

“Companions of My Thoughts More Green”: Damon’s Baconian Sexing of Nature

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Abstract: This article examines the relevance that Francis Bacon’s call for humanity to engage in a (re)productive relationship with Nature has for Andrew Marvell’s “The Mower’s Song.” Rather than viewing Damon’s realization of his isolation from the meadows as solely due to his emerging sexual feeling for Juliana, this article complicates the Mower’s plight by arguing that Damon experiences a tropological shift in how he characterizes Nature. While in “Damon, the Mower” sexuality appears alien to the natural world, Damon comes to recognize Nature as a sexual entity through his depiction of the grass’s growth as “luxuriant” and the meadows as a participant in a May-game festivity. The transition that Damon experience parallels that which Bacon demands for the sciences. For Bacon, the restoration of humanity’s Edenic mastery begins with treating Nature as any woman subject to masculine domination. However, in perceiving Nature through terms similar to those that Bacon advocates, Marvell’s protagonist does not discover a path to back Paradise but reenacts the Fall. On this basis, Marvell offers a counter narrative to the one Bacon posits in which the new science returns humanity to its prelapsarian mastery over Nature.



In her work as an ecofeminist critic, Carolyn Merchant has done much to promote a reassessment of the legacy of the Scientific Revolution. Her eminent study of the rise of the new science in seventeenth-century Europe, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the New Science* (1980),

reveals the tropological shift that authorized an aggressive treatment of the natural world. Transitioning from a mother-earth image towards the figurative realization of Nature as an erratic, sexualized female other, Merchant argues that the predominance of modern science was predicated on an exploitative and misogynist tropology: "Female imagery became a tool in adapting scientific knowledge and method to a new form of human power over nature."¹ Merchant constructs a counter-narrative of the Scientific Revolution promoted by historians of modern science. As Merchant articulates this debate in a recent article: "Whether the control of nature leads to human wealth and well-being for the few or to social and ecological decline for the many depends on the underlying assumptions of the narrative told by scholars."² Rather than a tale of human triumph, enlightenment, and prosperity, the new science, as Merchant suggests, came at the expense of "peoples throughout the world, for the environment, and for the laboring classes."³ For Merchant, Francis Bacon is the key intellectual figure behind the grand narrative for the emerging scientific thought, in which the natural philosopher sexualizes Nature metaphorically to advance human prosperity and so return mankind to a prelapsarian dominance over the natural world. While her work has immense value for Baconian scholars, Merchant's rereading of the Scientific Revolution also opens the door to the re-evaluation of other seventeenth-century literary production. With Merchant's perspective as a foundation, I argue that Marvell's pastoral protagonist, Damon, rejects Bacon's sexualized narrative that undergirds the new science.⁴ Marvell was not necessarily thinking exclusively of Bacon in his depiction of Damon's alienation from, and hostility towards, his natural surroundings; however, I see Marvell aligning with Bacon's question as to whether humanity can recover Adamic mastery over Nature, figured as a feminine other available for sexual exploitation. Ultimately, however, Bacon and Marvel come to the opposite conclusions: while Bacon promises through the implementation of his scientific program that humanity will usher in an era of prelapsarian sovereignty, Marvell's Damon, encountering his environment through a Baconian lens, destroys the meadows and himself. Rather than resulting in another Eden, Damon's actions prefigure a second Fall. Demonstrating the anguish and destruction that Damon experiences by adopting this Baconian perspective, Marvell resists the narrative of the Scientific Revolution that will predominate in the seventeenth-century.

Prior to exploring the relevance that Baconianism has for understanding Damon's tragedy and its epistemological significance, it is necessary to unpack Bacon's tale of human intellectual advancement that will come with the new science. In creating this narrative, Bacon realizes his contemporary historical moment as a break from the morass of classical learning, which he suggests to be the youth of humanity's intellectual development. This rejection of youth becomes a predominant theme for Bacon. In "Of Youth and Old Age," Bacon expresses an anxiety over the youth of the mind that has "much heat, and great and violent desires and perturbations, are not ripe for action till they have passed the meridian of their years."⁵ Throughout *Novum Organum* (1620), Bacon's foundational scientific treatise, there is a sustained distrust of youth. In essence, Bacon's scientific program looks to curb the instinctual habit of the immature mind "to leap and fly from particulars to remote and nearly the most general axioms (such as the so-called first principles of arts and of things)."⁶ Bacon portrays his renewal or "instauration" of learning as the transitioning from a young, impetuous mindset to a more disciplined one. In *Temporis partus masculus* (*The Masculine Birth of Time*), presumably written in 1603 but never published, the guide admonishes his student that he should not feel ready yet to explore Nature without his guidance: "But, my son, if I should ask you to grapple immediately with the bewildering complexities of experimental science before your mind has been purged of its idols, beyond a peradventure you would promptly desert your leader."⁷ Without his elderly instructor, the youthful student would succumb to the "idols of the road." Bacon reiterates again and again his conception of youth not as a privileged time of innocence and intellectual/spiritual clarity but a perilous moment through which one must be carefully mentored.

Bacon's apprehension of youth becomes a pivotal facet of the tropology of his instauration. Intellectual maturation for Bacon will paradoxically restore humanity to its original authority over Nature, a point I find Marvell challenging through Damon's pastoral journey. As Bacon envisions the future path of human learning, the transition from a pre-modern, allegorical worldview to a modern scientifically-based mode of learning parallels the sexual maturation of the male youth. For Bacon, mankind may reclaim Edenic mastery over Nature once it has abandoned its intellectual childhood. This mental transition or maturation entails the imperative to sexualize Nature, to perceive the relationship between

humanity and Nature as one in which the latter is subject to sexual domination by the former. Merchant identifies as Bacon's significant contribution to modern scientific thought the development of a language that "reduc[ed] female nature to a resource for economic production."⁸ For Bacon, only when the encounter with Nature is read through the metaphor of sexual reproduction can humanity hope to formulate the type of knowledge "so that the mind can exercise its rightful authority over the nature of things."⁹ For Bacon, when learning enters into its sexually mature adulthood, humanity will prosper and enjoy a return to an Edenic state.

Bacon's legacy is apparent in the decades immediately following his death, even prior to the founding of the Royal Society in 1660. Baconianism was very much in the intellectual atmosphere of Marvell's England. In his immensely influential study of Puritan scientific thought, Charles Webster places Bacon and his ideas at the center of intellectual life both during and immediately following the English Civil War: "It is therefore only a slight exaggeration to regard Baconianism as the official philosophy of the Revolution."¹⁰ Webster finds that the appeal of Baconianism for Puritanism resided in Bacon's call for restoring humanity to the mastery over Nature that Adam had once possessed. In rejecting the history of learning, which had led humanity further into the morass of postlapsarian thought, Bacon glimpsed a means to achieve Adamic control of things, to return to the innocent state of humanity in Nature, by advancing a new tropology that demands the mind to engage with Nature on a (re)productive basis. As Webster identifies, this Baconian goal of restoring mankind's dominion over Nature was conducive to Puritan millenarianism: "The Puritans genuinely thought that each step in the conquest of nature represented a move towards the millennial condition"¹¹ Most importantly, Webster demonstrates that the development of scientific thought in England during the 1640s and 1650s was little interrupted by the outbreak of war. Baconianism was very much circulating within the intellectual atmosphere of these decades, evident in the fact that during the 1640s Bacon's essays were reprinted three times (1639, 1642, and 1648), while *Novum* was reprinted in a pocket-size edition in 1650.¹²

Through the adherence to Baconian principles, Puritan intellectuals sought to manipulate Nature for the amelioration of humanity's physical condition, particularly in the realm of agriculture. According to Webster, Puritan social reform sought to revolutionize agriculture "by applying

Baconian experimental philosophy to an area which Bacon himself had expected to exemplify the great utilitarian value of his methods."¹³ The treatises on agriculture in the early 1640s express the belief that humanity is on the cusp of fully taking advantage of the world's natural resources. In *The Treasure of Traffike* (1641), Lewis Roberts admonishes that, while earth "yields thus naturally the richest and most precious commodities,...the search and inquisition thereof, in these our days, is by man too much neglected and omitted."¹⁴ Likewise, Gabriel Plattes articulates the Baconian imperative to harness Nature's full bounty through dissemination of scientific knowledge and experimentation. In the dedicatory epistle to *A Discovery of Infinite Treasure, Hidden Since the World's Beginning* (1639), Plattes suggests that England could be transformed into "the Paradise of the World" through the implementation of a scientific program: "no Lawyer can make an estate so indefesible (sic) as an approved and profitable experiment." For Plattes, this agricultural revolution can "turn Plow-men into Philosophers; and make them to excelleth their predecessors even as a learned Physician excels an Empiric."¹⁵ Roberts's and Plattes's texts reflect a changing perspective towards Nature, which saw the natural world as finally being subjected to human control through scientific inquiry. At the foundation of this restoration was Bacon's narrative for the new science.

While Bacon's call to re-establish Adamic mastery over Nature informed Puritan millenarianism and agricultural reform, the imperative to alter the terms on which humanity encountered Nature, to perceive the natural world as a sexual other who must be dominated into a reproductive relationship, is subtly evident throughout many scientific writings of the mid-seventeenth century. In *Certain Philological Essays* (1661), Robert Boyle, a predominant and founding member of the Royal Society, articulates the control of Nature for human benefit in a way that implies a sexual conquest:

For some Men care only to Know Nature, others desire to Command Her: or to express it otherwise, some there are who desire to Please themselves by the Discovery of the Causes of the known Phenomena, and others would be able to produce new ones, and bring Nature to be serviceable to their particular Ends, whether of Health, or Riches, or sensual Delights.¹⁶

Boyle imposes a hierarchy here between those who merely seek knowledge of Nature, what Bacon would label "light-bearing," and those who work to render Nature conducive to their own desires, what for Bacon would be "fruit-bearing."¹⁷ The authority that these latter practitioners of natural philosophy assert over Nature comes through not only in their knowledge of hidden "causes of the known Phenomena" but also in their ability to manipulate and re-produce them. To engage productively with Nature is to make her "serviceable" to one's own needs, even those "sensual Delights." Boyle echoes Bacon's goal "that Nature should serve the affairs and convenience of man" and also realizes this dominance over Nature in terms that suggest Bacon's claim for the new science as the sexual maturity of the mind.¹⁸ Even in his treatise challenging the Galenic paradigm of reproduction, *On Generation* (1651), William Harvey (Bacon's physician) conceives of scientific investigation of Nature as "penetrate[ing] into the heart of her mystery."¹⁹ Here Merchant finds in Harvey's reduction of the mother's role in reproduction to that which is solely material and passive the "new scientific values based on the control of nature and women."²⁰ What emerges in these texts is evidence of the influence of Bacon's rhetoric in how the new engagement between humanity and Nature will be realized.

Within this Baconian discourse that realizes the new science as both a metaphorically sexual encounter with Nature and a restoration of humanity's prelapsarian supremacy, Marvell composes what may be considered a dirge to the English pastoral genre, "The Mower's Song." This poem is generally considered the conclusion to Marvell's Mower poem sequence, the first three poems of which are "The Mower Against Gardens," "Damon, the Mower," and "The Mower to the Glowworms." Though initially published in 1681, consensus among Marvellian scholars is that the Mower poem sequence was written during Marvell's tenure as Mary Fairfax's tutor, between 1649 and 1651.²¹ Though this article primarily focuses on "The Mower's Song," with references to "Damon, the Mower," I also touch on Marvell's other poems concerning sexuality and Nature, particularly "The Garden" and "The Mower Against Gardens." The composition of these poems, according to Nigel Smith, is in the same period as the Mower poem sequence.²² In "The Garden" and "The Mower Against Gardens," Marvell expounds on how sexuality occludes humanity

from a natural, Edenic experience, which makes these poems vital to my reading of "Damon, the Mower." Further, Linda Anderson contends that the Mower poems do form a thematic sequence focusing on a single personality: "Whether or not Marvell intended the poems as a sequence, he is at least consistent throughout out all four poems in presenting a single individual who defines himself in a special relationship with nature while at the same time hinting that the reader should question that definition."²³ Susan Snyder goes even further in extrapolating from the order of the poems in the 1681 folio edition of Marvell's poetry; she argues that this order indicates the poems' depiction of the development of Damon's relinquishing his childish engagement of Nature.²⁴ Since the poems themselves suggest this development of their shared protagonist, I agree with and predicate my own reading of the poems on this presumed order.²⁵

At the end of his journey in the Mower poem sequence, Damon experiences sexuality as alienating, entrapping him in an unfamiliar world where he can no longer enjoy the unity he once had with the meadows. Beyond Damon's isolation, I find that Marvell's pastoral protagonist enacts a tropological shift similar to that at the center of Baconianism: Damon makes an intellectual transition from reading his environment as asexual and reflective of his own inner world, depicted in "Damon," to seeing the meadows as a sexual entity that must be dominated in "The Mower's Song." As opposed to re-entering Eden, Damon suffers another Fall. The sexualizing metaphor that Bacon claims will open up the path to improving humanity's material existence leads to Damon lashing out against the meadows. The poem sequence dramatizes Damon's journey from a pre- to a post-lapsarian perspective, which is made evident by the changing tropes by which Damon perceives the meadows. In "Damon" Marvell describes the meadows as maternal, whereas in "The Mower's Song," the mower labels them as "luxuriant," a sexually charged word in Marvell's lexicon. In this sense I read the meadows as a synecdoche for Nature. Damon's sexualizing of and consequential alienation from the meadows Marvell suggests to be representative of humanity's inescapable condition. Sexual/ intellectual maturation does not provide the escape from our postlapsarian state that Bacon proposes.

This reading of Damon's alienation from the meadows builds on and complicates how scholars have generally understood his crisis. Critics of the Mower poems argue for the intersection between Damon's emerging

sexuality and his relationship with the meadows. Within this reading, Juliana's entrance into Damon's world, which becomes the catalyst for his entrance into sexuality, provokes his loss of the harmonious relationship that he once enjoyed with Nature. Robert N. Watson traces the loss of a symbiotic relationship with Nature to the speaker's heterosexual desire. The poem, argues Watson, acts as an admonishment against men involving themselves with women, who act as "a marker of otherness... the desire for her produces (or reflects) a recognition of a loss of symbiotic presence in the universe that is a perpetual fact for the human creature, despite the impulse to hide it behind a particular erotic betrayal."²⁶ Likewise, Judith Haber finds that Juliana's presence forces Damon into recognition of his own individuality and separateness: "Romantic love makes Damon acutely aware of the separate existence of another; he therefore becomes aware of both his individual isolation and his desire for union."²⁷ For Watson and Haber, then, the sexual awakening causes Damon to recognize Juliana's uniqueness from himself, which in turn causes him to perceive his own isolation from his environment. According to these critics, sexual maturation in Marvell's Mower poems brings loneliness. While I agree with this reading that attributes Damon's sense of alienation to his recognition of his sexuality, Damon's new post-Juliana experience of Nature, I argue, reflects a profound and complex metaphorical transition. Rather than interpreting the meadows as resistant to sexuality, Damon in "the Mower's Song" reads his environment as a sexually autonomous and dangerous character. This re-imagining Nature as a sexual entity redefines the dynamic of Damon's relationship with his environment: what had once secured his sense of self through a maternal trope now he perceives as jeopardizing his agency and so must be subdued. While critics - such as Haber and Watson - identify as a consequence of Damon's entrance into sexuality his alienation from the meadows, I posit that Damon's sexual maturation also causes him to perceive the meadows as a sexualized other whom he seeks to dominate. This article then looks to recover "The Mower's Song" as a space in which Marvell questions the possibility of regaining an Edenic relationship with the natural world through sexualization and domination, two central aspects of Baconianism.

Leaving Behind "The Boyhood of Knowledge"

In *Novum*, Bacon posits a modern historiography that champions the progressive nature of learning. For Bacon, contemporary knowledge appears stagnant: "By contrast [to the mechanical arts] philosophy and the intellectual sciences stand like statues, worshipped and celebrated, but not moved forwards."²⁸ Bacon indicts humanism for turning the intellect's perspective forever backwards through its veneration of classical authors. Such an epistemological position seeks truth in the recovery of ancient learning through philology; that is, the closer one could come linguistically to these past texts, the more one could access a past golden age of learning. Much of the agenda that Bacon sets out in his scientific writings advocates the reorienting of our historical outlook. Rather than possessing what Bacon sees as the humanist's nostalgia for antiquity, the disciple of the new science will be focused on the present and future. This reversal of history, in which the past becomes merely prelude to the present, demands a new ontology of truth: "As regards authors, it is utterly feeble to grant them so much but to deny his rights to Time, the author of authors and indeed of all authority. For Truth is rightly described as the daughter of Time, not of Authority."²⁹ Here Bacon's iconoclasm is most pronounced: he sets as antithetical "time" and "authority," each one denoting an opposed epistemology. While "authority" suggests a textual-based learning that discourages deviation from ancient writings, Bacon's claim that "truth" is "the daughter of time" liberates the mind from obsequious devotion to the past. The knowledge held in the texts of Aristotle and Plato, for Bacon, should no longer be privileged as representing the maturity of human thought. Bacon predicates his epistemology on reversing humanism's privileging of the past: "For the world's old age is its true antiquity and should apply to our own times, not to the world's youth, when the ancients lived. For their age from which our own point of view is ancient and older, from the world's point of view is new and younger."³⁰ Bacon reevaluates the past and repositions the early seventeenth-century subject not in a diminished present but on the cusp of an era of discovery. Bacon cites recent innovations and the exploration of the New World as evidence for his historiography: "And surely it would be disgraceful in a time when regions of the material globe, that is, of earth, the seas and stars, have been opened up far and wide for us to see, if the limits of our intellectual world

were restricted to the narrow discoveries of the ancients."³¹ The achievements of Columbus and Galileo necessitated a conception of intellectual history as successive, not in decline.³²

In part, Bacon formulates his progressive model of human intellectual history as a rejection of the preoccupation with words as opposed to things, of which Bacon charges Aristotle as being the original instigator. Notably, in *The Masculine Birth*, Bacon's elderly guide commences his diatribe against ancient philosophers with Aristotle, who initially leads, for Bacon, the human mind awry by turning its attention towards words: "Just when the human mind, borne thither by some favoring gale, had found the rest in a little truth, this man presumed to cast the closest fetters on our understandings. He composed an art or manual of madness and made us slaves to words."³³ As Bacon develops further throughout his scientific treatises, Aristotle's crime of duping the intellect into the belief that words possess an intrinsic connection with Nature confused the subjective and the objective. That is, the mind's fixation on words leads to its mistakenly reading the objective world through its own linguistic constructions. Aristotle, rather than holding the venerable position in which humanist tradition had placed him, becomes the origin of humanity's intellectual fall. Through textually-, as opposed to experientially-, based learning, Bacon finds that words have become autonomous: instead of facilitating the generation of knowledge, words actually obstruct one's ability to access an objective reality. This epistemology reflects, for Bacon, the immaturity of the pre-scientific intellect, for the "Greeks seem merely the boyhood of knowledge, with the characteristic of boys, that it is good at chattering, but immature and unable to generate."³⁴

The overarching trope that Bacon employs in describing the new stage of human intellectual history is that of male sexual maturation. In considering the above quotation from the preface to his *Novum*, the "boyhood of knowledge" that classical authors represent is marked by impotency: their knowledge, linguistically-based, lacks the ability to encounter Nature sexually, to engage in a (re)productive relationship with a recognized other. This conflation of intellectual and sexual maturity emerges in *The Masculine Birth*. Here the elderly guide acts as much as teacher as panderer for his young male student. The text identifies the end goal of the elderly guide's instructions as the student's ability to engage in

a (re)productive relationship with Nature: "My dear, dear boy, what I propose is to unite you with *things themselves* in a chaste, holy, and legal wedlock." Although, as the text presents it, the student has not as yet reached that point of intellectual/sexual maturity, the elderly guide assures him that once he has properly distanced himself from Nature he will then be able to bring forth "a blessed race of Heroes and Supermen who will overcome the immeasurable helplessness and poverty of the human race."³⁵ Bacon, through his character of the elderly guide, defines sexual/intellectual maturation as not just the penetration of the female other/Nature but also the realization of the social function of this copulation. That is, for Bacon, the sexually/intellectually mature male subject is one who moves beyond the personal and views his efforts in a public context. In this sense, both learning and human sexuality must be seasoned with "charity." Like the young male who must separate himself emotionally from the female other to copulate properly for the benefit of society, the mind must cleave itself from Nature in order to generate productive knowledge.

This new sexualizing trope, as Merchant reveals, was not innocent but, in fact, sanctioned an aggressive, exploitative treatment of Nature. In moving from a conception of the world as living organism to one of a machine, Merchant identifies a shift in the predominant trope for Nature, from the earth mother figure to the unpredictable female other who must be sexually subdued. With this new image of Nature, as Merchant notes, came the loss of any ethical restriction that had previously guided humanity's interaction with its environment:

The new image of nature as a female to be controlled and dissected through experiment legitimated the exploitation of natural resources. Although the image of the nurturing earth popular in the Renaissance did not vanish, it was superseded by new controlling imagery. The constraints against penetration associated with the earth-mother image were transformed into sanction for denudation.³⁶

To turn the natural world into a vast depository of resources meant for human consumption required a complex tropological and accompanying ethical shift that repositioned humanity in a dominant position to Nature. Within the emerging scientific mindset of the seventeenth century, Nature

required intervention so that humanity could reap its full benefit. As Merchant remarks, "Disorderly, active nature was soon forced to submit to the questions and experimental techniques of the new science."³⁷

Since the publication of her study of the Scientific Revolution, Merchant's thesis has sparked a controversy between ecofeminist scholars and modern apologists for Bacon. In the latter camp, critics of Merchant's thesis dismiss her claims as anachronistic. Particularly, Iddo Landau finds that Merchant, along with other feminist critics of Bacon, places too much significance on Bacon's gendering of Nature, being more conventional than anything else: "However, this frequently seems to be a 'dead metaphor' for him...One characteristic of dead metaphors is that they occur in contexts where their primary connotations are irrelevant."³⁸ Despite this resistance, Merchant's work has left an immensely important legacy to feminist critics of modern science in hypothesizing a counter-narrative to the grand narrative that informs many historians of early modern science.³⁹ Katharine Park cites Merchant's reevaluation of the Scientific Revolution as the foundational contribution that *The Death of Nature* has made to ecofeminist scholarship: Merchant's rereading of the Scientific Revolution made available for analysis the "deep current of misogyny" that would underpin "the view of nature associated with the mechanical philosophy of Descartes, Hobbes, and others."⁴⁰

My own interpretation of Bacon's metaphors for the new science draws on the shift in the image of Nature that Merchant chronicles. I look to build on Merchant's work by arguing that not only was there a transition in the metaphors used for Nature but that Bacon portrayed this tropological shift as the sexual maturation of the human mind. As Bacon would have the seventeenth-century subject comprehend his contemporary moment in history, learning, particularly natural philosophy, is about to experience a sexual awakening. No longer will the pre-sexual mindset of the ancient authors confine humanity to mediating its encounter with Nature through solipsistic fantasies. In his "Thoughts and Conclusions" (1607), Bacon succinctly articulates his identification of ancient Greek philosophy with immature sexuality: "Now of this philosophy Aristotle is by universal consent the chief, yet he left nature herself untouched and inviolated, and dissipated his energies in comparing, contrasting and analyzing popular notions about her."⁴¹ Benjamin Farrington's translation of this unpublished text suggests Bacon's overarching indictment of

classical philosophy as condemning human learning to a perpetual childhood: in being obsessed with his own mental constructions of Nature, Aristotle allows the human mind to confuse its own fantasy with objective reality and to forgo any material engagement. Bacon's charge that Aristotle had "left nature untouched and inviolated" implicitly marks the adherent to the new science as one who would violate, deflower Nature.

The "Luxuriant" Growth of Nature

The correspondence between sexual maturation and humanity's relationship to Nature is a central theme in Marvell's Mower poems; however, sexuality inhibits Damon's ability to establish a prelapsarian encounter with the meadows. Where Bacon locates the means back to Eden as being a sexually mature mind, Marvell cites such a perspective as perverting humanity and Nature. As Damon becomes more sexually aware of himself, he makes the transition from interpreting himself in an intimate relationship with the meadows to one in which his environment becomes alien and must be subjugated to his will. Susan Snyder offers a compelling reading of Damon's anxiety over being alienated from Nature that points to the transition of the human subject from a pre-sexual, imaginary state to the recognition of sexual individuality: "...the overall metaphoric system casts suspicion on sexuality itself. The favored condition here is presexual, with no desire and in fact no discernible differentiation into he and she."⁴² The typical Renaissance pastoral journey, according to Snyder, follows the male protagonist as he leaves a time of unity and allegory to enter into a world of sexuality and death: "The journey is now familiar passage from an Edenic state of natural wholeness through sexual awakening that is also an initiation into individual mortality, which here concludes in a new, negative relation with nature based this time on alienation and death."⁴³ The end of the journey is then separation. Snyder locates this break from the imaginary stage for Damon in his sexual awakening brought about by Juliana: "Damon's song makes apparent the connection between feeling desire and realizing a separate identity."⁴⁴ Sexual awareness then forces one to recognize otherness, and, consequently, the unity of the past, presexual stage is irretrievably lost.

In contrast, I argue that while in "Damon the Mower" Damon experiences sexuality as preternatural and even inimical to the meadows,

in "The Mower's Song" he comes to read Nature through a sexualizing trope. While the earlier poem of the sequence presents Damon viewing Nature as asexual (I would go as far as to claim sexuality is external to the meadows here), Damon of "The Mower's Song" finds Nature as possessing a sexual agency. My reading of this latter poem centers on Damon's labeling the grass's growth as "luxuriant." Damon imaginatively creates a world that is populated by a personified Nature: the sun that "licks off [his] sweat," the "ev'ning sweet" that bathes his feet in cowslip water, or the "deathless fairies" whom he leads in dance ("Damon the Mower" 45-8, 61-4). Yet with Juliana's entrance and the recognition of his own sexuality, Damon no longer finds himself co-eternal with his environment. Juliana brings with her the imperative that Damon must come to grips with his own individuality. Yet this account is only half of the story, as I read it. Damon's tropology, through which he creates his relationship with the meadows, alters in such a way to have him recognize Nature as an autonomous sexual being. Damon's interpretation of Nature/ the meadows goes through a fundamental transition along similar lines to those which Bacon demands for human learning. While Damon is not completely aware of his mental transition, Marvell means for the reader to notice and question the new terms on which Damon encounters the meadows. It is not that we are meant to perceive Damon as reaching a truer account of Nature, i.e. as a sexual other to be dominated but instead to witness the consequences of a mind that perceives Nature this way. On this basis, I bring to light Marvell's rejection of Baconian thought: whereas Bacon finds the sexualizing of Nature as restorative, through Damon's tragedy Marvell avers such a path as isolating and destructive. Ultimately, I argue that in "The Mower's Song" Marvell challenges the project to reclaim Edenic mastery over Nature, which underlies the rhetoric of the proponents for the new science.

The opening stanza of the poem finds Damon mourning the loss of the union that once existed between his internal reality and his environment:

My mind was once the true survey
Of all these meadows fresh and gay (1-2)

In this idyllic state of correspondence, Damon could read his world as merely himself writ large; the grass became as a symbol of his own joy. The meadows were reflective of Damon's subjectivity and, when interpreted properly, reveal the similitudes between the human subject and the natural world. Damon does not concern himself much with the meadows' materiality but rather is preoccupied with their metaphorical import: the grass's greenness has significance for him solely when he can see it as connoting his interiority. Notable, also, is the narcissism that underlies Damon's worldview. The fundamental belief of Damon's epistemology – that Nature is simply composed of signs through which Damon could read himself – creates a knowledge that is inwardly directed. Damon's knowledge of Nature derives primarily from a hermeneutics of signs and not an engagement with the material.

The opening line of the poem further reveals that Damon now occupies a postlapsarian perspective. Damon locates himself as having left an earlier, "truer" state of mind in which he could easily perceive the unity between himself and the meadows. Damon, however, does not appear fully cognizant of the intellectual transition that he has undergone. To claim that his "mind was once the true survey" of the meadows raises concerns as to the intellectual state from which he is presently speaking. If in what seems to be the unrecoverable past Damon could read Nature "correctly," how is the new relationship that he constructs between Nature and himself to be understood? Damon's opening lament at the loss of his earlier mindset, in which existed a harmony between the external and the internal, I believe, removes the reader from the drama that Damon perceives between himself and the meadows. Damon is ignorant of the full implication of his statement; that is, for him, his intellect has not altered, but rather it is the meadows who have abandoned the "fellowship" between them. However, Marvell, in distancing the reader from his protagonist, holds up Damon's present mindset for scrutiny. What has been lost to Damon is not, as Marvell would have the reader believe, the fidelity of his environment to his internal state but instead his ability to perceive such a relationship. So whereas Damon projects the drama of the poem outwardly onto the meadows, the poem relocates the crisis internally within the mind. Essentially, Damon makes the same mistake as he does when he first meets Juliana, which I discuss immediately below: he misreads his own inner turmoil as an external phenomenon.

In Marvell's earlier poem, "Damon the Mower," Damon figuratively realizes Nature itself not only as asexual but also sexuality becomes a destructive, alien force. In the first poem of the Mower sequence, Damon portrays Juliana as emitting a preternatural heat, which appears destructive for both the Mower and the environment alike:

This heat the sun could never raise,
Nor Dog Star so inflames the days.
It from an higher beauty grow'th
Which burns the fields and mower both:
Which mads the dog, and makes the sun
Hotter than his own Phaeton.
Not July causeth these extremes,
But Juliana's scorching beams. (17-24)

As typical of Damon in this earlier stage of consciousness, the internal and the external blur together: Damon projects his nascent sexual passion for Juliana back onto her – the heat that he misperceives as emanating from her – only to have it threaten the fields and himself. Ironically, Damon's confusion about whether this heat emanates from "the hot day, or hot desires" leads him to seek refuge in the external, a "cool cave" or "gelid fountain" (25-32). His fictional world appears resistant yet vulnerable to the sexual passion Juliana provokes in Damon. The asexual fantastical environment that Damon creates, and with which he reads himself in union, must exclude Juliana's presence. Marvell, like Bacon, appears to raise concerns over pre-modern metaphorical perspective as being solipsistic and non-reproductive. Damon's gift to Juliana of a "harmless snake.../ Disarmed of its teeth and sting" speaks to this asexuality: Damon's feckless courting in offering the snake, rendered impotent, denotes how alien Juliana and the mature sexuality she represents are to his child-like mind (35-6). Linda Anderson interprets the toothless serpent similarly in suggesting that the gift emblemizes a Nature "rendered harmless, thus safe for children."⁴⁵ I depart from this reading of the symbolic import in understanding the "harmless snake" as connoting the inability of tropological framework of Damon's immature fantasy to incorporate a sexual other. His act of presenting the "harmless snake" to

Juliana I read as Damon's attempt to court Juliana but in a way that stresses his sexual immaturity.

Likewise, "The Garden" creates this same dichotomy between the sexual and the natural, which reiterates Marvell's skepticism whether humanity can reassert Adamic dominance over Nature, particularly through Baconian terms. Bacon suggests that by adopting a sexualizing tropology humanity may once again bring the natural under its sway; for Marvell, it is sexuality itself that precipitates man's loss of Paradise. In the poem, the speaker imagines entering into an Edenic space that is emphatically marked as presexual: "Such was that happy garden-state, /While man there walked without a mate" (57-8). Stanza III emblemizes this division between sexuality and Nature in the image of the tree scarred by lovers' inscriptions:

No white nor red was ever seen
 So am'rous as this lovely green.
 Fond lovers, cruel as their flame,
 Cut in these their mistress' name. (16-20)

Again sexuality appears as an annihilating force that seeks the ruin or perversion of Nature. As with Juliana's supposed preternatural heat, the passion of the "fond lovers" becomes a "cruel" ruinous "flame" inimical to a presexual, symbiotic communion with pristine Nature. Jonathan Crewe correctly points out that "sexual desire is foreign to the first pastoral world, and is in effect overwritten on it."⁴⁶ In this sense, sexuality becomes an imposition on Nature. This theme of sexuality being external and detrimental to Nature Marvell further explores in "The Mower Against Gardens," where the speaker castigates the "luxurious" gardener whose lustful acts abuse the natural world. Here the gardener's intervention into the natural world, which Marvell depicts as a sexual imposition, turns Nature into a gaudy parody of itself. When humanity interacts with its environment on sexualizing terms, the end result is the corruption of Nature.

Given that in "Damon the Mower" sexuality seems alien from Nature, "The Mower's Song" marks a stark transition in Damon's metaphorical framework. Damon's ability to take solace in an interpretation of Nature meant entirely for his comfort is obliterated by the

imagined indifference of the meadows. Damon now realizes himself as isolated from Nature, recognizing the boundary between the self and the other. However, rather than giving himself over to a solely material universe, Damon delves into a new tropological project. The loss for which Damon grieves, the inability within this interpretation of Nature to blur the subjective and the objective easily, becomes an emotional betrayal by his environment: the growth of the now "unthankful meadows" signals that they have forgone "a fellowship so true" (13-4). Watson claims that Damon continues to anthropomorphize his environment, only now by engaging the meadows confrontationally: "He has ceased to intervene with his blade, but his mind is still subjugating the grasses to human purposes: they are mocking him only because he has ceased mowing them, but in another sense, they are mocking him only because he has made them volitional and conscious creatures."⁴⁷ For Watson, then, what primarily denotes Damon's shift is the recognition of Nature as possessing a separate will, inimical to Damon's own. Yet an important facet of Damon's mental transformation, I argue, is that the meadows have now become a sexual entity for him:

But these, while I with sorrow pine,
Grew more luxuriant still and fine (7-8)

This moment when Damon notes the lack of correspondence between his internal turmoil and the grass also suggests sexuality as now being part of Nature. The growth of the grass becomes "luxuriant," a word that possesses sexual implications for Marvell.⁴⁸ In "The Mower against Gardens" Marvell notes how "luxurious man" perverts the natural world through his own sexuality:

Luxurious man, to bring his vice in use,
Did after him the world seduce:
And from the field the flowers and plants allure,
Where Nature was most plain and pure. (1-4)

As with "Damon, the Mower" and "The Garden," the depiction of Nature implies a dichotomy between the sexual and the natural. However, this dichotomy is lost to Damon in "The Mower's Song," where Nature appears "luxuriant" for Damon. From Marvell's prior use of "luxurious," Damon's

characterizing of the grass as "luxuriant" signals that Nature itself becomes sexual. To state this more bluntly, wherever Damon will look now, he will see sex through his new tropological lens:

That not one blade of grass you spied,
But had a flow'r on either side (9-10)

The lines here suggest that Damon sees sexuality throughout all of the meadows. The image of the blade of grass between two flowers may recreate the penis and testicles.⁴⁹

Stanza III outlines the parameters of Damon's newly sexually charged engagement with Nature. Here in a reversal of positions, Damon perceives himself as objectified by the meadows:

Unthankful meadows, could you so
A fellowship so true forgo,
And in your gaudy May-games meet
While I lay trodden under feet? (13-6)

As the poem progresses, Damon's hostility towards the meadows intensifies. The supposed indifference of the meadows towards Damon's anguish, found in the grass's "luxuriant" growth, now becomes the meadows' intentional threatening of Damon's selfhood. The Mower sees himself in a struggle with his environment for dominance: not only has his environment betrayed him but also seeks to invert their roles and trample upon him. Yet, the fact that Damon reads the grass's continued "luxuriant" growth as its enjoying "May-games" further emphasizes that Damon interprets the meadows as a sexualized other. As the above stanza portrays it, Nature assumes the role of the wanton participant in the May-game festivities, which often carried sexual associations, as in Robert Herrick's "Corinna's Going A-Maying:"

Many a green-gown has been given;
Many a kiss, both odd and even;
Many a glance too has been sent
From out the eye, love's firmament;
Many a jest told of the keys betraying

This night, and the locks picked, yet we're not a-Maying. (51-6)

As Herrick depicts here, the May festivities center on a robust sexuality, one that celebrates the lustfulness of the natural world. The gown stained green from rolling in the grass, presumably in an amorous embrace, symbolizes the participants devolving into a more natural state of sexual liberality. In contrast to the orgiastic, joyous tone of Herrick's account of the May festival, Marvell's mower finds in a sexually aware Nature a threat to his own subjectivity. The sexual, autonomous environment looks to reverse the roles of subject and object, as Damon now interprets Nature. The "gaudy May-games" of the meadows threaten Damon in reducing him to the position of grass. Beyond being supposedly apathetic towards Damon's unrequited passions, Nature further betrays its fellowship with him through its sexual behavior that jeopardizes his very being.⁵⁰

In my charting of the roles of the meadows in the Mower poems, Damon's environment changes from the nurturing mother to the sexualized other.⁵¹ This tropological shift necessitates the violence that Damon wreaks on the meadows in stanza IV:

But what you in compassion ought
Shall now by my revenge be wrought. (19-20)

The final act of mowing here is an attempt at self-preservation, the urgency for Damon to restore his agency through dominance and objectification of Nature. During the presexual period of unity with Nature, Damon's self was secured by passive observation: he could read his environment as being solely for him, much like the infant's perception of the mother. Within this new tropology, Damon must force his will onto Nature. This interpretation of Nature as a threatening sexualized other employs a language similar to that of Baconianism. In reading Nature through a sexualizing lens, that authorizes a violent and exploitative encounter, Marvell's protagonist must now seize the meadows and bind them to his will.

In the fourth stanza, Damon desperately lashes out at his environment, in the effort to re-establish the correspondence that he once was able easily to perceive between himself and Nature. The

companionship that he created linguistically with the meadows Damon must now aggressively assert through the mowing of the grass:

But what you in compassion ought,
 Shall now by my revenge be wrought;
 And flow'rs, and grass, and I, and all,
 Will in one common ruin fall. (19-22)

On a literal basis, Damon is performing the same act as he had before – mowing. Damon's conception of his labor, however, has changed from "Damon the Mower": though his function as mower once was his being part of the meadows, his mowing is now a way of imposing on his environment. The unity that he passively enjoyed between himself and the meadows, the internal and the external, must now be achieved through his violent intervention into Nature. This change in the way harmony is established between the human subject and the natural world further reveals Marvell's rejection of the Baconian mindset. In *Novum Organum*, Bacon advocates for action on the part of the adherent to the new science in order to harness Nature's fullest potential: "...so things in Nature that are hidden reveal themselves more readily under vexations of art than when they follow their own course."⁵² The imperative for humanity to intervene in the natural world Bacon likewise demands in one of his earlier unpublished scientific treatises, *The Refutation of Philosophies* (1609). Here Bacon prefigures Nature as elusive and whose secrets "are either laid bare to sense or *forced into the light by evidence*" (*my emphasis added*).⁵³ Sylvia Bowerbank notes this change in humanity's relationship to Nature that is central to Baconianism: "Bacon's lifelong work can be understood as an attempt to demonstrate that man's intervention far from disrupting harmony, actually bring savage nature to her true order."⁵⁴ In this sense, Damon enacts part of Bacon's project, to establish harmony with Nature forcefully; however, such an imposition results in a "common ruin" for him and the meadows, a universal destruction.

The poem's refrain depicts Damon's charging Juliana for destroying the Edenic harmony that he once had with Nature:

When Juliana came, and she
 What I do to the grass, does to my thoughts and me. (5-6, 11-12, and 17-8)⁵⁵

As Damon analogizes his mowing of the grass with Juliana's effect on him and his mind he conflates his labor with sexuality on the basis that as Juliana alters and perverts his thoughts so too will his mowing become an imposition on the meadows. In "The Mower's Song" the act of mowing now connotes the disruption of the human actor in the natural world. As his reading of his environment changes, so too does his understanding of his interaction with it. In "Damon, the Mower" Damon interprets the meadows as succoring him during his labors (41-8). So whereas Damon once saw his mowing as his function within the natural order now, in "The Mower's Song," his mowing becomes an assault on his environment. Damon's place outside of Nature, what he sees in the "luxuriant" growth of the grass, provokes his violent reaction: his mowing now is a way of subduing the rampant sexuality that he finds so threatening throughout the meadows. The sexual autonomy that Nature possesses, suggested by Damon's depiction of the meadows as participating in the "May-games," Damon brings to end with his scythe, which results not only in the destruction of the meadows but of himself as well.

Heraldry of His Tomb: Marvell's Troubling the Return to Eden

Marvell engages, if indirectly, with Baconianism on the question of whether humanity can ever regain a prelapsarian mode of thought. For Bacon, through the mind's abandoning its pre-sexual way of encountering Nature, humanity may commence to lay the foundation for a productive knowledge that will usher in an era of Edenic prosperity. However, Marvell expresses doubts as to whether such a return is even possible. I would like to turn briefly to the lines from which the title of this article comes:

Companions of my thoughts more green,
 Shall now the heraldry become
 With which I shall adorn my tomb (26-8)

As is his common mistake, Damon consistently interprets his internal turmoil as an external event - here his mental transition that I track becomes, for Damon, the drama of the meadows' betrayal. The first line of

the section just cited speaks to this tension: Damon sees the dissonance between his mind and the meadows as an emotional one. Yet the line can also be taken to indicate the intellectual/sexual maturation that Damon has undergone: when his thoughts were youthful, innocent, virginal, his mind could read Nature "properly," i.e. as a sign of himself. This "green" way of thinking is no longer available to Damon. Our postlapsarian sexual state alters our reading of Nature, a crisis that Marvell dramatizes. The sign, or "heraldry," of his new mind will be the decaying grass he has freshly cut. The finality of this last act of mowing mirrors Damon's unrecoverable loss of his presexual state with which he charges Juliana. Damon's new tendency to sexualize the meadows is not restorative, as Bacon espouses, but damning.

In this article, my goal has been to reveal how Marvell rewrites Bacon's grand narrative for the new science through Damon's tragedy. Carolyn Merchant's counter-narrative for the Scientific Revolution, whose movement is not towards prosperity but decline and devastation, helps to bring to light this anti-Baconian sentiment that Marvell voices in "The Mower's Song." As Merchant makes clear, the stakes are high in how Bacon's legacy is assessed:

A deep divide exists between Bacon's supporters and detractors...the deeper roots of this divide lie in perceptions of the Scientific Revolution as a grand narrative of progress and hope versus one of decline and disaster. How one views the Scientific Revolution itself is a marker of how one might assess the import of Bacon's contributions.⁵⁶

For Merchant, Bacon's scientific writings are a pivot for two different narratives of the development of modern science: either Bacon set Western epistemology on the path to a new era of abundance and well-being or led to an ecological crisis. Merchant's identifying of these two opposing narratives of the Scientific Revolution helps to address a concern that has motivated much of the critical discussion of Marvell's Mower poems. As Edmund William Tayler notes: "The central tenet of pastoral verse, the idyllic correspondence between man and Nature known as the pathetic fallacy, has apparently been deliberately violated, and yet there is no overt explanation of why Marvell departed so radically from the pattern of

traditional pastoral."⁵⁷ Taylor here raises the central question that has energized modern scholarship on Marvell's pastoral sequence: what changed in the mid seventeenth-century English worldview that made the concept of a mystical harmony between humanity and the natural world appear untenable for Marvell? Part of the answer, I suggest, rests in the contemporary changing cultural attitude towards Nature embodied in Baconianism. With the Puritan embrace of Baconianism, Nature became that which must be systematically studied, manipulated, and exploited. Humanity's further prosperity depended on the ability to investigate scientifically and harness Nature potential. Moreover, control over Nature held for Bacon and his Puritan adherents religious significance: scientific knowledge opened the path back to Paradise. The intent of this essay has been to view Marvell in "The Mower's Song" as rejecting the potential for humanity's return to a prelapsarian period through the conquest of Nature and so offering a counter narrative to that on which Bacon predicates his epistemology. Where Bacon promised that the sexualization and domination of Nature would bring knowledge "to perfection in charity, for the benefit and use of life" and so allow humanity to rediscover Eden, Marvell's Damon finds only his grave.⁵⁸

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meaningful critique of Francis Bacon's scientific program. He received the 2010 College of Arts and Science Dean's Dissertation Award. In addition to the intersection of seventeenth-century science and literature, Funari is interested in questions of nationalism in city comedies and ecofeminist theory. He is currently teaching at Johnson County Community College in Overland Park, KS.

¹ Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1980), 165.

² Carolyn Merchant, "The Secrets of Nature: The Bacon Debates Revisited." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 69 no. 1 (2008), 149.

³ *Ibid.*, 162.

⁴ Andrew Marvell, *The Poems of Andrew Marvell*, ed. Nigel Smith (New York, NY: Longman Publishing Group, 2003). All of Marvell's texts cited in this article come from this edition of his poetry.

⁵ Francis Bacon, *The Essays*, ed. John Pritcher (London: Penguin Books, 1985), 187.

⁶ Bacon, *Novum Organum*, 110.

⁷ Francis Bacon, "The Masculine of Time," in *The Philosophy of Francis Bacon*, trans. Benjamin Farrington (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 72.

⁸ Merchant, *The Death of Nature*, 165.

⁹ Bacon, *Novum Organum*, 7.

¹⁰ Charles Webster, *The Great Instauration: Science, Medicine and Reform 1626-1660* (New York, NY: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1975), 25.

¹¹ Webster, *The Great Instauration*, 506.

¹² Another testament to Bacon's popularity during these decades is the eight editions that his *New Atlantis* went through between 1626 and 1658.

¹³ Webster, *The Great Instauration*, 469.

¹⁴ Lewis Roberts, *The Treasure of Traffike* (London, 1641), 9.

¹⁵ Gabriel Plattes, dedicatory epistle to *A Discovery of infinite Treasure, Hidden Since the World's Beginning* (London, 1639).

¹⁶ Robert Boyle, *Certain Physiological Essays and Other Tracts* (London, 1661), 41-42. Carolyn Merchant offers a similar reading of this passage from Boyle's essay in *The Death of Nature*, 189.

¹⁷ Bacon, *Novum Organum*, 108.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 198.

¹⁹ William Harvey, *The Works of William Harvey*, trans. Robert Willis (Philadelphia, PA: University of Penn Press, 1989), 153.

²⁰ Merchant, *The Death of Nature*, 156.

²¹ Nicholas Murray, *World Enough and Time: The Life of Andrew Marvell* (New York, NY: St Martin's Press, 1999), 48.

²² Andrew Marvell, *The Poems*, 131,152. In the Penguin Classic Edition of Marvell's complete poem, Elizabeth Story Donno suggests a similar dating of "The Garden," "The Mower Against Gardens," and the Mower Poem sequence. Andrew Marvell, *The Complete Poems*, ed. Elizabeth Story Donno (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1986), 100-110.

²³ Linda Anderson, "The Nature of Marvell's Mower," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* Winter (1991), 131.

²⁴ Susan Snyder, *Pastoral Process: Spenser, Marvell, Milton* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 61.

²⁵ For accounts of the scandalous circumstances surrounding the publication of *Miscellaneous Poems*, see Murray, *World Enough*, 253-5 and John Dixon Hunt, *Andrew Marvell: His Life and Writings* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978), 184-5 and 189-90.

²⁶ Robert N. Watson, *Back to Nature: The Green and the Real in the Late Renaissance* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 124.

²⁷ Judith Haber, *Pastoral and the Poetics of Self-Contradiction* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 114.

²⁸ Bacon, *Novum Organum*, 8.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 92.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 92.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 92.

³² Recently, Baconian scholars have realized the historiographical dimension to his Grand Instauration. Denise Albanese succinctly outlines the humanistic and the new scientific views of the present. The humanist tradition devalues the present as the youth of human learning, yet the proponents of the new science recast the classical authors as representing the infancy of our intellectual development: "Classical antiquity is not the parent of the present moment, but instead its infancy, and authoritative eloquence as the generator of culture is reduced to unproductive childish

prattle." Denise Albanese, *New Science, New World* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), 34.

³³ Bacon, *The Masculine Birth*, 63.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 72.

³⁶ Merchant, *The Death of Nature*, 189.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 164.

³⁸ Iddo Landau, "Feminist Criticism of Metaphors in Bacon's Philosophy," *Philosophy* 73, no. 283 (1998): 54. Also see Peter Pesic, "Wrestling with Proteus: Francis Bacon and the 'Torture of Nature'," *Isis* 90 (1999): 81-94 and Perez Zagorin, *Francis Bacon* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 121-4.

³⁹ See Evelyn Fox Keller, *Reflections on Gender and Science* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985); Sandra Harding, *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge? Thinking from Women's Lives* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991); and Susan J. Heckman, *Gender and Knowledge: Elements of Postmodern Feminism* (Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 1990).

⁴⁰ Katharine Park, "Women, Gender, and Utopia: *The Death of Nature* and the Historiography of Early Modern Science," *Isis* 97 (2006): 490. The relevance of Merchant's work in understanding modern-day ecological crises, particularly the current oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, has become evident. In her article criticizing the corporate and governmental response to the Gulf oil spill, Naomi Klein cites *The Death of Nature* in explicating the mindset that led to the recklessness exhibited by British Petroleum towards the environment. Klein suggests that BP's "Initial Exploration Plan" "reads like a Greek tragedy about human hubris" in that nature appears in the document as both "predictable and agreeable" to industrial aspirations. Ultimately, Klein identifies the lesson of the Gulf Coast catastrophe to be an abandoning of the arrogance endemic to a mechanistic view of Nature: "The most positive outcome of this disaster would be not only a move to renewable energy sources... but full embrace of the precautionary principle of science." Naomi Klein, "A Hole in the World," *The Nation*, July 12, 2010, 17, 20.

⁴¹ Francis Bacon, "Thought and Conclusions," in *The Philosophy of Francis Bacon*, trans. Benjamin Farrington (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 83.

⁴² Snyder, *Pastoral Process: Spenser, Marvell, Milton*, 53.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 48-9.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁴⁵ Anderson, "The Nature of Marvell's Mower," 133.

⁴⁶ Jonathan Crewe, "The Garden State: Marvell's Poetics of Enclosure," in *Enclosure Acts: Sexuality, Property and Culture in Early Modern England*, ed. Burt Richard and Jonathan Michael Archer (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), 273.

⁴⁷ Watson, *Back to Nature*, 125.

⁴⁸ Tayler finds the syntax of the line ambiguous: "luxuriant" modifies either the grass in the meadows or Damon's own thoughts Edward Tayler *Nature and Art in Renaissance Literature* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1964), 157. My reading of the line argues that Damon through his own sexually aware perspective sees the meadows as sexual.

⁴⁹ Leah S. Marcus remarks on how the image of the blade of grass abutted on both sides by a flower recreates the phallus. Leah S. Marcus, *The Politics of Mirth: Jonson, Herrick, Milton, Marvell, and the Defense of Old Holiday Pastimes* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), 234-5.

⁵⁰ Marcus finds in Damon's condemnation of the meadow's "gaudy May-games" the Mower's failure to appreciate the religious import that Archbishop Laud attempted to instill in such festivals. As Marcus argues, Damon's reaction to perceiving himself as betrayed by the "unthankful meadows," who continue the festivities without him, reveals his failure to adopt Laud's interpolation of such festivals as "humble acknowledgement of his individual inadequacy, a recognition of the vastness of the political and religious design of which he is a part." Marcus, *The Politics of Mirth*, 236. I agree with Marcus' assertion that in "The Mower's Song" Damon's egocentric worldview is jeopardized by the meadow's participation in the "gaudy May-games" without him, yet I also read here Damon's recognition of Nature's sexual autonomy. In "Damon" the allusion to the May-game festivities appears, as I interpret these lines, sanitized, child-like, and not overtly sexual; however, in "The Mower's Song" the May-games possess more sexual connotation for Damon's sexually aware perspective.

⁵¹ My reading of Damon's journey from "Damon" to "The Mower's Song" employs a psychoanalytic model of maturation, that of the infant's transition from a stage of perceived unity with the mother to its recognition

of separateness. On this basis, I am indebted to Snyder, who likewise argues for the applicability of psychoanalysis in reading the pastoral protagonist's development. Snyder, *The Pastoral Process*, 3, 11, 16, and 17.

⁵² Bacon, *Novum Organum*, 108.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 130.

⁵⁴ Sylvia Bowerbank, *Speaking for Nature: Women and Ecologies of Early Modern England* (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 2004), 9.

⁵⁵ In the last two stanzas of the poem, the tense of the refrain changes from past to present in lines 23-4 and 29-30.

⁵⁶ Merchant, "The Secrets of Nature: The Bacon Debates Revisited," 148.

⁵⁷ Tayler, *Nature and Art in Renaissance Literature*, 154.

⁵⁸ Bacon, *Novum Organum*, 15.