrick’s ‘Gather ye rosebuds while ye may’, i.e., the Anacreontic theme of ‘carpe diem’. But, Marvell takes this traditional theme beyond the conventional associations. Here, ‘all thought becomes an image and the soul / Becomes a body:’, as Yeats stated in the poem, ‘Phases of the Moon’. The lady here is too bashful to acknowledge that she too desires that which her lover is seeking. But he knows and therefore, urges her to join him in the fight against time.

‘And now, like am’rous birds of prey,  
Rather at once our time devour,  
Than languish in his slow-chapp’d power.’

This is a perfect illustration of metaphysical wit. There is a reference to a belief that each act of physical union shortens the life of the participants. This popular belief forms the basis of the witty paradox leading to the culminating effect of the poem. Time is conceived in concrete terms, producing the image of slowly moving but powerful jaws. It is a reminder that we are already inside the jaws of time. Therefore, the speaker wishes that he and his beloved could 'devour' time by means of physical union as was popularly believed, instead of waiting for time to 'devour' them, through a reversal of roles. The word 'devour' aptly reinforces the image of 'birds of prey', with the paradoxical qualifier, 'am'rous', added to it. The startling juxtaposition of 'am'rous' and 'birds of prey' is characteristic of the flexibility of Marvell's poetic imagination. This image leads on to an envisioning of the actual act itself—

'Let us roll all our strength, and all  
Our sweetness, up into one ball:  
And tear our pleasures with rough strife,  
Through the iron gates of life.'

Marvell is offering a poetic transcription of the act of love, without declining into bad taste. He is using the image of blockades on a river to state a physiological fact. In the expression, 'roll' into 'one ball', there are both linguistic and mythological associations. 'Ball' suggests conglomeration as well as sphere. Empedocles saw the universe as a duality and all motion as a conflict due to the opposed principles of love and discord. As Marvell presents it, love creates a sphere, the 'ball'. The expression, 'iron gates', evokes the image of a gorge through which the river Danube passes and also the anatomical feature. Here we have a witty and intellectual transcript of an erotic experience, which makes the act of love become part of the universal processes of life. Their love can transcend the power of death and destiny by hastening their death, thereby upsetting the power of Time over them. Marvell is adding a philosophical dimension to the act of love by presenting it as a means of triumphing over Time's plan and as an assertion of free-will---

'Thus, though we cannot make our sun  
Stand still, yet we will make him run.'

Marvell is realistic enough to realise that they cannot escape the cycle of life and death, but, in a superb coup, he outwits Time. By hastening their death through the act of love, the lovers can make time 'run' after them, instead of meekly submitting to its dictates.

In 'To his coy Mistress', Marvell offers a decidedly metaphysical rendering of the conventional 'carpe diem' theme. The dramatic presentation and the perfect structure of Marvell's poem make it different from Herrick's treatment of this theme in 'Gather ye rosebuds while ye may'. The perfectly worked out arguments in each stanza and the subtly etched, scholarly images, allusions and metaphors, require an intellectual response to the essentially erotic subject. Marvell unites metaphysical and neo-classical modes, which lends an urbane tone to his poem. The imaginative use of wit, dramatic style, and a tight, logical structure associated with the metaphysical school of poetry, combine with elegance of diction, classical regularity of form, associated with the style of Ben Jonson and the Augustans. Marvell's poem exudes an impression of equilibrium and of cheerful self-possession, brought out through the octosyllabic measure, in contrast to the disturbing realism of Donne's language and style.

The poem is divided into three stanzas, with the argument in each leading on to the next. The syllogistic frame is so tightly knit that not one line can be replaced by another. The first and second premises, in the first two stanzas smoothly and briskly lead on to the conclusion in the final stanza.

Marvell's language is very urbane, which makes the wit all the more elegant and subtle. His allusions are conventional and classical, rather than scientific and occult as in Donne's poems. 'To his coy Mistress' remains one of the most outstanding metaphysical poems for its syllogistic and elegant manner of arguing upon a delicate subject, lifting convention to an elevated intellectual and philosophical level.

#### 'The Garden'

In 'The Garden', Marvell seeks for some kind of reconciliation between man and his world by highlighting the salubrious effects of a life of contemplation in proximity to Nature. Marvell attempts to re-create Eden for us through his depiction of a real

English garden, with an underlying consciousness of man's inability to sustain a beatific experience because of his entanglement in material affairs.

'How vainly men themselves amaze  
To win the palm, the oak, or bays;  
And their uncessant labours see  
Crowned from some single herb or tree,  
Whose short and narrow verged shade  
Does prudently their toils upbraid;  
While all flowers and all trees do close  
To weave the garlands of repose.'

Marvell starts on a judgemental note, stressing on the 'vanity of human wishes'. The 'palm' refers to the rewards gained in war, the 'oak' for public service, and the 'bays' for achievements in the 'arts'. The 'uncessant' labours for material success seem wasted in terms of returns. A 'single herb or tree' is nothing compared to the boundless wealth of 'all flowers and all trees' and merely mock at, 'upbraid', 'their toils'. 'The short and narrow verged shade' received as reward for labour and pain does not provide 'garlands of repose', which can only be found in the seclusion of the garden, 'far from the madding world's ignoble strife'. Marvell is working on the seventeenth century literary convention of celebrating country life, inspired by Latin writers, especially Horace, Virgil and others. Here, going back to the world of nature is presented as a conscious choice, as it was in the case of Lord Fairfax who voluntarily retired from active life to settle in Nun Appleton.

Once the choice is made, Marvell points out the wisdom of his decision.

'Fair Quiet, have I found you thee here,  
And Innocence, thy sister dear!  
Mistaken long, I sought you then  
In busy companies of men.  
Your sacred plants, if here below,  
Only among the plants will grow,  
Society is all but rude,  
To this delicious solitude.'

It is only in the Eden-like ambience of the garden that the virtues of solitude and innocence can be understood. The speaker had mistakenly sought for these in the midst of men and material activities. Now he realises that such heavenly virtues find manifestation in the world of nature alone if they are to be found 'if here below', i.e., on this earth. Compared to the superior and refining influence of 'solitude', the world of men, 'society', appears uncivilised, 'rude'.

And the colour which represents this superior world is green, not 'white or red', colours that are associated with the sensuous beauty of women. It is this world of greenery which holds greater power to draw men's affections. Lovers who carve the names of their beloveds on the barks of trees are little aware that these trees are far more beautiful, and satisfying for their senses. This carving of names is a 'cruel' act, reiterating the inferior, uncivilised, 'rude' world of men.

'Fond lovers, cruel as their flame,  
Cut in these trees their mistress' name.  
Little, alas, they know, or heed,  
How far these beauties hers exceed!'

Marvell is simultaneously endorsing the pastoral tradition as well as subverting it by claiming that if the speaker ever does 'wound' the trees it shall not be for any human lover but for the tree itself.

'Fair trees! Where's'er your barks I wound,  
No name shall but your own be found.'

Marvell realistically observes that it is only after having 'run our passion's heat', that one retreats into the shelter of nature.

When we have run our passion's heat,  
Love hither makes his best retreat.  
The gods, that mortal beauty chase,  
Still in a tree did end their race.  
Apollo hunted Daphne so,  
Only that she might laurel grow.  
And Pan did after Syrinx speed,  
Not as a nymph, but for a reed.'

It is through a characteristic Marvellian twist that the myth of Pan or Apollo chasing nymphs is interpreted as a deliberate act to metamorphose them into objects of nature. The conceit embedded in the concept of making the green of nature all-pervasive is applied to the classical myths for supporting his argument that 'the garden', i.e., nature is the ultimate destination for man. That Daphne and Syrinx, pursued by the gods, had escaped by turning into plants, is wittily presented as the original intention behind the chase. Marvell divests the violence associated with the myths by offering an original interpretation to proceed with his dialectic of retreat and succour which can only be found in the garden.

And thus we are presented with a series of ecstatic garden experiences which contain a sense of immediacy.

'What wondrous life in this I lead!  
Ripe apples drop about my head;  
The luscious clusters of the vine  
Upon my mouth do crush their wine;  
The nectarine, and curious peach,  
Into my hands themselves do reach;  
Stumbling on melons, as I pass,  
Ensnared with flowers, I fall on grass.'

Here is a celebration of the experience of a 'wondrous life' that is intensely felt at a personal, sensuous level, free of all traditional, classical associations. This is almost a Christian celebration of God's good world, with the 'fall' on grass completely harmless and without any consequences.

This enjoyment of the senses leads onto considerations of 'pleasures' of the mind culminating in the immortal last line--

'Meanwhile the mind, from pleasures less,  
Withdraws into its happiness:  
The mind, that ocean where each kind  
Does straight its own resemblance find;

Yet it creates, transcending these,  
Far other worlds, and other seas;  
Annihilating all that's made  
To a green thought in a green shade.'

In this stanza we have Platonic associations of the world of perfect forms or ideas which find replications in the material world. The mind contains innate ideas of everything just as the ocean 'where each kind/ Does straight its own resemblance find'. Further, the mind can also create forms which have no physical embodiment, 'transcending' the material sphere—'other worlds, and other seas'. To attain this power, all else has to be annihilated. It seems as if liberation of the mind can only be achieved through complete negation of all substance, so that there remains only 'a green thought', not in any bodily form, but, in a 'green shade'. Yet, the mention of 'green' lends substance to the apparently disembodied thought. Marvell expertly resolves the dichotomy between essence and substance, mind and body, by his power to 'dissolve, diffuse and dissipate'.

From the sphere of the mind, Marvell moves on to a consideration of man's spiritual affinity with the 'garden state'.

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

By casting aside the body, the soul, imaged as a bird, as in Neoplatonic writings, seeks out the pleasures of the world of nature. Physical details of the garden, such as fountains and fruit-trees, reinforce the assimilative quality of the poet's perceptions while depicting the soul's flight. The 'various light' refers to the Neoplatonic belief that the various colours of the natural world emanate from the one, divine light of eternity. The soul, imaged as a bird, reflects this divine light as well as its own beauty

in the waving of 'its silver wings', as it 'whets' or preens and 'combs', while awaiting its 'longer flight' which could mean union with the eternal, or death, or, perhaps, poetic imagination. With this elevated, spiritual exploration of the natural world, the I of the speaker recedes to give place to an objective assessment of the pleasures of solitude in that 'garden-state' when 'man walked without a mate'.

The experience of Edenic bliss can only be truly felt in solitude, where there is no Eve to distract man. In this eighth stanza there is an allusion to the second book of Genesis, where Eve was created as 'help-meet' i.e., a suitable companion for Adam. But, solitude was far more conducive for enjoying the joys of the 'garden-state' or paradise. But, mortal man has to accept whatever bliss he can experience in his fallen state, because undisturbed solitude is not possible. Retreat into nature in solitary state would be 'To live in paradise alone'. There is a return to the actual garden of the opening stanzas, which now appears as a microcosmic imitation of the heavenly garden.

'How well the skilful gardener drew  
Of flowers and herbs this dial new;  
Where from above the milder sun  
Does through a fragrant zodiac run;  
And, as it works, th'industrious bee  
Computes its time as well as we.  
How could such sweet and wholesome hours  
Be reckoned but with herbs and flowers!'

Marvell draws attention to the perfect handiwork of the Creator to which man can only have temporary access, as he is subject to time. In the postlapsarian world, the time spent among 'flowers and herbs' is to be counted as moments spent in eternity. The expression 'fragrant zodiac' indicates the flowers and herbs planted in the form of a sundial. This, too, is a reminder of the temporality of existence, which the bee, while gathering its sweet ('time' as a pun on 'thyme') cannot evade. Therefore, it is only through as much happiness that one can extract out of nature that one can experience the true joys of the macrocosmic 'garden state', even if it is for a brief while.

The 'garlands of repose' and their ennobling power are depicted through gentle argument and traditional associations. Contemporary reality and

literary tradition combine to convey a sympathetic assessment of the subject. The poem follows a regular stanza form of eight lines each, which helps to maintain a sedateness and elegance of tone aiding the logical progression of thought. The first two stanzas emphasise the importance of contemplative life, while the next two depict a somewhat lyrical, pastoral, experience, having a close resemblance to Marvell's Latin poem, 'Hortus'. The sensuous, mental and spiritual apprehension of nature in stanzas 5, 6 and 7, lead on to a consideration of the heavenly garden, concluding with an objective assessment of man's position in the temporal, material context, with which the poem began.

#### 'A dialogue between the Soul and Body'

In this poem, Marvell presents a reworking of the traditional genre of the moral debate. Dialogues between the body and soul or other pairs of abstractions were common in the Middle Ages and had regained popularity in Marvell's time. Here, Body and Soul are given entire stanzas to present their cause independently and not out of any provocation, though each is aware of the presence of the other. Each of the speakers has a distinct manner of speech which lends a dramatic effect although there is no dramatic contest between the two.

The poem opens with the 'dialogue' of the Soul.

'O who shall from this Dungeon raise  
A soul enslaved so many ways?'

The Body is the 'dungeon' and ironically those faculties considered elevating to man are denigrated and invested with the opposite functions. The soul is 'manacled' by hands and feet, whereas it is the prisoner's hand and feet which are manacled. The eye instead of enabling sight is said to cause blindness in the soul and the ear instead of being an organ for hearing, is said to cause deafness. Marvell makes the complaint of the Soul almost comical in the inversion of details. But, then, his purpose is to bring out the hollowness of human existence where man is blinded by vanity and turns a deaf ear to truth. And, so the Soul finds itself fettered—

'A soul hung up, as 'twere, in chains  
Of nerves, and arteries, and veins.  
Tortured, besides each other part,

In a vain head, and double heart.'

Marvell gives a graphic representation of the human anatomy as viewed by the Soul. The 'chains' consisting of 'nerves, and arteries, and veins' and the shackles made of bones, hand and feet round up the conceit in projecting the body as a 'dungeon', with all these becoming instruments of torture. This is how the Soul imagines his position.

The Body's answer is again a theory of how it conceives of his condition, with a similar complaint of being fettered by the Soul.

'O who shall me deliver whole,  
From bonds of this tyrannical soul?'

The Body gives a list of all the tortures it has to undergo for the Soul's control over it. Because the Soul insists upon moral rightness, the Body is placed in a state of crisis, with the constant fear of erring—'That mine own precipice I go'. The life instilled in the Body by the Soul gives it warmth, stirring all kinds of desires, which were not there in its 'needless' or inert state. The life that the soul gives to the Body is to test its mortality—'Has made me live to let me die'. The ambivalence contained in these lines bring out the irony of the situation. The fact that bodily existence is subject to mortality makes the complaint of the body being possessed by the soul meaningless. Further, the Body now claims to be the possessor of the Soul, whereas, earlier it had wished to be delivered of this 'tyrannical soul'—

'A body that could never rest,  
Since this ill spirit it possessed.'

With this list of complaints made by the Body, the Soul now speaks up in defence. It wonders what magical power could have tied it to this fleshly being. The Soul, imprisoned in the Body has to suffer all the evils that afflict mankind. Again, there is the paradox of the Soul, 'that cannot feel', be made to feel the pain. Ironically, the Soul has to keep alive that which destroys it—i.e., the Body. And despite its eagerness to flee the Body, it not only has to endure its sufferings, but also its recovery—

'Constrained not only to endure  
Diseases, but, what's worse, the cure;'

The last two lines of this dialogue contain a reversal of the usual associations of the image of a shipwreck. Here, return to health after being close to death is depicted as being 'shipwrecked into health again', missing the chance to reach the port, signifying death.

Body now takes the cue for its rebuttal of the Soul's standpoint. The idea of illness and recovery is now interpreted to suit the argument of the Body who claims that the malaise of the Soul was such that it was beyond cure.

'But physic yet could never reach  
The maladies thou dost me teach.'

It is to be noted that a direct address is being made for the first time in this dialogue in the use of the second person, 'thou'. Body claims that the torments of physical ailments are nothing compared to the torments inflicted by the presence of the Soul. The conflict between Body and Soul becomes all the more complex in view of the indistinguishable causes of physical and mental sufferings. As Body states, bodily experiences are coupled with intangible, but far more potent spiritual disturbances, such as fear, hatred and so on.

'Whom first the cramp of hope does tear,  
And then the palsy shakes of fear;  
The pestilence of love does heat,  
Or hatred's hidden ulcer eat;  
Joy's cheerful madness does perplex,  
Or sorrow's other madness vex;'

Abstract qualities become associated with physical conditions in true metaphysical fashion, here. At this point, the ten-line utterance of the preceding passages is altered to include another four lines, in which Body states the inherent contradiction in existence.

'What but a soul could have the wit  
To build me up for sin so fit?  
So architects do square and hew,  
Green trees that in the forest grew.'

Some critics believe that the poem is incomplete, while others consider these last lines outline the basic dilemma which cannot be solved, and perhaps should not be attempted, so as to leave it open-ended as all intellectual discourses. In these lines, Body argues that it is the Soul which infused life into it and made it vulnerable to sin.

To substantiate his point, he gives the analogy of forest and garden. Like the Mower, Body considers that trees are best left to grow in the forest. Yet 'architects' plan gardens, submitting them to all kinds of correction and punishment—'square and hew', for their own pleasure. The dialogue now progresses into the sphere of art from the sphere of theology, widening the area of speculation, hinting at a debate between the relative merits of Nature and Art.

The symmetrical arrangement of the stanzas and the content of each dialogue bring out the decidedly intellectual nature of the debate, in keeping with the tradition of medieval debates. But Marvell adds an interesting twist to the dry subject by the personal, heartfelt, urgent tone of the speakers. This lends a dramatic quality to the utterances and the debate between Body and Soul becomes both lyrical and objective, assuming universal dimensions in moving on to the larger scope of a debate between Nature and Civilisation. Conventional associations are reversed to keep the interest alive as in the image of shipwreck or the reference to the green trees. And once again, the impalpable becomes real and alive, like a 'green thought in a green shade'.