

GREEN THOUGHTS

The forms, affordances, and politics of garden poetry

by

Jake Arthur

A thesis submitted to the Victoria University of Wellington in fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in English Literature

Victoria University of Wellington

2016



Frontispiece to John Worlidge's *Systema Agriculturae*, 1675.

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Acknowledgements

I'm very grateful to my supervisors, Sarah Ross and Anna Jackson, for their helpful suggestions, email responses outside of work hours, and life advice.

Thanks to my flatmates past and present, and to my family.

Thank you to Todd Atticus for the love and the flower dinkuses.

ABSTRACT

The garden is a rich site for framing the flows and contestations of culture because it is, on the one hand, a social practice with its own extensive history, methods, and concerns, and, on the other, a rich literary image. This interwoven history makes it a worthwhile object of study, but it has also resulted in studies that are either decidedly broad, very specific, or that focus exclusively on one kind of garden at the expense of the other. This thesis seeks to address these obstacles by challenging the line between real gardens and their images. Applying a novel working definition of “form”, I argue that the constituent forms of real gardens can be conceptualised as a set of meaning-bearing resources which enable, when represented, kinds of figurative meanings. This thesis considers the real garden as reducible to three forms essential to all gardens: enclosure, internal arrangement, and cultivation by a gardener. Such a distillation allows us to interrogate persistent meanings of the garden image across literatures by fixing it as an object of inquiry. These three forms, I argue, enable political meanings, figuring the relationship of individuals to greater systems or wholes, their arrangement of elements, and dramatising the operation and limits of power. However, those forms have been emphasised, represented, and ultimately signified differently in images of various provenance and in various writers’ hands.

My chapters trace the garden’s persistent forms across time and place. Two of my chapters address Civil War England. The first considers how gardens respond to a specific discursive context to imagine a dystopian state in Andrew Marvell’s “The Mower against Gardens” and the potential for utopian change in “The Garden”. In my second chapter, I turn to Lucy Hutchinson’s “Elegies”, considering how her poetic garden operates within the elegy and country house genres and responds to literary precedents like Marvell’s “Upon Appleton House”

to characterise a grief that is intractably personal and political. My final two chapters shift in time and place to consider twentieth- and twenty-first-century New Zealand poetry, analysing in the third chapter the turn away from colonial settler verse in Ursula Bethell's poetry towards the domestic garden as a site of home and belonging. Finally, my last chapter considers Jenny Bornholdt's contemporary New Zealand verse, in which the garden image dramatises the power imbalance and artifice intrinsic to poetry itself. This thesis therefore seeks to produce general knowledge about how the garden, through its forms, *can mean*, while also producing specific knowledge about how garden images *have meant* in particular texts across different contexts. I argue that these are not contrary aims: a new approach to the garden as a set of forms proves an incisive tool with which to understand this important and variegated image.

INTRODUCTION:
Garden forms and their affordances

To write about nature is to write about ourselves. Not an objective entity, nature is a category people construct as they represent it. As Rebecca Bushnell puts it, “Any argument we might make on behalf of nature . . . tells us as much about our fears and hopes for [our] culture as it does about what lurks in the woods and blooms in the fields” (5). This is particularly true of the garden, commonly held to be a part of what we call “nature” but also the direct product of our cultivation. By definition entailing human intervention, the garden is at once “natural” and conspicuously human; it is both manmade and “deeply entangled with the words and images” we use to describe it and its making (Cronon 20). As a result, gardens are rich sites through which we can frame the flows and contestations of a culture.

Though many studies recognise gardens as socially constructed, they rarely combine scrutiny of how they are represented in literature with an understanding of gardens as a historical practice. Gardening is a practice with a long history. We know that gardens existed in Ancient Mesopotamia from as early as 2000 BCE, becoming important elements of royal palaces, places of worship, and city design (Dalley 1). Gardens were a significant part of early Islamic culture, and were adopted in the cities of Ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome, before spreading throughout Europe and around the world. Gardens have never had a fixed purpose, nor a fixed design. From royal courtyards and the intricate geometries of Italian and French-inspired Renaissance gardens of the sixteenth century to the late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century fashion for wilderness gardens (Clark), gardens have changed over time.

Moreover, the way gardens *should be* has often been hotly contested, reflecting cultural anxieties or current political debates. These arguments extend to the way in which they are or

have been represented. Gardens are places of cultural disputation as “each culture endows garden forms with particular sets of meanings”, varying over time but also “within that culture, [so that] those meanings, and therefore vehicles that express them, are contested and not fixed” (Helmreich 1). These vehicles are both natural and representational. Helmreich locates in the resurgence of gardens (and controversy about them) in the nineteenth and twentieth century an attempt to counteract a perceived loss of England’s green character (7-8). However, this image of England—and its embodiment specifically in the garden—cannot be discussed separately from the long literary and artistic tradition of representing England in terms of ideal natural places, whether it be the Garden of Eden, Homer’s *locus amoenus*, Virgil and Theocritus’ *Eclogues*, or the Canticlean (and Marian) enclosed garden.

The garden’s ability to reflect political issues such as the makeup of the nation is, I argue, not only traceable to these canonical precedents, but fundamentally enabled by certain forms essential to all gardens. In his essay “Different Spaces”, Foucault describes the garden as the oldest example of a “heterotopia”, a place “outside all places” where “all the other real emplacements that can be found within the culture are, at the same time, represented, contested, and reversed” (178). A place of “mixed, intermediate experience” (179), he describes the garden as “deeply symbolic” (181):

The traditional garden of the Persians was a sacred space that is said to have joined together within its rectangle four parts representing the four parts of the world, with a space even more sacred than the others which was like the umbilicus, the navel of the world at its center (this was the location of the basin and the fountain); and all the garden’s vegetation was supposed to be distributed within that space, within that figurative microcosm . . . The garden is the smallest parcel of the world and the whole world at the same time. (181-2)

This formulation is helpful because its concept of emplacements—“the relations of proximity between points or elements” (176)—ties the symbolism of the garden to its materiality. The garden is conspicuously formed and cultural meanings emerge from or percolate around those forms, its enclosed “rectangle” and its “distributed” plantings allowing it, in Foucault’s argument, to figure the world itself.

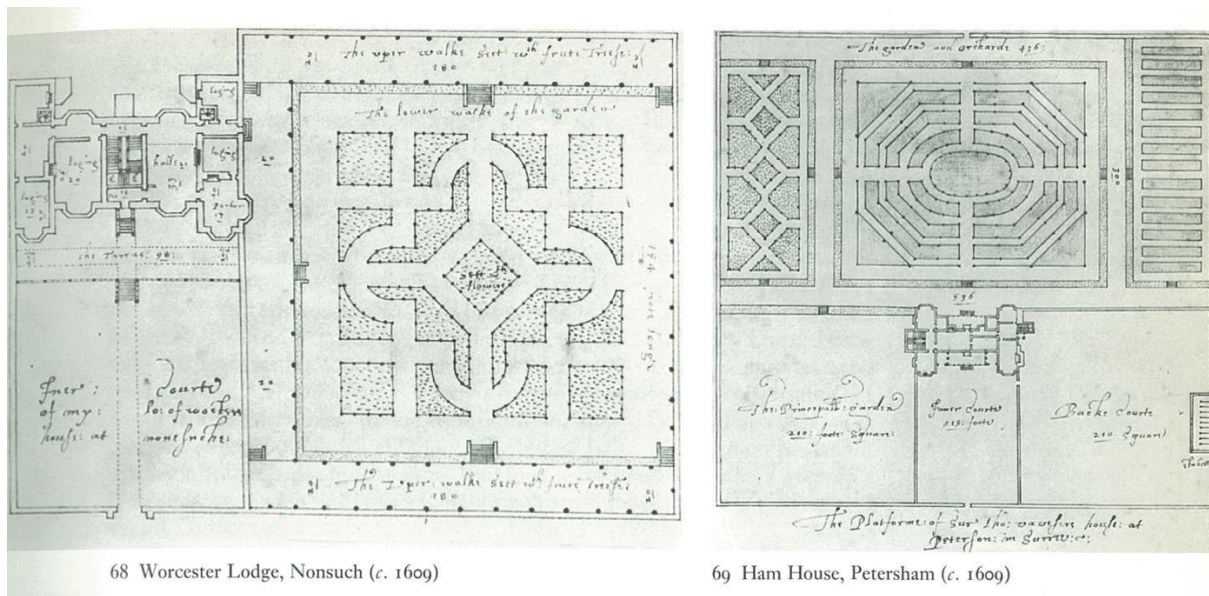


Fig. 1. Geometrical seventeenth-century garden designs from Roy Strong, *The Renaissance Garden in England* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1979; print; 119)

Gardens in literature derive their meanings from a long literary tradition, but those meanings—past and present—stem also from the material forms that constitute gardens in the real world. This thesis will argue that conceiving of the garden as a persistent set of forms can prove an incisive tool in understanding it as an important and culturally various poetic image. This study responds to an overly sharp division in academic literature between gardens as a cultural practice and gardens as literary images. This is, for the most part, a result of institutional pressures: one study is the realm of garden historians and the other literary critics. The result is

analyses of poetic gardens that are divorced from a basic interest in what gardens involve and what gardeners do. Recent movements like ecocriticism do little to rectify this. This is partly because, in a field that rests upon the problematic definition of nature, the garden is conspicuously artificial. However, ecocriticism also tends to maintain an emphasis on textual representations of nature (Estok 16), rather than considering how “nature” itself (or the forms we have historically imposed on it) might enable kinds of representations. An important exception to this is the work of Katie Holmes.¹ A cultural critic whose interest in garden practices informs her study of Australian settler diaries, she considers how garden practices enact settler ambitions while being represented as a touchstone of identity. Although she does not study conventionally “literary” texts, her studies demonstrate the worth of scholarship that pays a close attention to textual gardens and real gardens together. This is a methodology I intend to take up and further justify.

The second bind in studies of the garden is the requisite choice between producing general comment or specific knowledge, a particularly salient concern given the garden’s long history as a practice and as literary image. Studies of gardening as a practice are often strictly delimited in either place, time, or both, such as Roy Strong’s *The Renaissance Garden in England*, Thelma Strongman’s *The Gardens of Canterbury* (which considers gardens in Canterbury, New Zealand), and Donal P. McCracken’s *Gardens of Empire: Botanical Institutions of the Victorian British Empire*.² The same is generally true for studies of garden imagery in literature, such as Amy L. Tigner’s *Literature and the Renaissance Garden from Elizabeth I to Charles II: England’s Paradise*, and Stanley Stewart’s *The Enclosed Garden*, which primarily considers Marvell’s “The Garden” in light of the Marian *hortus conclusus* of the Song

¹ Another notable exception with a non-literary focus is Robert Rotenberg’s *Landscape and Power in Vienna*.

² These are also often limited to a particular type of garden, such as McCracken’s botanical gardens, and *The Vernacular Garden* edited by John Dixon Hunt and Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn.

of Solomon.³ The institutional demand to produce specific knowledge within specific periods (and nations) encourages “certain kinds of questions and certain kinds of answers” (Hayot 746), limiting studies that seek transnational or transhistorical (dis-)continuities.

I suggest in this thesis that a new attention to the material garden can help to mitigate this problem by conceptualising the material garden as a generalisable set of forms which might have generalisable expressive resources. This approach to form is influenced by the provocative arguments of Caroline Levine in her recent book *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network*. Levine argues the world is comprised of “many organizing principles, all circulating in a world jam-packed with other arrangements” (7). By extending more conventional literary critical definitions of form to include every “*arrangement of elements*”, any “*ordering, patterning, or shaping*” (3, her emphasis), Levine encourages us to see forms all around us and to evaluate how different forms interact when they collide. She states that “Forms will often fail to impose their order when they run up against other forms that disrupt their logic and frustrate their organizing ends, producing aleatory and sometimes contradictory effects” (7).

Though her call to see the world as a “vast array of designed things” (7) is a broad one, her focus is specifically social and literary, and she generally relegates physical forms to a passing mention.⁴ I will reorient that focus, taking her premise that the world is “jam-packed” with forms as a spur to interrogate those she largely neglects, namely the forms we can touch and see, which contain us, and which we impose. I therefore follow Levine’s provocation but redirect it to ask instead what real-world forms—every “*arrangement of elements*”, “*ordering, patterning or shaping*”, and kind of materiality—can tell us about the figurative meanings an object accrues

³ A notably broader study is Lynn Staley’s *The Island Garden: England’s language of nation from Gildas to Marvell*.

⁴ Levine discusses how forms like the prison cell “encloses bodies within surrounding walls” (8), which “cannot do its work without the hard materiality of metal or stone” (11); but her discussion focuses on this and other forms primarily for their social aspect, namely “as an iterable way of organizing experience” (11).

when it is represented. How do forms in the world influence what they tend to mean in their literary representations?

This can be relatively straightforward. Bridges, for example, vary, from rickety swing bridges to vast suspension bridges. However, they all share a set of basic forms that make them what they are. A bridge is a physical platform that connects two places that are separated. A bridge allows passage over another element that is difficult to traverse (such as a ravine or river), and it is narrow, at least relative to the bodies it connects. These physical forms entail kinds of figurative meanings. As an image in literature, the bridge is generally a liminal space, representing passage or transition, as in Emily Dickinson's poem "Faith—is the Pierless Bridge" which is depicted "Supporting what We see / Unto the Scene that we do not—" (qtd. in Zanten 535). This is not to say that all bridges are the same; their materials, for instance, change from bridge to bridge. In another Dickinson poem, a precarious wooden bridge still denotes transition, but, instead of being the sturdy bridge of faith, it now implies uncertainty (Zanten 528), as the speaker "step[s] from Plank to Plank / A slow and cautious way" towards "Experience" (qtd. in Zanten 528). Poets can treat objects in myriad ways, but I contend that its underlying forms tend to entail particular meanings and so can provide us with generalisable knowledge about the figurative resources of objects in the world.

To discuss how forms *tend to entail* types of meanings, I will draw on Levine's term "affordance". "Affordance" is a design term that refers to the "potential uses or actions latent in materials and designs", and which Levine argues "allows us to grasp both the specificity and the generality of forms—both the particular constraints and possibilities that different forms afford" (6). I will be applying this to real-world objects in order to think about how their forms, when represented, provide poets with different resources for making meaning. When I speak of an object's affordances, I am referring to the range of figurative meanings that are enabled by its

forms. The forms of the bridge hence afford meanings of connection and passage, transition and development, but its materials can make that connection seem unstable.

Levine describes forms as “iterable—portable” (7): they “can be picked up and moved to new contexts” (7); they have the “capacity to endure across time and space” (12). While Levine is here talking about literary forms (“syntax, free indirect speech, and the sonnet” [13]), the concept seems more appropriate to real-world objects. Physical objects persist either through their own resilience, or because they keep being created. Bridges keep being made, the basic forms that comprise them continually iterating. Forms and their affordances can outlive the cultures that inscribe them with meanings. Of course, this does not mean that cultural meanings are somehow less important or interesting. Not all forms, or composites of forms, actually acquire meaningful cultural currency, so that a purely theoretical study of what a form affords would not necessarily tell us anything about how images of that form have actually tended to work. Levine argues that forms “organize materials in distinct and iterable ways no matter what their context or audience” (Levine 13), but I suggest that context is imperative to understanding their specific meaning. Reorienting Levine’s definitions in this way allows me to interrogate how culturally ascribed meanings are mediated by the basic forms that comprise objects in the world, and so to generalise about the kinds of meanings particular objects can afford when they are represented in poetry. This can prove particularly useful with an object—like the garden—that is so diverse and its meanings so complex.

To understand the garden as a set of forms, and so to discuss its affordances, we first must turn our scrutiny to what we mean by “gardens”. Gardens have varied greatly over their history—in their shape, their cultural functions and meanings, and their materials (fountains, streams, paths, types of plants)—but there are absolute requirements that have not. The *OED* defines the garden as “an enclosed piece of ground devoted to the cultivation of flowers, fruit or

vegetables” (“garden”), delineating three primary forms that are, in Levine’s terms, “iterable—portable” (Levine 7). Firstly, it is “an enclosed piece of ground”; it has an intentionally outlined shape that is delimited either by a fence or hedges or by the edge of the planting; it is not expansive or open. Secondly, its internal elements are selected and arranged: the rows of the flowers, the placement of different trees, the paths for visitors to walk; at a minimum, its elements are arranged. Finally, it persists through cultivation, or, in other words, it is continually ordered and formed by the gardener(s). From the royal courtyards of Mesopotamia to the geometric gardens of the Italian Renaissance, the garden has persisted in its basic set of forms: its enclosure, its internal arrangement, and its human ordering.

In his study of city gardens in Vienna, Robert Rotenberg states:

[gardens are] simultaneously illusory and ordering—illusory because they present an icon of nature which stands apart from the surrounding artifice of human society; ordering because the formal arrangement of the plants by the designer is a comment on the relationship between people and nature, the individual and society, and the powerless and powerful. (20)

Here he considers how the forms of the garden—its enclosure, its internal arrangement, and its cultivation or ordering—entail a complex set of affordances that imagine relations between parts and wholes, between individuals and the larger groups and systems that surround them. My thesis is interested in what those forms and their affordances come to signify in *poetic* representations of the garden at different times. These meanings are not reducible to a tripartite split between these three constituent forms. Images of gardens have been put to myriad uses by poets in myriad contexts, and this thesis cannot catalogue that range. However, having a fixed point of reference in these three essential constituent forms allows us to address how those same resources are used by different poets, at different times, to different ends. These fixed points of

reference will also allow us to think about continuities. Because forms persist and because they tend to afford certain kinds of meanings, we can postulate that the garden itself might have persistent—though not homogenous—meanings.

This thesis will argue that the garden's real-world forms afford its images a particularly strong capacity for representing power and politics: collective, relational, and literary. Gardens, and garden images, are about power. Poetic gardens delineate an ordered zone and foreground the process of that ordering, figuring most obviously meanings of political power and the state, but also politics of home and belonging. A conspicuously designed zone, the garden image also affords politics of literary representation, what Jacques Rancière describes as the "way of framing... [a] portion of the visible and the sayable" (10), poets using the image to comment reflexively on the very process of writing. The three forms that constitute the garden, individually and in their interrelation, afford garden images a potent and flexible capacity for political comment.

This political capacity has been put, at different historical moments, to very different uses. Poets' formal emphases, the cultural milieux in which they write, and their construction of individual poems all determine how gardens mean differently. Nigel Smith has argued that authors communicate their politics by "remak[ing]" the genre in which they write (*Literature and Revolution* 6). I contend that one of the ways the garden image is made to *mean* differently follows a similar process, in which one or other of the garden's three forms are emphasised in an individual "remak[ing]". By accentuating one or other of the garden's forms, writers can demarcate a set of political interests. An emphasis on the garden's external boundary might foreground questions of integrity, intrusion, or access, as it does in the Genesis account of the Garden of Eden when its enclosure becomes a symbol of irrevocability. Alternately, preoccupations with the garden's internal arrangement might posit order and good management

but also the potential for, or fact of, *disorder*, as in Lucy Hutchinson's "poor desolate" Civil War garden. Finally, an emphasis on gardening as a process might dramatise the operation of political power or outline a hierarchy, the garden's elements beholden to the will of the gardener. The ability of the garden to figure different types of political relations and entities can therefore be traced in part to the different emphases given to its forms, each furnishing writers with discrete affordances that can be used to address different concerns.

This formal emphasis does not itself entail a political position. The meanings of any representation are dependent on its particular construction and its position in a broader cultural milieu. In Milton's *Paradise Lost*, for example, Adam pictures gardening as the first couple's "daily work" (4.618), "our pleasant labour, to reform" (4.625) nature's tendency to "wanton growth" (4.629). The emphasis on the formal relationship of the gardeners to the garden implies a Puritan vision of individuals' "self-cultivation" that wards against their own "wanton growth", as well as a republican vision of cooperation and work as the basis of an ideal political state. In Shakespeare's *Richard II*, the nation's corruption figures in images of gardens: "our sea-walled garden, the whole land, / Is full of weeds, her fairest flowers chok'd up" (3.4.43-44). The garden's disorder shows Richard to be a negligent king. However, this is not a republican image and any such interpretation would be anachronistic. The garden, like the English nation it here represents, is ordered from the top. By emphasising the formal relationship of gardener(s) to garden, the garden becomes an analogue of leadership. In Milton, it pictures a vision of an ideal republic, and in Shakespeare a dystopian vision not of monarchy itself, but of the *wrong* king. The formal relationship of gardener to garden in both cases represents a model for political leadership and organisation, though analysis of their particulars—and contextual knowledge of the texts behind them—is necessary to determine their quite opposite meanings. An emphasis on

particular forms of the garden affords certain kinds of political meanings but does not determine their nature or vector.

This example illustrates the need to engage with cultural context as well as the construction of the poem itself. An interest in the forms of gardens in the world helps us to understand garden images as having a particular aptitude for representing politics and so enables us to seek generalisable knowledge about them. However, this will be most useful when it is joined with the kind of precise literary critical work that nuances that understanding by showing us how gardens mean at particular moments, in particular hands and texts; as Levine notes, forms are “both situated and portable” (6). By analysing representations of gardens from very different temporal, spatial, and cultural moments, and doing so with a focus on real gardens’ forms, I aim to speak to the signifying resources of the garden image both specifically and in general.

This study develops a methodology, one that is at once particular and general and one that spans different periods and different places. While, as Eric Hayot points out, crossing period and place to some extent reinscribes them as our basic context for literary analysis (739-40), choosing an unconventional combination of social formations alongside an unconventional focus on form allows us to ask different types of questions. I intend to speak to the garden’s general affordances by undertaking specific analyses of poetic gardens across time and place. These analyses will draw on the foundational work of New Historicist critics in seeing literature not as an autonomous sphere but as enmeshed in and referential to the culture that surrounds it. As one of the leading New Historicist critics, Stephen Greenblatt, states, literature should be analysed as part “of the larger networks of meaning in which both the author and his works participate” (4). These larger networks are central to my analysis of how the garden image comes to mean different things at different times, allowing me to consider individual representations of gardens alongside multifarious material like the Genesis account or seventeenth-century husbandry

manuals which imbue it with particular meanings at particular times and places.

The potential pitfalls of New Historicism were foreseen early on by Greenblatt. He notes in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* that if “literature is viewed exclusively as the expression of social rules and instructions, it risks being absorbed entirely into an ideological superstructure” (4). However, as formalist critics like Richard Strier have suggested, Greenblatt’s actual arguments tend to do exactly that, posing an *a priori* ideological superstructure that duly absorbs (or elides) contrary details (72). Thus, while the contextual and theoretical gestures of New Historicism remain influential today, they have received a necessary critique from a new generation of critics who have at times been called (new) formalists. This has been notably asserted by early modern scholars (such as Heather Dubrow, Richard Helgerson, and David Norbrook), who have put into practice Greenblatt’s unheeded warning against seeing literature “exclusively as the expression of social rules and instructions” (4) by considering the sometimes subversive effects of literary forms and poetic features.

These critics have moved to consider how texts’ “meanings are shaped and enabled by the possibilities of [literary] form” (Rasmussen 1). Critics like Richard Helgerson and Nigel Smith have contended that texts do not passively reinscribe social realities, but intervene in them formally. This is form in the sense of literary form or genre. Recognising the politics of literary forms prevents texts from being read simply for how they consolidate dominant cultural or political narratives, and so preserves their political agency and that of their authors. “Discursive forms matter”, argues Helgerson, “they have a meaning and effect that can sometimes complement but that can also contradict the manifest content of any particular work” (6). Though these critics do not privilege form to the extent that Hayden White does when he says “What constitutes the literary work’s ideology is its form, not its putative contents” (163), they nonetheless recognise that “the kinds of meanings that a given cultural configuration can

generate . . . are reflected in the formal features of its modes of discourse” (White 189), be they different discursive forms altogether (as for Helgerson) or on the level of grammar and linguistics (as for White). Helgerson, in particular, argues that the political meanings associated with literary forms are oppositional, that forms exist in an ongoing and evolving dialogue. Changes in a culture affect a text’s reception, but so too do changes in the cultural status of other ‘competing’ discursive forms (Helgerson 7). This means texts can use or alter generic markers to stake out their own politics (Smith, *Literature and Revolution* 6). My thesis will acknowledge that literary forms are themselves politically charged, and are “as much agents as they are structures. They make things happen” (Helgerson 6).

It is also important that, even as we consider texts holistically to embark on an overarching argument about forms, we do not neglect the oddities and disjunctions that complicate those arguments. Strier follows Empson to warn against a critical presumption that “nothing in past literature ever struck a learned contemporary of that literature as strange or odd” (23-4). This warning is similarly applicable to contemporary criticism, where we must also ward against—as Ellen Rooney argues—a too-easy “application of ‘theoretical themes’ as master codes that reduce every text (whatever its provenance) to an illustration of theory itself” (31). Though I contend overall that the garden’s forms afford its images political meanings, those meanings are various, informed by the poet’s cultural and historical context, the way in which the text is shaped by literary form, and the poet’s specific formal choices in its construction. My project seeks to continue the close attention to texts, their construction, and their interaction and agency within a network of traditions, genres, and other texts, but also to complement these concerns with an attention to material forms. My project considers how the material forms of the garden enable, subvert, or interact with literary forms, as well as the formal features that construct individual poems.

While I borrow terms like *affordance* from the work of Caroline Levine, I also depart from her argument in significant ways. Levine applies her broad definition of form to all structures, social and literary. She argues that because “no form operates in isolation” (7), the interactions (or “collisions”) of many different types of forms can reify oppressions but also find liberating avenues within them (7). The idea of “collisions” is useful because it demonstrates in an intuitive way how apparently incongruous elements of a culture interact with one another. This is applicable to my argument, which also considers how the interactions of the garden’s forms with other entities, like the state, literary forms, and religious tradition give it meaning. However, I believe those discussions can be had more effectively if we retain our precise and differentiated vocabularies, instead of replacing them with one in which everything becomes a form. By considering phenomena as various as a prison timetable and a sonnet as “forms”, Levine blurs literary and sociopolitical realms together in a way that risks obscuring, rather than clarifying, how they interact. This blurring tends to both exaggerate the power of individual representations to affect macro political formations and leave that influence undertheorised. Beyond the kind of theoretical provocation Levine is performing, a historically specific and terminologically precise approach to how different “forms” interact allows for defter analyses. It is possible to discuss how, for example, rhetorical devices remould our literary forms in ways that shape our social and political realities without using terms that elide the complex interrelation of those categories. Therefore, while Levine’s definition is useful for revealing new structures as forms with interlocking effects, I will otherwise maintain our specific historical and literary critical vocabularies.

Poetic gardens imagine power: its operation, its purview, its success, and its failures. However, this is no homogenous signification; the garden image has, at different times, been informed by different cultural surrounds, political imperatives, and poetic pressures. By dividing

my thesis between two countries and two periods in which the obligations of individuals to wider collectives became fraught in very different ways—Civil War England and modern New Zealand—I hope to speak at once to how the garden image has been used differently and to how its affordances have persisted.

My first two chapters, based in early modern England, will evaluate how poets use the garden image to address the upheaval of the Civil War period. My first chapter discusses the poetry of Andrew Marvell, considering “The Mower against Gardens” and “The Garden” against the backdrop of seventeenth-century policies of land enclosure and the discourse of husbandry manuals. In these poems, a poetic emphasis on enclosure renders the garden a microcosm of the political state while also imagining, through gardening, the potential for (and limitations of) utopian thinking.

My second chapter takes as its primary focus Lucy Hutchinson’s “Elegies”, but also draws on Marvell’s “Upon Appleton House”. Hutchinson’s poems emphasise the garden’s internal arrangement and the gardener’s ordering to depict her grief at the failure of the Commonwealth and the death of her husband. Here, the garden’s forms interact with the literary forms of the country house poem and the elegy. The former produces a dilating effect in which the garden evokes, and its forms dramatise, the political state and national leadership. The elegy also makes use of the political meanings evoked by the garden as a means of articulating what Kate Lilley calls the genre’s “sufficiently reparative language” (Lilley 73). Also signifying in relation to the Eden story it alludes to, the garden of the “Elegies” allows Hutchinson to encapsulate her grief as both personal and political, though she ultimately prevents its potentially restorative affordances from fully ameliorating her grief.

In my third chapter, in order to demonstrate the persistent affordances of the garden’s constituent forms, I undertake a radical shift to the early twentieth-century New Zealand poetry

of Ursula Bethell. This allows me to reappraise the affordances of the garden's forms in a different cultural environment. Against a prevailing genre of settler verse in which the garden image either implies the physical civilisation of the wilderness or offers a retreat into a European enclave, Bethell begins to imagine New Zealand as home through her gardening. Aligning the garden with a firmly domestic set of concerns, its forms reflect a politics of home that models an incipient New Zealand identity as well as cultivating a new poetic language with which to articulate it.

In my final chapter, I move forward in time again, this time to analyse the twenty-first-century poetry of Jenny Bornholdt. Bornholdt's poetry demonstrates the consolidation of ideas of home and belonging in the New Zealand context, with the garden reflecting a family history and narrative of cultivation. The collection also responds to the exigencies of confessional poetry, the garden evoking—but finally subverting—the intimate truth-telling relationship intrinsic to that genre. Here, the arrangement of the garden's elements and the gardener's ordering become visceral analogues for the work of writing in a way that dramatises how the poet is empowered to manipulate the reader.

The garden's persistence in our literature is a testament to both its essential flexibility and its ongoing resonance as a model of social experience. Explicitly delimited, internally arranged, and subject to the gardener's ongoing formal imposition, the garden is both exceptionally shaped and exceptionally liable to become misshapen. Consequently, it is an ideal image through which to imagine the extent, effects, and exercise of power.

In the writing of Andrew Marvell, gardens are ambiguous and deeply allusive. This is in part a result of the various cultural traditions that are associated with the garden in seventeenth-century England and partly to do with Marvell’s own enigmatic treatment of them. I will discuss how Marvell’s emphasis on two of the garden’s forms—its enclosure and cultivation—evokes meanings of a corrupt nation and leadership in “The Mower against Gardens”, and, in “The Garden”, a failed imagining of a utopian state and space. I contend that, in both poems, the forms of the garden afford Marvell the means to dramatise the condition and constitution of the systems that enclose their speakers, as well as picturing the power of individuals to remould them.

Analysing how garden images mean in these poems requires we be conversant in the cultural formations and archetypes that inflect them at this particular time. Early modern English writing routinely describes England as an Edenic garden. This association is mediated through the garden’s form of enclosure, as, too, is the divergence of garden poetry from the pastoral mode with which it is often conflated.⁵ Gardens and pastoral fields share an ostensibly ‘natural’ set of images, and in early modern poetry, they share a range of thematic interests. However, the garden’s particular set of forms affords its images more capacious political resources than those of pastoral fields, its enclosure aligning it figuratively with political wholes, and its gardening with the exercise of political power.

⁵ While critics like Jonathan Crewe have partly considered the specificity of garden forms (he considers enclosure specifically), they do so from within a framework that considers the garden pastoral. Jonathan Goldberg in *Voice Terminal Echo*, for example, sees “The Garden” as the poem “in which the “entire rhetorical repertoire of Renaissance pastoral is rehearsed” (Crewe 276). Donald M. Friedman in *Marvell’s Pastoral Art* further calls the “multiplex garden figure . . . the generative source of Marvell’s idea of pastoral” (13) without considering in detail the consequences of its formal specificity.

In discussing “The Mower against Gardens”, I identify it as responding to a particular discursive and political context outlined by Katherine Bootle Attie,; namely, the use of Edenic garden images to advance or reject contemporary policies of land enclosure. In the case of “The Garden”, I will suggest that the image of Eden is superimposed on pastoral retirement as Marvell probes, along multiple lines, the capacities of the garden to imagine a better place, as well as the capacity of poetry *about* gardens to get us there. The garden’s resources are hence tasked in these poems with imagining and negotiating utopian and dystopian alternatives.

In early modern England, gardens in literature—and particularly paradisal gardens—often function as a metonym for the English state. In her book *The Island Garden*, Lynn Staley traces the link between England and the garden to Gildas’ *De Excidio et Conquestu Britanniae* in the sixth century, considering the affiliation to be essentially geographical, as does Amy L. Tigner in her study of Renaissance gardens. In Genesis, the Garden of Eden is depicted as island-like because it is enclosed by four rivers (KJV Gen. 2.10-14), so that “Unlike European kingdoms bound by land to other countries, England is particular in its ability to imagine itself as Edenic, precisely because it is an island” (Tigner 1). This geographical equation is referenced in Joseph Hall’s 1603 *The Kings prophecie*, which pictures England as a “second Paradise below” separated from the “contagious vice” of “sinfill” Europe by the equivalent of Eden’s rivers:

For great *Euphrates* and the swelling *Nile*,

With *Tigris* swift; he bad the Ocean hoare

Serue for the great moate of the greatest Ile

Unlike Continental countries whose borders are frangible, England (or, rather, Britain) as an island provided early modern poets and readers with an accessible way to conceive of the nation,

as well as a link to “the most powerful idealistic and utopian image in the century”: the Garden of Eden (Smith, *Marvell* 153).



Fig. 2. The Garden of Eden as a walled island, from the Limbour Brothers' *Très Riches Heures du duc de Berry*. (Located in the Musée Condé 1411-1416; MS65 or F25).

The image of England as a garden brings specific political meanings afforded by its enclosed shape. In John of Gaunt's speech in *Richard II*, Shakespeare makes use of this affiliation when describing England as "this sceptred isle" (2.1.40):

This other Eden, demi-paradise,
 This fortress built by Nature for herself
 Against infection and the hand of war,
 This happy breed of men, this little world,
 This precious stone set in the silver sea,
 Which serves it in the office of a wall,
 Or as a moat defensive to a house,
 Against the envy of less happier lands,
 This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England (2.4.42-50)

Here, the enclosure of the garden aligns with England's island geography to render it a political whole that can then be weighed against other "less happier lands". Indeed, its enclosure is depicted as the root of its virtues, its separation affording England its security, its integrity, and its purity, which in turn allows the country to be imagined as having a unitary and homogenous condition and destiny.

While the pastoral shepherd often acts as "a device to allow the poet to speak about political or literary problems from within a conventional disguise" (Friedman 7), the gardener is a figure who more directly figures power through the ordering of the garden. This meaning is also consolidated by the garden's contemporary associations with Eden and England. The prelapsarian Garden of Eden, governed by God directly, is a utopian image of divine government. God is the true King, but He is also depicted as the gardener, a precedent set

biblically in John 15:1.⁶ It is this prelapsarian condition that John of Gaunt nostalgically evokes in his speech, in which providential leadership renders England the “blessèd plot”, separated and defended from wilder lands by divine fiat.

The garden’s enclosure, and the image of the nation as a political unit that it affords, distinguishes it from the pastoral. That the garden of England is a “fortress” with a “moat” and a bulwark “Against infection and the hand of war” brackets it with military priorities uncommon in the pastoral. The emphasis on enclosure highlights the threat of invasion and renders the island garden, by way of its very form, always and wholly on a war-footing. While, as we will see in other poems, the garden can still act as a retreat and inherits ideas of retirement from Horace’s *Epodes* just as the early modern pastoral does, the totalising function of enclosure figures that place of retreat as a political *alternative*, rather than a political respite.

This meaning is also a product of the enclosed garden’s Edenic, and specifically postlapsarian, implications. Eden also signifies a fallen state, so that the garden reflects a misuse of political power and authority. The Servant presents just such a garden-state in his dire assessment of England: “our sea-wallèd garden, the whole land, / Is full of weeds, her fairest flowers choked up / Her fruit trees all unpruned, her hedges ruined” (3.4.44-46). A similar indictment occurs in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, when Hamlet disclaims the state’s “unweeded garden, / That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature / Possess it merely” (1.2.135-7). Unlike John of Gaunt’s utopian depiction of England, the Servant instead casts England (and Hamlet Denmark) as a disordered garden, its enclosure now figuring a stifling image of a sick body and its political neglect manifesting in a series of gardening tasks left unattended.

Moreover, in the Gardener’s reply, Richard’s mismanagement of the state is explicitly dramatised in terms of gardening:

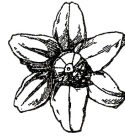
⁶ “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman” (KJV).

. . . O, what pity is it
 That he had not so trimm'd and dress'd his land
 As we this garden! We at time of year
 Do wound the bark, the skin of our fruit trees
 Lest, being over-proud in sap and blood
 With too much riches it confound itself.
 Had he done so to great and growing men,
 They might have lived to bear, and he to taste,
 Their fruits of duty. Superfluous branches
 We lop away, that bearing boughs may live.
 Had he done so, himself had borne the crown. . . (3.4.56-66)

As the garden is beholden to its gardener through their ordering cultivation, so too is the nation's fate tied to its king, that form affording a reflection on leadership and the working of political power. Inflected by the cultural association between the nation of England and Eden, the garden's enclosure figures the garden as a political whole, and through its gardening the operation of political power.

Whether in its utopian or dystopian version, Eden can act as a mobilising image because although it was "lost", New Testament doctrine suggested it could, in some form, be regained. The Servant implies this when he disclaims the weeds, which, of course, could be pulled out by a more competent gardener (and hence a more virtuous leader) in order to regain the paradisaical England depicted by John of Gaunt. Images of gardens offer the possibility of, as Diane McColley puts it, "mak[ing] Edenic choices" towards "the promise of a better future" (qtd. in Hiltner 6). We can thus see the garden working as a flexible image for politics, its meanings mediated by the garden's basic forms and their cultural associations with Eden, to evoke on the

one hand a prelapsarian and utopian image of providential political organisation and leadership and, on the other, a fallen and dystopian political disorder and misuse of power.



“The Mower against Gardens”

The idea of “Edenic choices” is very apt to the seventeenth century, a time in which people sought literally to recreate Eden (Smith, *Andrew Marvell* 153). Husbandry manual writers and horticultural enthusiasts,⁷ as well as groups like the Diggers, saw Eden not as an inaccessible state but one that, with hard national graft, could be brought about. This belief is reflected even in the names of contemporary husbandry manuals, such as John Parkinson’s *Paradisi in sole paradus terrestris*, Sir Hugh Plat’s *Floraes paradise* (and later, *The Garden of Eden*), and even Gabriel Plattes’s *A discovery of infinite treasure, hidden since the vworlds beginning*. In spite, or perhaps because of, this profusion of Edenic claims, “the manner by which England was to be made into a new Eden was contested” (Hiltner 5). In the 1650s, as Katherine Bootle Attie has argued, the conventional association of England with Edenic gardens became particularly charged, serving as a rhetorical strategy to advance or reject policies of land enclosure and their attendant visions for the nation.

Land enclosure, namely the privatisation of common-use land signalled by the physical demarcation of fences or hedges (Attie 135), has a long history in England. Enclosure accelerated significantly in the seventeenth century, in which “about 24 per cent of the country is estimated

⁷ Rebecca Bushnell, in *Green Desire: Imagining Early Modern English Gardens*, tells us that gardening (or *having* a garden) was a popular means of signalling one’s social aspirations (15).

to have been enclosed” compared with only 2 per cent in the sixteenth century, 13 per cent in the eighteenth century and 11 per cent in the nineteenth century” (Overton 148). Enclosure became particularly urgent in the mid-seventeenth century, when the Civil War “made agricultural improvement an issue of higher national priority than ever before” (Attie 138). Attie argues that, in order to make this mass removal of common land rights more palatable, writers of contemporary husbandry tracts attempted to shift “the public perception of the profitable enclosure from a space of selfish ambition into one of paradisaal recovery” through images of prelapsarian Edenic gardens (137). While land enclosure did not necessarily result in actual gardens, they became the most prominent image used to advance the policy because “Politicizing the idea of the garden . . . was already familiar literary territory” (Attie 143). By using gardens as the poster child for land enclosure, writers were able to tap into its formal and cultural resources.

Andrew Marvell’s poem “The Mower against Gardens” picks up on and upends this rhetorical strategy by advancing a pastoral vision of the ideal nation against a corrupt vision located specifically in the garden. The pastoral Mower defends “plain and pure” nature (4) against a dystopian vision of the nation represented by a postlapsarian garden and its tyrannical gardener. Although Marvell’s endorsement of the Mower’s position is in no way uncontested,⁸ I argue that the Mower himself advocates for common land rights against those who would take them away. This idea is not entirely new. In 1970, Bruce King argued that “The Mower against Gardens” has its eponymous character echo the Diggers’ arguments against land enclosure and private property (239). He traces the poem’s links with the works of the Diggers and particularly Gerrard Winstanley, a vehement opponent of private property, noting that Lord Fairfax’s regular contact with Winstanley’s group in 1649 would likely have been related to Marvell during his

⁸ See Judith Haber’s *Pastoral and the Poetics of Self-Contradiction: Theocritus to Marvell* and Bruce King in “The Mower against Gardens’ and the Levellers” (239).

residence at Fairfax's estate at Appleton.⁹ I argue for the merit of King's argument, while also deepening the sense of the poem's contextual engagement by demonstrating how it challenges the Edenic rhetorical strategies that pro-enclosure writers began to use in the early 1650s, as outlined by Attie. Placing the poem in this local discursive context helps us to corroborate how the forms of the garden afford poets political comment generally, while also seeing how those affordances are worked by individual poets and imbued with specific meaning in a cultural milieu.

This argument challenges critical orthodoxy by suggesting that "The Mower against Gardens" emerged from the discursive context of the early 1650s, rather than the Restoration dating first suggested by Allan Pritchard in 1983 as an addendum to his re-dating of "The Garden", and which was further advanced by Paul Hammond in 2006. As Derek Hirst and Steven N. Zwicker have recently pointed out, both of these arguments assume an inheritance from the poetry of Philips and Cowley that is fundamentally unsubstantiated, relying on numerous assumptions and "the insistent privileging of print as mode of publication" (167).¹⁰ While the dating of "The Garden" requires further scrutiny, I will echo Hirst and Zwicker's contention that "The Mower against Gardens" is likelier dated to the 1650s (175), by arguing that it is best illuminated in the discursive context of that time.

The Mower inveighs against gardens, considering them a betrayal of pastoral fields. It is primarily their enclosure that he identifies as perverse. Fields, whether grazed or used for crops, are "plain" (4) in that they are unobstructed and open to the gaze. A garden, alternately, is

⁹ This is best corroborated, as King points out, by the direct reference to the Levellers made in "Upon Appleton House", at lines 449-456 (King 237).

¹⁰ Hirst and Zwicker conclude that the premise of Pritchard's argument "simply does not hold" (172), but stop short of an affirmative pre-Restoration dating. They pick out Hammond's sister argument about "The Mower against Gardens" for particular scrutiny, critiquing the types of evidence that Hammond corroborates. They describe consonant rhyme words as "the commonest of pairings" (170), and thematic similarity—for example in the poems' discussion of grafting—as not a telling inheritance, but merely "a subject of wide contemporary interest" (170).

separate and private, likely to be enclosed by fences and hedges so that the only thing that is visible is its periphery; its inside is obscured in its own abundance. To make a garden is to impose form on nature “most plain and pure” (4), and so, in the Mower’s mind, to *deform* it “enclosed within the gardens square / A dead and standing pool of air” (5-6). For the Mower, as for the Diggers, “the creation of enclosed gardens is an example of luxury and results from the original fall of the race” (King 239). Enclosure deviates from the course of nature in order to “bring his vice in use” (1), the phrase “bring in use” tying the economic incentives of enclosure with sexual connotations (Smith, *Marvell* 133), so that the land is doubly exploited by “Luxurious man” (1). The Mower takes a single garden to represent the entire practice of land enclosure, projecting onto it a moral deviance that evokes a corrupt Eden and a corrupt England.

Pro-enclosure husbandry tracts present enclosure as a means of increasing the land’s natural bounty, and consequently as a means of reclaiming a time of prelapsarian plenty (Attie 144). Marvell’s Mower responds to this argument head-on, taking the putative advantages of land enclosure as the starting point for his own, inverted depiction of the practice. For example, land enclosure through hedging was seen to provide a beneficial shelter. Sir Hugh Plat’s horticultural manual, aptly called *The Garden of Eden*,¹¹ states that “to bring forth the better digested fruit”, “all easterly and northerly winds may be avoided by some defence. I would have it but a small Orchard; and if it were walled in, it were so much the better” (53-54). Adam Moore echoes this in 1653,¹² advocating for enclosure to restore England’s “*Eden-like blessing*” (1). He argues for enclosure with trees, arguing that common land is “now punished with the

¹¹ This manual was published first in 1652, though it “had long circulated in manuscript” (Hirst and Zwicker 170).

¹² This advantage of enclosure is often referenced. Gabriel Plattes argues in 1639 that enclosure is among the ways whereby Englishman can “make this Countrey the Paradise of the World”; he argues that hedgerows provide “notable shelter for the Cattle in Winter, to preserve them from cold stormes; and no lesse commodious, to keepe them from the heate of Summer” (10). The same point is repeated in 1675 by John Worlidge, who declares land enclosure to be “one of the highest Improvements in *England*”, arguing that “Enclosure with a good tall Hedge-row, preserves the Land warm, and defends and shelters it from the violent and nipping Winds” (10).

extremity of cold and pinching windes”, whereas “such a warmth would these Willows effect, that all would freely spring and prove together to the generall profit” (27). The Mower flips this argument, as the gardener “first enclosed within the gardens square / A dead and standing pool of air” (5-6). Instead of enclosing the land in order to protect it from the wind, the gardener encloses the air itself, parodying the advice of husbandry manuals so that instead of affording safety and protection, the garden’s enclosure evokes a sense of stillness and putrefaction.

Another advantage of enclosure is discussed by Samuel Hartlib in his 1651 anthology of husbandry works:

I may add *Enclosure* as an *Improvement* of land: not onely because that men, when their grounds are enclosed, may imploy them as they please; but because it giveth warmth and consequently *fertility*. (48)

Here, the control that comes with private ownership is conflated with enclosure’s benefits to the land itself.¹³ Again, the Mower picks up on this idea. Immediately after emphasising the enclosure of the “dead and standing pool of air”, the poem proceeds: “a more luscious earth for them did [the gardener] knead, / Which stupefied them while it fed” (7-8). In other husbandry manuals, fertility and abundance are associated with Eden and therefore virtue. In 1653, Ralph Austen ties enclosure to spiritual growth (Attie 140), and describes God as having “caused a parcell of ground to bring forth Plants and Trees most exquisite . . . and enriched that place with more fruitfulness and beauty, then any other part of the Earth” (12-13). Marvell, though,

¹³ This is reflected, too, in Plattes’s earlier discussion. He contends that “I would have all Timber trees planted in hedgerowes, and by this means no ground will be lost: but all woods and thornie grounds may be turned into fruitfull fields and pastures, and are apt to be made fertile by my new inventions: besides, the planting of the Timber trees in hedgerowes, bringeth a double commoditie; for they are not onely an helpe to divide the land of industrious persons, from the land of the idle, that every one may enjoy the fruit of his owne labours; but also they will be notable shelter for the Cattle in Winter, to preserve them from cold stormes; and no lesse commodious, to keepe them from the heate of Summer. And if any one shall object against the multitude of ground lost by hedgerowes; let him remember himselfe, that every hedge gaineth ten times his proportion of land” (10-11). Here again, ownership and fertility dovetail.

portrays it as a corruptive surfeit of nutriment (“luscious” 2.), leading to the garden’s abundance, but also its moral decay. The poem’s emphasis on consumption as the corruptive action strongly evokes Eden, but here a specifically fallen version. The Mower shows a conspicuous knowledge of the arguments for enclosure even as he disparages them, as well as the Edenic image so often used to advance them.

This postlapsarian echo is consolidated by how the Mower depicts the garden’s materials in terms of feminine dissemblance, vanity, and sexual deviance. The Mower condemns the ornamentation of the garden, in which the “flowers themselves were taught to paint” (12), and the “tulip, white, did for complexion seek / And learned to interline its cheek” (13-4). The conceit of cosmetics suggests not only a vain preoccupation with appearance (which in turn links to Adam and Eve hiding their nakedness after the Fall) but a more essential duplicitousness in which the land’s materials are taught to betray their nature. This is also evoked by the “adult’rate fruit” (25) produced by the gardener as he “grafts upon the wild the tame” (24). Grafting was another “improvement” of nature which, alongside enclosure, was popularly discussed in husbandry manuals.¹⁴ Although grafting was colloquially sexualised (Hirst and Zwicker 170), that metaphor is here extended to an incestuous image in which “No plant now knew the stock from which it came” (23) and to describing “His [the gardener’s] green *seraglio*” (27). This last choice again links the garden’s sexual deviancy directly with its enclosure,¹⁵ both instituted into greater depravity by the gardener,¹⁶ and once more inverting the utopian Edenic strategy of pro-

¹⁴ Sir Hugh Plat’s *The Garden of Eden* provides extensive advice on grafting, including, as noted by Hirst and Zwicker, an echo of the poem itself in the index entry “Grafting between the bark and tree” (170).

¹⁵ The *OED* defines “seraglio” as an “Enclosure, place of confinement” (I.), a meaning that extends to the harem “in which the women are secluded” (I.1.a.).

¹⁶ Interestingly, Attie notes the use of a similar language of licentiousness (as compared to chastity) in Adam Moore’s 1653 *Bread for the Poor*; there, he argues that common English land risks being “cuckolded by Forreigners and strangers, and your Common used before your face ...” whereas enclosure takes “her [the land] home to your chamber, and keep[s] her with a guard where she cannot be abused” (qtd. in Attie 146). A similar language was deployed against land enclosure by the Diggers who linked it to “sensuality, darkness, and wickedness” (qtd. in King 239).

enclosure writers.

Indeed, in all of these cases, the Mower links human intervention in nature to corruption. The gardener's enclosure of the land, his "knead[ing]" of the soil, and his teaching the plants and flowers to alter their appearance, all disrupt the "plain and pure" pastoral ideal represented by the Mower. That the result evokes a postlapsarian Eden suggests the Mower is condemning man's ambitious (and, he implies, futile) attempts to recreate Paradise on earth, and so undermining the rhetorical strategy associated with land enclosure (and indeed husbandry improvements in general) at this time.

However, the poem also more locally echoes the language of Digger pamphlets and the writings of Gerrard Winstanley in particular, as pointed out by Bruce King (239). Winstanley, as part of the Diggers (or True Levellers), argued that land enclosure was a corruption of God's creation and championed common land (Corns, Hughes, and Loewenstein 45-46). Attie argues that Winstanley also takes up Eden as a rhetorical strategy, though in this case its fallen variant, and in so doing "implicitly undermines the pro-enclosure argument by equating the designs of the improvers with Adam's fatal attraction to the forbidden fruit" (148).

Winstanley shows Adam corrupting the world as the "first enclosing landlord" (Attie 148); he "seeks to compass all the creatures of the earth into his own covetous hands" (480). Winstanley challenges private property as a category in general, considering it "a law of government of his [Adam's] own making" (481), both arbitrary and a direct usurpation of the earth's "common treasury" (Winstanley 482). In the same way, the Mower's preoccupation with enclosure suggests a radical distrust of ownership as a concept; the gardener must "seduce" and "allure" the world into a condition of enclosure which is represented as foreign to it.¹⁷ It is an

¹⁷ This also runs contrary to the Mower's alignment with the pastoral, a mode which wholly rejects "the yearning after property and prosperity" (Poggioli 4).

“enforced” state, artificially broken into shapes (“squares”) which have no natural equivalents (Smith, *Marvell* 133).

For both the Mower and Winstanley, ownership is linked to corrupt human governance. Adam himself is a gardener, tasked with “dressing” the land (Gen. 2.15), but he is also a source of authority as “that man that appeared first to rule the earth” (Winstanley 480). Winstanley contends that Adam, by enclosing land, perverts that authority by “seek[ing] to . . . make himself a Lord, and all other his slaves” (480). Associating Adam with worldly gardens (and thus the kinds of uses to which common land was unjustly perverted), but also casting him as a figure of false human authority, Winstanley attacks land enclosure and the legitimacy of its proponents. Adam’s false authority is, on the one hand, emblematic of humanity more broadly; Winstanley says that “this [self-loving] *Adam* appears first in every man and woman; but he sits down in the chair of Magistracy, in some above others . . . it rises not to its height in all; but every one that gets an authority into his hands, tyrannizes over others” (481). However, Winstanley also uses Adam’s archetypal patriarchal power to explicitly challenge the legitimacy of England’s political state and leaders, stating: “O thou proud selfish governing *Adam*, in this Land called *England!*” (482). Moving quickly between his Edenic analogue and his particular target in the erosion of common property ownership by enclosure, Winstanley renders Adam not just a symbol of corruption generally but a symbol of England’s illegitimate leadership.

“The Mower against Gardens” likewise makes a grim comment on the status of the English nation through the image of the gardener. Like Adam in Winstanley, the gardener in Marvell’s poem stands in for man generally, but also a figure of authority that is here corrupted. He is “that sov’reign thing and proud” (20); he first “seduce[s]” (2) and “allure[s]” (3) nature before enclosing it (5), and carries out the grafting of plants and tree; it is he who is positioned as the “tyrant” (28) over his “*seraglio*” (27). While one of the garden’s basic forms—its enclosure—

affords it a particular resemblance with England, the form (in Levine's terms) of gardening figures meanings of power. In the garden of Marvell's poem, nature answers to an "enforced" (31) authority, the gardener able to explicitly model political power through his practice of form.¹⁸ Just as the gardeners of *Richard II* lament that Richard has "not so trimm'd and dress'd his land / As we this garden!" (3.4.57-8), resulting in its current weed-ridden state of corruption, so too is the gardener in this poem represented as the fount of power and its misuse. With its emphatic enclosure and its strong Edenic echoes, the garden must be seen as an emblem of England, with the Mower rejecting either a specific "tyrant"¹⁹ or more broadly the cabal of wealthy interests that sought to overturn the long history of common land rights and so corrupt the nation's pastoral ideal. The poem marks the transition from a pastoral vision of the nation (complete with classical figures such as "fauns and fairies" [35]) to a dystopian Eden marked by enforced enclosure and cultivation.

Thus, the garden is a site through which writers can advance competing visions for the nation. The Mower uses the image of an Edenic garden to intervene in an ongoing debate about enclosure, and to reflect—much like the servants and statesmen in Shakespeare's play—on the state of the nation. Marvell has the Mower take up and subvert the rhetorical strategy used to advance land enclosure by turning the utopian valence of the garden inside out. In doing so, as King argues, Marvell has the Mower speak in the Digger tradition led by Winstanley, depicting the Eden story as the archetypal warning against enclosure. In emphasising its enclosed shape, and secondly its ordering by the gardener, Marvell makes use of the political affordances of the garden's forms; land enclosure is depicted as a deviation from the righteous course of England's

¹⁸ This direct practice of power is opposed to the more abstract and idealised harmony with nature envisaged in pastoral shepherds.

¹⁹ This term echoes the wording of legal charges against Charles I, and (relevant if Hammond's dating is to be believed) Restoration-era depictions of Cromwell.

“blessèd plot”, not here the garden fortress envisioned by John of Gaunt, but the “common treasury” (Winstanley 482) of its “sweet fields” (32).



“The Garden”

Ralph Austen, in his 1653 *The spirituall use of an orchard, or garden of fruit-trees*, argues for enclosing the commons and planting fruit trees so that the poor “might maintaine themselves, and profit others, in stead of burthening them”, thus making the nation “a very Garden of delights . . . another Canaan, flowing with Milke and hony”. He depicts gardens of fruit-trees as “the *Books* wherein we may read and see plainly the Attributes of God”,²⁰ finding in them a series of divine similitudes, and thus advancing horticultural improvement as a means through which the nation can regain paradise and divine communion. It was this ambition, which Winstanley describes in Adam as “an aspiring desire to be equall, or like to God himselfe” (260), that the Mower depicts as depraved. For him, the gardener’s pursuit of “a more luscious earth” (7) in the garden was, like the Tower of Babel, more heretical than utopian. While, unlike “The Mower against Gardens”, Marvell’s “The Garden” is not a poetic intervention in enclosure polemic, it nevertheless seeks to reclaim that “more luscious earth”. “The Garden” literalises the Edenic strategy of husbandry manuals in order to try to manifest the utopian rewards of life in paradise. Evoking the virtues of the paradisaal garden over those of society, the speaker of the poem probes the utopian resources of the garden.

²⁰ This latter quote is from his expanded 1657 edition of the same work.

“The Garden” has generally been considered a poem that celebrates Horatian retirement. The speaker retires from public life into nature in order pursue a typically pastoral “contemplative retreat wherein was fostered the quest for spiritual purity and wisdom” (Friedman 12). The speaker’s retreat into nature “weave[s] the garlands of repose (8)”; it is a “worldly relinquishment” (Crewe 273) that sets up a division between the fruitless *negotium* (work) of society and the fruitful *otium* (leisure) of his garden retirement. This occurs through a series of comparisons that valorise nature and, in particular, seclusion. That “Society is all but rude / To this delicious solitude” (15-16) is in part because of the vanity of society and its rewards (“How vainly men themselves amaze” [1]), in part because of the abundance of the garden (“Ripe apples drop about my head” [34]), but also because in nature “the mind, from pleasures less, / Withdraws into its happiness” (41-42). While the body experiences nature’s bounty, the mind “meanwhile” finds the repose necessary to begin “Annihilating all that’s made (47)” —“blot[ting] out all images of objects in the world” (Smith, *Marvell* 158)—to seek a pure “green thought in a green shade” (48).

Seeking a purer and more authentic life in nature is a pastoral ideal. However, the choice of the garden for the setting makes this poem specifically utopian by way of its association with Eden. The reason that the garden can function as a site for utopian imagining is its enclosure, for, as evidenced by More’s *Utopia*, in which “the imagining of Utopia is constitutively related to the possibility of establishing some spatial *closure*” (Jameson, *Archaeologies* 291). Marvell, like husbandry manual writers and the Diggers, finds in the worldly garden an intimation of the ideal life, probing, in this poem, the idea that Eden could in some meaningful way be made manifest on Earth. This effort is not assured. In stanza II, the speaker notes that “Your sacred plants, if here below / Only among the plants will grow” (13-14). Working off the same concept of divine similitude as Austen in his husbandry manual, the speaker seeks the materials of transcendence

(“sacred”) in nature. He considers the garden the most likely place (as compared to society), but finds the enterprise still uncertain (“*if* here below”, my emphasis); those “sacred” plants may not be extant at all. Separate from the “busy companies of men”, the garden offers the space and resources required for the mind’s utopian “green thought”.

However, the garden is also very much a product of those “busy companies”, not a natural or authentic place, but one contrived by the gardener. This complicates the poem’s Horatian division between *negotium* and *otium*, as does its ongoing emphasis on ordering both horticultural and poetic. While certainly a poem of natural celebration, the speaker in “The Garden” never appears wholly satisfied with the Horatian rewards of his “happy garden-state” (57). The poem is hedged with disclaimers, conditions and ambiguous terms that disrupt that impression, but above all, it continues its “Annihilating”, its “creat[ing]”. The “green thought in a green shade” (48) is the poem’s utopian vision; however, it is not the end-point of the poem or its resolution and does not signal “repose” or *otium* at all. Instead, the specifics of that “green thought” are continually reshaped through the proliferating imaginative avenues of the poem and the concomitant reordering of the garden itself. Restless and digressive, the poem is more manic than content, belabouring its celebration of the utopian garden because it finds it ultimately insufficient.

This subversion occurs in three key ways: through a prevailing sense of sameness, a grammar of contingency, and, most importantly, a proliferation of multiple and contradictory utopian images. The idyllic nature of the garden is insistently complicated. This is evident even in the opening contrast between societal and natural life: “How vainly men themselves amaze / To win the palm, the oak, or bays” (1-2)”. Here, Marvell’s depiction of the vanities of public life in symbolic plants renders them not so different from the natural materials lauded by the poem.

The gardener could themselves cultivate the literal “palm, the oak, or bays”.²¹ The difference, as Marvell depicts it, is rather that these “vain” pursuits offer only “short and narrow vergéd shade” (5), compared to the more plenteous and enclosing foliage of the garden, in which “all flow’rs and all trees do close” (7). While the garden is depicted as superior—it offers more shade—it still appears to offer a version of the rewards of public life. Indeed, even if we consider shade as a Christian concept, we reach similar conclusions. In the Song of Solomon account from which Marvell draws in stanza III, shade is strongly associated with providence (Stewart 71).²² The female speaker in that story describes herself as having “black”, sunburnt skin, connoting sin. Through her love for the male speaker, she is transformed as the spouse’s “inclosed garden”,²³ their marriage providing the redemptive shade of a garden and thus providence. Nevertheless, while the garden’s enclosure provides more shade and so, perhaps, greater providence, the idea that God also commends the vain pursuits with which “men themselves amaze” suggests the rewards of garden retreat are not transformative but merely more plentiful.

Shade is the first of many images through which Marvell judges garden life and “green thought[s]” as a better version of society. This is conventional in poems of Horatian retreat, but, in the garden setting more associated with transformative utopian visions, these images become tainted with lack. Each garden image is lauded by the poem, but they are also subtly undermined by their own terms. In a second image, Marvell compares the garden’s beauties to those of an earthly mistress. The poem describes amorous men carving their lovers’ names into trees, though “Little, alas, they [the trees] know, or heed, / How far these beauties hers exceed!” (21-22). The

²¹ Indeed, Ursula Bethell plants exactly these in reference to Marvell, and in turn Bornholdt in remembrance of her.

²² An extended discussion of the Christian meanings of shade, especially in relation to the Song of Solomon tradition, can be found in Stanley Stewart’s *The Enclosed Garden*.

²³ The relevant verses are: “Look not upon me, because I *am* black, because the sun hath looked upon me” (Song of Sol. 1:6) and “A garden inclosed garden *is* my sister, *my* spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed” (Song of Sol. 4:12). A precedent for shade as providence is found in Jonah 4:6, and the sun is associated with God’s vision and with exposing sin in Samuel 12:11.

speaker then says that, in his case, “Wheres’ e’er your barks I wound, / No name shall but your own be found” (23-24). The merits of the garden are here discussed in terms of their aesthetic beauties, and found, again, simply to be *better* than their societal equivalent, rather than offering the “sacred” and *other* rewards of the garden’s utopian referent. The garden “exceed[s]” the beauty of the mistresses but the comparison also limits the sense of that beauty to the merely physical, as does its celebration in the same human ritual of tree-carving. The poem conveys the superiority of the garden to society, but fails to depict its utopian otherness. Marvell is bound to extrapolate from the world as it is known.

These frustrations are subtle and their effect cumulative. However, the poem’s broader sense of contingency and its relentless changes in approach further undermine its putative celebration. The speaker (and, given the creative powers later assigned to this figure, we might consider him the “poet-speaker”) appears always to seek new representational avenues to make the reputed divinity of the garden tangible or legible. The opening retirement is compounded by a second enactment of retreat in Stanza IV (26), in which the worldly life is rejected by recourse to the classical gods. This is superimposed by the third, most radical retreat into the mind. These retreats imply that the initial retirement into the garden, though superior to society, was insufficient; the utopian rewards the garden implies, and that the speaker seeks, remain out of reach.

This series of different “retreats” insinuates the idea of *negotium* into even the poem’s most celebrated moment of horticultural *otium*, the “green thought”:

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. (41-48)

This stanza is ambiguous, in part because the moment of withdrawal, suggesting Horatian retirement and “repose”, coincides with frenetic mental activity and a sense of poetic *negotium*. The garden’s “garlands of repose” (8) do not usher in a period of passivity, but more and more tangential activity. While the garden’s solitude and separation from society enables the speaker to have the “green thought”, that “green thought” is neither an articulation nor the inception of pastoral *otium*; it instead triggers a cascade of creative *negotium*.

The following stanzas mark a shift away from the pastoral’s “double longing after innocence and happiness, to be recovered not through conversion or regeneration but merely through retreat” (Poggioli 1). Instead, the latter half of the poem turns to active creation, refiguring in a series of “green thought[s]” competing “Far other worlds”. Beyond mere retirement, these worlds all explicitly seek the more radical utopian ideal enabled by the garden image and its archetypes: connection with the divine. That this work is necessary at all, given the preceding stanzas that heralded the garden as a place of idyllic retirement, is further evidence for the niggling intimations of inadequacy that I have already identified. The poem’s pastoral expectations are thus disrupted in a text that lacks “any consistency of narrative” or “pastoral locale” and instead turns to “abrupt shifts” (Crewe 273). The poem does not end at stanza VI, but continues, implicitly setting aside its initial pastoral convictions in an attempt to manifest the joys of the garden through alternate and competing images. The garden’s “green shade”, its *otium*, is thus paradoxically both an escape from (societal) *negotium* but also the precondition of a different type of work, this time creative.

These images, and those of the stanzas that precede VI, are each “green thought[s]”; the speaker’s mind refigures his environment in a way that evokes both poetic creation and the cultivation of the garden. These worlds are quickly evoked and quickly replaced, suggesting not pleasurable poetic creation, but abortive attempts. One such world is the Neoplatonic allegory staged in stanza VII. The poem “transfers the metaphors of Neoplatonism from the cosmic to the human scale” (Smith, *Marvell* 154), as the body—the focus of the garden’s pleasures in previous stanzas—is cast aside in order for the soul to transcend. This interrupts the poem’s implicitly Edenic impression and retroactively makes all the pleasures that were permitted in a schema of prelapsarian innocence suspect. The bodily images of the garden’s fruits “crush[ing] their wine” (36) become the impedimenta of physical life that need to be rejected so that the speaker’s soul can glide “into the boughs” (53). To compensate for this ambiguity, a reader must revise those impressions, so that the poem conveys a journey *towards*, rather than a celebration of, unity with the divine.

This re-reading, like the world of stanza VII, does not last long, as it is erased by VIII’s return to Eden and to the body (“man there walked” [58]). “Waves in its plumes the various light” (56) suggests a divine beauty and providence (“light”), but the poem never begins its flight, and so once again fails to ascend, returning again to the garden that feels more enclosed than ever. These transient revisions give the poem the aspect of a thought-experiment, as too, does the language of this stanza and the poem more broadly. The first three words of “Or at some fruit-tree’s mossy root” (50) show its pretence; the vision is just an option (“or”), and it has any number of potential permutations (“at some”). It is all hypothetical, and this phrase casts doubt on even the most declarative of the stanza’s sentences. We are told “Here at the fountain’s sliding

foot”, but there is an increasing sense that there may not be a fountain at all.²⁴ Instead, garden and poem alike are in a state of continual reconfiguration.

Indeed, in stanza VIII, Eden returns as the key referent, and the prophetic tone of VII is replaced by the dissatisfactions of the speaker. The speaker does not want simply to regain Paradise, but to retreat further to before the creation of Eve when “man there walked without a mate” (58). This image is unconventional.²⁵ If, as the Mower and Gerrard Winstanley suggest, we should indeed consider gardening problematically aspirational, then this is surely ambition at its most extreme. The speaker imagines a garden beyond not only “a mortal’s share” (61), but beyond the “share” of immortal Adam in the Genesis account.²⁶ God is also depicted as a gardener, but one (unlike Richard II) with legitimate and irreproachable authority. The collocation “garden-state” implies, then, a longing not only for a prelapsarian *condition* but also for a direct relationship with God, undiluted by others. Dismissing man-made authorities (like the nation), and man-made places (like the real-world garden), the speaker’s “garden-state” reaches instead for the garden’s actual utopic referent.

As a consequence, the last stanza’s return to earth and the human “skilful gard’ner” (65) appears bathetic. It disrupts both the Neoplatonic journey *towards* the divine and the celebration of the “happy garden-state” (67) depicted in the previous stanzas. God is, of course, the ultimate creative figure, and unlike the speaker, his role is literally “creating” and “annihilating all that’s made”. The gulf between the human mind’s imaginative creations, those of the human gardener, and God’s creation becomes the shadow subject of this last stanza. Against this context, the lines

²⁴ The very presence of a fountain (not previously mentioned in the poem) might be said to suggest this artifice. Hester Lees-Jeffries argues that fountains are “liminal” zones; the water’s “surface is the space of imagination” (10), thus giving the poem a metapoetic dimension which will soon become explicit.

²⁵ Elizabeth Scott-Baumann, following Allan Pritchard’s dating of the poem, suggests Marvell’s “The Garden”—and this formulation in particular—was influenced by Katherine Philips (*Forms of Engagement* 90-112).

²⁶ “Imagines” is again key here; the grammar of stanza VIII places its utopian vision firmly in the past in “’twas”, and, in “’twere”, in the counterfactual past subjunctive. Like the Neoplatonic allegory it replaces, or the “sliding fountain”, this is another short-lived “green thought”.

“How well the skilful gard’ner drew / Of flow’rs and herbs this dial new” (65-6) must be read as comic, or at least ironic. The creation of the gardener who works in flowers and herbs, skilful as he may be, cannot compare with God’s “garden-state”, Marvell appearing to check the ambition of his previous stanzas. Jonathan Crewe states that, in this final stanza, “The garden text . . . is one of microcosmic imitation and limitation, not of creative freedom” (275) and, indeed, we end with the very same materials of “flow’rs and herbs” that began the poem. The first stanza rewards society’s vain pursuits with “some single herb” (4), but, by the end of the poem, those rewards have not been transformed; they are simply more prolific, suggesting either that divine life offers no unique reward, or that those rewards are firmly out of reach.

The line “Annihilating all that’s made” thus seems to have as its object not just the “busy companies of men” (12), but also the “Far other worlds” previously created by the mind. The poem proceeds by evoking and then replacing a series of imaginative experiments, as though none of them are quite sufficient. While each of these experiments have been “green thought[s]”, depicted in the garden’s materials, the last stanza’s return to the real garden explicitly aligns the mind’s creation (read: poetry) and annihilation with the garden’s forms. “How well the skilful gard’ner drew / Of flow’rs and herbs this dial new” (65-66) figures imaginative creation in the “drawing” or ordering of the garden, but also implies the destruction that preceded it in “new”. Such an image further consolidates the metapoetic equivalence between gardens and imagination and between the forming acts of gardening and writing. The failure of the garden’s materials—its “flow’rs and herbs”—to transcend is also a reflection on the equivalent failure of the poet’s language.

Christine Coch identifies a tradition of imagining poetic issues through the garden in the sixteenth century, stating that “for poets so inclined, cultural associations between gardens and verse made poetic gardens a singularly rich medium for dramatising the merits and problems of

their art” (100). Marvell may be drawing on this tradition, considering his semiotic vehicles as inseparable from their fallen taint as the flowers of the garden. The second stanza’s “sacred plants” could thus be understood in terms both horticultural and linguistic. Both the garden and the poem are mutable, able to be reshaped by the creative figures behind them, but, just as the gardener lacks the “sacred plants” (13) to imagine the Edenic garden, so too can the poet only draw on his fallen words. The garden’s form of ordering takes on a double referent, as poetic and garden creation become equated.

The garden therefore becomes a place not of *otium*, but of poetic and horticultural *negotium*. This is work that is never fully rewarded. Under repeated protestations of joy, the implicit subject of the poem appears to be limitation, though also, I think, a wry indefatigability. The poem ends with a cheerful exclamation: “How could such sweet and wholesome hours, / Be reckoned but with herbs and flow’rs!” (71-2). If we read “reckon” as meaning *describe*, another contemporary usage (“reckon, v.”), then the line suggests another reflection on representational resources, a sardonic acknowledgement that time can only be passed in an experiential mode which is familiar, that is meted out in known quantities (“hours”) and with known signifiers. However, it might suggest also, as in the “sacred plants”, both an ongoing conviction that nature is the best available option and—in its shadow question (“How could”)—a mind still on the lookout for alternatives. Indeed, the poem ends with images of time and *negotium*:

“th’industrious bee / comput[ing] its time” (69-70), the moving of the sun around the garden’s sundial (67-68), and the gardener’s cultivation (65). Although the garden’s physical enclosure is emphasised here as it was in “The Mower against Gardens”, the continual attempts to cultivate its limited materials into something *more* articulates anxieties about entrapment—about an enclosure more radical and restrictive than walls and hedges. Marvell’s poem questions both halves of Austen’s formulation; not only does the garden fail to become “the *Books* wherein we

may read and see plainly the Attributes of God”, but it challenges the idea that any books—or words—could ever encapsulate them.

Marvell therefore takes up Horatian retirement alongside the contemporary rhetorical use of the garden as a metonym for paradise, in order to interrogate the garden’s actual utopian capacities. Images of gardens afford representations of political alterity, instituting a microcosmic enclosure in which the gardener (here God) rules over his ideal “garden-state”. However, in also setting up an equivalence between gardening and writing, the poet-speaker reshapes the garden and poem in ways that model utopian political action, but specifically God’s power to annihilate or (re-)create his environment. Unlike God, though, the speaker’s acts are imaginary and rendered insufficient by the fallen nature of the materials he uses to create them: plants and words.

“The Garden” can thus be seen both as a spiritual journey that is forever being retarded (and therefore a garden that emphasises enclosure), or, through the garden and poem’s emphasis on ordering, a utopian effort to flex the epistemological boundaries that confine the speaker, and all of us, in the most radical sense. Fredric Jameson’s *Archaeologies of the Future* makes an “anti-anti-utopian” interpretation of texts, in which the calling of each text is to regenerate:

the *utopian imagination*, the imagination of otherness and radical difference; to succeed by failure, and to serve as unwitting and even unwilling vehicles for a meditation, which, setting forth for the unknown, finds itself irrevocably mired in the all-too-familiar, and thereby becomes unexpectedly transformed into a contemplation of our absolute limits. (288-89)

Although we find in every utopian text a failure to transcend, each provides a flicker of utopian impulse, reconnoitring our cognitive limits to suggest, ultimately, ways we might overcome

them. Seen in this way, the poem carries out Jameson's anti-anti-utopianism in miniature through the garden. It multiplies, stanza-by-stanza, different garden arrangements (produced by different poetic arrangements) to attempt to reach and articulate that divine Other, but the final "return to the lesser pleasures of the actual garden suggests the speaker's acknowledgement that true transcendence of the things of this world... is only possible at some future time" (Barnaby 353). As with all utopian texts, attempts to depict utopias leave them languishing where they began, in the "green shade" and the "herbs and flow'rs", so that the garden's forms come ultimately to reflect on the workings and limitations of artistic expression. Nonetheless, as a glimpse into a wider utopian process, the poem's individual failures are meaningless compared to the temerity of the continued attempts and the hope they embody.

Perhaps, then, the speaker in the final stanza is not dwelling, defeated, on the futility of his efforts and the time wasted in his attempts. Perhaps instead, he more resembles the gardener, "comput[ing]" his time before another attempt to "reckon" with the "herbs and flow'rs" and redraw "this dial new". This has an obvious parallel in the poet who, ending this poem, looks forward to future ones. Interestingly, the dial superimposes another enclosed and arranged shape over the garden that could figure an emblem of the state over which the gardener presides. As in the dystopian image of Shakespeare's "choked up" England, gardening can afford its images meanings of political mismanagement, but it also always offers the potential for regeneration and improvement in the virtuous horticulturalist—or leader—to come. "The Garden" interrogates the utopian potential of gardens, but also how gardening can reflect on and mirror a similarly empowered figure: the poet. By placing the garden and, in particular, its formal ordering at the centre of his poem, Marvell puts the politics of literary representation—its powers and their limits—at the poem's conceptual centre.

Thus, in Marvell's poetry and at the time of his writing in the mid-seventeenth century, the image of the garden is a patchwork of inherited cultural traditions that is also inflected by its application in contemporary discourses such as land enclosure polemic and Horatian retirement. It is one that, through its forms, is invested in utopian (and dystopian) negotiation, namely the imagination of political alternatives in its enclosure and the practice of power in its gardening. In the Mower poem those forms afford him ways to speak about political wholes, arrangement and leadership, whereas in "The Garden", they figure utopian political arrangements before coming to reflect, ultimately, on the power—and limits—of artistic representation to create "Far other worlds" (46). In each case, the poetic garden imagines and articulates the possibility of radically different visions for society.

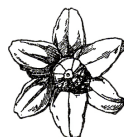
“Elegy engages persistently with the figuration of desire under the aspect of lack, or interdiction, and the quest for a sufficiently reparative language” (Lilley 73)

Kate Lilley has argued that although elegies originated from a “domestic-erotic-familial space”, they were “not at all cut adrift from politics” (82). Lucy Hutchinson’s “Elegies” also originate from this space, responding to the death of her husband, Colonel Hutchinson. However, their shared republicanism, and the circumstances of the Colonel’s death, firmly interpolate politics into that ostensibly private reflection. Colonel Hutchinson was a signatory of Charles I’s death warrant and died in prison for reputed involvement in an anti-monarchist plot following the Restoration. Hutchinson’s poems hence testify to Lilley’s contention that “elegy provided a framework for figuring the unstable relations and shifting boundaries of inside and outside, self and other, family and nation, the private body and the body politic” (82). While the object of Hutchinson’s grief in the “Elegies” is always her husband, his loss is one that resounds through every part of her life.

Hutchinson heightens the liminal space provided by the elegy by choosing to centre elegies 7 and 12 around the image of a garden. Garden images speak at once locally and nationally, privately and publicly, and so provide Hutchinson with a set of affordances complementary to the elegy. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the forms of the garden, such as its enclosure, mediate cultural associations with England and Eden so that images of gardens imagine alternative political arrangements. Moreover, its cultivation by a gardener often comes to figure political power. While these meanings remain in play, Hutchinson underscores her grief by emphasising a lack of cultivation and the third constituent form of the garden, its

internal arrangement. By presenting the garden as *disordered*, she evokes her anguished mental state while also projecting it into the disorder of the nation. Working through a republican revision of the country house poem, as well as persistent allusions to Eden, she traces both of these meanings to the absence of her husband's cultivation of the garden, portraying him as a virtuous lord and, by extension, as a model of republican leadership that never eventuated.

I will argue, in reference to another key republican garden in Marvell's "Upon Appleton House", that Hutchinson's garden elegies portray her political and private losses as coeval and coterminous. The garden provides a means of connecting, in a set of established cultural associations, the fates of individuals to the state of the nation and the state of man. The garden provides a sufficiently *capacious* language, but Hutchinson prevents it from becoming the "sufficiently *reparative* language" (Lilley 73, my emphasis) sought by the elegy; it is able to express her loss—with all its intertwined nuances—but not to heal it. Unable to face a future without her husband, and without the republican ideals she dedicated her life to, Hutchinson uses the garden image to foreground lack and interdiction.



The Garden Estate

Elizabeth Scott-Baumann has argued that Hutchinson's elegy 7, "To the Garden at Owthorpe", and, to a lesser extent, elegy 12, "Musings in my Evening Walks at Owthorpe" operate in and subvert the tradition of the country house poem ("Paper Frames"). She describes the genre as one in which "the whole estate becomes an emblem of the owner, extended into an elaborate conceit" ("Paper Frames" 666). The traditional country house poem celebrates lordly

virtue through a “series of complex mediations” (Jenkins 12) in which the utopian virtues of the estate, “unity, agreement, communality . . . [are] implicated in their negative opposites” (Jenkins 9). In spite of the genre’s common name, these poems tend to focus on the entire estate (Fowler 1), cataloguing its beauties with the aim of praising its lord, as in Aemilia Lanyer’s “Description of Cookham”, addressed to Margaret Clifford, and Jonson’s “To Penshurst”, which compliments Robert Sidney.

In the country house poem, the estate functions as a microcosmic image of the ideal state. Indeed, “The equation of the household and the state is a political commonplace of the time” (Jenkins 46), with lord and sovereign seen as operating the same type of authority. This is famously articulated in Robert Filmer’s *Patriarcha*, in which he establishes the divine right of kings by tracing their patriarchal authority to Adam’s. In doing so, he considers patriarchs and their degrees of authority as “all one, without any difference at all but only in the latitude or extent of them”; “as the father over one family, so the king, as father over many families, extends his care to preserve, feed, clothe, instruct, and defend the whole commonwealth” (Filmer 24). In the same way, traditional country house poems (which are typically politically conservative) see the authority of the lord as reflecting upon, and separate only in scale, from the King’s authority over the nation. Hutchinson’s “Elegies”, and Marvell’s “Upon Appleton House” with which I will compare them, both operate this two-fold emblem through the estate’s garden specifically. They also each pose republican rewritings of what was traditionally a royalist literary form, with “Hutchinson shap[ing] a genre which is often praising, peaceful, and static, to fit a subject matter which is critical, topical and grieving” (“Paper Frames” 666).

Hutchinson depicts her grief together with her disappointment in the Restoration by reorienting the conventions of the traditional country house poem. Though a primary focus on the garden is typical of the genre (Fowler 1), Hutchinson takes the garden as her exclusive focus,

extrapolating from it the condition of the estate. Her most significant generic alteration, though, is that the idealised estate at Owthorpe—the garden’s “better ordered ranks” (7.30)²⁷ and “shining fruit trees” (7.12)—is instead the determinate *past* of the estate’s present condition of loss. Having described her own beauty and the garden’s, Hutchinson rejoins, “But he is gone and these gone with him too” (7.17). In elegies 7 and 12, the garden is depicted as disordered and uncultivated as a consequence of the Colonel’s death. These poems therefore “use the anticipation of the estate poem genre to emphasize the absence at the core of her poem” (*Forms of Engagement* 155), namely the absence of the Colonel.

The disorder of the garden is mirrored in the speaker. The poem renders the speaker (who appears to be Hutchinson herself) a literal part of the estate by equating the corruption of the garden with her own grieving condition. While ostensibly the garden is the prompt and audience for her reflections, it is also depicted in a state of mourning through an extended pathetic fallacy. The address of “thou and I” (7.3) is interspersed with the plural first-person “we” and “our” so that speaker and garden become thoroughly equated until they split at line 33, which I will turn to later. The garden, usually a site of conspicuous order, becomes without a gardener “desolate”; the “shining fruit trees” (7.12), her “becoming grace” (7.16) and the garden’s “better ordered ranks” (7.30) replaced by “pernicious growth” (7.28) where garden and speaker have “o’errun all the sweet fragrant banks” (7.29). Following the death of her husband, Hutchinson finds in the *disordered* garden “the disordered passions of my mind” (7.32).

Given that in the country house poem, the estate usually models the ideal functioning of the nation, the emphasis on the garden’s *disorder* suggests its national decline and, in

²⁷ Quotations from elegies 7 and 12 are taken from *Women Poets of the English Civil War*, forthcoming in 2017 from Manchester University Press and edited by Sarah C. E. Ross and Elizabeth Scott-Baumann. The first number in the parenthetical references represents the number assigned to the original sequence of the “Elegies”, as in David Norbrook’s initial publication of the poems (“Elegies”); the second number is the line number. For all other elegies, Norbrook’s version is referenced.

Hutchinson's republican rewriting, perhaps also an indictment of Restoration England. This corruption is most viscerally depicted through images of the speaker's "unchecked" desire, which becomes dangerously unshackled without the Colonel to tend it. Images of desire in the poem are not always easily understood as being directed towards the Colonel. The poem "o'errun[s]" with images of profusion, and the "disordered passions of my mind" (7.32) entail an ambiguous edge. The flowers "shrink[ing] back into their beds" (7.19) invite reading alongside elegy 12, which at first continues the garden-speaker equivalence: "The flowers hang down their drooping heads / And languish on their undressed beds" (12.13-14). "Languish", with its alternative meanings of yearning and longing ("languish, v."), is erotically suggestive, and while in elegy 7 being "dressed" (7.5) implies an adulterous deviance, "undressed beds" (12.14) could suggest the same, for a bed undressed is a bed used. The speaker answers her own question "shall we prostitute those joys again?" (7.7) in the negative, but her answer that "'Tis now our best grace to be wild and rude" (7.10) seems like exactly the kind of "pernicious growth" (7.28) that the Colonel tasked himself with eradicating.

These images are indicative of a broader cultural obsession with female desire and chastity, which was a conspicuously inscribed zone in early modern English culture, but which becomes, in the country house poem, something of a generic convention. Jenkins describes the genre's female figures as effecting the poems' broader emblematic relationship with the state, saying that "Through their female figures, the poems mediate between the domestic and the public" (26). In conventional country house poems, like Jonson's "To Penshurst", female chastity reflects a well-run estate. Lady Sidney's "high housewifery" (85) is put to the test by King James' unexpected visit, the estate modelling and facilitating the smooth operation of the state. Lady Sidney is praised for being "fruitful, chaste withal" (90), characterising also the estate's appropriately directed abundance in a topos "equating the female body with the land"

(Jenkins 24). Here, though, without the Colonel who “planted in me all that yielded praise” (7.14), Hutchinson’s speaker reverses the topos of women as “a map of the integrity of the state” (Stallybrass 129). Her license, as depicted in the disorder of the garden, implies instead a wayward state: the decadence of the Restoration. To perform this characterisation, Hutchinson discredits her own reputation, emphasising her unruliness in order to aggrandise the Colonel’s virtuous governance and that of the once predominant English republicans.

The garden and Hutchinson’s dependency on the Colonel, and the extent of their decay after his death, hence enshrines his now-lost lordly virtue and patriarchal power. Lordly virtue in the royalist country house poem reflects kingly virtue, or, in the republican reworkings of the “Elegies”, might suggest that Hutchinson is presenting her deceased husband as a model of virtuous republican leadership that never came to pass. Traditional country house poems seek to neutralise internal or external forces that might disrupt the estate by imposing a rhetorical stasis (Dubrow 78), but Hutchinson’s “Elegies” reverse this process. In these poems, external forces (here the Restoration’s reprisals against republican figures like the Colonel) have succeeded in toppling the estate and its lord. Rather than rhetorically defending the estate (as represented by the garden) against external threats, Hutchinson moves instead to glorify the Colonel by contrasting its former utopian state—attributed to the Colonel’s careful cultivation—against its present decay. Making use of the garden’s formal affordances and its cultural association with England, his former cultivation figures virtuous political leadership. The forming work of the Colonel’s gardening, his sculpting into “better ordered ranks” (7.30), his “Check[ing]” (7.28) and “rais[ing]” (7.13) in elegy 7, and his “set[ing]” (12.11) and “adorn[ing]” (12.25) in elegy 12 imagine in miniature the Republic’s armies and its moral oversight, positing him as an ideal of republican leadership that never eventuated. Thus, the emphasis in the “Elegies” on the gardener’s cultivation affords his authority as a husband, lord, and leader, the poems undertaking

a rhetorical strategy in which the greater the estate's present disorder and decay, the more Herculean the Colonel's former imposition of order.

Hutchinson's representation of political power and republican leadership through gardening, and within a country house poem, may follow in the footsteps of Marvell's similarly republican and similarly politicised "Upon Appleton House". Sarah C. E. Ross, drawing on the work of Annabel Patterson and Martin Dzelzainis, suggests Lucy Hutchinson may have read Marvell's poem through the mutual connection of Arthur Annesley or through the relationship between her husband and Lord Fairfax (185). In "Upon Appleton House", Marvell, who acted as a tutor for Fairfax's daughter Maria in the 1650s, makes a sweeping survey of Fairfax's estate. Having acted as chief commander of the Parliamentary forces during much of the Civil War, Fairfax's retirement in 1650 was controversial, especially premised as it was on his disagreement with the republic's invasion of Scotland (Smith, *Marvell* 210). The result is a poem that, like Hutchinson's "Elegies", eschews the epideictic tendencies (Fowler 7) of the country house poem as well as its pastoral "praise of rural simplicity" (Fowler 14) to instead explicitly grapple with contemporary politics.

This is evidenced in "Upon Appleton House" which, like Hutchinson's "Elegies", ties the nation and national leadership to the garden and gardening. In stanza XXXVI, Fairfax:

. . . retirèd here to peace,
 His warlike studies could not cease;
 But laid these gardens out in sport
 In the just figure of a fort;
 And with five bastions it did fence,
 As aiming one for ev'ry sense. (283-88)

The “peace” and Horatian retirement typical of country house poems is immediately counterposed by Fairfax’s continuing “warlike studies”, in which he applies his military acumen to his garden. These lines place an ambiguous value on gardening, which is dismissed as “sport” before being tied with a technical image of the “five bastions”, which, as Julianne Werlin contends, actually reflect the star-shaped construction of fortifications at this time (380). Fairfax is represented as still engaged in “warlike studies”, but Marvell’s perspective on their garden application is opaque. Either Fairfax has found a more virtuous object for his talents, or his military and political nous are squandered in the garden, offering merely the semblance or “figure” of his former works. Issues of leadership and civic responsibility hence instate themselves in the ideological centre of a genre that tends, in its royalist versions, towards the panegyric.

Marvell’s poem and those of Hutchinson both use the country house poem genre, which was conventionally royalist, to imagine a republican political vision. They do so in part by emphasising hands-on garden work that signals a republican ideal of leadership. In other country house poems, the lord’s ordering and management of the estate is indirect, and labour exists as a problematic or even threatening term (Jenkins 23). Both Hutchinson and Marvell’s republican revisions instead have a more egalitarian emphasis on work, with both the Colonel and Lord Fairfax doing the gardening themselves.²⁸ Hutchinson speaks positively of the Colonel’s hands-on approach in her *Memoirs of the Life of John Hutchinson*, saying that because his “active spiritt could not be idle nor very sordidly employ’d, [he] tooke up his time in opening springs and planting trees and dressing his plantations . . . wherein he reliev’d many poore labourers” (239). While still a more aristocratic form of labour than agriculture (as the Mower would attest), the Colonel’s horticultural pursuits challenge the usual “hierarchic obligation” (Fowler

²⁸ This approach is reflected also in Adam and Eve’s gardening in Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, which constitutes a utopian vision of a republican political order.

14) between the estate and its lord implied in conventional country house poems. Elegies 7 and 12 hence mould a royalist literary form to pose an alternative ideal of a republican leadership that the speaker now finds cruelly out of reach.

For Hutchinson, who has associated herself with the garden, this direct cultivation is not just political, but personal; it suggests her physical relationship with her husband. Every facet of the estate's and her own decay (including her potential wantonness) is traceable to the absence of his cultivation. Figuring herself as the garden, the speaker states that "[he] planted in me all that yielded praise" (7.14) and "Gave my youth lustre and becoming grace" (7.16) so that the Colonel is described gardening the speaker, his nurturing hand eliciting a specifically physical beauty in "lustre". The conflation between garden and speaker in the first part of the poem means that when the flowers "rise, charged with weeping dew / And missing him shrink back into their beds" (7.18-19), they elicit the speaker's own tears, her now-empty bed. This imagery pervades the poem, ending on the image of the speaker as "ungathered flowers" (7.50), the restoration of their "loveliness" dependent on the resurrection of her "lover" (7.52). The speaker finds in the garden an analogue not just of grief, but specifically of a lack of "usual culture" (7.26), the ordering of her behaviour by her husband conflated with the ordering function of the gardener. By casting herself as the estate's garden, Hutchinson becomes just one more of the elements that, together, emblemise the Colonel's "absence at the core of her poem" (*Forms of Engagement* 155). Framing the politics of her marriage as akin to the garden's dependence on the gardener, Hutchinson diminishes her agency to aggrandise the Colonel's authority, both as a husband and a leader.

The garden's forms therefore allow the "Elegies" to proceed on two levels at once. The disorder of the garden figures the state's corruption along with Hutchinson's disordered mind, and the garden's missing cultivator represents both Hutchinson's lost husband and the

Restoration's mismanagement of the nation. The political meanings afforded by the poems' emphasis on these forms operate, in part, through Hutchinson's self-abnegation. Her marital subordination becomes the raw material of her political comment. Ross has argued that "Hutchinson's focus on her husband as the single, crucial figure in whom all moral and political rectitude is met is a desolate, republican extension of the tendency . . . of women to imagine the political state through the patriarchal relationship" (179). While this rhetorical accentuation of patriarchal authority is, for us, problematic, it works to exploit existing country house poem conventions (such as the equation of national integrity to chaste womanhood), turning them towards a republican purpose at odds with the genre. By underscoring her subjection through the estate's garden, she is able to reflect on the similarly patriarchal dynamic of national leadership and on the corruption of Restoration England. Indeed, the "unusually strong terms of sexual availability and dishonour" identified by Scott-Baumann in the corrupt garden ("Paper Frames" 670) puts her own virtue at doubt, but it does so in order to exploit a generic convention that allows her broad political comment, namely a powerful image of England's decadence after the Restoration.

This political agenda complicates Lucy Hutchinson's reputation for "wifely submissiveness" (Hirst 682), suggesting it could be a representational tactic through which to lodge a more sweeping political comment. This tactic is not uncommon, with Patricia Pender identifying early modern women's modesty rhetoric as "emphatically rhetorical" and a "site of early modern women's subtle and strategic self-fashioning" (3) rather than a "straightforward sign of the author's submission" (2). Indeed, Hirst notes that "the more assertive the female writer . . . the more assiduous the apologetics" (683). We know that when Hutchinson was at her most transgressive, in terms of both literary ambition and Christian character, in her translation of Lucretius' famously difficult *De rerum natura*, she recast the enterprise as womanly busywork

in the nursery. Working “in a roome where my children practizd the severall quallities they were taught . . . I numbred the sillables of my translation by the threds of the canvas I wrought in” (qtd. in Scott-Baumann, “Lucy Hutchinson ” 268). Read in this context, Lucy Hutchinson’s claims to humility effect a strategy by which the inquiries of an officious, patriarchal culture are deflected.

In spite of this rhetoric of modesty, Hutchinson’s “Elegies” are politically charged even at the level of literary form. Both country house poems and elegies were associated with royalism, the former in praise of kingly virtue and the latter used for Caroline laments, and in these poems she turns both towards republican ends in an example of how “the ‘politics’ of works are communicated to the reader by a process in which the text remakes its genre as it is read” (Smith *Literature and Revolution* 6). Her generic choices also underscore the emotive force of the poems. Their mixture of wasted potential, irrevocability, and nostalgia aligns with the elegy, which is also engaged in a rhetorical gaze backwards to a better time. Country house poems, too, enshrine nostalgia. The estate was always “a fragile ideal, an admittedly ‘residual’ formation” (Jenkins 18), and its poetic performance was one of perennially looking-back: “experience in these poems is retrospectively described . . . these are poems of revisiting, even when the present is used” (Dundas 22). The garden image is central to these meanings, its forms of internal arrangement and cultivation providing a visceral image of Hutchinson’s private grief but also affording the disorder of the English nation and indictment of its leadership. Her garden elegies find—through their generic rewritings, their own associations, and the affordances of its forms—if not the “sufficiently reparative” language it seeks, then one capacious enough to envisage her grief in its intertwined private and public dimensions.



“Our earthly gardens want”

Hutchinson’s elegy 7 and 12, as well as Marvell’s “Upon Appleton House”, also have a strong association with Eden. Parallels with Eden reinforce associations with England already evoked by the emblematic function of the country house poem. Lord Fairfax and the Colonel are each presented as types of Adam and gardeners who have (for different reasons) been unable to apply that expert husbandry to the nation. Eden is, as I have already explored in the previous chapter, an image of two halves. In its postlapsarian version, it connotes loss and reinforces the nostalgia intrinsic to the elegy and to the country house poem. However, it also carries a utopian charge, in that it offers the chance of regeneration through Christ. Hutchinson chooses between these different resources, emphasising the Colonel’s providential cultivation but foregrounding its irrevocability, the garden becoming a variegated image of loss.

While the garden’s former idyllic condition during the Colonel’s life is paradisaical, these elegies most powerfully evoke fallen Eden. “Redolent with a postlapsarian language of foulness”, their combination of a central garden image with female desire, as well as an elegiac tone, chimes with the Fall (Ross 188). The speaker is Hutchinson, but she casts herself as a type of Eve. This analogue is implicit even in the garden-woman conceit that structures elegy 7, with Elizabeth Hodgson noting the seventeenth-century trend in which Eve “becomes assimilated with her garden” (41) so that “she sits briefly and uneasily in this century as a version of the garden itself” (54). It also reflects an earlier tradition identified by Christine Coch of the “dangerous woman in the garden” (98). Coch identifies in sixteenth-century lyrics women “portrayed as the garden’s rival” or, “more often . . . as its alluring double” (98). In Hutchinson’s elegies, both are apparent;

woman and garden are analogues, but the speaker both resents and distrusts the garden's restoration, much like a rival. Through images of uncontrolled desire, Hutchinson becomes, like Eve, the archetypal "dangerous woman in [or of] the garden".

In Milton's terms, Eve is the "instrument of all our woe" (*PL* 2.872), and indeed an affiliation with Eve almost inevitably suggests culpability.²⁹ Scott-Baumann has identified in these poems the "language of guilt and infidelity" ("Paper Frames" 665), tracing it to her contested forgery of a letter in her husband's hand to spare him persecution in the wake of the Restoration.³⁰ As befits her association with Eve, this guilt manifests through images of consumption. In elegy 12, the speaker addresses the garden in a refiguring of the country house poem's *sua sponte* topos, in which the estate freely offers up its own abundance: "What ever doth it self present / Brings food unto my discontent" (12.7-8). This is mirrored in the later lines, "where shall I seek relief / If even my pleasures feed my grief" (12.55-56). Former joys and current pleasures feed into her grief, suggesting not only a kind of survivor's guilt but, through Eve and original sin, a suggestion that her 'appetite' might be responsible.

Reading the speaker's self-abasement in the corrupted garden as an expression of Eve's guilt encourages us to re-examine the Hutchinson's marriage, and the Colonel, in terms of biblical precedents and types. Ross has argued that the poem offers Eve's response to the absence of an "Adamic male cultivator" (187), the Colonel. His identification with Adam is corroborated by the textual echoes of Genesis. The speaker's question to the garden, "Shall we for any meaner eyes be dressed" (7.5), evokes the description of Adam's gardening role in Genesis 2:15 ("[God]

²⁹ For a discussion of representations of Eve and her culpability, see Elizabeth Hodgson's "A Paradiatic Creature", in which she argues that "as the [seventeenth] century progresses, Eve is increasingly reinvented as a particular subject and citizen of Eden, the patroness, labourer and goddess of an English georgic paradise, with a distinctive ethical function not immediately connected to her original sin" (41).

³⁰ See Derek Hirst's "Remembering a Hero: Lucy Hutchinson's *Memoirs* of her Husband" in the *English Historical Review*.

put him into the garden of Eden, that he might dress it, and keep it.”). The Colonel plants the speaker much like God plants the garden and Adam in it (Gen 2:8) and “raises” the speaker just as God “out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree” (Gen 2:9).

Such an association of the Colonel with Adam is also supported in Hutchinson’s wider corpus in the striking similarities between the “Elegies”, her memorialising blazon of the Colonel in her *Memoirs* and her account of Adam in *Order and Disorder*. Some resonances could be seen merely as blazon conventions, such as, in *Memoirs*, the Colonel’s “thick sett [hair]... softer than the finest silk, curling into loose greate rings” (3) which is also mentioned in elegy 9 (his “Thick bright hare flowed in loose Curle”)—and which finds a close echo in Adam’s “soft and shining hair... the loose curls” in *Order and Disorder* (3.112-114). Other images, though, are less conventional to the blazon. Adam is adorned, in *Order and Disorder*, with “Majesty and Grace” (3.69); the Colonel in the *Memoirs* with “magnanimity and majesty mixt” (3); and more explicitly in elegy 9, “his face / Mixing his Majesty with grace” (27-8). Further, Hutchinson describes Adam’s eyes as “Those lamps which in its upper windows flame” (3.76) and the place where love “Enters the soul, as fire drawn in by fire” (3.80) in *Order and Disorder*. In the *Memoirs*, the Colonel’s eyes are similarly enlivened by “a becoming fire as terrible as bright” (187). In describing the original “glory of man’s frame” (3.75), Hutchinson’s mind does not stray far from her husband, suggesting she considers her husband a type of Adam and that the virtuous gardening that figures in the “Elegies” might correspond not only to the Colonel in Owthorpe, but to Adam in Eden.

The patriarchal hierarchy between the speaker and the Colonel also reflects the hierarchy of Adam and Eve’s marriage biblically and in contemporary representations, further corroborating the Colonel as a type of Adam. The emphasis on patriarchal authority is comparable to the hierarchy of creation in *Paradise Lost*—a text Hutchinson is likely responding

to (Ross 191)—with Adam made “for God only, she for God in him” (*PL* 4.299). Indeed, in Filmer’s *Patriarcha*, the natural authority of all fathers, husbands, and kings, is traced directly to Adam as the original patriarch. An association with Adam would appear to intensify the Colonel’s patriarchal authority, with the Colonel’s gardening suggesting not only legitimate political leadership but “the divine order which the Hutchinsons had glimpsed after the Revolution” (Soctt-Baumann “Paper Frames” 671). However, in gauging the effect of Hutchinson’s Adamic and apparently providentialist depiction of her husband and his gardening, it is helpful to contextualise these poems alongside others. While Milton’s *Paradise Lost* literalises this image, with Adam’s (and Eve’s) gardening of Eden very much an image of an ideal republican order, the implications of this affiliation are less clear outside the antediluvian setting. Marvell’s “Upon Appleton House” depicts Lord Fairfax tending his estate in a similarly Adam-like, and similarly republican, way. Reading the Colonel as a type of Adam alongside Lord Fairfax provides a helpful counter-example that reveals that while Edenic parallels are often utopian, they tend, much like utopias, to be out of reach.

“Upon Appleton House” analogises Fairfax’s military career with gardening. As with Marvell’s “The Garden”, the garden here signifies and problematises withdrawal, as the poem evaluates in a characteristically ambiguous way the legitimacy of his retirement. Again, part of the ambivalence of this retirement is the persistence of *negotium* in the form of garden work. After Marvell shows Fairfax laying out his garden in “the just figure of a fort”, a section which carries a somewhat bathetic tone, he deepens those interpretative difficulties by evoking the garden’s conventional parallels with Eden and England. In XLI, three gardens are conflated:

Oh thou, that dear and happy isle,
The garden of the world ere while,
Thou paradise of four seas (321-23)

Fairfax's actual garden at Appleton House is compared to England (the "happy isle"), and in turn to Eden, the "four seas" around England mirroring the four rivers that surround "paradise" (Gen. 2:10-14). As we saw in the previous chapter, the shared enclosure of gardens, Eden, and England, affords this tripartite image, just as, in Hutchinson's elegy 7, the garden is separate: "impaled . . . from the common ground" (7.11). Already politicised by the military conceit, Marvell reminds us of the garden's other cultural inscriptions, and so raises the stakes; though not explicitly evoking Adam, Fairfax's cultivation in his private estate nonetheless becomes resonant with him, the apparently trivial act of gardening imbued with allegorical force.

This is consolidated in the next lines, where a pastoral ideal of the nation converges with yearning for the prelapsarian state:

Unhappy! Shall we never more
 That sweet militia restore,
 When gardens only had their towers,
 And all the garrisons were flowers (329-32)

The jargon of Fairfax's military career is applied instead to gardening, as he appears as the commander of the "sweet militia" of flowers, figuring Adam's authority over Eden's garden. These lines, in their comparison of garden life to society, are again reminiscent of "The Garden". They appear to show gardening to be superior to military pursuits, lamenting the exigencies of actual warfare by depicting cultivation as the primary occupation—and gardens as the primary materials—of the prelapsarian state. But while Marvell here appears to echo the Diggers' plans to transform England into a paradise, by rendering the lines a negative question ("Shall we never more") Marvell implies what will soon become explicit: the irrevocability of a prelapsarian condition in a fallen world.

The poem turns with the ominous lines: “But war all this doth overgrow: / We ordnance plant and powder sow” (343-44), and those that follow appear to thoroughly undercut the legitimacy of Fairfax’s gardening:

And yet their walks one on the Sod
 Who, had it pleased him and *God*,
 Might once have made our Gardens spring
 Fresh as his own and flourishing.
 But he preferr'd to the *Cinque Ports*
 These five imaginary Forts:
 And, in those half-dry Trenches, spann'd
 Pow'r which the Ocean might command. (345-52)

The image of a lone figure under God in England’s “Paradise of four seas” evokes Adam, imbuing Fairfax with the ability to determine England’s fate. In these lines, gardening and politics are conflated, so that, instead of making the garden of England flourish through his management of the Royal Navy’s Cinque Ports, he squanders his talent by literally gardening—not now the paradisaal garden of Eden, but that of Nun Appleton. Werlin has noted the loaded use of the word ‘flourishing’ which, “in the mouths of parliamentarians . . . evoked a state with the energy and vigor of an expanding commonwealth, ‘the most flourishing, and strongest Land in the world’” (383). She argues convincingly that the very insistence of military imagery in the poem “leads to a vision of England as an international and imperialistic power” (377) or, in other words, one where the garden’s “sweet militia” of flowers is inappropriate. Marvell seems to purport an alternative vision of a militarised and imperial England that Fairfax has abandoned to instead cultivate “imaginary forts” in his estate garden, his power to command the “Ocean” squandered in its “half-dry Trenches”.

The implication here is that—exactly because he is Adamic—Fairfax’s gardening is out of touch with the essential realities of the postlapsarian condition. Because of the Civil War, England’s “former Edenic state, of which the garden is an image, no longer exists” (Werlin 381). Marvell mixes a paradisaal vocabulary with that of England’s current political turmoil in order to suggest the infeasibility of separating private lives from public obligations. Utopian visions of Eden and England are overturned to emphasise the England that exists now and Fairfax’s responsibilities to it. Marvell’s use of the garden image unpacks these meanings only to collapse them and advocate for civic duty. Thus, even in the Genesis account where gardening might be expected to draw support, it fails to legitimate Fairfax’s actions because the Edenic conditions that justified it are lost.

This image is not convincingly overturned by the subsequent stanza which softens this impression by characterising ambition as a weed Fairfax conscientiously uproots while he tills another plant called “*Conscience*” “which most our earthly gardens want” (353-56). The flowers of conscience are “eternal, and divine, / That in the crowns of saints do shine” (359-60), but even as this description implies Fairfax’s beatific character (and further suggests an alignment with Adam), the overarching impression is of an abdication of worldly responsibility. These lines reverse the direction, but preserve the underlying conviction, of Marvell’s “An Horatian Ode upon Cromwell’s Return from Ireland”, in which Cromwell abandons the “inglorious arts of peace” (10) of “plant[ing] the bergamot” (32) in his “private gardens” (29), in order to actually engage in the world. Bergamot, representing ambition, is replaced by real ambition. While itself deeply ambiguous, this poem also sees the work of gardening as secondary, or even trivial, against the real work of politics. That planting bergamot might have been be Cromwell’s “highest plot” is laughable given the political career that succeeded it, much in the same way that in “Upon Appleton”, Fairfax’s gardening becomes the bathetic object of his “warlike studies”. Fairfax’s

association with conscience, a flower of “prickling leaf.../...which shrinks at every touch” (357-58) ends this part of “Upon Appleton House” by underscoring the irrevocability of his worldly influence. Now cast into the mould of a saint, the “eternal, and divine”, he is represented by a plant that wards against the outside world through its “prickling” spines and that is damaged or “shrinks” by mere touch. Though critiquing his decision, Marvell’s narrator makes no call for Fairfax to return to the service of England; his withdrawal is presented as irreversible.

While there is no suggestion that Hutchinson intends to criticise her husband as Marvell does Fairfax, “Upon Appleton House” draws our attention to the garden as a place of seclusion and withdrawal, and above all, to the irrevocability of Paradise. Eden is a suitable analogue for the only-glimpsed republic desired by the Hutchinsons because the Fall echoes the wrenching finality of the Restoration. N. H. Keeble notes that “The Restoration so effectively, so painlessly, and so quickly frustrated the whole range of Puritan aspiration that its beneficiaries could not but see it as divine mercy” (228), raising the question of how it must have appeared for those, like the Hutchinsons, who had instated themselves at the heart of the republican cause.³¹ Lord Fairfax and the Colonel have each passed into the realm of the “eternal, and divine”, their affiliation with Adam (and their gardens with Eden) acting not so much to glorify them, but to show that they are lost to society. Hutchinson’s depiction of the Colonel in terms of Adam places him beyond blame, but also the ideal order he offered his wife, estate, and England, definitively out of reach.

This remoteness stages the “interdiction” against desire that makes these poems poignant and elegiac (Lilley 73). The Colonel’s alignment with Adam, and the estate with Eden, makes him radically inaccessible but deeply longed for; Eden, after all, is nostalgia’s most potent

³¹ The fallen Eden of the “Elegies” is also an image of God’s lost favour. As Lobo notes of Hutchinson’s *Memoirs of the Life of John Hutchinson*, there is a subtext here of “profound human failure: responding to the fear that the Restoration might indicate God’s abandonment of his elect nation” (Lobo 336).

archetype. The poems' evocation of Eden casts the loss of the Colonel—already dilated through the country house poem—onto a metaphysical scale. Although unpicking those overlapping meanings in a chapter necessitates they be separated, they are wholly intertwined. The divide between Hutchinson's idealised past and grieving present is at once unfathomable (everything seems to have changed) and it is exactly located in the death of her husband. That the Colonel is "a figure who encapsulates personal and political loss" (Ross 175) is fitting for elegies which are at once deeply nostalgic and bitterly disappointed.

While Hutchinson's personal and political grief are shown as consequences of the Colonel's death, she represents that loss not by describing him, but by describing their garden. Susan Wiseman sees the garden primarily as an image of desire, arguing that "the presence of the erotic, and erotic elegy, powers, troubles and disrupts mourning; desire is bound up with the poems' lack, even refusal, of a destination or end to mourning" (212). However, I would contend that the poems refuse recovery because her desires—and indeed the garden in which they are depicted—are *not only* erotic. The garden is a richly allusive image, at once a metonym for the owner and an analogue for the state, its forms and cultural associations allowing it to figure political and religious meanings that depict Hutchinson's complex grief. However, it is not an image that precludes recovery, whether it be the recovery of Paradise through Christ or literally through its renewed cultivation by a gardener. Elegy 7 acknowledges the garden's potentially restorative affordances. Hutchinson severs the "parallel" that combines speaker and garden at line 33, saying to it:

But thy late loveliness is only hid,
 Mine like the shadow with its substance fled.
 Another gardener and another spring
 May into you new grace and new lustre bring,

...

But ah, my glories never can revive (7.33-8)

Unlike the garden, the speaker states that her virtues are, like the Colonel, gone forever. The image of the garden therefore allows Hutchinson to encapsulate the many vectors of her grief; the garden's forms of internal arrangement and ordering enabling, in part through the poems' intersection with the literary form of the elegy and the country house poem, the means to cast her grief in politically resonant terms. However, she denies its ameliorative affordances, unwilling or unable to fulfil the elegy's quest for a "sufficiently reparative language". Hutchinson's "Elegies" tell us that there is too much missing for her to be repaired.

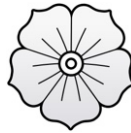
“Gardening was part of the physical and cultural settlement of New Zealand by Europeans, which involved a process of domestication”
(Raine 78)

A composite of forms, the garden is an enduring object in the world. It is “iterable—portable” (Levine 7), and it has “the capacity to endure across time and space” (Levine 12). However, as all gardeners know, the garden exists in a state of transition, always changing *from* and changing *into*. This flux is not only physical. Gardens respond to changes in garden fashion, which in turn are a product of physical, societal, and national realities. For all her control, the gardener’s ambitions are delimited; there are physical constraints: the quality of the soil, the edge of her property, the hours available for the task. Then, there are constraints less quantifiable but no less determining, such as the intersecting discourses that imbue gardens and gardening with particular meanings at particular junctures. Gardens respond to physical and social realities and thus are always inseparable from their spatial, temporal, and cultural coordinates. To garden is to negotiate a relationship with your environment, but also with what Benedict Anderson calls the nation’s “imagined political community” (6).

These overlaid difficulties are neatly summarised by Anne Helmreich when she says that “each culture endows garden forms with particular sets of meanings and, within that culture, those meanings, and therefore vehicles that express them, are contested and not fixed” (1). This project pertains to gardens in poetry, and hence to vehicles natural and linguistic. The meanings of the words that depict the garden are as contested as the meanings assigned to the flowers and plants that comprise it. To track the meaning of garden images as it varies both within and between cultures entails a methodology that crosses time and space, challenging the usual

operations of our discipline. By changing period and place from Civil War England to modern twentieth- and twenty-first-century New Zealand, this study places the garden and its constituent forms at its conceptual centre even as it produces specific knowledge about the use of garden images in those individual periods.

There is a surprising overlap in the way that poets of mid-seventeenth-century England use images of gardens and how those images are used in colonial New Zealand. Some cultural meanings fade clean away, some weaken or strengthen, and others refigure their coordinates. The British Empire's colonisation of New Zealand, beginning in earnest after Captain James Cook's first voyage to the country in 1769, was, after years of intermittent conflict and cooperation with Māori peoples, formalised in the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi. The deep allegiance New Zealand settlers felt to Britain endured over generations of their children and left a profound cultural legacy. An enthusiasm for gardens was an important part of this legacy. Early settlers were struck by the rugged emptiness of the New Zealand landscape. Lord Lyttleton noted that, for early settlers "fond of the picturesque", the Canterbury landscape "often at first sight seemed exceedingly repulsive", while others found the plains "monotonous in the extreme" (Strongman 12). To mitigate this, and to impress a specifically English mark on the new colony, settlers turned to gardens. Shifting to consider settler and early twentieth-century New Zealand poetry, I will consider how the forms of the garden, in their poetic representations, afford the figuration of colonial ordering, but also how those same forms are, in the poetry of Ursula Bethell, turned away from this national project towards negotiating a more personal politics of belonging.



New Zealand settler verse

The early modern tradition that saw Shakespeare represent England as an island garden and saw 1650s husbandry manuals compare the nation specifically to Eden, persists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as an essential part of English national identity. Tracing a line from *Richard II*, to William Mason's 1772-1781 *The English Garden*, to examples in Kipling and Ruskin, Helmreich argues that "the notion that the garden embodied Englishness reverberated at the turn of the century" (7). Anxieties about industrialisation, and a fast-changing English landscape, led to the garden figuring as an image of retreat (Helmreich 25), and—just as it had in the 1650s—a utopian image of an alternative political order. The Empire seemed to present an opportunity to make this utopian vision a reality by preserving the integrity of an ever-more crowded Britain, while also, in the words of contemporary historian James A. Froude, allowing to "grow up, under conditions the most favourable which the human constitution can desire, fresh nations of Englishmen" (212).

Settlers often found that instituting those "most favourable" conditions required not a little husbandry. "Making a garden compensated for the overwhelming flatness, scrubbiness or emptiness" of the land (Raine 83), and "gardening and acclimatisation appealed . . . to biblical injunctions to improve and restock the earth with useful plants and animals" (Beattie 245). New Zealand settlers' gardening was also, in practice and in style, specifically English, the popularity of ornamental home gardening influenced by the "great gardening nation" that was its metropole (Dann 7). Gardens were a way of taming the wild land; by putting their time and hands into the soil, they ordered it. For other gardeners (and chroniclers) like New Zealand settler Adela

Stewart, gardens fulfilled “the need to wall herself off from the vast ferny lands and her fear of the ‘practically unlimited Pacific ocean, quite lifeless’ by enclosing herself in a highly charged, private world of European- and British-style beauty” (Raine 83). The garden thus offered an escape through its formal enclosure or, in its cultivation, a means of ordering the alien landscape of early New Zealand into something more familiar. In each case, gardens became inscribed with British settlers’ hopes, their doubts, and fears.



Fig. 3. Glens of Tekoa in 1880, with a tree-enclosed garden to the left, from Shona McRae, *By the Braes of Balquether* (Christchurch: Pegasus Press, 1963; print; 48.3)

This inscription is seen also in the concomitant effort of literary-minded settlers to shape the land’s meanings through its representation in poetry. In William Pember Reeves’s much-anthologised “A Colonist in His Garden” (Alexander and Currie 24-28), he pays homage to:

We men take root who face the blast,

When to the desert come,
 We stand where none before have stood
 And braving tempest, drought and flood,
 Fight Nature for a home (58-62)

The settler identity is masculine, tied to hardiness and endurance, notably imagined as planting itself—“tak[ing] root”—on an empty land in which Māori occupation and agriculture are erased. Nature is something wild to be conquered and then transformed into a home.

This home manifests in an English-style garden. He states his allegiance to the New Zealand “wilderness” he has made “to flower” (67), but then hesitates:

Yet that my heart to England cleaves,
 This garden tells with blooms and leaves
 In old familiar throng,
 And smells, sweet English every one.
 And English turf to tread upon. (69-73)

His stated allegiance to New Zealand is paradoxically determined by how far he has been able to create in that new land an image of England. His garden on the one hand emphasises enclosure (it has “sheltering branches” [88]) as a retreat from the New Zealand “blast”, but it is also the first instance of a larger campaign of cultivation. In his English-style garden, “In pigments not to be effaced / We paint the hues of life” (79-80) “on the silent waste” (78), guarding against the reality of the New Zealand landscape by cultivating it into something else. This culminates in an image of his daughter, when he asks “could I rear in England’s air / A sweeter English rose?” (121-122). The cliché of the English rose neatly restates the poem’s conceit, but also projects the garden’s cultivation into a multigenerational effort at colonisation, in which the air becomes fairer the more roses are reared by settlers like Reeves.

This poem embodies how “Colonial gardens were simultaneously a visual link to migrant’s personal and collective past, a projection of the European presence across the landscape, and a promise of continuing development into the future” (Raine 76). Reeves’s poem picks up on the dilating function of the estate garden in early modern country house poems, but also, through his daughter, on their tendency of “equating the female body with the land” (Jenkins 24).³² The garden is a paradisaal (though not explicitly Edenic) image tied positively to English national identity, just as gardening is tied to New Zealand’s anglicised future. Their conjunction in this poem is an important intervention in a nascent literary culture, for, though gardens can be seen as themselves “part of the physical and cultural settlement of New Zealand” (Raine 78), their representation in settler poetry made their symbolic valences available to the popular imagination, turning a practice that was often private or nonetheless atomised by the nature of settler communities into a collective symbolic ritual. The cultivation of the New Zealand landscape into an English garden, and his New Zealand-born daughter into an English rose, channels his settler homesickness into making this new country resemble the old in ways both literal and literary.

The strand, evident in Reeves, that depicts a forbidding New Zealand landscape (its “tempest, drought and flood” [61]) against an ameliorative English cultivation, is a persistent one. Though “A Colonist in his Garden” is one of Reeves’s later and more famous pieces, it is strongly foreshadowed in his poems from the 1880s,³³ and finds an archetype in the poetry of figures like William Golder, whose 1867 “The New Zealand Survey” (McQueen 18) made the case for colonial expansion on the basis of Māori failing “to improve / In cultivation’s art, or ev’n t’ extend / Their labours more than served a present need” (8).

³² In particular, this suggests Lord Fairfax’s daughter Maria in Marvell’s “Upon Appleton House” who comes to embody the hopeful future of the estate.

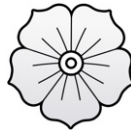
³³ Notably “A Ball in the Old Provincial Council Chambers” (McKenzie 42).

In Mona Tracy's later poem "Akaroa" (Alexander and Currie 127-28), published in 1930, a similar theme returns to the garden setting, with exotic New Zealand plants compared against British imports with the refrain: "Ah sweet it is....so young, so old!" (14). Despite the protestations of this refrain, the poem's "garden plots" (7) are more Darwinian than sweet, as the "crimson *rata* strives to choke / With amorous arms the hoary oak" (11-12). This image shows New Zealand (*rata*, *kowhai*) and English plants in violent competition. In a similar way, the narrator attempts to imagine the garden as a place of history ("kindly ghosts . . . voyageurs from storied France" [21-23]), but is unable to, "For never a phantom steals there down / To sunlit Akaroa town" (43-44). The impression is of an upstart New Zealand nature, its natural disorder requiring prolonged cultivation (implying colonial efforts) by a gardener in order to coexist with the history and majesty of its European equivalents. The final lines see the "jonquil, mocking *kowhai's* gold—/ So blithe, so new! So triste, so old!" (51-52), with the exclamations posed as dialogue from the jonquil and *kowhai* respectively. Illustrating the countries in diametric opposition, the garden is once again the symbol that shoulders the conflict between colony and metropole, its botanical imports threatened by the natives.

Both Reeves and Tracy's poems are notable not just for the pro-colonial perspectives they invest in the garden, but also the traditional verse forms they use to evoke it. Their rhyming couplets, the 8-syllable lines of "Akaroa" and Reeves's alternation of two 8-syllable with one 6-syllable lines, both set in iambic feet, conjoin thematic and formal conservatism. While strikingly unified in their devotion to Victorian forms, prescribed rhyme schemes and metres, not all verse at this time shunned New Zealand for Britain. There was a significant fashion for patriotic verse in the late nineteenth century which often revolved around the country's natural abundance (McQueen 11). Another popular topos was to include exoticising praise of Māori peoples and legend, native New Zealand landscape and plants, in a body of writing that has been addressed in

Jane Stafford and Mark Williams's *Maoriland*. Implicit, then, in both of these strands was a British subject position, an appropriation if not by force then by representation, of New Zealand resources, histories, and peoples for a British society that claimed to make better use of them.

Therefore, settler verse applies English orthodoxies of gardening and poetry onto the New Zealand setting. Settler verse emphasises the garden's enclosure away from the New Zealand environment and their cultivation of it, with European gardens and their materials imagining an ideal state.



“Won’t you greet a friend from home / Half the world away?”

Ursula Bethell split her life between England and New Zealand (Baigent 24). Born in Surrey but raised in Rangiora and Christchurch, she travelled back and forth between Europe and New Zealand several times, settling in Christchurch in 1919 and making one final short trip to England in 1926. She would seem, then, an unlikely poet to break from a predominant tradition of New Zealand verse that prioritised English settings and culture, especially given statements of hers, such as a note to her publisher stating that “I am by birth and choice *English*, but I have lived in New Zealand a good deal & shouldn’t like to be impolite to it” (Whiteford, *Letters* 48). Indeed, the poems of her most successful collection, *From a Garden in the Antipodes* (published in 1929), seem individually to reinforce the same kinds of meanings we have observed in the gardens of Reeves and Tracy.

All of these poems revolve around her garden at Rise Cottage, in Christchurch, and many, as in Reeves’s “A Colonist in His Garden”, seem to pose the garden as an enclosed retreat

from her New Zealand environment into an English one. For example, in “Aesthetic” (Bethell 18), she addresses a yellow daisy, to evoke “A Victorian mantel-piece, on a green background, / By one called Ethel, out of Thackeray” (4-5). Similarly, in “Fuschias” (Bethell 17), a visitor to her home is shown the garden in which “are exhibited / All the regalia of Regent Street” (1-2), the flowers pictured as “elegant persons” (12) that are “sheltered” (14) in “shaded seclusion” (13). In this, and like Hutchinson before her, her poems suggest what Di Stefano calls, “the displaced person who attempts to make tangible what is missing and absent” (39); what is missing for Bethell appears to be England itself, the garden’s formal enclosure and persistent association with England allowing her to reconstitute her chosen identity in a foreign place.

Moreover, in some of Bethell’s poems, the New Zealand environment appears at first glance to be inhospitable in much the same way that Reeves’s colonist endured the “tempest”. In “Warfare” (Bethell 14), the speaker (who we are led to understand as Bethell herself) says that “my garden now is menaced / By a host of abominable enemies” (1-2). In “Response” (Bethell 1), she must tie her English native chrysanthemums “fast to strong posts / So that the south winds cannot beat them down” (6-7), and in “Gale SSW” (Bethell 2), she hopes her favoured plant Omi-Kin-Kan will endure “a fierce storm from the South Pole” (1). There are many more examples, suggesting ostensibly the same kind of untamed depiction of the New Zealand landscape as in other verse of this era and in the settler period. The besieged enclosure of the English garden is met, too, by a strong emphasis on cultivation that elsewhere connoted colonial themes. The poet depicts herself responding to the enemies of “Warfare” by working hard in the garden, “giv[ing] battle relentlessly till my strength is exhausted” (9). In “Pause” (Bethell 2), we find the persona “very earnestly digging” (1) in her own garden before she reflects on the landscape around her which, “only a little while since . . . / Lay untrammelled likewise, / Unceasingly swept by transmarine winds” (10-13). Such a conjunction of her own gardening

with the nation's wider cultivation suggests they operate under a shared colonial compulsion to trammel and tame the land.

The mere fact of Bethell cultivating her home garden suggests her allegiance with British culture and values, as does the marketing of this collection in Britain, which asked (quoting Rudyard Kipling) "Won't you greet a friend from home / Half the world away?" (O'Sullivan x). Geographical distance, and the exoticism that implies, is here counterposed by a comforting familiarity, a "friend from home", so that the collection is presented as an ambassador speaking from abroad, rather than being genuinely foreign. This is an appropriate description; Bethell's poems take a friend's conversational tone; they appear to have the content and unpretentious style of an anecdote. However, the collection departs from the perspective of settler verse by also depicting "a friend *at home* / Half the world away". The poems revolve around home—creating it and celebrating it, even in its far-flung location. Indeed, while the garden's enclosure and its cultivation are crucial in these poems, their politics are severed from the explicit national mythologising that characterises much early New Zealand poetry. *From a Garden in the Antipodes* instead narrows its focus to the individual, the domestic sphere, and the activities of ordinary daily life. While Bethell's garden cannot be seen as separate from the colonial enterprise,³⁴ it is notable for shifting the perspective from a perceived settler group, like Reeves's "we men", to an individual gardener and an individual home.

In "Warfare" (Bethell 14), her battle against the garden's "abominable enemies" (2) seems to accord with the perspective of much settler verse, in which a wild nature militates against their civilising efforts. However, Bethell appears to knowingly pick up on this type of

³⁴ As I have already suggested, the ornamental gardening that Bethell practises is by definition European and hence a foreign import and imposition. It is important also to recognise that this "next stage" of domesticating the colony is premised on the success of the often brutal colonial activities that came before it; as Holmes argues, domestic gardens "reflected an ordered, controlled environment, one where the history of the land and the violence of its acquisition had been erased" ("In spite" 173).

rhetoric in the hyperbolic actions of the gardener: “I assault, I give battle relentlessly till my strength is exhausted” (9). This grand language of conquest becomes subtly bathetic here as a result of the poem’s turn to the personal and the domestic. Her garden takes on little of the resonance of Reeves’s allegorical gardens and her cultivation none of Golder’s imperial ferocity. Partly, this is because the enemies that encircle Bethell’s garden are all too everyday, all too benign. Some are “visible, some invisible, or darkly lurking, / Some threatened by prophetic experts” (3-4), but these ominous descriptions are undermined by the gardening manual catalogue of “codlin moth, / woodlich, thrip, scale, cherry slug” (5-6). Moreover, the gardener is able to simply call a “truce” (11), leave the battle and have a rest on a bench, neglecting the duty of Reeves’s male settlers to endure all manner of trials. This ease suggests that Bethell, as a woman, is alienated from the masculine paradigm of the settler. Not a life available to her, she picks it up for a moment and then discards it. The fact that “Warfare” can evoke, and so effortlessly undercut, the inflated stakes of settler verse could also suggest their saturation and coming obsolescence in New Zealand (and British) literary culture. Their legacy exists as a set of tropes that can be deployed and worked against to depict a more contemporary predicament. Bethell does just that here, evoking a whole civilising mission but then radically lowering the stakes to a single gardener and her “spray and a few chemicals” (10).

What I want to suggest about Bethell’s poetry, then, is that it is important exactly because the situations it depicts are not. It appears to replicate the tropes and concerns associated with the gardens of settler verse, but subtly subverts them. While a battle with invaders of a garden might expect to be met, outside the garden, with an even greater horde of combatants, in “Warfare”, the garden is subject to no such allegorical strain. She declares:

A truce! Let me sit down upon this bench,
And lift my eyes beyond the confines of this strife!

How peaceful sleeps the great Pacific to the eastward;

Mile upon mile unbroken rests the open plain;

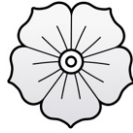
The purple mountains in mysterious repose (11-15)

In Reeves's "A Colonist in His Garden", his garden is an English enclave, a microcosm of his utopian hope that is positioned against an inhospitable, uncivilised New Zealand. But in Bethell's poem, the "strife" is located in the domestic sphere, and it is the external environment that offers her succour. This is a reversal of the usual course of Horatian retirement in a poem like Marvell's "The Garden", in which the "garlands of repose" (8) are *inside* the garden. This shift represents, then, a further trivialisation of the hyperbolic terms of the garden's invasion and, by extension, a gentle critique of the threat settler verse locates in its environment. Not only can it be escaped as easily as "lift[ing] my eyes" (12), but it has particular "confines", leaving everything outside the garden unaffected by its internal conflict. That fight may be engrossing, but its difficulties are put into perspective by an environment that seems "eternal" and beyond human influence. Instead of being a site that microcosmically models the settler's cultivation of the country, or stages a Darwinian battle of different kinds, Bethell's enclosed garden is content with being 'merely' domestic.

Bethell's treatment of the environment represents a shift from her literary forebears; it does not resonate with the severe New Zealand landscape reflected in Reeves's "tempest, drought and flood" nor even with that depicted by celebrated modernist figures, such as Katherine Mansfield. In Mansfield's story "The Woman at the Store", the reader is told that the "heat was terrible", that "the white pumice dust swirled in our faces, settled and sifted over us and was like a dry-skin itching for growth on our bodies", and that "there was nothing to be seen but wave after wave of tussock grass, patched with purple orchids and manuka bushes covered with thick spider webs" (550). In such passages, echoed in "Millie" and "Prelude", the New Zealand

landscape is depicted as inhospitable, with claims of its domestication insistently subverted. This tendency in early New Zealand literature finds a similarly exoticising but methodologically reversed trope in texts that underscore its overwhelming beauty, but in doing so render it alien. Reeves himself does this in “The Passing of the Forest” (McQueen 112), in which he laments the destruction of the landscape and remembers how earlier settlers once enjoyed “Drinking fresh odours, spicy wafts that blew / We watched the glassy, quivering air asleep,” (57-58). Bethell rejects both extremes, as she escapes the conflict in her garden to look up and consider the majestic but benign “great Pacific” (13). “Mile upon mile unbroken rests the open plain[s]” of Canterbury, but lacking is the alien emphasis on wonder and exoticism. Bethell instead draws from it the comfort and “peaceful[ness]” (13) necessary to counterbalance the frenetic tasks of the domestic sphere.

Instead of juxtaposing New Zealand realities and English culture, Bethell’s garden is a nested domestic site of home within a broader environment that is also, largely comforting and familiar. Although her garden evokes Englishness, its enclosure does not so strongly afford the meanings of retreat or of an English enclave in a foreign land that was evoked by her settler predecessors. Instead, the “confines” and the “small fond human enclosures” of the garden frame a site of personal belonging and domesticity. Focusing on the personal and the anecdotal, her verse distances itself from colonists’ visions for the nation. Her garden’s enclosure denotes the domestic world and its engrossing concerns, while also being contiguous with a wider sense of antipodean place.



“Solitary, after all, were the gardener, / But for the accompaniment of words”

Bethell’s individual home and belonging are manifested and negotiated primarily through garden work. The ordering acts of cultivation both make and maintain her garden and, in so doing, stake out a relationship with the wider environment and the nation. In his introduction to the 1997 edition of Bethell’s verse, Vincent O’Sullivan writes:

As one reads most verse written in New Zealand before Bethell, one suspects that whenever the country was *looked at*, whatever else the writer did apart from looking was forgotten. The settler, even the man or woman who was intimately at home with the place, reverted to the tourist when pen was taken in hand, and so tried to write a postcard. (O’Sullivan x)

Here, O’Sullivan’s sets up an important opposition between the person “intimately at home with the place” and the “tourist”: someone just passing through who tries, for the sake of correspondence, to do brief justice to what she sees. The difference between a tourist and a local lies in the way in which they engage with the place they are in. Home is “usually represented as fixed, rooted, stable – the very antithesis of travel” (George 2). The tourist lacks the rituals and habits of an established life and so writes a postcard of superficial observations. Having spent many years in Canterbury and as a prolific letter writer, Bethell invests her verse with conversational style and an emphasis on daily life. O’Sullivan has argued that Bethell “write[s] about nature . . . while she did other things as well; while she was gardening, while she carried on ordinary domestic life” (xiii), but her poems in fact make her ordinary domestic life—and particularly her gardening—the explicit subject of that writing. Bethell’s ordering of the garden

and her reflections about poetry itself model how new places demand new narratives of belonging, as well as new terms with which to articulate them.



Fig. 4 The garden at Bethell's Rise Cottage from Baverstock, W. S. (Christchurch: University of Canterbury Library), rpt. in Thelma Strongman, *The Gardens of Canterbury* (Wellington: A. H. & A. W. Reed Ltd, 1984; print; 1).

The concept of home has, in recent decades, attracted incisive critical comment with the advent of postcolonial studies. Rosemary Marangoly George contends that “homes are not neutral places” (6) but politically contingent and telling sites, their “basic organizing principle . . . a pattern of select inclusions and exclusions” (2); the home is, in short, “a way of establishing difference” (2). Bethell’s home is in the garden, as the title of the collection suggests. In “Controversy” (Bethell 12) she compares two domestic realms, the house and garden, finding work spent in one to be the detriment of the other. The last stanza reads:

Tell me now, what is your dream—

The neatest apartment in Knightsbridge?

Or in a deep glade of Eden a booth of green boughs? (9-11)

Asked in one of the few poems that address the house itself (and in the middle of a collection in which almost every poem revolves around the garden) Bethell's own answer is implicit. In George's definition, home maps onto the garden through the internal arrangement of its elements, the garden's particular set of inclusions and exclusions. Indeed, the Eden image Bethell evokes in "Controversy" suggests a garden ordered in ways both divine and ornamental, and some plants, such as the Japanese Omi-Kin-Kan, recur across multiple poems to disrupt the garden's ostensible Englishness. However, I want to argue that, more significant than the garden's internal arrangement, is Bethell's emphasis on the garden's cultivation. The collection speaks, above all, to the rituals and pleasures of garden work over the enjoyment of a particular, static arrangement.

Bethell's ideas of home, as reflected in her poetry, more closely align with the definition of John Di Stefano, who argues that home is "a space or structure of activity and beliefs around which we construct a narrative of belonging"; "More than a physical space, home might be understood as a familiarity and regularity of activities and structures of time" (38). In "Gradient" (Bethell 16-17), the persona talks about the slope of her garden as part of her daily ritual. She states, "How easy when I go down in the morning" (2) but later, "How steep when at evening, my labours concluded / I collect all my implements and climb up to my bed" (4). A familiar obstacle thought of fondly, the garden's slope is also a means of measuring time and toil so that the reader can imagine the pattern of days and nights spent in the garden: "How favourable for beholding the heavens, / At cockcrow . . . / Or in the still, starry night!" (6-8). This regularity reflects the same kind of ordered arrangement which she cultivates, day-to-day, in the garden. In "Prepare" (Bethell 5-6), the persona reports "much hard toil. Much backache. / Muddy boots.

Scratched hands. Deep sleep” (4-5), corroborating an impression of prolonged labour that is repaid by the satisfactions of “a general greenness” (6) and “the rose-bushes broken into leaf” (7).

The actual dimensions of the arrangement achieved in the garden are less important than the process of ordering, with Bethell always underscoring that any order in the garden is fleeting. In “Soothsayer” (Bethell 5), the persona is alert to any intimation of change, with the “old blackbird whistle” telling her to “Get ready . . . / Quick. Quick. Spring” (10-12). Feeling the change of season, she cuts down the chrysanthemums and turns her attention to her future “young delphiniums” (15). Changing over time and requiring constant attention, Bethell’s notion of home is instead a set of physical rituals, a hands-on engagement with the land, an investment of time and energy. Cultivation becomes a form by which Bethell shapes, and relates to, the environment around her, her repeated physical labour investing it with ideas of belonging.

The shape and design of *From a Garden in the Antipodes* as a collection of poetry enacts this idea of investment over time. Just as the daily toil of the gardener consolidates the sense of belonging to that place, so too does the collection work by gradual accretion to build a sense of familiarity and, ultimately, homeliness. Each poem is relatively short (some with as few as five lines), and they generally recount a single anecdote, thought, or incident. Although individually they can appear trifling, their power lies in their interrelation. The book as a whole becomes “a friend from home”, not merely because it reflects the English values of the implied reader, but because the poems themselves combine to create such a poignant impression of Bethell’s life and of her garden as a lived-in place.

This effect is, I believe, deliberately crafted, one of several innovative techniques Bethell both uses and reflects upon as she self-reflexively seeks a language capable of expressing her familiar home in an unfamiliar environment. Though lacking abstraction and the tendency of “taking us behind familiar reality” (Bradbury and McFarlane 24), Bethell’s verse in this collection

demonstrates many of the techniques of an incipient modernism. Crucially, she breaks from the Victorian verse forms that characterised earlier New Zealand poetry and writes a collection almost entirely in free verse, her poems varying markedly in rhythm and line length.³⁵ They also vary widely in vocabulary, from moments of Victorian lyricism to a prevailing sense of the ordinary. Some of her poems are deliberately experimental, devoting almost a whole stanza to a list of “lovely-sounding” (8) Latin names of shrubs (“*Iochroma Tubulosa*, *Podalyria Grandiflora*” [10]) in “Catalogue” (Bethell 3) as a response to the opening contention that “‘Shrubs’ is an ugly word!” (2). In a similar way, she makes a kind of hybrid found poem in “Ruth H. T.” (Bethell 3) by describing her rose tree with the words of its “pink label” (10): “‘Compact in growth’ is she, and ‘fairly vigorous’” (2).

These poems put issues of language and its registers at the conscious centre of their attention in a way similar to how Marvell’s “The Garden” aligns gardening with writing. “Solitary, after all, were the gardener / But for the accompaniment of words” (1-2) opens “Name” (Bethell 9), a poem in which the materials and sensations of the garden become conflated with language itself. “[W]ords . . . / murmur in the distance like bees, / They whisper in the rustle of the trees” (9-10). In “Alpines” (Bethell 9-10), she considers how “To voice the persistence of a sessile veronica” (7), and wonders “how to perpetuate” (11) “By means of any hieroglyph / The deep, the living azure of the dark blue gentian?” (13-14). The garden becomes as much a site of poetic labour as physical work, as she “listen[s] for little sounds that are shy and hidden” (2) with as much tenacity as she tends to the garden. The poem “Foreword” (Bethell 1) exemplifies this, opening:

I have told you, Ruth, in plain words

³⁵ Of her collections, her first, *From a Garden in the Antipodes* (1929), is her most consciously modern, with *Time and Place* (1936) and *Day and Night: Poems 1924-35* (1939) presenting a more Victorian sense of grand poeticism and evoking large religious themes that leave the garden of this collection often forgotten.

The pleasures of my occupation

In the rhythms of the stout spade

The lawn-mower and the constant hoe. (1-4)

Like for the “skillful gardener” in Marvell’s “The Garden”, physical and poetic work are here conflated, for Bethell’s occupation is two-fold. Her unpretentious commitment to getting her hands dirty in the garden produces a similarly unpretentious poetry, told “in plain words” and addressed with all the familiarity of a personal correspondence. The rhythm of her garden tools and work is transmuted in this collection to the rhythm of her lines, so that Bethell’s representation of cultivation as a physical ordering of the garden entails also the poetic ordering of her words.

“Foreword” (Bethell 1) depicts the work of home-making on multiple levels. In both shaping her garden physically and then making that process the subject of her poetry, Bethell is outlining the “regularity of activities and structures of time” that signify a home, while also consciously “construct[ing] a narrative of belonging” out of those rituals (Stefano 38). The “Ruth” mentioned in “Foreword” is Ruth Mayhew, to whom many of the poems were originally addressed (Whiteford, “Ursula Bethell” 90), and with whom Bethell stayed in Oxford during her youth. Understanding the collection as originating in their correspondence sheds light on her poetic practice, which combines the letter writing discourse of colonial women with a modernist poetics of the everyday and the particular. This also underscores its broadly explanatory function. Her poems are involved in articulating—and seeking an appropriate *means* of articulating—a home, an identity, and a sense of belonging within a New Zealand backdrop that, to readers like Mayhew, would have been decidedly exotic. However, homes also require a suitable language to communicate their particular virtues, their particular quirks. This collection gradually renders Bethell’s life familiar. Its conversational and personal tone, as well as its consistent gardening,

instate a sense of belonging, but also *model* a way through which New Zealanders can invest in and represent that still unfamiliar country as a home. Bethell works at her garden, but she also works at her language, finding in each the materials to negotiate a peculiarly New Zealand belonging.

In his introduction to her *Collected Poems*, Vincent O’Sullivan reports that the poet and literary critic D’Arcy Cresswell, while “not a man to resist exaggerations”,

makes a fair literary point with his claim that ‘New Zealand wasn’t truly discovered, in fact, until Ursula Bethell, “very earnestly digging”, raised her head to look at the mountains. Almost everyone had been blind before’. (xiii)

Much colonial verse is “disappointing and awkward”, O’Sullivan argues, because “it talks about something new, in a way that has only proved suitable for talking about somewhere else” (xiii).

While Cresswell’s term “discovery” is problematic, he is right to locate a new relationship between settler and landscape in Bethell’s cultivation. Having made her own rituals and language of belonging in her cultivation of the garden, the landscape ceases to be a threatening enemy or something to be tamed and becomes contiguous with her domestic world. Rejecting the topoi of the Maoriland postcard, Bethell’s poems create a new poetic language—experimental, intimate, and fundamentally embedded in nature—that makes the “exotic” New Zealand landscape (such as the mountains) an essential part of her antipodean home.

George argues that “Imagining a home is as political an act as is imagining a nation” (6), and, in *From a Garden in the Antipodes*, they go together. Bethell’s garden constitutes an enclosed site apart that evokes England but does not deny or decry its New Zealand location. In fact, it begins to celebrate it. Bethell makes use of the forms of the garden—its enclosure and its ordering—to negotiate the politics of home: the relationship between individual, environment

and place. Her cultivation of the garden is a physical ritual that allows her to invest the land with new ideas of home, as well as providing and modelling the language with which to communicate them. Not quite severed from the early modern traditions that led to the equation of garden and nation, nor the equation in Marvell between gardening and poetic creation, Bethell's poems retain and reshape the garden's political capacities. The garden's forms figure the way in which private lives can be shaped and articulated against or amongst public wholes, such as the nation's "imagined political community" (Anderson 6), public discourses, and literary traditions. Moreover, in making explicit her search for a language to articulate that different home, her poems represent a narrative about New Zealand domesticity and New Zealand belonging that helps to constitute an incipient national identity, not exactly English, nor *not* English. This narrative is at once personal to Bethell and a significant cultural intervention, for, when transmitted in a letter or a collection of poems, it can act as an emissary of a way of living that is both different and familiar.

In the settler literature that precedes Bethell, individual lives, and individual gardens, imply national allegory. The dearth of individuals, their isolation from their homeland and from one another leads to a literature in which private lives are conceptualised as ancillary to wider political narratives. The settler may make a new life in their adopted country, but, for the most part, home is the place they left behind. Bethell’s poetry begins to imagine New Zealand as a pākehā home. She finds an emotional connection with the land by cultivating it, suggesting a transition from the settler phase of colonisation to one in which British political and cultural dominance in New Zealand is, like Bethell’s garden in “Time” (8), “Planned. Planted. Established” (8). Born in 1960, fifteen years after Bethell’s death, Jenny Bornholdt echoes her domestic turn, and indeed works consciously in Bethell’s legacy, planting “a fig, olive and bay / in memory of Mary Ursula Bethell” (21) in the titular poem.³⁶ Bornholdt’s collection *The Rocky Shore* (2008), which will be the primary focus in this chapter, brings together six long prose poems, five of which revolve around her family’s Wellington garden, and all of which place home and family at the centre of their attention. There is no sense in these poems of a settler legacy, whether it be explicitly political or in terms of the tropes of that period. The focus is instead firmly on the private sphere: daily life, its tragedies and discontents, its preoccupations and pleasures.

This domestic life is articulated through the representation of garden forms. As in Bethell, cultivating the garden in *The Rocky Shore* is a ritual that entails emotional investment. However, for Bornholdt, each of the garden’s components are further associated with different

³⁶ This is a reference to Bethell’s poem “Detail” (5)

family memories, recounting a more extensive “narrative of belonging” (Stefano 38) than that of Bethell’s poetry about Rise Cottage. Ursula Bethell’s poetic gardens are filled with expectations for the future, but little sense of a past. In contrast, as Katie Holmes argues: “Established gardens speak of a history, a present and a future. They speak of a sense of place. They also speak of power: of colonization, of permanence, of control” (“A little garden” 120).

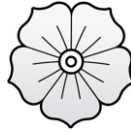
The Rocky Shore presents a more established garden and a more established pākehā New Zealand society, namely one that has persisted long enough to allow individuals like Bornholdt to develop a sense of a family narrative that is firmly grounded in place. No longer a fragile grafting onto a wild environment, Bornholdt’s garden derives meaning from its long association with family history. However, it is also a place of constant upheaval and reworking, with the gardener (often Bornholdt herself) cultivating and literally reordering the garden, seeking an ideal arrangement that at once adds to the garden’s ledger of family memory but also seeks to somehow resolve or crystallise the memories it represents. Both a site that demarcates a space of home (against outside forces), and a vital and changing space, its continual gardening invests the land with an evolving family history that pays little heed to national identity.

While these poems are overwhelmingly concerned with the everyday happenings of domestic life, they are nevertheless marked by adversity. The collection prioritises grief and pain, consciously working in the traditions of confessional poetry, while also performing a postmodern reflection on its resources and limitations. Confessional poetry is a tradition distinguished from autobiography by its emphasis on the disclosure of trauma and pain. Although lacking some of the psychological and transgressive elements associated with confessional poetry of the 1950s and 60s and figures like Robert Lowell, Sylvia Plath, and Anne Sexton, *The Rocky Shore* is recognisably confessional in its focus on grief and pain, particularly that which is related primarily to death of her father and friends but also her pain from a long illness. Indeed, she

invites this label, naming one of her poems about her father's death "Confessional" (9-15).

Marked by a "use of language in which ethical values of good and evil are superseded by values of truth and falsehood" (de Man 279), confession has been linked to modernity. Foucault argues that Westerners live in a "confessing society" (*History of Sexuality* 59) that has established "confession as one of the main rituals we rely on for the production of truth" (*History of Sexuality* 58).

Though these confessions do not primarily take place through the garden image, it nevertheless serves a crucial confessional role in asserting the truth-value of the poems. This is echoed also by Bornholdt adopting a poetic language that is ostensibly simple and often expressly anti-poetic, encouraging the intimate reader-author relationship that characterises confession by way of a straightforward, and putatively "true", poetic voice. However, the artifice of the garden—that it is ordered and cultivated by the gardener—also dramatises the issues that surround confession as a poetic mode. A tradition that values truth above all else, it is particularly susceptible to questions of authenticity. These are questions that Bornholdt subtly encourages. In this collection, the work of gardening becomes an analogue for poetic work in a way that, while ostensibly just one more element of Bornholdt's confessional honesty, ultimately reveals that honesty as a constructed poetic stance. *The Rocky Shore* hence offers a confession to the reader through the garden, but emphasises the forms of gardening and the garden's internal arrangement also to symbolise the poetic contrivances that produce that intimacy. Thus, while not so intrinsically tied to political affairs as Marvell and Hutchinson's Civil War gardens, nor as engaged in critiquing national allegory as Bethell's implicitly are, the garden in this collection still serves a political purpose. The garden's forms imagine the politics of home, but also make legible the literary politics that determine relations between poet, text, and reader.



“Back here in the garden”

As in the poetry of Ursula Bethell, the garden in *The Rocky Shore* is a place in which ideas of home are developed, articulated, and accessed. The gardener’s ordering of her environment makes it *her own*, and the garden’s internal arrangement discloses a family history, its past cultivation leaving physical traces that make the garden a place of memory. The forms of the garden therefore afford what Rosemary Marangoly George calls “the politics of home”: “the pattern of select inclusions and exclusions” that constitute a place of home against other *non-homes* (2). Shaping a private home apart that includes family memories, and deliberately excludes the anxieties of the public sphere until she is ready to process them by way of her gardening, Bornholdt presents the garden as the site through which she (the gardener) exercises power to resolve or ameliorate daily pressures.

The garden is also crucial to how the collection works within (and ultimately subverts) the operations of confessional poetry. Although the poems’ most confessional moments (namely those marked by grief at her father’s death or her own pain) do not take place there, the garden sets up an intimate poet-reader relationship and asserting the poems’ truth-value. Confessional poetry relies on verisimilitude, its confessions only meaningful if they appear to be a true reflection of the author that writes them. The collection’s frequent garden passages, and their emphasis on messy labour and daily happenings, corroborate apparently trivial detail that adds to the poems’ sense of veracity. They also offer frank insights into Bornholdt and her private life, implying the readers’ unmediated access to all areas of her life.

The reader becomes invested in Bornholdt's garden and home because Bornholdt herself is constantly shown investing time and energy into it. An emphasis on the garden's materiality is key to this; her gardening is depicted as a physically demanding process. She states: "Planting flax in front of my shed I raise large, sodden plugs / of earth, place flax in the holes, then stomp the earth back" (64).³⁷ Gardening here is not an abstract grafting or delicate pruning, but a bodily imposition of order, as implied by the title of this poem, "Fitter Turner". Like a newspaper report about a "Congenital ball and socket ankle joint" (51), the task of the gardener—and thus the task of making a home—is a mechanical one: it involves things coming undone and fitting them back together and it requires actions as blunt and corporeal as "stomp[ing]" the dirt down again. Reshaping the earth to make it her own, the physicality of gardening entails emotional investment in a ritual of home-making.

This is joined by an impression of habit. Gardening is not a one-off, but, as in Bethell, a constant ordering that constitutes a home, which itself can be defined as "a familiarity and regularity of activities and structures of time" (Stefano 38). This regularity is partly produced by the disruption of the collection's ostensible narrative, namely the building of the shed.

Fragmented within each poem and with no clear sense of linear progression, the garden becomes not a teleological project but a ritual. The present work on the shed is echoed by actions taken in the past: "He [her father] and my / mother and Greg and the children and I had spent a lot of time / up there, clearing and digging" (19). Furthermore, there is a sense of more, similar work in the future. Plans multiply, as Bornholdt reports: "I've been writing and thinking and clearing a space near the vegetable garden for another shed. This time / for the children" (49). Sheds conflate so that the progress or status of the work at hand becomes unclear, the poems

³⁷ Due to the prose style and length of the poems in *The Rocky Shore*, I have chosen to use page numbers instead of line references.

emphasising not the instrumental nature of the work, but its structuring role as a ritual of belonging that has a present and future, as well as a past.

The poems are also punctuated with other incidents that deepen readers' understanding of the garden as a home that demands an ongoing relationship of emotional and physical investment. Incidents often revolve around physical pain, foreshadowing the collection's more confessional concerns. In "Fitter Turner", Bornholdt writes:

It's been good working to make room
for this shed, even though it's meant some mornings spent
with the shovel, instead of working on this poem. I've developed
a sore back, but nothing serious, just an ache. (49)

Reports of gardening injuries are not always so trifling, as she earlier confides: "What wrecked / my neck this time was the garden" (46), and how, having been "bitten by something in the garden", her arm swells to resemble "a very large and interesting / potato" (46). Such incidents are often reported with levity, the injuries not putting her off gardening, but simply part and parcel of physical work and of "getting older and sadder" (49). Importantly, too, both serious and minor injuries are disclosed. Bornholdt cultivates the impression that the reader is simply told everything that happens, whether it is significant or flattering, or neither. Such episodes cement the reader's expectation of intimacy and honesty.

While garden work creates a sense of a lived-in place, a real home with its own rituals and habits, the arrangement of the garden's elements also corresponds to particular memories and an evolving family history. Gardening is a way of "claiming space" but also of "planting out meanings" (Holmes, "In spite" 172). In the title poem, Bornholdt says that "Sometimes I would like the garden to be just / the garden and not a place of memory" (22). Bearing the traces of its former incarnations and its former cultivators which persist even as it continues to change, the

poems explain, over the course of the collection, the family history behind the garden. Garden work is often collective and even when it took place in the past, the garden retains traces of that familial cultivation. Much like the Colonel's form cultivation in Hutchinson's "Elegies",³⁸ those traces can be painful, as Bornholdt reports: "This part of our garden / was a place I didn't visit much after my father died" (19) because it was gardened by him. In "Willow", Bornholdt reports having "uncovered the paving stones we stood on / when we cleared the garden with my father. / They'd grown over and I'd forgotten" (43). The garden is always turning *from* something, and *into* something else, but it leaves traces of its historical cultivation.

These memories generally gather around the garden's materials: paths, plants, or trees. Even as she asks, "Why this need / to name and place everything?", she thinks of "the new black doris plum, planted because that was my grandmother's name" (22). Beyond this need to "name and place", the collection also continually *tells* that family history; it places the reader in the position of a friend or confidant that joins her in the garden and becomes gradually acquainted with its private meanings. A fence becomes meaningful because she built it with her son for only "\$23.50" (73-4), the sheds remind her of the men who built them (30), and a piece of metal sticking out of the ground evokes her father who used to put a tennis ball over the tip (62). Often, the garden reminds her of her father's recent death, for example in "Willow" when she tells of how a man at the hospital "was upset when my father died / and wanted us to buy a tree / to remember him by" (37), and she buys and plants a lilac. Each object in Bornholdt's garden is "give[n] its genealogy" (22), giving her memories a physical form that allows them to be understood or processed, but, in doing so, also offering the reader greater insights into her mind and family.

³⁸ There is a distinct elegiac charge in *The Rocky Shore* that reflects Hutchinson's "Elegies". The garden again evokes the lost person, though here the griever (Bornholdt) takes up the gardening herself. Cultivation becomes a way of processing grief, though, as for Hutchinson, not quite a way of *resolving* it.

It is the memories associated with the garden's materials that lead to Bornholdt's preoccupation with how those materials are arranged. Unlike Bethell, whose gardening rituals primarily involve maintenance, Bornholdt is constantly reorganising the garden. These poems emphasise not only the form of ordering (in its cultivation), but the garden's internal arrangement. "Move" is the most frequent verb used to describe her gardening. She lists her tasks, "Move the lilac" and "Move the lemon to where at last it looks convincing" (31), but, given that these objects are inextricably linked with family memories, the meaning of "convincing" becomes more complex. That "the lilac struggles. / I've moved it twice" (36) becomes meaningful because it is linked to her father, its rearrangement suggesting an ongoing process of grief. However, it suggests too a potential resolution to that grief in the garden's arrangement: if she could just find the right place, her grief would be manageable. Hence the internal arrangement of the garden recounts a family history, her reordering of its elements not changing those memories, but altering how she experiences them when she is in the garden. Like Hutchinson's "Elegies", the garden might offer if not a "sufficiently reparative language" (Lilley 73), then a means of engaging with grief. Her gardening could be interpreted as seeking an elusive arrangement that resolves those memories or, rather, that prevents them—by way of ongoing gardening—from becoming static and thus in some further sense irrevocably past. (Re-)ordering the garden is not only a regular activity or a way of investing emotionally in a place, but also the means by which the ongoing family narrative is inscribed, its memories accessed and processed.

Rearranging the garden and hence engaging with its history allows the reader to see how that home space is constituted. The poems not only characterise what this private life is like, but also the "pattern of select inclusions and exclusions" through which a home is differentiated from the *not*-home (George 2). The poems are, on the one hand, conspicuously international. They

take place in multiple countries (France, England, and New Zealand) and proliferate a plurality of references from “Dutch hache” (47) to a Vastu Shanti Hindu blessing ceremony (25) and *Papa Small* (74). And yet for all this internationalism, the world outside the home is just as often a place that prompts anxiety and fear. There is Bornholdt’s recurrent fear of flying and unsettling trips to the hospital, described as “Weird ways / to spend your days” (25). These episodes take place in intimidating settings, the “White bed / in the A&E” (57) and are populated with unfamiliar figures, “an African / orthopaedic specialist . . . with the unlikely / but appropriate name of *Joy*” (57).

These passages are offset by passages at home, which is often specifically the garden. After examining at length her fears of flying, the next stanza of “Willow” begins with “Back here in the garden” (43), and in “Big Minty Nose” she “com[es] up out of pain” to observe how “the garden trembles / with birds” (61). Indeed, the poems return to the garden as a place of comfort, coming to grips with the anxieties and pain associated with the external world by transmuting it into the garden. For example, the poems’ most confessional passages, marked by grief or pain, take place outside the home: while flying, thinking of a “loved one / dying” (42), seeing her father’s cancer on an X-ray (14), or when at the hospital her own pain takes “up all the air in the room” (58). It is instead in the garden, where her father’s loss has been deliberately *included* by way of the lilac, that this grief can begin to be approached. The reader’s private insights therefore extend to Bornholdt’s public anxieties. They come to understand not only what the space of home (the garden) is like, but its politics: its inclusions and exclusions.

The gardener shapes a home out of a wider environment and exercises power over its elements and their meanings. To both of these processes and the emotional impulses behind them the reader is privy. While not itself the site of the poem’s most confessional moments, the garden and its rituals are nevertheless an important way that Bornholdt sets up the “literary

friendship” associated with confessional poetry. “Literary friendship”, as defined by Wayne Booth, is a metaphor that helps to conceptualise how texts and their implied authors interact with their implied readers. Bornholdt’s garden poems offer a very strong “literary friendship”; they provide a large “*quantity* of invitations” (179) (there are a lot of long garden passages); they maintain a gentle “*intensity* of engagement” (180) (the speaker is conversational and makes few demands); the world is familiar, coherent and non-threatening (180) (it is filled with reassuring domestic detail); and they offer a high level of “psychic ‘entry’” into her inner world (187) (it discloses her family history and process of grieving). All of these are characteristic of confessional literature, but they are compounded by the genre’s (and this collection’s) claim to *not be fictional at all*. Booth argues that a welcoming “literary friendship” might set the implied reader up as an “equal in the imaginative enterprise” (184); here, instead, Bornholdt disclaims the notion that an imaginative enterprise is at stake. The result is that it feels less like a “literary friendship” and more like a real friendship. Bornholdt manifestly reduces the “*distance* between their [the implied author’s] worlds and ours”, diminishing the degree of “‘otherness,’ that they fling at our current norms” (180) by arguing—convincingly—that this is not another world at all, but actually the reader’s own.

The necessary paradox of confessional poetry, that it evoke a sense of intimacy even in a public form, is a line that Bornholdt carefully toes. The “friendship” offered through the garden—one that is intimate, frank, and revealing—is enhanced by Bornholdt’s poetic choices. Indeed, her garden and her verse work along similar lines. Though Bornholdt spends a lot of time in her garden, she describes it as “a mess”, adding that this description is “no / false modesty” (21). The disorder of the garden, even after such continual work, evokes a down-to-earth home that shuns any sense of pretence. This stance is reflected in her verse, which also explicitly rejects pretension and artifice in order to make it seem as natural and unconstructed as

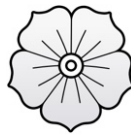
possible, the familiar events the poems recount clothed in everyday language.³⁹ Consolidating the impression of the garden as a real place, populated by actual people with real and relatable concerns, Bornholdt's verse tacks away from typical poetic style to a conversational one that negotiates its reader not "as a potential judge, analyst, jailer, or confessor" ("Confessional Poetry"), as in other confessional poetry, but as a friend.

Her verse is as "sprawling", as apparently "messy" as her garden. She notes that "when people talk about poetry / they often mention *compression* – yes, it can / be that, but it can also be a great sprawling / thing" (10) and, indeed, Bornholdt's verse is closer to prose. Often structured in anomalously long lines, it lacks any conspicuous compression or interpretative difficulties. Each of the six poems presents a coherent speaker and coherent content, which, though eschewing linear development, picks up on narrative strands and incidents in ways reminiscent of other familiar forms: the letter, journal, or novel. These formal choices, which Bornholdt herself describes as "conversational" (53), are joined by her rejection of traditional poetic features. In "Fitter Turner", rhyme comes pre-judged and pre-defended, both superficially pleasing and, apparently, meaningless: "And we'll drive home – his eye matching sky – which is an easy rhyme, but pleasing, to me, nevertheless" (55). This extends to metaphor, the bedrock of poetry. In the poem "Confessional", the speaker watches as a red T-shirt falls "down through the circle of the [crane's] ladder like.../ like what? Like a red T-shirt falling down the inside / of a crane." (13). Bornholdt's verse seeks to foreground understanding, effacing lyric difficulties to welcome readers into a world that looks less like poetry and more like truth.

Confessional poet Robert Lowell said that he wanted his poems to be as "single-surfaced as a photograph" (qtd. in "Confessional Poetry"). In this collection, too, Bornholdt tells us that

³⁹ These choices reflect the aims of confessional poetry, which "sought forms of 'naked', honest expression, cultivated spontaneity, immediacy, and a conversational style" ("Confessional Poetry").

things are exactly as they seem. In “Fitter Turner”, she says of someone that, “For the purposes of this poem / we’ll call him *Chris*. (We might as well, because that’s his name.)” (49). Bornholdt echoes the spectre of fictionalisation only to reject it, equating herself firmly with the speaker in order to cut through the layers of the implied poet, speaker, and voices interposed between reader and author and place them “face-to-face”, as though having a conversation. Indeed, the reader is even made to feel privy to Bornholdt’s poetic process in “Big Minty Nose” when she states: “Our cherry tree (I first typed *cheery* tree)” (72). Dismissing poetic pretence while being frank about the poetic process, Bornholdt underscores the truth-value of her poetry. The garden, its history, and the painful family history it discloses, all appear wide open for readerly access, as do the poems themselves; that is, “if in fact it *is* a poem” at all (47).



Literary Politics

A collection whose confessional intimacy relies on evoking a sense of personal rapport and friendship, *The Rocky Shore* assumes, firstly (and like all confessional poetry), that the intimate content of private lives can be told, and, secondly, that it can be transmitted to a public without making it seem like public knowledge. That *The Rocky Shore* can be read as straightforward confession of family trauma is a testament to how convincingly it manages these difficulties and evokes a verisimilar “literary friendship”, for she also insistently problematises the content of her own confession and the entire category of confessional writing. Often, as in the passages I have just discussed, the same lines that evoke a rapport between poet and reader by rejecting poetic conventions also risk undoing that rapport by reminding the reader that those conventions are hers to control, the reader part of a broader audience beholden to her authorial

prerogative. However, it is in the garden, which establishes the collection's "literary friendship", that her confession is most fundamentally undermined. By emphasising the garden's internal arrangement and ordering, the collection dramatises how language acts as a "way of framing... [a] partition of the visible and the sayable" (Rancière 10). In doing so, Bornholdt undermines her "unmediated" confession to highlight instead the writer's power over the reader: able to invent and manipulate in order to achieve particular effects.

Even as, with one hand, Bornholdt pulls readers close, with the other she pushes them away by highlighting the paradox of intimacy in a conspicuously public form. A photographer comes to take pictures of Bornholdt in her garden because she is a poet that "write[s] about gardens" (21). The photographer is seeking to represent the garden to an audience just as Bornholdt does for her readers here ("The garden, you see (and must understand) is a mess" [21]) and throughout the collection. On the one hand, this consolidates the idea that the reader is being willingly *included* into Bornholdt's private confidence, whereas the photographer intrudes on it "to my alarm" (21). Indeed, the direct address "you see", "[you] must understand" suggests still that the reader of the poetry has more authentic access. Nevertheless, the fact of the photographer's intrusion, and the concomitant intrusion of the photo's general publication, dramatises the ontological instability of the collection's supposedly private sphere. Incidents like this destabilise the collection's apparent aims because they ask at what degree of exposure intimacy—upon which the poems' confession relies—disappears. While readers are lulled into a sense of a one-on-one rapport with the poet, episodes like this that threaten to disrupt that intimacy by indicating the presence of a wider audience.

This incident is also interesting because it draws attention to another art form that is designed and hence reflects on poetry. Photography is, like poetry, a creative act that involves ordering, arrangements, and artifice. Josh Cohen argues that privacy eludes being captured:

“cameras aren’t simply neutral instruments recording the confession, but intrinsic to its very texture. This isn’t a private conversation into which a camera has surreptitiously intruded” but one manifestly shaped by its presence and techniques (127). The photographer baulks at the garden because it is so messy, but presumably he does his best to mitigate the situation by artful framing and positioning of the subjects. The poet who writes about gardens similarly alters the “real” scene by the fact of trying to capture it and often engineers it towards particular effects, even if that effect is to appear accessible or down-to-earth. The inclusion of another constructed artistic process reminds the reader that poetry is not a neutral or objective medium, but one in which the author is empowered by a series of choices. Indeed, Bornholdt often explicitly discusses poetry as a deliberate, and even laborious, work of construction. I have already discussed the line “For the purposes of this poem / we’ll call him *Chris*. (We might as well, because that’s his name.)” (49). This line, while ostensibly antipoetic, also reinforces that this is a poem that not only has “purposes” but is *purposeful*. Again, while Bornholdt acknowledges the poems are “very plain and straight forward and conversational”, she rejoins that “it’s taken a lot to get it / this way” (53).

These metapoetic interjections are regular and marked, but the most significant way that Bornholdt reveals her poetry to be deliberately constructed—even as it is accessible, welcoming, and antipoetic—is through the equivalence she establishes between poetry and the forms and formal work of the garden. She says, in the final poem that “I think the garden is as much poem as this poem is” (68), and this is an equivalence that rings true throughout the collection. Poetry and gardening are joined by the same emphasis on ordering and arrangement, and Bornholdt insistently speaks about them together and in the same ways. “This poem, for instance, was like the shed”, she says because they each need to be arranged, the shed finding its place in the garden just as the right words do in a poem (19). These two processes conflate: “I had to make it out of

something and move it around the lawn”, presumably talking about the shed, but also, in the following line, about the poem: “I didn’t want to repeat myself, but then I did. The garden needed re-visiting” (19). Forming the poem, like forming the garden “sometimes . . . takes a while” (19) and they both require similarly involved work. Indeed, while poems are “low impact” (49) and do not cause injuries like garden work, they nevertheless share the diction of physical effort. Bornholdt is shown “struggling with” a poem (53), “it’s taken a lot to get it / this way” (53), and writing poetry, like gardening, involves “Mixing up, breaking down, renewal – all the big themes” (64).

Though mutually associated with order, they each tend towards entropy; they can become a “great sprawling thing” (10). Poems and gardens resist the efforts of those who would impose order on them, Bornholdt noting that “This poem was always going to end there” “but then / more happened” (76). Both desire increase: “*That tree / will always want to be a bigger tree*”, just as “this poem will always want / to be a bigger poem” (72). Order is therefore elusive but vital to both forms: “You think you have everything in its right place / and bingo, something goes and blows it all apart” (21-2). The idea of there being a “right place” to put something, whether it be a tree or the end to a poem, suggests Bornholdt is seeking the same kind of “ideal” arrangement in her poetry as she is in her garden. These are related; the poems themselves participate in the process of preserving and accessing family memories through the garden. The emphasis on moving plants from one part of the garden to another suggests the garden is the same kind of organic, opaque process as poetry; both require a lot of “moving”, and while, ultimately “*the poem finds its own form*”, it requires a lot of human effort to get it there.

The result of this equivalence is that when the poetry turns to the garden and to garden work (which is often) it also implies poetry and poetic work. This is a more persistent intrusion than that of the photographer and one that is more visceral, as the work of poetry-writing is

figured in the hands-on physical work of construction, of moving plants, trees, and earth. The effect of this analogy is that the more closely you read the collection, the more you sense it pushing you away. This is, like Marvell's permutating "green thought[s]", specifically and self-consciously a garden contained within a poem. The forms of the garden are themselves merely the 'content' of an underlying form that, like the camera, is "intrinsic to its very texture" (Cohen 127): poetry itself. The poems thus draw attention to their double construction, using the garden as a designed vehicle through which to figure the designed work of poetic production. In a sleight-of-hand, Bornholdt makes her confession seem intimate and unmediated even while it is riddled with reminders that it is a curated, delimited act of speech.

In "Big Minty Nose", the last poem of the collection, these tensions become explicit as Bornholdt asks:

What I wonder about is how much you need
to know? What if I don't have a garden?

What if I do still have a father? (72)

Here Bornholdt asserts her authorial control, not now denying fictionalisation, but asserting her right to lie. Instead of discussing poetry as a means of breaking away from its conventions or expectations, she seeks security in its obfuscating resources. This is the first time in the text that Bornholdt has suggested she may not be telling the truth, and as Cohen argues, as "confessing animal[s]" (that is, natives of Foucault's "confessing society") we are "peculiarly vulnerable to a lie" (141). By saying that the garden might never have existed at all, she threatens to undermine both the poet-reader relationship built over the rest of the collection, but also the family life contained within the garden's arrangement and cultivation. In a genre that seeks authentic confession, "What if I don't have a garden?" asserts instead the poet's power to alter truth and manipulate the reader.

Bornholdt's is also fundamentally a question about the *desirability* of confession. Reader and poet each seek greater privacy, either that of the poet and her world, or, in Bornholdt's case, away from the reader. In doing so, they each ask the same question: at what point does a private life become public property? By questioning the mechanisms of confession, Bornholdt seeks to preserve some privacy and some authorial mystery. I would contend, though, that this attempt marks if not the collection's most *confessional* moment, then nonetheless its most revealing, as Bornholdt implicitly flinches at her own honesty. As she has done throughout with the ordering and arrangement of the garden, she once again reminds the reader that she holds all the cards. But displaying your power is not the same as exercising it, and while the poems' private revelations are in no way unmediated, there is in the end little sense that Bornholdt has completely misled us, nor that there was no garden, after all.

The Rocky Shore locates in the garden's cultivation a growing "narrative of belonging" that is delimited as a home by a "pattern of select inclusions and exclusions" (George 2). The garden is a place of home through which Bornholdt excludes the external world and its anxieties, but appears to allow the reader access. However, those same garden forms that constitute it as a place of home also make visible the "way of framing . . . [the] partition of the visible and the sayable" (Rancière 10) intrinsic to any literary representation. Therefore, the garden's forms act in opposite directions; they outline a home that includes the reader while also excluding them by revealing that home (and their place in it) to be a poetic contrivance. The garden image thus dramatises the way in which confessional poetry itself foregrounds issues of power to enact a postmodern reflection on that genre, its resources and limits.

In *The Rocky Shore*, the garden's cultivation and internal arrangement are again a means of imagining power relations. The gardener fashions a place of home by choosing what to include and what to exclude, and the poet herself contrives a comparably artificial and arranged

space. The garden's forms therefore model not only the negotiation between individuals and place, between family life and the public sphere, but also how the poet exercises control over the poem, its language, and those who read it.

CONCLUSION

“It is the work of form to make order. And this means that forms are the stuff of politics” (Levine 3)

Gardens appear to be neutral and natural places, though they are neither. People garden, or visit gardens, in order to feel closer to nature, but, in so doing, they make it less natural and more human. We invest gardens with our time, our ambitions, our hopes and fears. These are investments they register outwardly, reflecting back in their materials, their shapes, and arrangements our priorities and those of our culture. Receptive sites of human intervention, gardens testify to the way we see the world, and the way we want the world to be.

This thesis has made use of Caroline Levine’s definition of form as a means of analysing gardens in the world alongside gardens on the page. I have distilled real gardens into three constituent forms—enclosure, internal arrangement, and cultivation—that are fundamental to all gardens, and so are “iterable—portable” (Levine 7). These forms carry particular affordances; they *tend to entail* certain types of figurative meanings when they are represented. This is useful because, if forms are “iterable—portable”, if their affordances broadly persist, then the way that their representations vary can offer us a window into the particularities of a text and a culture.

My study has allowed us to think about continuities, about the broad ways in which forms can mean, even as we identify divergences. This is a methodology that could be applied to any designed objects in the world, but it is particularly useful for those objects that are formally and culturally complex and that persist in our literatures. Forms provide us with fixed points through which we can hypothesise what fundamental meaning-bearing resources things in the world—like gardens—make available to poets. I have argued that the garden’s affordances are broadly political, but that the nuances of those significations are determined by how those forms

are deployed and emphasised by the poet, and how they interact with culture and literary forms. In spite of their persistent forms and affordances, the meanings of garden images vary, allowing us to observe the knotty intersections of forms with poetic construction and historical and literary traditions.

Across the poets I have studied, the forms of enclosure, internal arrangement, and ordering take on various, though recognisable meanings. The garden's enclosure has afforded meanings of separation and security, whether it be the apparently Horatian retirement of some of Marvell's garden poems, the English garden enclaves in settler New Zealand, Bethell's privileged domestic space, or Bornholdt's retreat from the anxieties of public life and into the garden. But enclosure has also come to signify suffocation, decay, or distance from God. Though it guards against corruption, enclosure also tends to mean that once taint has taken hold, it is difficult to dislodge. Marvell's "The Mower against Gardens" emphasises the enclosure of the garden to suggest the totality of its corruption, and the comparable totality of Hutchinson's garden allows it to become an emblem of corruption in both estate and nation. In "The Garden", these binary meanings are combined: the garden's enclosure provides the speaker respite from society but also ultimately stultifies his efforts to imagine paradise.

The garden's internal arrangement has afforded an impression of a well-functioning mind, estate, or nation and, often, a broken one. These meanings combine in Hutchinson's garden at Owthorpe, the virtue of the former garden now wholly corrupted and, with it, both estate and state. The arrangement of the garden's elements has spoken to the competence of the cultivator, as in Hutchinson's praise of her husband, but also to their legacy, both Hutchinson and Bornholdt finding in the garden not only a reflection of how things are, but the traces of how things used to be. The garden's arranged materials have also implied poetic arrangements, the "herbs and flow'rs" of "The Garden" evoking, as in the garden of *The Rocky Shore*, the

words on the page. Both natural and artificial, the internal arrangement of the garden has attested to the effects of human power more broadly, in the constructed poem and the operation of the nation, and to its limitations, as in *Hamlet's* “unweeded garden / that grows to seed” (1.2.135-6).

While the arrangement of the garden reflects the effects of power, the cultivation and ordering of the garden dramatise the exercise of that power. The ordering of the garden by a cultivator has figured the power of individuals (such as the Colonel, Marvell's gardeners, and Ursula Bethell) and, in the case of Bornholdt's family and New Zealand settlers, that of collectives. What kind of power gardening implies, though, has varied, whether it be political power over a nation, influence over a space of home, or control over a poem and reader, or all of these things. Ordering the garden has also tended to entail a reflection on the restraints on those powers, such as the limits of literary representation explored in “The Garden”, or on the misuse of those powers, as in Lord Fairfax's bathetic military garden and Hutchinson's image of a degenerate Restoration.

As Levine states, “no form operates in isolation” (7). This has also been a project about overlap and interruption, about alignment and subversion, and about the complex collisions between culture, forms, and literary context. Each of the poets I have studied here demonstrates how garden forms interact with literary forms and social discourses in dramatic and often unexpected ways. Marvell's poems have signified in relation to seventeenth-century land enclosure polemic and subverted the rhetorical use of enclosed Edenic gardens as a metonym for an ideal England, as well as challenging the benefits of Horatian retirement. Hutchinson's “Elegies” make use of many of these same associations, while also recasting the royalist country house poem onto a republican subject matter marked by the elegy's overwhelming sense of lack. Almost three hundred years later, Bethell tacks against the persistence of those early modern

associations in New Zealand settler verse as she rejects the garden's connotations of national (English) allegory. Finally, Bornholdt's poetic garden, severed from those pressures, instead responds to the genre of confessional poetry, finding in public disclosure something therapeutic but also uncomfortably invasive.

The power and persistence of the garden image lie in the way it can be reshaped to the exigencies of new ideas and new realities, both cultural and literary. However, there are some parameters that do not change, and this thesis has argued that it is through these essential forms that its capacities can be best interpreted and understood. This approach allows us to identify—from all the garden's variety—not unity, but broad coherence, as well as moments of striking continuity and departure. Crossing nations and centuries and disentangling the multilayered interactions of image, text, author, and culture, this project has sought to better understand both how the garden image *has* meant in particular contexts and what it *can* mean in general. Garden images consistently negotiate power relationships through a series of oppositions: between nature and art(ifice), part and whole, individual and system, order and disorder. But beyond this general formulation, these images have often performed those negotiations in surprisingly consonant ways, even across gulfs of time and place. And where they have deviated, for example in the broad movement away from national politics to the politics of the home and literature, is more telling, perhaps suggesting in modernity what Jameson calls a “radical split between the private and the public” (“Third-World” 69). By turning our literary critical attention to real-world forms and their affordances, we can gain a new perspective on an image whose history is as variegated as its materials, and so establish a new way of thinking about forms in the world together with forms in poetry.

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flowers with their nature, place of birth, time of flowring, names, and vertues to each

plant, useful in physic or admired for beauty : to which is annext a kitchin-garden

furnished with all manner of herbs, roots, and fruits, for meat or sauce used with us, with the art of planting an orchard ... all unmentioned in former herbals. London, 1656. *Early English Books Online*. Web. 13 June 2016.

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