



Literary  
Lives

# Andrew Marvell

A Literary Life

*Matthew C. Augustine*



# Literary Lives

This classic and longstanding series has established itself making a major contribution to literary biography. The books in the series are thoroughly researched and comprehensive, covering the writer's complete oeuvre. The latest volumes trace the literary, professional, publishing, and social contexts that shaped influential authors—exploring the “why” behind writers' greatest works. In its thirtieth year, the series aims to publish on a diverse set of writers—both canonical and rediscovered—in an accessible and engaging way.

More information about this series at  
<http://www.palgrave.com/gp/series/14010>

Matthew C. Augustine

# Andrew Marvell

A Literary Life

palgrave  
macmillan

Matthew C. Augustine  
School of English  
University of St Andrews  
St Andrews, UK

Literary Lives

ISBN 978-3-030-59289-9

ISBN 978-3-030-59287-5 (eBook)

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-59287-5>

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2021, corrected publication 2021

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, expressed or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Cover illustration: © FALKENSTEINFOTO / Alamy Stock Photo

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG.  
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

*For Julian*

# Acknowledgments

One of the themes of this book is the ‘manyness’ of Marvell’s authorship, his patronage relations, his collaborations with the living and the dead, his habits of borrowing and ventriloquism, of transposing and transversing. So nothing could be more appropriate than to acknowledge, with humility and pleasure, the various debts and borrowings that underwrite my own endeavours in these pages.

The historical spine of the book relies extensively on the work of seventeenth-century historians which can in no way be adequately acknowledged by means of the minimal apparatus of books in this series. Where specific citations are given, a more general debt may usually be assumed. Some of the historians to whom I have most often turned in writing the book include Glenn Burgess, Patrick Collinson, Barry Coward, Tim Harris, Ann Hughes, Mark Knights, Ronald Hutton, John Miller, Steven Pincus, Jacqueline Rose, Conrad Russell, Jonathan Scott, Paul Seaward, Quentin Skinner, John Spurr, Nicholas Tyacke, Austin Woolrych, and Blair Worden. Reading them more deeply than I had done previously has been its own reward, and I can only hope they think their work was put to good use.

My debts to the most recent generation of Marvell’s editors and biographers—Annabel Patterson, Martin Dzelzainis, Nicholas von Maltzahn, Neil Keeble, and Nigel Smith—are more substantial still. With respect to Martin, Nick, and Nigel, they are also personal. Not only have they encouraged my work for many years, they have also responded to my numerous queries with the same diligence and patience for which they are known in their scholarship. I can’t thank them enough.



Friends and colleagues in the Andrew Marvell Society have provided a lively community for the sharing of work in progress, and their own writings have of course variously shaped and challenged my view of Marvell's life and work. For their wisdom and fellowship, in addition to those named above, I am especially grateful to Steph Coster, Geoffrey Emerson, Joan Faust, Alex Garganigo, Blaine Greteman, Nick McDowell, Ryan Netzley, Brendan Pawdzik, Tim Raylor, Jonathan Sawday, and David Simon. Here Joanna Picciotto deserves special mention: her boundless enthusiasm for the project urged it forward in low moments, and amidst much other more pressing business, she generously read the whole manuscript before it went to press; to her I am very grateful indeed. Within my home department, Christina Alt, Harriet Archer, Giulio Pertile, and Nick Rowe read and commented on versions of several chapters; I thank them for their care and for their untiring collegiality. I am also grateful to Emma Buckley and Edward Paleit for advance sight of their edition of Thomas May's *Lucan's Pharsalia*. The timely completion of this book was made possible by a semester of teaching leave in Spring 2019, and I am grateful to the School of English and the College of Arts and Divinity at St Andrews for that sabbatical.

At the Hull Charterhouse, the resident historian Ann Godden provided much valuable information concerning the historical buildings and grounds. The Master, Rev. Canon Paul Greenwell, welcomed me with extraordinary grace, and indeed, we sat with the ghost of his predecessor, Andrew Marvell Sr, and with the poetry of the Charterhouse's most famous son, a communion unlikely to be repeated in this life. For that experience, Paul is most warmly remembered.

Years ago, on submitting my first article for publication, a reviewer tartly commented that the essay seemed too much an argument with the author's teachers. But who better to argue with about Marvell's poetry than Derek Hirst and Steven Zwicker? This slightly childish response is I hope at least partially vindicated by the publication of this book, the product of a now decades-long conversation with those incomparable scholars, teachers, and friends. Amidst the isolation of intense work on the manuscript compounded by the arrival of a global pandemic, the company of their writing, their emails, and Steve's regular phone calls from across the Atlantic has been sustaining in ways far beyond the recompense of these acknowledgments, but I thank them all the same.



I would also like to thank the Press's two anonymous readers for their many fruitful suggestions.

The privilege of writing this book has been paid for most dearly by those most dear to me. To Katie, as ever, thank you for all that you are and do. To Julian, of indefatigable cheer, this book is dedicated, as promised.

MCA

August 2020

## A Note on the Text

The presentation of the text in this book reflects a set of imperfect compromises. At the advice of the press and in keeping with the series' aim 'to publish in an accessible and engaging way', quotations from texts in old spelling have been silently modernised throughout. This decision bears most vexingly on the presentation of Marvell's prose, the original appearance of which is preserved with great care (though not unvaryingly) in the standard Yale edition. But to make an exception of Marvell's prose and retain its original spelling, capitalisation, and so on would be to make it stand out as awkward and old-fashioned when what one wants to emphasise about Marvell's prose is exactly its modernity. At the same time, one *does* want to retain aspects of orthography and typography which are deliberate and rhetorical, for instance, when medial capitalisation serves to personify a noun or italic type is used to identify quoted language or for purposes of visual debate. When quoting from texts in old spelling, I have thus sought as far as possible to convey the effect achieved in the original while upholding the standard of modernisation. I have preserved initial capitalisation of honorific nouns in quotations, for example, 'King', 'Church', and 'State', but not that of ancillary forms, for example, 'kingdom'. Where it seemed best to reproduce original spelling or punctuation, it is so noted parenthetically.

# Contents

1	Introduction: A Literary Life?	1
2	<i>Andreae Filius</i> : East Riding, Yorkshire, 1621–1633	9
3	<i>In loco parentis</i> : Cambridge, 1633–1641	29
4	‘Our wits have drawn th’infection of our times’: London and the Continent, 1641–1650	51
5	‘Some great prelate of the grove’: London and Nun Appleton, Yorkshire, 1650–1652	91
6	‘With my most humble service’: England and the Continent, 1652–1659	131
7	‘His anger reached that rage which passed his art’: England, the Netherlands, and the Baltic, 1659–1667	161
8	‘The interest and happiness of the king and kingdom’: London, 1667–1678	187
	Correction to: <i>Andrew Marvell: A Literary Life</i> <i>Matthew C. Augustine</i>	C1
	Index	229

# Abbreviations

ELH	English Literary History
ELR	English Literary Renaissance
HJ	Historical Journal
HLQ	Huntington Library Quarterly
MP	Modern Philology
N&Q	Notes & Queries
RES	Review of English Studies
SC	The Seventeenth Century
SEL	Studies in English Literature 1500–1900
SP	Studies in Philology
TLS	Times Literary Supplement

## Frequently Cited Works

1681	<i>Miscellaneous Poems, by Andrew Marvell, Esq.</i> (London, 1681)
Chameleon	Nigel Smith, <i>Andrew Marvell: The Chameleon</i> (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010)
Chronology	Nicholas von Maltzahn, <i>An Andrew Marvell Chronology</i> (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005)
CJ	<i>Journal of the House of Commons (1547–1699)</i> , 12 vols. (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1802)
ConstDoc	<i>The Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution</i> , ed. S. R. Gardiner, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906)
CPW	<i>Complete Prose Works of John Milton</i> , gen. ed. Don M. Wolfe, 8 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953–82)
HPHC	<i>The History and Proceedings of the House of Commons (1660–1739)</i> , 14 vols. (London: Richard Chandler, 1742)
ODNB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i>

- OED *Oxford English Dictionary*
- Pepys *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. Robert Latham and William Matthews, 11 vols. (London: George Bell, 1970–83)
- P&L *The Poems and Letters of Andrew Marvell*, ed. H. M. Margoliouth, rev. Pierre Legouis with E. E. Duncan-Jones, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971)
- Poems *The Poems of Andrew Marvell*, ed. Nigel Smith, rev. ed. (London: Longman, 2007)
- PW *The Prose Works of Andrew Marvell*, ed. Annabel Patterson, Martin Dzelzainis, Nicholas von Maltzahn, and N. H. Keeble, 2 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003)

# 1

## Introduction: A Literary Life?

What is a ‘literary life’, and why should Andrew Marvell be in need of one? Certainly not for want of recent attention. A century ago, in a famous essay published in the *TLS*, T. S. Eliot proposed to ‘bring the poet back to life’ by squeezing the drops of two or three poems (Eliot 1975, 161). Seventy years later, in 1990, Frank Kermode and Keith Walker’s Oxford Authors edition of Marvell could proclaim him ‘the most important seventeenth-century poet after John Milton’. And indeed, the mass of literary, biographical, and editorial commentary devoted to Marvell’s relatively slim body of work over the last several decades is little short of astonishing. The emphasis on ‘poet’ in the OUP brief might give us pause, however, insofar as the study of Marvell in the latter part of the twentieth century can be characterised by a paradigm shift, from Eliot’s poet of ‘tough reasonableness beneath the slight lyric grace’ to what Annabel Patterson has called ‘the writer in public life’. In the course of this shift, scholarly attention has been broadly transferred from the domains of lyric invention and lyric possibility to the more civic preoccupations of panegyric, satire, and animadversion.

Modern biography of Marvell follows much the same pattern. Pierre Legouis’s *André Marvell: Poète, Puritain, Patriote (1621–1678)* was begun in the same year as Eliot’s essay and completed in 1928; an English abridgement was published in 1965. Legouis’s would remain the standard biography until 2010, with the publication of Nigel Smith’s deeply researched and essential study *Andrew Marvell: The Chameleon*. Highlighting his differences with Legouis, Smith observes that by page 20 of *Poet, Puritan, Patriot*, ‘Marvell has arrived at Nun Appleton, but his life was more than half over’ (*Chameleon*, 6). Nun Appleton, the Yorkshire estate where Marvell served as tutor to the daughter of Thomas Lord Fairfax, is where we think Marvell wrote much of

his greatest poetry, including his masterpiece, 'Upon Appleton House'. Legouis hastens towards this idyll in Marvell's career; his section on 'The Lyrical Poet', at 64 pages (of 252), is the longest in the book. By contrast, Smith has Marvell arrive at Nun Appleton on page 88 and depart on page 110 of a Life that runs to some 350 pages. Attuned as it is to actions and events, *The Chameleon* turns resolutely from the world of private otium to that of public negotium, where it is led by the rich archive of material associated with Marvell's state employments, first as a secretary in Cromwell's Protectorate, then as MP for Hull, a position Marvell held for the last twenty years of his life. The biography's literary vantage point is thus shifted away from the languishing numbers of Nun Appleton and towards the Cromwell poems and Marvell's satires and pamphlets of the Restoration.

The advantage, the rationale of a 'literary life' is a degree of liberty from the standard biographer's duty to life records and the material trace. My account of Marvell's life places his body of lyric verse at the centre, ordering and illuminating everything else. With the 'Horatian Ode', Marvell wrote perhaps the greatest political poem of the seventeenth century, indeed some would say in the English language. But he also wrote superbly when he turned his hand to the poetry of *carpe diem* ('To His Coy Mistress'), to the lover's complaint ('The Definition of Love'), to philosophical meditation ('Eyes and Tears', 'On a Drop of Dew', 'The Garden'), to sacred verse ('The Coronet'), to the fictions of pastoral (the Mower poems), to epicedium ('The Nymph Complaining'), and to chorography or country-house poem ('Upon Appleton House'). Indeed, it is hard to think of another poet in Marvell's time, or any time for that matter, who mastered so many of the prevailing genres of his age. It is the more remarkable that Marvell seems to have withheld much of his lyric verse from public view, writing for only select coteries and indeed often just for himself—his *Poems* were not published until 1681, 'being found since his death among his other papers' ('To the Reader').

Reemphasising the poems that have appealed to generations of readers need not mean slighting Marvell's turn in the mid-1650s to a more public mode of writing and to the work of politics. That career is compelling in its own right, and Marvell's advocacy for religious toleration and freedom from arbitrary government still speak urgently to the present. Moreover, this book shares the view that Marvell was often just as witty and as 'literary' in his political satires and prose pamphlets as he is in his lyrics. A varied genius is still the same genius—it makes little sense to treat Marvell as if he were split in two by the forces of history. But neither does this book purport to unravel 'the figure in the carpet' of Marvell's writing. It is tempting to suppose the existence of such a key to Marvell's work, some ethical ideal, some



metaphysical quiddity 'to make a whole man out of this poet with too many personae' (Patterson 1978, 5). And indeed, as is implicit in the very project of fashioning a 'literary life', this book seeks at least a measure of such coherence in writing itself. Like previous biographers and critics, I seek to contextualise and to explain apparent gaps, elisions, and contradictions in both Marvell's real and his imagined life. Where others have sought to see through Marvell's masks and ironies or see past his chameleon shifts, however, this book holds that contextualisation often brings us to the brink of mystery but no further, making room for the delight many readers take in the sense that Marvell's poetry holds an unfathomable secret.

Needless to say, Marvell gave little thought to the figure he would cut in future biographies, or to having or leading something that we might call a 'literary life'. He withheld most of his poetry from view, and, with a few exceptions, maintained his anonymity even in those works he did choose to publish or circulate. And unlike, say, his friend John Milton, who could hardly resist writing about himself, and who cast himself variously as a second Homer or Orpheus, or as touched by holy fire like the prophet Elijah, Marvell typically holds himself aloof in the shadows of his work. Marvell's literary lives have thus been significantly shaped by the interests of those who saw fit to provide such a life for him. Soon after his death, for instance, he was celebrated as a Whig patriot and hailed in some circles as 'the poet laureate of the dissenters'. This (still active) image of Marvell belies, however, the changeability of his political allegiances, the complexity of his patronage ties, his scrupling over being 'mistaken' for a dissenter. Such labels are also prone to backfilling—to the discovery of clues or traces which point to the future. Eliot's aestheticizing of Marvell is of course no less motivated, no less 'political' than the Whig history it disrupts: Eliot holds up 'the really valuable part' of Marvell's verse as an emblem of European culture before the onset of a spiritually deadening modernity. In the absence of a knowable author, Marvell's writings mark out a discursive space unusually open to the projections and idealisations of critics.

It would be at once deceiving and self-deceiving to suggest that *this* life of Marvell was not also conditioned by the values of the people and institutions which have produced it. Nonetheless, I have tried to honour Marvell's reticence to be made an icon, even for those causes he courageously supported (to say nothing of causes which he scarcely imagined). We must be responsive as well to some of the particular challenges posed by the nature of Marvell's literariness. Under the tutelage of modern criticism, we have learned to see him as a ventriloquist, a magpie, a great 'borrower of other men's words' (Patterson 2000, 4). His most famous poem, 'To His Coy Mistress', combines overt

parody of Cavalier tropes and the figurative excesses of metaphysical verse with subtle but pervasive echoes of neo-Latin poetry—a remix, as it were, of other poets and other poems. This habit of recall, and what we might term pastiche, extends also to Marvell’s polemical work and is part of what makes it so difficult to pin down Marvell’s own convictions. When he chose to enter the arena of Restoration prose controversy, for instance, he did so by reworking (‘transprosing’) a popular dramatic burlesque called *The Rehearsal*, hence *The Rehearsal Transprosd*. It is a basic principle of post-Romantic literary theory that all art comes from other art; this is acutely so in the case of Marvell, whose whole poetic may be summed up in that Latin prefix *trans*—crossing ‘from one place, person, thing, or state to another’. For this reason, Marvell’s texts are often best viewed in terms of their encounters with other texts, viewed, in other words, as scenes of reading.

This idea allows us to chart precisely some of the junctures between Marvell’s life and art: for reading, as scholars increasingly recognise, is an inherently embodied and historically conditioned activity. As Thomas McLaughlin (2015) remarks, ‘Reading is a physical practice that requires a vast social pedagogy. Hands and eyes and brains need to learn the procedures and respect the logic of the practice. Reading socialises the body, subjects it to a powerful discipline. Yet, all reading bodies are unique, differently capable, differently socialised. Reading practices are enacted by specific, idiosyncratic bodies in concrete, complex physical and social environments’ (2). This book is an attempt to trace out the history of a specific, idiosyncratic body reading (and writing) within a series of concrete, complex physical and social environments: under the roof of Marvell’s father, the Rev. Andrew Marvell, in the East Riding of Yorkshire; at Trinity College, Cambridge; on the Continent and in London during and just after the English civil wars; at Nun Appleton, in the employ of Lord Fairfax; in service to Cromwell, both at home and abroad; and back in London, at Westminster, and in the coffee houses, print shops, and libraries Marvell frequented during the Restoration.

Such an approach finds sanction in the fact that reading, writing, and their attendant pedagogies figure importantly across the body of Marvell’s work. As a professional tutor, as a literary client to various patrons and constituencies, as a government functionary with specific responsibility for diplomatic correspondence, as a highly valued gatherer of intelligence, and as a writer who, after the Restoration, largely operated outside the law, Marvell was uniquely attuned to the application of linguistic acts and arts. Reading and its pedagogies are engaged in even the tenderest of circumstances. In a letter from Marvell to his friend John Trott, for instance, Marvell consoles Trott on the loss of his son. ‘Only, as in difficult things,’ Marvell advises the grieving father,

‘you will do well to make use of all that may strengthen and assist you. The word of God: the society of good men: and the books of the Ancients’ (1681, 69). Reading’s pedagogy is a balm against the ‘dissoluteness of grief’ and ‘prodigality of sorrow’ (67). But it is not hard to see that the letter itself is a fruit of the reading practices it prescribes, in its bounty of instructive parallels and scriptural allusions. In this way, it is also a token of ‘the society of good men’. The letter cements the social and affective bond between Marvell and Trott and speaks to a shared culture of ‘exemplary reading’ and epistolary (not to mention poetic) exchange (see Zwicker 2002).

But the experience of reading could also be the locus of all-too-real abrasions. In *The Rehearsal Transpros’d*, Marvell chides the intemperance and cruelty of the Oxford cleric Samuel Parker, commenting archly: ‘I must confess at this rate the nonconformists deserve some compassion: that after they have done or suffered legally and to the utmost, they must still be subjected to the wand of a verger, or to the wanton lash of every pedant; that they must run the ganteloop [gauntlet], or down with their breaches as oft as he wants the prospect of a more pleasing nudity’ (PW, 1:82). Marvell speaks here to the common experience of early modern schoolboys, who were routinely beaten for fumbling their grammar exercises. But he also points to the repressed drives that structured such a manner of teaching by schoolmasters and churchmen. In his poetry, Marvell is repeatedly drawn to representing scenes of endangered innocence, often in tones which do not altogether belong to the conventions of pastoral. As a Member of Parliament and Restoration polemicist, he inveterately opposed what he saw as the rapacity of the clergy; the so-called Bishop’s Bill of 1677, which would have deputed the education of royal children to the bishops, was the occasion of Marvell’s longest speech in the House and moved him to a vehemence for which he felt obliged to apologise (see Grey 1769, 4:322). Such evidence is admittedly fragmentary and open to interpretation, but it has been taken by some to suggest, as indeed I take this evidence to suggest, that Marvell understood perhaps too well the collocation of reading, authority, and abuse, and moreover that such knowledge was integral—if painfully so—to Marvell’s writing life (see Hirst and Zwicker 2007, 2012).

\* \* \*

Here we might acknowledge the more immediate occasion of this book, which is the approaching quatercentenary of Marvell’s birth in March 2021. The marking of a four hundredth birthday is surely as good a reason as any to

reassess a major author, and in the century since Eliot's 'resurrection' of Marvell, a major author is undoubtedly what he has become. Perhaps more decisive for the writing of this book, however, is the sentiment expressed by Rosalie Colie at the outset of her brilliant study *'My Echoing Song'* (1970), the only justification any work of literary criticism could ever have or need: 'Marvell's work was and remains too hard for me' (vii). When we have said all there is to say about a writer, when our understanding seems more or less sufficient to its object, we turn elsewhere. The endurance of Marvell in the critical consciousness of the last century, and in particular the flowering of Marvell scholarship over the last forty years, speak clearly to the fact that Marvell is a writer who continues to fascinate (and perplex) not just those new to his work but also—perhaps especially—the community of readers most devoted to him, that is, his critics, historians, and biographers.

It may be that this book will be read mainly by students and scholars, but I have tried to write it for the benefit of anyone who wants a way of putting this writer, if not exactly together, at least into perspective: the life within the world, the work within the life. Care has been taken to cover Marvell's career from beginning to end, and though my account concentrates most deeply on matters of poetry, it honours the potency and historical force of the prose as well. From the beginning, it was important to me that the book should also give an adequate account of the political developments that shaded Marvell's historical experience, and which found reflection—both directly and indirectly—in his writing. Achieving a suitable depth of political narrative sometimes came at the cost of this narrative appearing to run parallel to that of Marvell's life. My hope is that readers will find connections between the national and the personal biography in the contingent flux of interest and allegiance thematic of both. With respect to commenting on the poetry, my strategy has been to privilege depth over breadth, eschewing potted readings of dozens of poems in favour of detailed and original explorations of a smaller number of texts in different genres.

In organising the contents of the book, I have deliberately tried to avoid the impression that Marvell's writing life falls into a series of discrete chapters, that he is first a lyric poet, then a writer of panegyric, then a satirist and politician, and so on. Marvell's writing habitually blurs the boundaries of genre, and his preoccupations are not linear but recursive, appearing and reappearing without respect for tidy biographical narrative. Above all, I have tried to foreground here the acts of reading that comprise Marvell's art no less than they comprise the historical reception of that art—the ways in which Marvell found his voice in and through the voices of others and the ways in which we continue to make him speak anew. Like most all stories of reading and

writing, this one begins at home, and it is to Marvell's early life, at home in east Yorkshire, that we now turn.

## References

- Colie, Rosalie. 1970. *'My Echoing Song': Andrew Marvell's Poetry of Criticism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Eliot, T.S. 1975. *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*. Ed. Frank Kermode. London: Faber.
- Grey, Anchtell. 1769. *Debates of the House of Commons, from the Year 1667 to the Year 1694*. 10 vols. London.
- Hirst, Derek, and Steven N. Zwicker. 2007. Eros and Abuse: Imagining Andrew Marvell. *ELH* 74 (2): 371–395.
- . 2012. *Andrew Marvell, Orphan of the Hurricane*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kermode, Frank, and Keith Walker, eds. 1990. *Andrew Marvell*. Oxford Authors. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Legouis, Pierre. 1928. *André Marvell: Poète, Puritain, Patriote (1621–1678)*. Paris; London: Henri Didier; Oxford University Press.
- . 1965. *Andrew Marvell: Poet, Puritan, Patriot*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Marvell, Andrew. 1681. *Miscellaneous Poems by Andrew Marvell, Esq.* London.
- . 2003. *Prose Works of Andrew Marvell*. Ed. Annabel Patterson, Martin Dzelzainis, Nicholas von Maltzahn, and N. H. Keeble. 2 vols. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- . 2007. *Poems of Andrew Marvell*. Ed. Nigel Smith. Rev. ed. London: Longman.
- McLaughlin, Thomas. 2015. *Reading and the Body: The Physical Practice of Reading*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Patterson, Annabel. 1978. *Marvell and the Civic Crown*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- . 2000. *Andrew Marvell: The Writer in Public Life*. New York: Routledge.
- Smith, Nigel. 2010. *Andrew Marvell: The Chameleon*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Zwicker, Steven N. 2002. Habits of Reading and Early Modern Literary Culture. In *The Cambridge History of Early Modern English Literature*, ed. David Loewenstein and Janel Mueller, 170–200. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

# 2

## *Andreae Filius: East Riding, Yorkshire, 1621–1633*

Details of Marvell's early life are sparse; however, the essential facts are no longer in doubt. Marvell was born on 31 March 1621, a Saturday, in the rectory at Winestead, a tiny parish to the east of Hull in the East Riding of Yorkshire. As late as the middle of the nineteenth century, records show that Winestead had only 139 inhabitants. Marvell's father was the Rev. Andrew Marvell (b. 1584), the parish's incumbent minister. Andrew Sr had married the poet's mother, Anne Pease (d. 1638), at Cherry Burton near Beverley, a village some twenty-five miles northwest of Winestead, on 22 October 1612. Their union produced three children prior to Marvell's birth: Anne (b. 1615), Mary (b. 1617), and Elizabeth (b. 1618). They would have one more child after Andrew, another son, John (b. 1623), who would not survive infancy. Marvell's sisters, however, all lived into adulthood, eventually marrying prominent Hull townspeople, respectively James Blaydes, Edmund Popple, and Robert More. Marvell's connection with the Popples was especially close and remained so throughout his life. His brother-in-law, Edmund, helped ensure Marvell's election as MP for Hull when Marvell's fledgling career in government was threatened by the collapse of the Commonwealth. But it was with his nephew, William Popple, that Marvell enjoyed the warmest personal relationship in his adult life. Perhaps the closest we get to an unguarded Marvell is in his letters to Will, his 'beloved nephew'.

While Marvell's mother had Yorkshire roots, his father was a recent arrival. Marvell's grandfather had been a yeoman farmer in Cambridgeshire, and the Marvell family seems to have been well established there. Andrew Sr was born

---

The original version of the chapter was revised. The correction to this chapter can be found at [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-59287-5\\_9](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-59287-5_9)

in the village of Meldreth, ten miles southwest of Cambridge. But his was not to be a farmer's life—a 'rising man', the poet's father matriculated to Emmanuel College, Cambridge in 1601, graduating BA in 1605 and taking his MA in 1608. Founded by the Puritan Sir Roger Mildmay in 1584, Emmanuel had rapidly expanded to become the largest college in Cambridge by the 1620s and was known as a centre of reformist zeal. After being ordained as deacon in 1607, the elder Marvell gained an appointment as curate and schoolmaster at Melbourne, a village in his home shire, in November 1608. We find the Rev. Marvell's signature in the burial register for Flamborough, in the East Riding, in January of the following year, and in May 1609, he would be ordained as priest at York Minster. It was in the course of his tenure at Flamborough that Marvell Sr met and married Anne Pease.

In April 1614, the young minister was presented with the living of Winestead-in-Holderness, about forty miles south of Flamborough and fourteen miles east of the bustling port of Kingston-upon-Hull. The Winestead Parish Register records that 'Andrew Marvell parson of Winestead was inducted into the corporal and peaceable possession of the said parsonage by Mr Marmaduke Brooke, dean, parson of Ross, upon Easter even, being [St] George's day' (*Chronology*, 16). Anne and Andrew Marvell's children would be born there. Shortly after the death of his infant son John in September 1624, however, Marvell Sr was elected Master of the Hull Charterhouse, which stood just outside the walls of the town, in Sculcoates, and at the same time began to preach at the Holy Trinity Church in Hull. Originally an almshouse adjoining a Carthusian monastery, the Charterhouse survived the dissolution of the priory, being re-endowed for 'the living of the master and relieving of poor and impotent people'. Marvell would revisit such structures and dissolutions when he came to write 'Appleton House', with its recollection of the manor's former life as a nunnery. It was the Master's responsibility to render the hospital's accounts, see to the upkeep of the building and grounds, and of course to minister to the spiritual needs of its residents. According to ordinances passed in 1571, 'Daily, or at least thrice a week, the master was to say divine service, viz., morning and evening prayer from the Book of Common Prayer, and further instruct the brethren and sisters in the catechism, and procure that the brethren and sisters should each communicate at least four times a year' (see Page 1974, 310–313).

It was once thought that Marvell's father had been Master of the Hull Grammar School rather than Master of the Hospital. The correction of this error—which persisted for more than 150 years—effectively relocated the young poet's everyday life from the busy centre of Hull to the rural suburbs beyond the city walls. The Charterhouse stood merely fifty yards from the



River Hull. Having been rebuilt in 1644, after it was destroyed during the Siege of Hull, torn down and rebuilt again in 1780, and restored by architects after the Blitz (1940–1941), the Charterhouse is still in operation today as supported living for pensioners. Visitors there will be shown the mulberry tree in the garden, under which Marvell is supposed to have read as a child. Like the anecdote of Newton and the apple, this story is probably too accommodating of Marvell—that poet of gardens—to be true, though there is often a regressive patina to Marvell’s fantasies of ease and satiety. In ‘The Garden’, ‘Ripe apples drop about my head; / The luscious clusters of the vine / Upon my mouth do crush their wine’—lines which perhaps recode the child’s unrestrained sensual pleasure (feasting on mulberries, for instance) in more adult terms. The stanza ends, ‘Stumbling on melons as I pass, / Ensnar’d with flow’rs, I fall on grass’, thus enacting the fall in reverse, a stumble into innocence (ll. 33–40). Much of the pathos of Marvell’s pastoral poetry derives from a sense of longing for such a backward fall, mingled with an awareness that you can’t go home again.

To be sure, the Yorkshire landscape made a deep and lasting impression on Marvell. In ‘Upon Appleton House’, Marvell will become the great chronicler of that country’s meadows, woods, and riverbanks. More elementally, Marvell’s abiding fascination with perspective owes something to the undulating topography of the Yorkshire Wolds, which run in a crescent from the Humber estuary west of Hull to the chalk cliffs of Flamborough Head, and to the squashed horizons of the lowland plains of Holderness which lie east and south of the Wolds. In ‘Appleton House’, one critic observes, the reader ‘will have to experience a series of inversions, metamorphoses, and tricks in perspective before he will find himself once more standing erectly ... Men will change to grasshoppers, mowers to Israelites, and the meadow which seemed a sea will in fact become a sea’ (Roth 1972, 272). The poem ends, it may be recalled, with that striking image of topsy-turvydom, ‘But now the salmon-fishers moist / Their leathern boats begin to hoist; / And, like Antipodes in shoes, / Have shod their heads in their canoes’ (ll. 769–773). Walkers of the Wolds will know that the ground can appear much flatter at a distance than is the case, as the glacial valleys cutting the plain tend to deceive the eye. Also, whereas typically low-lying land is farmed, and livestock graze the hills, the fact that the arable land in this area is on top of the Wolds means farming appears ‘upside down’, with hills used for crops, and the valleys for grazing. Smith describes Holderness as ‘one of England’s ends, a place of dunes seldom rising more than three yards, with seawater all around’ (*Chameleon*, 12). Indeed, the land here is slowly tilting into the sea: according to a Eurosian Case Study, the East Riding coastal zone is the fastest eroding in Europe, and there are signs that over thirty villages have

been lost to the sea here since Roman times (see Sistermans and Nieuwenhuis 2013). The eroded material gives the water off the Holderness coast its characteristically muddy appearance. Marvell's youthful perception was formed within a matrix of liminality, inversion, and the visually counterfeit.

## England in the 1620s

'Let's in', says the poet to the reader in the closing lines of 'Appleton House', and it remains to explore the experiences of young Marvell in the Charterhouse and the Hull Grammar School and to discern what we can of his family life and upbringing. First, though, let us turn our attention outward, from shire to nation, so as to situate Marvell's early years within the unfolding political history of England, a story in which he will eventually have a part. By 1621, King James the VI and I was entering the last years of his reign. He had come to the throne in 1603 following the death of the childless Queen Elizabeth. In 1625, James would be succeeded by his son Charles, crowned Charles I. James was the first British monarch to rule, in both name and fact, over the multiple kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland. Although Henry VIII had been proclaimed king in Ireland in 1541, the island was not brought under effective political control until the last years of Elizabeth's reign. James had long been king in Scotland before inheriting the English throne, and even after the union of the crowns in 1603, Scotland remained semi-independent, retaining its own Parliament as well as its ancient grudges towards England. For their part, James's English subjects were no less prejudiced against Scots for having a Scottish king. Then as now, English people grumbled that the joint monarchy served merely to siphon off English wealth and taxes. James's proposals for uniting Scotland and England under one constitution were decisively quashed in Parliament.

The political and ethnic tensions among James's kingdoms were exacerbated by religious difference, a consequence of the uneven progress of the Reformation across the British Isles. Though Ireland was ruled by a Protestant Ascendancy of English landowners, the majority of the country remained Catholic, as the independent Republic of Ireland is today. In Scotland, the winds of Reformation had by the end of the sixteenth century thoroughly transformed the Scottish Church, which was staunchly Calvinist in doctrine and Presbyterian in structure, though still nominally episcopal (that is, governed by bishops). As we shall see, it was Charles I's ham-handed intervention in Scottish church government which set in motion the crisis that would lead to civil war.

Religious matters in early Stuart England were internally pressurised and would only become more so under James and especially Charles. Since the Elizabethan Settlement of 1559, an element of English Protestants had more or less continuously agitated for further reform in the doctrine and discipline of the Church. These ‘precisians’ or ‘Puritans’, as first called by Archbishop Matthew Parker, stressed Bible reading and systematic preaching at the expense of sacramentality and clericalism, and on the whole fostered an intensity of religious experience greater than that of their Protestant neighbours. Though episcopacy was generally accepted in England before 1640, a wide swathe of Anglicans and Puritans could nevertheless agree that bishops were too worldly and corrupt, local clergymen often inept, and that a galling proportion of Church tithes ended up in lay hands. There was also broad consensus within the English Church on Calvinist predestinarian teaching, though this too was threatened by an insurgent group of powerful bishops, led by William Laud, with whom Charles would fatefully cast his lot. This ‘Laudian’ or ‘Arminian’ wing of the Church rejected the Calvinist theology of grace, arguing instead for the free will of man to obtain salvation (after the Dutch theologian Jacobus Arminius). With this apparently liberal theology, however, came a renewed (and self-interested) emphasis on liturgical ceremony with the priest at its centre. This struck more precise Protestants as a return to Roman Catholic ritual and reignited fears of popery and absolutism in church and state. The outbreak of the Thirty Years’ War in 1618—which pitted various Catholic and Protestant powers against each other for control of central Europe—lent further urgency to the question of the future of English Protestantism.

## **‘A Most Excellent Preacher’: Rev. Marvell and Life in the Charterhouse**

Anticipating the religious context of the English civil war prompts questions about the character of Marvell’s father, a clergyman, and about the temperature of religious feeling in the Marvell household. Conveniently, Marvell the controversialist has left us a pithy description of his father, the force of which has perhaps been lost in the rush to confirm Marvell’s dissenting credentials. ‘But as to my father’, Marvell wrote in 1673, addressing Samuel Parker in the second part of *Rehearsal Transpros’d*, ‘he died before ever the war broke out, having lived with some measure of reputation, both for piety and learning: and he was moreover a conformist to the established rites of the Church of