

The paradoxical ambition of Andrew Marvell's *Third Advice to a Painter*

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March 2018

The satiric practice of a poet better known for his lyric verse

I submitted an earlier version of this essay to an academic journal. I'm very grateful to the journal's editor and to the the anonymous reviewers whose reports helped me to improve it a lot. Their responses also helped me to see that I'd been trying to bridge a gap that was wider than I'd thought—to present as a piece of scholarly research something which was really aimed at introducing one of Marvell's satires to a general readership—one which knows Marvell almost exclusively as a lyric poet.

To a reader who is not engaged in the academic study of English poetry, Andrew Marvell appears as a writer of short, concentrated, lyrics: self-contained and self-sufficient. He is most widely known for two poems in particular, “To His Coy Mistress” and “The Garden”. From the middle of the nineteenth century until, roughly, the 1970s, Marvell was largely seen as a preeminently literary figure who exhibited (in T S Eliot's phrase) a “tough reasonableness beneath the slight lyric grace”. Then almost everything changed. Marvellians such as Annabel Patterson and Warren Chernaik undertook the task of “historicizing” Marvell, of locating his work — and certainly not just his lyric poetry — in the socio-political context of seventeenth-century England, a country which witnessed the public beheading of its ruler, a republican experiment, the eventual restoration of the monarchy and a constitutionalist revolution, all attended by violent conflict between

bitterly opposed Christian sects. The Marvell who emerges from this relocation is not always reasonable and not always tough — and not a writer whose work always exhibits “slight lyric grace”. In recent years, much attention has been paid to his sometimes scabrous polemical prose and his acute, and often cruel, satiric verse.

For many decades, Marvell’s critics tried to defend his reputation against the imputation that the graceful lyricist had degenerated into the author of coarse, unsubtle and partisan satiric versifying. They vigorously disputed his authorship of several satires which had been attributed to him. *The Second Advice to a Painter* and its companion-piece *The Third Advice*, both substantial works first printed in 1666, were prominent targets. The case against them was marshalled by Ephim G. Fogel in the *Bulletin of the New York Public Library*.¹ Fogel was able to show that the arguments for attribution were based on fallacious reasoning: they relied on the “salmons in both” type of argument which simply pointed out similarities between the disputed satires and work known to be by Marvell. Fogel went further, though, and tried to show that there were positive grounds for rejecting Marvell’s authorship. For example, he claimed that the *Advices* and *The Last Instructions to a Painter* (a satire from 1667 which is indisputably Marvell’s), contain irreconcilable assessments of the behaviour of George Monck, Lord Albemarle: while the earlier poems exposed him and his Duchess to ridicule, the later one was gravely sympathetic to his position and approved of his actions during the Dutch naval incursion into the Medway in 1667. It is an oversimplification to say, as Fogel does, that the poems of 1666 make cruel fun of Albemarle while *The Last Instructions* praises him. In the *Advices*, Monck is presented as brave and fierce, if not very effectual once he is no longer on land; and Lady Albemarle is at least clear-sighted and forthright.² In *The Last Instructions*, Monck is again brave and fierce but his actions and decisions are questionable and perhaps catastrophic.³ *The Third Advice* and *The Last Instructions* are both more nuanced than Fogel believes (but on balance unfavourable) in their judgment on Albemarle and his duchess. The two satires cannot be regarded as mutually inconsistent in this respect.

¹Ephim G. Fogel, “The Case for Internal Evidence: Salmons in Both, or Some Caveats for Canonical Scholars,” *Bulletin of the New York Public Library* 63 (1959): 223–236, 292–308.

²Martin Dzelzainis, “Andrew Marvell and the Restoration Literary Underground: Printing the Painter Poems,” *The Seventeenth Century* 22:2 (2007): 395–410.

³Art Kavanagh, “Andrew Marvell’s Ambivalence about Justice”, (PhD thesis, Royal Holloway University of London, 2012), 114–19.

Like Fogel, John M. Wallace concluded that the *Advice* poems could not be Marvell's, and was reinforced in that view by the *Third Advice's* derisive treatment of the Moncks. Lady Albemarle is portrayed, Wallace says, "as so lewd and ignorant a woman that her hostile narrative about the government might appear to be discredited before it began". If the poem has been seen as unworthy of Marvell's abilities, it is at least in part because, as Wallace has it, "point of view is so badly handled" that the criticism of the court loses some force in being put into the mouth of a witness who, as she speaks, undermines confidence in her own testimony.⁴ On this view, however, if the poem is a failure, it is at least an ambitious one.

Having noted that the "Restoration lampoon . . . spawned instantly recognizable stock figures who could be assailed over and over again in a kind of satirists' shorthand that dispensed with any need for explanation", Harold Love finds the Duchess's an unsatisfactory protagonist "because there was no hinterland of previous representations to give point to this ambitious new one"⁵ This suggests that Lady Albemarle is one of the butts of the satire. As she is clearly not the main target, however, her introduction must inevitably dissipate the force of the attack.

By leaving much of the anatomization of the court's failures to somebody whose own credibility is doubtful, the satirist avoids raising false hopes that the situation will easily be remedied. In a sense, the division of the satirist's task mirrors the division of the fleet: in both cases it reduces the chances of success. The comparison in the envoi of Lady Albemarle to Cassandra (l. 447) implies that she is telling the truth but fated not to be believed; indeed, the poet urges the king to believe her (l. 447), thereby going some way towards removing any doubts as to the credibility of her attack. The suggestion may be that the satirist's own position is not much better: he is likely to be believed, but his lines may inspire laughter rather than a serious attempt at repairing the damage he describes.⁶

⁴John M Wallace, *Destiny his Choice: The Loyalism of Andrew Marvell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 154.

⁵Harold Love, *English Clandestine Satire 1660–1702* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 25.

⁶Dzelzainis points out that the Duchess is also likened to Philomela, whose "successful resort to a visual medium" revealed the truth she had been prevented from articulating in speech, so implying that "the truth will out one way or another". He argues that the poem's "difficulty does not arise from any wavering of purpose on the poet's part as from the prior problematisation of the conditions of truth-telling": "Andrew Marvell and the Restoration Literary Underground: Printing the Painter Poems", 118.

It must be admitted, though, that the apparent problem with “point of view” also has something to do with the poem’s ungainly structure. Wallace adds that because of the mishandling of point of view “for half of the poem it remains problematical” (p. 154). The problem may be that this “half of the poem” does not easily accommodate itself to the rest. The first 172 lines conform to the painter motif, in which the miniaturist Richard Gibson is encouraged to show, “Drawing in little, how we do yet less” (l. 10). A brief return to this motif is made in the final two lines before the envoi “To the King”:

Gibson, farewell, till next we put to sea;
Faith thou hast drawn her in effigy! (ll. 435–6)

The intermediate 263 lines contain, first, a comically grotesque portrait of the Duchess (ll. 173–200), followed by a narrative supposedly in her own voice (ll. 201–434). In this long section, the painter motif is left behind (“Paint thou but her, and she will paint the rest”, l. 172). It is as if an unfinished painter poem had been filled out with another poem, already substantially complete, on the same topic. The suspicion gains support from the recognition that Marvell was to do something similar in appending *A Short Historical Essay to Mr Smirke* on the grounds of urgency: “the Printer calls: the Press is in danger”.⁷ Similarly, his reuse in *The Loyal Scot* of a passage from *The Last Instructions* suggests a willingness to integrate previously written material without substantially reworking it to cover the join. In both poems, the passage begins “Not so brave Douglas” (*The Last Instructions*, l. 649; *The Loyal Scot*, l. 15). In the first poem, “Not so” differentiates Douglas’s conduct from that of the “Captain, lieutenant, ensign” (l. 645) and others who have abandoned their posts at the approach of the Dutch fireships. In the second, there is no corresponding referent for “so”; its presence is explained by saying that Cleveland began his encomium “Abruptly . . . disguising art, / As of his satire this had been a part” (ll. 13–14). These lines are an ironic glance at what Marvell himself is doing, using an abrupt beginning not to disguise art but as a substitute for it.

Nicholas von Maltzahn’s identification of *An Account of the Growth of Popery* as an assembled text (*Prose Works*, 2:204–07) has resolved the most

⁷Annabel Patterson, Martin Dzelzainis, N. H. Keeble and Nicholas von Maltzahn, eds. *The Prose Works of Andrew Marvell*, 2 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 2:113; cited below as “*Prose Works*”.

pressing uncertainties as to that work's purport, authorship and composition. Differences in style and tone, as well as apparent small inconsistencies in the work's aims, are largely explained by the fact that the *Account* incorporates a number of preexisting documents, including three substantial passages from political diaries by authors other than Marvell. While the work's sudden transitions may indicate the assembly of components, not all of the components are necessarily the work of other hands. The *Account* begins with a trenchant if tendentious exposition of the (limited) powers and extensive responsibilities of the king, then abruptly diverts into what von Maltzahn characterizes as "an awkward interpolation" (*Prose Works*, 2:209–12) on the nature of "popery". The *Account* "makes that turn with an odd syntactic lurch, as if this whole character were but another passage of separate origin available for this assemblage".⁸

Marvell's satires and prose works typically had to be published quickly, both to maintain their topicality and to evade the efforts of Church, Crown and other interests to suppress them. It is clear that, at least in these circumstances, he was prepared to make use of already existing material, not all of it from his own pen, to add substance to what could not otherwise be completed on time, or perhaps to avoid having to rewrite what had already been written once, if in a somewhat different vein. The recognition of this fact suggests an explanation as to why the Duchess's complaint is not an exact fit for its Painter's frame. The first thing to be noted is that, in this poem, the transition is noticeably less abrupt than that at the end of *Mr Smirke* or the introduction to lines 15–62 of *The Loyal Scot*. The passage (ll. 173–200) in which the Duchess is presented can appear to belong to both main parts of the poem, serving as a step between them. On the one hand, its cruel and bawdy depiction of its subject is of a piece with the treatment of Albemarle himself and such supporting characters as Berkeley (l. 110) in the earlier section. On the other, it provides an introduction to, and a necessary setting of the scene for, the Duchess's angry speech. In that it complies with the direction to "Paint thou but her", it sits well with the Painter part of the satire; in that it functions as an introduction of the speaker, it also forms a necessary part of the "half of the poem" dominated by Lady Albemarle. As a result of this transition, the reader barely notices that the painter motif has

⁸Nicholas von Maltzahn, "Milton, Marvell and Toleration", in *Milton and Toleration*, ed. Sharon Achinstein and Elizabeth Sauer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 86–104, 90.

been in abeyance until its brief reintroduction at the end of the poem.

Annabel Patterson partly bases her argument for the authenticity of the *Advices* on internal evidence, such as verbal echoes, the reworking of rhymes that Marvell had used in earlier poems and the use of characteristic devices, such as the introduction of a second speaker (the European king in *The First Anniversary*, the sailor led by panic to curse Noah “and all his race”, in *The Second Advice*⁹). Nigel Smith similarly finds that “detailed attention to diction, prosody and rhyming”, leads to the conclusion that the two satires “contain” (not necessarily exclusively) the work of Marvell (*Poems of Andrew Marvell*, 324).

The verbal echoes noted by Patterson are clustered near the beginning and end of the poem; she does not draw our attention to any between line 95 and the “far other flames” of lines 421–2¹⁰ which phrase is found as the Duchess reaches the conclusion of her monologue. The echoes at the beginning of the poem are spread, sparsely enough, through the first 94 lines, more than half of the initial Painter section (*Poems of Andrew Marvell*, 344). The case is far from clear but if we are persuaded that the *Third Advice* includes the work of at least one poet other than Marvell and if the poem’s structure suggests that an existing poem was framed in order to make it conform to the Painter genre, the possibility should be considered that Marvell is primarily responsible for the frame rather than for Lady Albemarle’s canvass.

The satirical, mocking tone of the opening section is more consonant with the *Second Advice* and with much of *The Last Instructions* than it is with the off-central passage, which is markedly more sympathetic to its speaker, even as it pokes fun at her imperfect cleanliness and lowly former occupation. Shorn of the references to the “monkey Duchess”, “she-Albemarle” and “Presbyterian sibyl”, the Duchess’s discourse does not betray its speaker as either ignorant or particularly lewd (to borrow Wallace’s terms). There are at least two references to her sexual appetite but one of these (to her necessary abstention during George’s extended absence: l. 321) can hardly be regarded as damaging, while the other (where she attests to her knowledge, or lack of it, of the courtiers’ deficiencies in bed: ll. 229–30) is at least ambiguous and in any case is obviously a joke on her part. (Does ‘to

⁹Annabel Patterson, “Lady State’s First Two Sitzings: Marvell’s Satiric Canon”, *SEL* 40 (2000): 395–411 (404–10).

¹⁰Patterson, “Marvell’s Satiric Canon”, 408–09.

my knowledge' in line 230 mean that she knows them to be lacking something or that she does not have positive evidence of their proficiency? Most likely, it is calculated to convey the latter meaning while initially giving the impression that the former is intended.)

One possibility to be considered, then, is that Marvell made additions to a poem already largely completed by another hand in which Lady Albemarle arraigned and castigated the Court over its failings towards her husband, the men under his command and the country at large. On this theory Marvell would have added not only the Painter's frame but also the envoi and the summation of the Duchess's attack, starting at line 413. The principal argument against this hypothesis is the fact that in computational tests conducted by John Burrows, the result obtained by *The Third Advice* does not differ significantly from those of *The Second Advice* and *The Last Instructions*, indicating that the same poet — Marvell — was responsible for all or most of each poem.¹¹

The naval events with which the poem is principally concerned took place at the beginning of June 1666. As Patterson points out, it also refers to the Fire of London, which consumed part of the city between 2 and 6 September of the same year.¹² The lines referring to the fire (ll. 413–22) contain the phrase “far other flames”, which Patterson finds Marvellian. This suggests a slightly different hypothesis: that Marvell worked on the opening section and the duchess's discourse, independently of each other and at different times in or after June 1666, possibly considering them to be separate works. After the fire, he combined the two sections and added the last 44 lines and the linking passage (ll. 169–200) to form a new poem in the Painter series. In other words, the differences in tone and “point of view” between the two main sections of the poem may be accounted for by this being not the work of at least two poets but of the same poet at times separated by as much as two or three eventful months. This hypothesis would preserve the attribution to Marvell of the antiprelatical passage of lines 239–42. Here, Patterson does not note any linguistic or stylistic echoes of his other work but she points out that the lines received particular attention from the annotator of the Popple manuscript.¹³ The phrase “discontent to content twenty-six” (or “Discontent for Consents twenty six”) has a Mar-

¹¹John Burrows, “Andrew Marvell and the ‘Painter Satires’: A Computational Approach to their Authorship,” *Modern Language Review* 100 (2005): 281–97, 285–91.

¹²Patterson, “Marvell's Satiric Canon”, 398.

¹³Patterson, “Marvell's Satiric Canon”, 299.

vellian quality in being pithy and memorable while at the same time knotty and difficult to interpret; and the twin, related paradoxes of the following two lines reflect not just his antipathy to bishops but his penchant for phrasing that is ostensibly (but not on further examination) self-contradictory.

If the claim that the satire is paradoxically ambitious is to be maintained, it may be useful to try to point out the direction in which its ambitions lie. Dzelzainis is clear that the satirist's primary motive was to "nail a government lie": the Four Days' Battle of June 1666 had been presented as a deserved victory for the English, whereas Marvell "set about exposing it as all but a disaster".¹⁴ The satirist starts with the division of command between Monck and Prince Rupert (ll. 11–20) and the dispatch of the latter after a "Rumour" (l. 31) of Beaufort's presence. When the Duchess is left to 'paint the rest', she expands on this narrative without contradicting it in any material particular. She ascribes the splitting of command to a conspiracy on the part of corrupt courtiers to "break" (l. 281) her husband and divide up his offices and assets among themselves (ll. 209–14). Her persecution mania may invite ridicule but it can be no less absurd than any actual motive that might be offered for sending a badly supplied fleet and unpaid, underfed sailors to fight a war. The author has described Monck's reckless overconfidence — something his Duchess could not be expected to admit to — portraying him as "an old bustard, maimed, yet loath to yield" (l. 91), full of fury at being compelled to "fly" (ll. 97–104). Thus, the narrative authorial voice and that of the second speaker are able to fill the gaps in each other's onslaughts.

The Duchess's speech goes beyond what the satirist has been prepared to say in his own voice when she credits her Presbyterian coreligionist Edmund Calamy with being the originator of her assessment of the characters and actions of the deceptive "Men" (ll. 219, 227, 229) around the king. Calamy had been described by Marvell a few years earlier as one of the "moderate men" who would "be resolute in refusing of Bishopricks" after parliament had refused to enact the king's declaration at Breda.¹⁵ The furious, snarling "Presbyterian sibyl" (l. 200) who much of the time sounds so reasonable encapsulates Marvell's complicated relationship to Presbyterianism, with which he was clearly willing to make common cause in furtherance

¹⁴Dzelzainis, "Andrew Marvell and the Restoration Literary Underground: Printing the Painter Poems", 113.

¹⁵H M Margoliouth, ed., *The Poems and Letters of Andrew Marvell*, 3rd ed., rev. Pierre Legouis with E. E. Duncan-Jones, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 2:6.

of toleration.¹⁶

The poet is able to make use of the Duchess's oration to urge upon "George" the necessary remedial actions, something which would sound odd if articulated in his own voice, as he has made it clear that he has little confidence in Albemarle:

Cherish the valiant up, the cow'rd cashier,
See that the men have pay and beef and beer;
Find out the cheats of the four-millioner.
...
Tell the King all, how him they countermine;
Trust not, till done, him with thy own design.
Look that good chaplains on each ship do wait.
Nor the sea-diocese be impropriate.
Look to the pris'ners, sick, and wounded; all
Is prize: they rob even the hospital.
Recover back the prizes too; in vain
We fight if all be taken that is ta'en. (ll. 326–46)

It is not clear whether she refers to Dutch prisoners held by the English or English sailors held by the Dutch. The former would be considered prize from the English point of view because they could legitimately be ransomed: in that case her concern is that the ransom is finding its way into the wrong pockets, with a consequent reduction in George's expected share. Alternatively, "all / Is prize" may refer, not to Dutch sailors, but to the money intended to ransom Englishmen in the hands of the enemy. In either case, Marvell was well aware of the problem of prize being diverted from its proper channel. In a letter to Hull Corporation in October 1665 he reported on a bill to curb the "imbezelling of Prize goods in which there haue been so great faults committed".¹⁷ A few days later he was appointed to a committee on the same bill.¹⁸

Nigel Smith finds Lady Albemarle's hypocrisy fatal to her standing as an accuser: he draws our attention to her "reputation for peculation as well as

¹⁶von Maltzahn "Milton, Marvell and Toleration", 92ff; Nicholas von Maltzahn, "Andrew Marvell and the Lord Wharton", *The Seventeenth Century* 18 (2003): 252–65.

¹⁷Margoliouth, *Poems and Letters*, 2:40.

¹⁸Nicholas von Maltzahn, *An Andrew Marvell Chronology* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 90.

meanness” as a result of which her attack “would have seemed not merely hypocritical but also incredible” (*Poems of Andrew Marvell*, 345). All the same, if her personal trustworthiness is nil there is nevertheless little room for doubt as to the truth of what she reports. It is clear that she is motivated by self-interest, even greed, but the actions of the larcenous courtiers are at least as cynical and no more excusable.

However *The Third Advice* came to be written, the result is a satire which seems to betray a paradoxical ambition. The poet, whether an individual or an ad hoc collective, has chosen to attack Court policy using the instrument of a speaker on whom he (or it) is reluctant to bestow the credibility which would give the attack more force. Perhaps he is too scrupulous to present his speaker as a paragon, even if the depiction of her flaws draws attention away from the urgent truth of her denunciation of the Court’s behaviour. If it was the poet’s ambition to write an effective satire using a Cassandra as his surrogate, the cost of doing so was the persuasion of later readers, such as Fogel and Wallace, that his efforts were unworthy of a poet of Marvell’s stature. It is, of course, almost unthinkable that a seventeenth-century satirist had more of an eye to a critic writing centuries later than to his work’s possible influence on the immediate circumstances. Whatever its influence, the satire apparently reached many more readers than Marvell was accustomed to finding for his poetic works. *The Third Advice* was printed repeatedly in 1667 and Patterson points out that “there are more manuscript copies” of it and its predecessor “than of any other Marvell poem: forty-seven of the *Second Advice* and twenty-eight of the *Third*.” Smith, however, cautions that “very few MS copies can be dated to the late 1660s” and notes that many of the manuscripts seem to be later transcriptions from printed texts.¹⁹ The satire gained a relatively wide readership though, as Smith suggests, to a large extent “beyond the immediate context of the Second Dutch War” (325) and not as wide as that of its companion piece, *The Second Advice*.

Martin Dzelzainis has demonstrated that “the successive editions of the advice-to-a-painter poems in 1667 . . . represented distinct enterprises, working from separate archives”, some of these manuscript archives being of considerable authority.²⁰ The distinct enterprises were independent responses

¹⁹Patterson, “Marvell’s Satiric Canon”, 403; *Poems of Andrew Marvell*, 324–5, 344.

²⁰Martin Dzelzainis, “L’Estrange, Marvell and the *Directions to a Painter*: The Evidence of Bodleian Library, MS Gough London 14”, in Roger L’Estrange and the *Making of Restoration Culture*, ed. Anne Dunan-Page and Beth Lynch (London: Ashgate Publishing, 2008), 53–66, (66); Dzelzainis, “Andrew Marvell and the Restoration Literary Underground: Printing the

to strong public demand. Taken as a group, “the advice-to-a-painter poems were by far the most important political poems of the decade” (p. 55). Marvell’s contribution to their influence is, finally, not easy to measure. Harold Love and Martin Dzelzainis both suggest that “The Fourth Advice” was in large part responsible for the popularity of the several different printed volumes in which the *Second* and *Third Advices* appeared with other satires. Love notes “its able handling of a plainer and less exuberantly comic mode of satire than Marvell’s *Caroliad*” and contrasts its author with Marvell, who “sets out to erode the respect claimed for his victims by activating his reader’s sense of the ridiculous, remaining aesthetically distanced even when politically most engaged”.²¹ Dzelzainis comments “while we may tend to dismiss the *Fourth* and *Fifth Advices* as poetically inferior to Marvell’s poems, when they first appeared they were politically more explosive and effective”.²²

Marvell often wrote with the apparent aim of discreetly influencing a powerful man. Sometimes, as in “Upon Appleton House”, the attempt at influence can be so subtle and deferential that ample room is left for disagreement as to Marvell’s purpose.²³ In those instances where his intention seems relatively clear, he quite often missed his mark: not long after Marvell had praised his rule under the Instrument of Government, Cromwell dissolved the “senate free”;²⁴ a few years later his son Richard would relinquish his governing role.²⁵

The *Second* and *Third Advices* are addressed to the king, and presumably hope to influence him in the choice of his ministers, but their intended and

Painter Poems”, 397.

²¹Love, *English Clandestine Satire 1660–1702*, 115.

²²Dzelzainis, “Andrew Marvell and the Restoration Literary Underground: Printing the Painter Poems”, 401.

²³Derek Hirst and Steven Zwicker, “High Summer at Nun Appleton, 1651: Andrew Marvell and Lord Fairfax’s Occasions”, *Historical Journal* 36, 2 (1993), 247–69; M J K O’Loughlin, “This Sober Frame: A Reading of ‘Upon Appleton House’”, in *Andrew Marvell: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. George de F. Lord (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1968), 120–42; John Creaser, “‘As one scap’t strangely from Captivity’: Marvell and Existential Liberty”, in *Marvell and Liberty*, ed. Warren Chernaik and Martin Dzelzainis (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), 145–72, (153).

²⁴Derek Hirst, “‘That Sober Liberty’: Marvell’s Cromwell in 1654”, in *The Golden & the Brazen World: Papers in Literature and History, 1650–1800*, ed. John M. Wallace (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 17–53.

²⁵Charles Larson, “Marvell’s Richard Cromwell: ‘He, Vertue Dead, Revives’”, *Mosaic* 19.2 (1986), 57–67.

actual audience and sphere of influence were wider. Yet, if Dzelzainis and Love are right, it appears to have been “The Fourth Advice”, the work of a different poet, which carried most weight with that readership of the *Directions* editions. The great irony about Marvell’s public poetry — one which also applies to a lesser extent to *The Rehearsal Transpros’d: The First Part* — is that works which were designed to influence the immediate situation were in the end to be of much more appeal to later generations. The qualities which came to be valued — subtlety or nuance, apparent detachment, a certain tentativeness, and the levity which attenuated gravity — may have blunted their impact on his contemporary readership. That some of these qualities may have been enhanced by a longer composition time, so that the works did not quite manage to meet their immediate occasion, adds poignancy to the conclusion that Marvell’s interventions in public affairs were less immediately effective than he must have hoped. This may be true even of a poem like *The Third Advice* to which the critical response has been more equivocal, while the contemporary reception was more enthusiastic than is usually the case with Marvell’s poetry.

Originally published on Medium by Art Kavanagh 31-Mar-2018
Exported from Medium 19-Nov-2018.