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*THE CRITICAL HERITAGE*

**ANDREW MARVELL**

Edited by  
**ELIZABETH STORY DONNO**



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**ANDREW MARVELL**

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Edited by

**ELIZABETH STORY DONNO**



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To

WILLIAM NELSON

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## General Editor's Preface

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The reception given to a writer by his contemporaries and near-contemporaries is evidence of considerable value to the student of literature. On one side we learn a great deal about the state of criticism at large and in particular about the development of critical attitudes towards a single writer; at the same time, through private comments in letters, journals or marginalia, we gain an insight upon the tastes and literary thought of individual readers of the period. Evidence of this kind helps us to understand the writer's historical situation, the nature of his immediate reading-public, and his response to these pressures.

The separate volumes in the *Critical Heritage Series* present a record of this early criticism. Clearly, for many of the highly productive and lengthily reviewed nineteenth- and twentieth-century writers, there exists an enormous body of material; and in these cases the volume editors have made a selection of the most important views, significant for their intrinsic critical worth or for their representative quality—perhaps even registering incomprehension!

For earlier writers, notably pre-eighteenth century, the materials are much scarcer and the historical period has been extended, sometimes far beyond the writer's lifetime, in order to show the inception and growth of critical views which were initially slow to appear.

In each volume the documents are headed by an Introduction, discussing the material assembled and relating the early stages of the author's reception to what we have come to identify as the critical tradition. The volumes will make available much material which would otherwise be difficult of access and it is hoped that the modern reader will be thereby helped towards an informed understanding of the ways in which literature has been read and judged.

B.C.S.



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## Preface

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To a twentieth-century reader who thinks of Andrew Marvell in terms of poetic achievement, the history of his literary fortunes may occasion surprise. The single edition of the poetry published in the seventeenth century, and posthumously at that, had its promptings in his reputation as a witty satirist and incorruptible patriot. Established during the last few years of his life and lasting for nearly two centuries, this reputation was primarily determined by the impact of the controversial writings in prose. Editions in the eighteenth century did indeed keep the poetry in public view, but the same motivation for publication continued to obtain, as the assertions of the editors, together with their inclusion of the letters and prose pieces, attest. In order to trace the development of Marvell's reputation chronologically, comments on the works which determined this public image appear first. To establish a context for them, a summary of each controversy introduces the comments; to elucidate often remote topical allusions, some notes are appended.

The remaining critical items focus on the emergence of the poet, first in conjunction with the persistent image of satirist and patriot, then within the double frame of his achievement as poet and prose writer. Finally, at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, comes the singular stress on his achievement as poet.

E.S.D.

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## Note on the Text

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In general, the copytext is that of the earliest printing, with abbreviations and contractions expanded, modern typographical conventions followed, and insignificant printing errors corrected. For texts originally printed in italic with proper names in roman, a reverse procedure has been followed. Selected original notes are indicated by asterisks, explanatory notes by a numerical sequence. Place of publication is indicated only when it is other than London.

In place of long quotations from Marvell's writings, bracketed references have been inserted, keyed to the following editions:

Grosart	<i>The Complete Works in Verse and Prose of Andrew Marvell</i> , ed. A.B. Grosart, 4 vols, Fuller Worthies Library, 1872–5
<i>Poems; Letters</i>	<i>The Poems and Letters of Andrew Marvell</i> , ed. H.M.Margoliouth, rev. Pierre Legouis with the collaboration of E.E.Duncan-Jones. 2 vols, Oxford, 1971
<i>RT I and II</i> or Smith	<i>The Rehearsal Transpros'd</i> and <i>The Rehearsal Transpros'd the Second Part</i> , ed. D.I.B.Smith, Oxford, 1971



# Introduction

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## I

In 1753 Andrew Marvell was styled the ‘poet laureate of the dissenters,’ otherwise known as ‘fanatics’; in 1901 he was styled the ‘laureate of grass and greenery.’<sup>1</sup> Each phrase aptly sums up public response to the man and his works within their eras; in conjunction, they sharply point up the alteration in response that took place in the years between. The first designation is apt, not because it defines Marvell’s literary achievement but because it reflects, as well as projects, his literary status for nearly two centuries. The ‘poet laureate of the dissenters’ did not write poetry on the theme of religious dissent (except perhaps for ‘Bermudas’ which was later so interpreted and the anti-prelatical portion of ‘The Loyal Scot,’ if it is his), but he did write prose pamphlets that were to mark him out as an intrepid opponent of the ecclesiastical and political establishment. From the last decades of the seventeenth until the last few decades of the nineteenth century, he was to be acknowledged in metaphoric terms as *the* laureate of dissenting opinion. However odd it may seem to twentieth-century enthusiasts, his reputation as a poet was to remain in inverse relation to his general reputation almost throughout this period.

While early documentary material of the poetry is scant, its very paucity, whether printed or manuscript, can be taken as revelatory of Marvell’s attitude toward his craft. Of the ten selections published during his lifetime, he chose to acknowledge only five either by name or by initials, and each of these is occasional in nature. The earliest stems from the period at Cambridge when he contributed verses to a congratulatory volume on the birth of a royal child in 1637; the latest that can be dated is the commendatory poem on *Paradise Lost* which he contributed to the second edition of Milton’s epic in 1674. The remainder (apart from the dubious and not so dubious post-Restoration satires) were probably written early in his career before the assuming of his parliamentary duties in 1659–60, with certain

## INTRODUCTION

pieces lending themselves to fairly precise dating because of their occasional nature: 'Tom May's Death,' for example. Others can only be tentatively allocated to likely periods of composition: the period of travel abroad following his education at Cambridge, the return to London and sojourn antedating the short period spent in Yorkshire as tutor to Mary Fairfax, the short period spent at Eton as tutor to Cromwell's ward, and the equally short period spent as a Latin secretary in the Cromwellian regime.

None the less, this period of poetic activity (nearly forty years on the basis of first and last dates; more likely fewer on the basis of the smallness of the canon) covers a long span of time in contrast to that obtaining for the prose pieces. All occasional in nature and all but one of them published anonymously or pseudonymously, the prose pieces appeared within the space of five and a half years. Yet in spite of their disclaimer of authorship and their topical character, these were the works that were to establish Marvell's long-lived reputation as witty satirist and incorruptible patriot, with its corollary as the conscientious MP from Hull.<sup>2</sup> More than two centuries were to pass before his reputation was established as, primarily, that of a lyric poet.

The critical materials included here have been ordered to reflect this changing reputation: first, the contemporary reactions to the prose works (with their occasional acknowledgment that he was a poetaster if not a poet) are followed by the later criticism of these works, extending chronologically to 1894, after which they all but drop from consideration. Then the gradual emergence of the poet is traced, along with the continuing emphasis on his image as satirist and patriot, up to 1845.<sup>3</sup> In the course of the nineteenth century, concern for that image, on the one hand, and the poet and prose writer, on the other, is seen to fluctuate, gradually giving place to a somewhat uneven recognition of his dual literary achievements. Finally, during the last decade of that century and the first two of the twentieth, a reassessment comes. Though not invariably favourable, in its concentration on the lyric poetry it notably anticipates the kinds of literary concern so markedly characterizing Marvell criticism after 1921, the tercentenary of his birth and the terminal date for this survey. In view of the kind of literary evaluation accorded during his lifetime, such a reassessment could equally well be termed a 'reversal' or a 'discovery.' In view of the evaluation of his writings after his death, it represents a radical shift in political and literary values.

## INTRODUCTION

From either aspect it is significant in pointing the way to the current esteem for Marvell as poet.

However aggrandizing this tardy recognition may seem to literary sensibilities in this the tercentenary of his death (and it seemed so to a reassessing critic even in 1901; see No. 86), the fact remains that the poetry Marvell chose to acknowledge (or not to acknowledge on its publication) never disappeared from view once it was printed. His public image simply eclipsed it. That this should have been so is not surprising when belletristic writings are seen in historical perspective.<sup>4</sup> Ascertainably responsive to classical, contemporary, and near-contemporary writers in his finehoned and essentially 'literary' poems, Marvell none the less deliberately chose to renounce their publication, electing instead an outlet in the propagandistic underground. He seems, as a result, a puzzling 'dimorphic' figure, one seemingly representative of the Renaissance that preceded him and anticipatory of the journalistic age that followed, albeit it too had its roots in a Renaissance milieu.

Bits and pieces of biographical allusion tend to support this Janus-like aspect of essentially private poet and public gladiator.<sup>5</sup> On the one hand, there is the delineation of the solitary poet, drinking liberally from his bottles of wine—after becoming an MP it was to be the ale furnished by his constituency—with the intent, as John Aubrey put it (No. 28), 'to refresh his spirits and exalt his muse.' On the other hand, there is the delineation of the habitu  of the coffee house, along with—as an opponent put it—the loiterer about Lincoln's Inn Fields and Charing Cross where political 'farces and drolls' were daily enacted.<sup>6</sup>

Equally puzzling to biographical commentators was how the MP from Hull managed to support himself during his nearly twenty-year tenure in parliament, a puzzlement that gave rise to his denigration as the last in his period to accept parliamentary wages, apparently 6s. 8d. *per diem* when parliament was in session (see No. 41). This implication of material dependency does not altogether square with the image of the incorruptible patriot. Does its prevalence, beginning in the seventeenth century with Wood (No. 10), Parker (No. 22), and Aubrey (No. 28) and frequently repeated up until 1895 (No. 82), reflect partisan politics, or does it reflect the difficulty that even partisans of a historical approach find in attempting to reconcile the engaged polemicist with the disengaged poet? Whatever the answer, as an acknowledged legislator (as well as an unacknowledged

## INTRODUCTION

one in Shelleyan terms), Andrew Mar veil was to project a dichotomized figure to successive generations.

### II THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

In an age when satiric wits—in verse and prose—and pamphleteers—anonymous, pseudonymous, and otherwise—were equally prolific, it is notable that in Marvell's case prose anonymity yielded to detection more readily than poetic. An example of his satiric verse, 'The Character of Holland' (ll. 1–100), was published anonymously in 1665 and again in 1672, but it was not to be ascribed to him until after his death. In contrast, the anonymous appearance in 1672 of the first part of the *Rehearsal Transpros'd* was immediately to elicit a half-dozen replies (along with a number of later comments) demonstrating that the author's identity was well known. The inevitable pun on his surname, by supporters and opponents alike, and the syncopation of his given name to Merryandrew—a mountebank's assistant—by opponents alone, support his authorship, and Marvell himself confirmed it late in 1673 when he appended his name to the second part and took cognizance of these half-dozen replies in his text.

Directed against the high-churchman Samuel Parker—'that venal apostate to bigotry,' as he is called in 1819 (No. 43)—these two parts of the *RT* served to determine not only Marvell's reputation as witty satirist but also his way of capitalizing on current theatrical productions. For this his first flyting, he appropriated the designation 'Mr. Bayes' from the major character in Buckingham's farce *The Rehearsal* in order to ridicule his ecclesiastical opponent. For his second flyting in 1676 with Francis Turner (Master of St John's College, Cambridge), he appropriated the designation 'Mr. Smirke' with similar intent, deriving the name this time from a minor character in Sir George Etherege's *The Man of Mode*. The authorship of *Mr. Smirke: Or, the Divine in Mode*, as Marvell entitled his pamphlet, was again recognized despite the pseudonymous 'Andreas Rivetus, Junior' on the title page.

For his third and most seriously intended polemic of 1677, he ignored literary and theatrical allusions altogether, calling his work

## INTRODUCTION

*An Account of the Growth of Popery and Arbitrary Government* in a conjunction of terms that were destined to become religious and political watchwords. Of his five pamphlets, this was considered the most inflammatory. For some years after his death, the Tory journalist Roger L'Estrange (No. 17) continued to allude to it as a propaedeutic for revolutionary action, declaring that both the Earl of Shaftesbury and Marvell must either have been privy to the Popish Plot or 'jumped in opinion with all the fanatics that came after them, for the ruin of the government'; 'for never,' he continues, was 'a truer image drawn of one thing from another, than the model that was taken from this book of Marvell's, and made use of in all that followed' (*Observer*, 9 February 1683). In a gesture underscoring its timeliness, Robert Ferguson the Plotter published the *Second Part of the Growth of Popery and Arbitrary Government*, one that began where the former left off, 'viz. from the year 1677 unto the year 1682' in an edition that was paginated to continue Marvell's. Also in 1682, Dryden associated a later inflammatory pamphlet, the three-part *No Protestant Plot*, with Marvell's earlier piece, describing the third part vindicating the Earl of Shaftesbury (incorrectly) as stolen, 'much of it,' from the 'dead author's *Growth of Popery*' (No. 21). As a result of this sense of its political relevance, during the early years of the next century historians continued to denigrate or commend it according to their Whiggish or Tory propensities (see No. 24).

Though his last pamphlet (a defense of John Howe), published only four months before his death and the only one unredeemingly devoted to theological matters, evoked no extended early comment that I have discovered (for examples of later comment, see Nos 25, 26), the other four evoked a sufficient abundance—this is in marked contrast with the poetry. Such a disparity of response can be accounted for simply by the facts of publication. Of the acknowledged and unacknowledged prose pamphlets, four went through a number of editions before the end of 1678, the year of Marvell's death, while the single edition of the collected poems in the seventeenth century appeared posthumously (1681), under the auspices of his former housekeeper purporting to be his widow.<sup>7</sup> Motivation then, as for the later editions discussed below, was the desire to capitalize on Marvell's political reputation. This easy availability of four texts dealing with topical matters that were handled with wit or bravado

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does much to account for the seventeenth-century, as well as the later, emphasis on the polemicist in prose.

A contributing factor that helps to explain how the image of the incorruptible patriot developed, and accounts for its survival long after the pamphlets ceased to have topical interest, relates to difficulties attendant on their publication. The first part of the *Rehearsal Transpros'd* was initially published without license, inhibited from being sold, and then authorized at the direction of King Charles II, while the second part conspicuously displayed on its title page the threat (signed by one 'J.G.,' see No. 4) that the author of any libel directed against Dr Parker could expect to have his throat cut. The pseudonymous publication of *Mr. Smirke* resulted in the imprisonment of the bookseller who confessed to receiving the papers from Marvell and arranging for their printing without license; and, finally, the anonymous publication of the 'scandalous' *Growth of Popery*, as it was labeled, resulted in the offer of a sizable reward for information relating either to its author or its printer. Although Marvell seems to have escaped personal reprisal in each instance, his sudden death in August 1678 gave rise to the notion of foul play. The aura of political intrigue surrounding him was thus to generate a number of popular 'fictions,' with the result that his charismatic image came to overshadow his literary achievement.<sup>8</sup>

Given this political cast, it is not surprising that when Thomas 'Hesiod' Cooke (No. 33) readied a second (two-volume) edition, including poems, letters, and verse satires, in 1726, his motivation was essentially political: 'My design in this,' he declares, 'is to draw a pattern for all freeborn Englishmen in the life of a worthy patriot, whose every action has truly merited to him, with Aristides, the surname of "the Just."' The issuing of this edition again in 1772 was followed four years later by that of Captain Edward Thompson (No. 38) in three handsome folios. It was to make available additional letters, including the ones to the Hull Corporation which reveal Marvell in his parliamentary role, and additional poems, not all of them by Marvell; but for the first time—following on their cancellation from the 1681 Folio—the three major poems on Cromwell were made available to the reading public. Again the motivation was essentially political: 'One of my first and strongest reasons for publishing the works of

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Marvell,' Captain Thompson announces in his preface, 'was the pleasing hopes of adding a number of strenuous and serious friends to our Constitution.'

In between the editions of Cooke and Thompson, another had been projected. In 1756 the admiring Thomas Hollis secured a portrait of Marvell which he then had engraved and distributed 'to his friends and fellow-patriots; and to some, perhaps, who were neither.' In 1765 he was endeavouring to interest the printer William Bowyer in a new edition of the works; two years later, he was seeking to enlist a collector of libertarian tracts to explicate the difficult passages. Bowyer, however, declined to undertake the project, 'not from any dislike to the works of Marvell,' Hollis's editors explain, but from an apprehension that he might not recoup his expenses.<sup>9</sup> Whatever the case, the point needing emphasis is that, despite the partisan motivation, despite the literary and extra-literary accruals to his writings, there were indeed four appearances of the collected poems in under a century. Compared with the scant availability of the works of any number of Renaissance poets, this is a notable record.

Though eighteenth-century biographical dictionaries and encyclopaedias identify Marvell as an 'ingenious writer' or a 'witty droll,' they tend, not surprisingly, to stress his political character, referring to his Latin verses, to the verses on *Paradise Lost* or to 'Flecknoe' when they refer to his poetry at all.<sup>10</sup> In the ten-volume *General Dictionary, Historical and Critical*, translated from Pierre Bayle and augmented by Bernard, Birch *et al.* (1734–41), he is designated, in a reflection of tenuous Continental esteem (see No. 35), an 'ingenious English writer.' In 1748 (*Biographia Britannica*, he is called a 'witty droll'; in 1769, James Granger (*Biographical History of England*, II, ii) classifies him under the category of 'Poets and other ingenious Persons' but stresses his patriotic character; in 1770, Joseph Towers (*British Biography*, VI) includes a single reference to his 'satires and other poetical compositions.'

He is not included in the first edition (1768–71) of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (though Milton figures in an article on composition). In the second (1777–84), he is called an 'ingenious writer.' In the third (1788–97), the terse statement 'also Poems and Letters' is added to a mention of some of the prose. Not until the eighth edition (1853–60) is there to be a critical comment on

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the poetry: 'besides his controversial and political services, Marvell had written some minor poems of great tenderness, fancy, and beauty, which were deservedly popular [!]. His lyrical stanzas on the sailing of the emigrants for Bermudas, *Safe from the Storms and Prelates' Rage*, form one of the finest strains of the Puritan muse.' Despite this late recognition, the single most influential, if succinct, evaluation of the Marvellian poetic style in biographical dictionaries, that of John Aikin, came at the turn of the eighteenth century (see No. 39).

On the other hand, nine of the lyrics had appeared in Tonson's (or Dryden's) popular *Miscellany*, published in 1716 and reprinted in 1727, some in abbreviated form. Silent improvement of the texts by abridgment without ellipsis, by alteration of line order, and by verbal emendations was to remain a constant until well into the twentieth century.<sup>11</sup> Equally, the popularity of a small number of poems in a small canon was to remain a constant even after the beginnings of reassessment.

In addition to the verses in Latin, one or another of the lyrics like 'Eyes and Tears' or 'The Nymph' or the 'Dialogue Between the Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure' received occasional printing or comment (see, for example, Nos 34, 35), and in his life of Dryden Samuel Johnson did see fit to include six lines (17–22) from the commendatory verses on *Paradise Lost* (with two 'improvements'); still, he was several times to be charged with having inadvisedly omitted Marvell from the bead-roll of English poets. One of the explanations offered for this exclusion from the *Lives of the Poets* was on the alleged grounds that the selection was dictated by a bookselling syndicate rather than by Johnson himself. It was, none the less, judged to be an irresponsible action in 'a work which bore so close a relationship to the honour of his country.'<sup>12</sup> Another explanation offered was his strong antipathy to Marvell's politics, an antipathy overcome in the case of Milton because of his stature as an epic poet.

A curious critical correlative to Marvell's image as the laureate of dissenting opinion was the notion first enunciated by Giles Jacob in 1720: what was most to Marvell's 'honour,' he affirmed, and above his own several poetical 'performances,' was 'his being the first that found out the beauties of Milton.'<sup>13</sup> Though attributable no doubt in part to the MP from Hull's open defense of Milton (publicly reported by Edward Phillips in 1694) and in part to his

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published remarks in the *RT II* (p. 312), this easy blending of political and critical attitudes also reflects the early (but not later) esteem accorded to the commendatory verses on *Paradise Lost*. Despite his desire to credit Dryden with the honor, John Dennis admitted Marvell's (and Dr Barrow's) early championing of Milton's epic.<sup>14</sup> Both Cooke and Thompson proclaimed it, with the result that the notion filtered into the nineteenth century to be reported by others. It was being repeated in England in the *Civil Service Handbook of English Literature* as late as 1874 and in the United States in the comments of a dull Lutheran divine as late as 1877 (No. 76).

During the last decades of the seventeenth century and throughout the eighteenth, Marvell's charismatic image as witty satirist and incorruptible patriot bears out John Ormsby's observation that had he been less brilliant as a patriot, he would have been more conspicuous as a poet (No. 71). Both the geographical range and longevity of this image can be illustrated by two examples from the United States. In 1698 Cotton Mather was prompted to include in his *Eleutheria* a long, if telescoped passage from the 'witty' Marvell's *RT I*; nearly one hundred and fifty years later, James Russell Lowell (No. 41 c) disdained to compare the patriot Marvell with an example of the home-bred variety—a former president of the United States currently serving in the House of Representatives—because of the 'vast deal of humbug' in John Quincy Adams's reputation and because he was not 'well seen in the very ABC of freedom.'

### III THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES

#### I TO 1890

In a reflection of a developing esthetic, the inciter of the 'Pope and Bowles' controversy, William Lisle Bowles (No. 42) saw fit to include comments on some lines from Marvell in the notes to his edition of *Windsor Forest* (1806); while acknowledging the abundance of 'conceits' and 'false thoughts,' he was among the very first to characterize Marvell as 'an accurate descriptive rural poet' and surely the first to excerpt lines from 'Appleton House'

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as an example. The measure of change in sensibilities that occurred during the nineteenth century is indicated by the easy incorporation of these remarks into the Victorian edition of Pope (Elwin and Courthope, 1871–89). Following Bowles, the brief comments and quotations included in the popular journalism of Lamb (No. 44), Hazlitt (No. 45), and Leigh Hunt (No. 46), taken together with the inclusion of four of the lyrics in the anthologies of George Ellis (1801) and Thomas Campbell (1819, No. 43), helped to make Marvell's name somewhat familiar to the reading public.<sup>15</sup>

But it was the appearance of a two-part article by an anonymous writer in 1824–5 (No. 47) that signaled the trend toward poetic concern. Continuing to stress the 'British Aristides' as the 'great exemplar of public and private integrity,' the writer none the less deliberately discounts the prose in order to emphasize the poetry, selecting thirteen of the poems for quotation and comment; notably, 'The Character of Holland' is the only satire included. (Also at this time Hazlitt included eight of the lyrics in his *Select British Poets*, an anthology transatlantic in its appeal.<sup>16</sup>) As a result, when John Dove, 'a Whig and a dissenter' (see No. 50), published the first single life of Marvell in 1832, though 'pillaging' this and other sources, he included seventeen of the poems as well as extracts from the prose, while Hartley Coleridge, who unblushingly plagiarized Dove, included seven in one of the versions of his *Life* which appeared as an individual biography under the imprint of two different Hull publishers in 1835. The other version had appeared in the same year as Dove's as part of the *Worthies of Yorkshire and Lancashire*; though also indebted to Dove, this version relied on the letters to a greater degree with a consequent greater stress on Marvell's patriotic and parliamentary character. It was to appear under many different titles and imprints until the posthumous edition, entitled the *Lives of Northern Worthies*, appeared in 1852, edited by his brother. By means of these biographical accounts, though significantly now dressed with examples from the poetry, the image of the patriot and wit maintained its attraction; it was, however, increasingly being enhanced with romantic fictions in tacit acknowledgment either of the prevailing esthetic or of the declining appeal of a writer seen mainly as one committed to the political scene (see No. 51b). (In contrast, Landor's earlier 'imaginary conversations,'

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1824–9, involved Marvell with other public figures: Henry Marten, Parker, and Milton.)

Twelve years after Dove's *Life* appeared, Henry Rogers wrote a long review-article on it (his tardy consideration perhaps having been prompted by a developing interest in Marvell as the champion of John Howe whose works he had edited [see No. 25]); although commenting sharply on Dove's reliance on earlier sources, he ignored Coleridge's more flagrant borrowings (see No. 57). During the same period when Rogers published his influential review—it was to be incorporated, with due acknowledgment, in the first American edition of the poetry in 1854 and the first since Captain Thompson's in 1776—George Craik (see No. 58) also included Marvell in his equally influential *Sketches of the History of Literature and Learning* (1844–5), with quotations from the lyrics (and the post-restoration satires) but none from the prose.

By mid-century, then, the tide of opinion was showing a persistent undertow of poetic concern in both England and America. Indeed the Americans may be said to have responded the more enthusiastically. In 1836 Edgar Allan Poe (No. 54) singled out 'The Nymph' for extensive comment in a review of S.C.Hall's *Books of Gems* (No. 53). In 1848 John Greenleaf Whittier (No. 60), attracted both by the political image and by the poetry, published an essay with excerpts, including the 'splendid Ode to Cromwell' in its entirety since it was 'not generally known.' An advocate of seventeenth-century poetry as early as 1828, Ralph Waldo Emerson (No. 48) not only introduced lines from 'The Mower Against Gardens' into a lecture given before an agricultural society, but also showed his admiration in some of his own lyrics where, in the words of Oliver Wendell Holmes, the influence of Marvell is 'plain to every reader.' And in 1854 James Russell Lowell added a brief but pointed evaluation to Rogers's biographical account in the 'very elegant' American edition which was to have a dozen printings in the United States and England, some editions including Milton's poetry as well.

Random anthologies having made some of the poems well known, these were to be climaxed by the three most popular: Gilfillan's (1860), Palgrave's (1861), and Archbishop Trench's (1868); Trench, in fact, excluded 'Bermudas' from his *Household Book of English Poetry* because it had already found its way into so many modern

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collections (an exclusion that H.J. Massingham was to follow on the same grounds when compiling his *Treasury of Seventeenth-Century English Verse* in 1919). Somewhat surprisingly, Matthew Arnold was first to encounter the 'Horatian Ode' in Palgrave, but he can be credited at least with having introduced it to Sainte Beuve (see No. 69), who, in turn, introduced it to a French audience. Thus at the end of that anthologizing decade the time was opportune for the appearance of the first judicious survey of the man *and* his work—that of John Ormsby in an unsigned essay in the *Cornhill Magazine* (No. 71).

In the remaining years before 'poetic reassessment,' it was the writers, as opposed to the critics, who kept the poetic Marvell in public view. In 1870 James Russell Lowell incorporated admiring comments on the Cromwell poems in his essay on Dryden (No. 72). In the next year or so, an enormously popular anthology—*A Library of Poetry and Song, Being Choice Selections from the British Poets*—appeared under the name of William Cullen Bryant and included three of the lyrics under appropriate rubrics; though Bryant was not himself responsible for the classification and arrangement, they had all passed his 'cultured criticism,' including, one presumes, the textual alterations. According to the 1874 printing, this anthology proved so popular that a twentieth edition was called for within six months of the first. *Parnassus*, an anthology based on his commonplace book by still another American—Ralph Waldo Emerson, mentioned earlier—appeared in 1875 and included five of the lyrics, again classified under rubrics and again with textual alterations.

A few personal comments by English writers at this time indicate that the poet was being read, if only in the various anthologies. In a letter of 1872, the translator of the *Rubáiyát*, Edward FitzGerald (No. 74) termed him an 'old favourite'; in 1879, in an exchange with R.W. Dixon, Gerard Manley Hopkins, while admitting that he knew Marvell only from extracts, described him as a 'most rich and nervous poet.' In the following year, interestingly, the 'measure and music' of Hopkins's verse were found, according to an unidentified reviewer, to recall that of Marvell's.<sup>17</sup> And, finally, the poet laureate, as Tennyson's son and his close friend F.T. Palgrave record (No. 78), admired the poems, including the one—"To His Coy Mistress"—deliberately excluded from the most popular of all nineteenth-century anthologies, that of Palgrave himself.

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### II POETIC REASSESSMENT 1892–1921

During the opening years of the period of reassessment, there was a surge of conflicting opinions. On the one hand, some few poems—all those ‘worth more than a single reading,’ as one J. Stuart put it in 1892 (No. 80)—were much admired. On the other, there was a distinct falling off of interest in the prose works, with the RT and *Mr. Smirks* being described as ‘peculiarly distasteful,’ combining the ‘characteristics of tedium, dullness, and scurrility to a perfectly phenomenal degree.’ (*The Growth of Popery* had long since disappeared from public concern.<sup>18</sup>) Equally, there was a falling off of the image of the incorruptible patriot, with Alice Meynell (No. 84), for one, commenting on the ‘portly dulness of the mind’ that could term Marvell the ‘British Aristides,’ a narrow reflection on the efforts of Thomas Cooke whose two printings of the poems and letters had been ‘pillaged’ by so many others.

A compensation of sorts was the developing realization that as a result of his public commitment there had been ‘the loss of a great English poet’ (No. 79). Exactly how that lost poet should be categorized remained critically uncertain. Was he classic or romantic, metaphysical or Augustan, Cavalier or Puritan, or—in witness now to the impact of the ‘Horatian Ode’ rather than to the controversial works—republican or royalist? Almost invariably he was viewed, in the words of a critic of the period (No. 100) as ‘dimorphic,’ a view which well accords with that of Marvell’s contemporaries who, in an appropriation of his own diction, had described his ‘wit and polity’ as ‘unhoopable’ (see Nos 5, 20).

The question of his literary status was equally uncertain, one reviewer asserting in 1905 (No. 91a) that he was of scant importance because he had had no influence on his contemporaries and had founded no school of verse, while others only too readily associated him with other ‘great’ poets, including him, not in the ‘narrow sense’ but ‘in the wider and more usual sense,’ among ‘some five-and-twenty great English poets’ (No. 102).

Despite Marvell’s small canon of poems, a persistent recognition of his poetical versatility is to be sensed in the widely divergent remarks of commentators who endeavoured throughout the century to ‘place’ him. Some critics early on had linked him with his contemporaries—with Donne, Jonson, Lovelace, Suckling, Cowley,

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Waller, Herbert, Herrick, and the Milton of the lyrics—or had endeavoured to pinpoint him as a synthesis of differing literary strains—a blend of Donne and Milton, of Donne and Butler, of Jonson and Herrick, of Crashaw and Vaughan. As the esthetic of the century solidified, others linked him with *their* contemporaries and near contemporaries, crediting him with having sounded ‘certain notes’ (No. 96) not to be heard again until the days of—Cowper, Crabbe, Clare, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, Shelley, Meredith, Hopkins, and Hodgson. (Even when the prose works were still of concern earlier in the century, there had been a comparable urge to see in the Marvellian style influences on, as well as anticipations of, Burke, Junius, Swift, Addison, and Steele.) Such a plethora of literary associations may account for Stuart’s jaundiced comment in 1892 that the poems were often ‘monstrously overrated,’ the work of a man with ‘scarce a spark of originality.’ Yet in that same year, A.C. Benson (No. 79) offered a diametrically opposite view, declaring that Marvell ‘does not seem to imitate, he does not even follow the lines of other poets’; except for a scattered instance or two, ‘never,’ he continues, ‘does he recall or suggest that he has a master.’

As a result of these divergent opinions (indicative as well of an emerging new literary attitude), some of the poems were devalued, some maintained their established rank, and some came into new prominence. The early satires were among those being devalued. Whereas in 1848 Whittier asserted that there was nothing in its way superior to ‘The Character of Holland’ and *c.* 1887 Tennyson professed to having made Carlyle laugh for half an hour at the reading of one line, it was considered by 1897 a ‘heavy-handed squib’ (No. 83); while acknowledging it as the ‘most amusing’ of the satires, Stuart, even earlier, termed both ‘Flecknoe’ and ‘Tom May’s Death’ ‘unreadable.’

Poems continuing to maintain their popularity were those that had been anthologized: ‘Bermudas,’ ‘The Garden,’ ‘The Nymph,’ the ‘Horatian Ode,’ etc; while those beginning to come into their own include the dialogues, the Mower poems, and the Cavalier lyrics like ‘The Fair Singer,’ ‘Music’s Empire,’ and, especially, ‘To His Coy Mistress.’ Doubted in 1832 as to whether it was really by Marvell, excluded by both Palgrave and Trench on account of its doubtful propriety, ‘To His Coy Mistress’ had, however, impressed such critics as Craik and Ormsby as early as 1845 and 1869 (and Hazlitt even

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earlier). It was to come into its own in the decades of reassessment, even though the 'Affable Hawk' Desmond MacCarthy was to point out in 1922 that neither Edmund Gosse nor J.C.Squire, two of the contributors to the *Tercentenary Tributes*, had seen fit to mention Marvell's 'best and most surprising poem.'<sup>19</sup>

None the less a change in sensibilities had gradually been taking place. Well documented by J.E.Duncan in his study of the *Revival of Metaphysical Poetry*, it was ushered in, in part, by the much maligned Grosart (see, for example, Nos 81, 96), who, in Duncan's words, was 'one of the first critics to discover in metaphysical poetry a dynamic process in which thought and feeling were merging into one another.'<sup>20</sup> Equally important, since there must be texts before there can be appreciation, during the 1870s and 1880s Grosart elected to edit not only Marvell but also Donne, Cowley, Herbert, and Crashaw. Other important editions were Sir Herbert Grierson's two-volume Donne in 1912 and his one-volume *Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems* in 1921 wherein he announced that 'at his very best' Marvell was a 'finer poet' than either Donne or Dryden, a far cry from the eighteenth-century notion that Marvell's major literary contribution had been to discover 'the beauties' of Milton.

Despite the evidence provided by the increasing availability of texts, T.S.Eliot is the one most often credited with having ushered in the new appreciation of the poet, purportedly a result, first, of his account of Marvell in the *Times Literary Supplement*, which was to become a selected essay and one he himself elected to print twice, and, second, of his later review of Grierson, which was also to become a selected essay. A look at the critical evidence suggests something else.

With examples of historical criticism such as make up this volume—more revelatory, it seems, of the cultural context than of the writings dealt with—one may well be struck by the repetitive factor or what, in harsher terms, might be called plagiarism. In the case of Marvell this situation obtains on three specific counts.

First, it obtains in respect to the handling of the texts, a matter relating both to their derivation from preceding editions and to editorial preferences, typical phenomena until recent times. One striking example of this persistence of emendation is the reading 'claps' for 'combs' in line 55 of 'The Garden.' Introduced as early as

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1716 in Tonson's *Miscellany*, it was to persist even after G.A. Aitken had recourse to the Folio and restored 'combs' in his 1892 edition. For example, Sir Francis Meynell, who edited Marvell in 1918, notes that his mother (No. 84), in preparing her anthology *The Flower of the Mind*, was given the reading 'claps' by F.T. Palgrave, and he comments: 'he would not (and he could not) have invented a phrase, an image, a movement so much more lovely, and lovely with the very gesture of the poet and of his century.' Did he, Sir Francis wonders, perhaps see one of Marvell's manuscripts which was discovered and then lost? (*Henry Vaughan the Silurist and Andrew Marvell*, p. 58)

When undertaking to publish Marvell in 1726, Thomas Cooke showed a certain conscientiousness about the texts, at least to the extent of consulting Marvell's relatives, but he too emended some of the poems in conformity with prevailing taste. Either because of prevailing taste or because of his own indolence or even inadvertence, in preparing his edition Captain Thompson followed his example, so that eighteenth-century emendations, together with those acceptable to various nineteenth-century anthologists, were to have a long perpetration. This might be called the plagiarism of received texts.

Second, the situation obtains in respect to the biography, a more understandable phenomenon in that popular and apocryphal stories tend to cluster around a likely figure in anecdotal, derivative accounts. Moreover, to associate one historical personage with another provides a shorthand of signification that may come to have the weight of tradition. Instances are Cooke's metaphor of Marvell as the 'British Aristides' and Thompson's comparison of him with the unnamed Roman general content with his plate of turnips; first specified by Disraeli as 'Curtius' through either a misprint or a slip, this 'unclassical' comparison was to be frequently invoked. On the other hand, the biographies of Dove and Coleridge, replete with unacknowledged borrowings, invite the charge of plagiarism. Others, like the sketches of Mrs S.C.Hall or the biography of E.P.Hood (1853), represent wayward growths grafted to received accounts.

Third, the situation obtains in reference to critical aperçus, where the repetitive factor may be accounted for on several grounds. As pointed out earlier, the concise statement on Marvell's poetry in Aikin's *General Biography* (1799–1815) was frequently repeated—

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for instance, by John Gorton, whose *General Biographical Dictionary* appeared in 1851 and was to be reissued many times—so that the judgment itself passed into general currency. Lamb's 'witty delicacy' is another sort of example, somewhat akin to the historical comparison. Used to describe 'The Garden,' in however brief an account of that poem (No. 44), the phrase was considered so 'classical' by the turn of the century (No. 86) that it became almost mandatory to repeat it, although generally with acknowledgment, at least by quotation marks. Capping the period of poetic reassessment, Eliot provides an interesting example of still another sort, as a brief consideration of his comments on Marvell should demonstrate (No. 103).

An essential aim in his essay is the attempt to define 'wit.' Early on, he offers the well-known asseveration, set forth in conjunction with a mention of the 'Horatian Ode,' that it is 'a tough reasonableness beneath the slight lyric grace.' J.E.Duncan has suggested that his expression may have been inspired by Craik's phrase 'the union of force and grace' (applied to 'To His Coy Mistress,' No. 58). Closer in time, one may note, is A.C.Benson's use of the phrase 'force with grace' to describe the 'Horatian Ode' (No. 79).

When speaking of 'To His Coy Mistress,' Eliot remarks that 'the poem turns suddenly with that surprise which has been one of the most important means of poetic effect since Homer.' Later on, when speaking of 'Clorinda and Damon,' he again remarks on its element of surprise, adding that Poe considered it to be of the highest importance. Here again one might note Benson's observation that the 'strength of [Marvell's] style lies in its unexpectedness.' Or, equally, one might note Francis L.Bickley's remarks on 'the gift of sudden inevitability,' which, as he points out, represents Arnold's distinction between 'classic' and 'romantic' (No. 96). Again, in connection with 'To His Coy Mistress,' Eliot comments on the way in which the wit is fused into the imagination and characterizes it now as an 'alliance of levity and seriousness (by which the seriousness is intensified).'<sup>21</sup> Consequently, he observes, in such poetry there is a 'very narrow' difference between imagination and fancy.

The 'equipoise' or 'balance and proportion of tones'—its 'internal equilibrium'—is the result, he concludes, of Marvell's finding the 'proper degree of seriousness for every subject he treats,' never 'taking

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a subject too seriously or lightly.' It is this quality that makes him a 'classic,' These comments, which have been frequently parroted, may be compared with those made, in briefer compass, as early as 1854:

...whenever [Marvell] surrendered himself to his temperament, his mind sought relief in wit, so sportful and airy, yet at the same time so recondite, that it is hard to find an instance in which the court, the tavern, and the scholar's study are blended with such Corinthian justness of measure. Nowhere is there so happy an example of the truth that wit and fancy are different operations of the same principle. The wit is so spontaneous and so interfused with feeling that we can scarce distinguish it from fancy; and the fancy brings together analogies so remote that they give us the pleasurable shock of wit.

The mind of the poet, James Russell Lowell concludes, presents the 'rare combination of wit with the moral sense' (No. 64).

One can see in this constellation of critical aperçus a basis for Eliot's element of surprise, for the 'alliance of levity and seriousness,' for the 'very narrow' distinction between imagination and 'witty' fancy, for the 'equipoise' or 'balance and proportion of tones,' and for the fusion of thought and feeling which was to make its appearance in the essay on the metaphysicals.

Whether Eliot was (or was not) acquainted with any or all of these critical judgments is not, in my estimation, the significant point.<sup>22</sup> What is significant is the fact that his criticism of Marvell and the metaphysical poets is not so much an innovation as it is a bringing together of opinions that had long been current. One might call this the plagiarism of received ideas.<sup>23</sup> It is this fact, I think, rather than the originality or novelty of his views, that accounts for his influence on subsequent Marvell criticism. As selections in this volume attest, changes in sensibility are inevitably gradual and cumulative. Like Ormsby's for his era, it was Eliot's achievement to enunciate what had oft been thought and to do so at an opportune time.<sup>24</sup>

Such instances of similar evaluations—and others could be adduced—indicate that in spite of individual aberration, a consensus of critical response was developing. It was left to the period after Marvell had come into his own as a lyric and, above all, a 'philosophic' poet to fragment that response by increasingly idiosyncratic interpretations.

## INTRODUCTION

### III 1921–76

In the decade of Eliot's two influential pieces, there were also two influential textual and biographical publications. First, H.M. Margoliouth's well-annotated edition of Marvell's *Poems*, including the post-Restoration satires variously attributed to him, and the *Letters* (Oxford, 1927). In terms of the canon, this edition follows directly in the Cooke-Thompson (but not the American Lowell's) tradition. In terms of the text, Margoliouth offered a new approach by abstaining from preferential readings and relying on the Folio (apart from the missing conclusion to 'A Poem Upon the Death of O.C.,' where, necessarily at that date, he relied on Thompson). In the slightly revised edition of 1952, he took note of the recovered Popple manuscript (*Eng. poet. d.* 49) used by Thompson and recently acquired by the Bodleian. Not until the third edition, revised by Pierre Legouis with the collaboration of E.E. Duncan-Jones in 1971, were the readings of that manuscript even to be recorded. Second, there was Legouis's biographical and critical study, *André Marvell: poète, puritain, patriote* (Paris—London, 1928), an exhaustive treatment of the man and the writer and an invaluable source for its references to Marvell's later reputation.<sup>25</sup> The shortened corrected English version, prepared by Legouis in 1965 (Oxford), reprinted in 1968, remains the standard biography.

A somewhat later 'recovery' of the post-Restoration satires is indicated by their being included in the *Poems on Affairs of State*, under the editorship of George deF. Lord (New Haven, 1963). Such inclusion can perhaps be seen as an ironic 'reversal' of nineteenth-century attitudes in that the editor may now have been prompted to attribute satires to Marvell on the grounds of his ascendant fame as lyric poet. A particularly valuable recovery of the prose was the 1971 Oxford edition of the RT, edited in accord with modern standards and annotated with skill.

From the 1930s on, critical fragmentation developed, the result, in part, of an acceptance of the variety of kinds—pastoral, country-house poem, panegyric, etc.—exemplified in the small canon. Further, it came to seem as if in certain poetic instances Marvell deliberately had decided to 'summarize and surpass' the achievements of his predecessors.<sup>26</sup> Concomitant methodologies supported these realizations. Along with what Eliot dubbed the 'lemon-squeezer' type

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of criticism, *explication de texte* became an operational procedure, with consequent concern for the paradoxes, ironies, and complexities of his poetic style—the result, it was discovered not only of his confounding verbal and grammatical usage but also of his commingling seemingly opposed attitudes. An allied approach had been tirelessly ushered in in 1930 by William Empson with his *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (though in the revised edition of 1947, he was to reduce his analysis of Marvell's use of the conceit with 'the beginnings of its decay' in 'Upon the Death of Lord Hastings' and its 'blurring' in 'Eyes and Tears').

Historical critics, in turn, sorted themselves into compartments, signaled by their multiple points of departure, with the result that some of them frequently seemed to go beyond an approach that on its own terms stresses literary contexts within the social and political confines of a particular era. First of all, there were those who endeavoured to place Marvell within a particular literary tradition, the rhetorical, for example, where he was considered as having employed common Renaissance techniques—rather than sounding certain notes not to be heard again until the nineteenth century. Or he was placed, stylistically, with the 'sounders' of the metaphysical or the Cavalier or the baroque mode.

There were also the 'source hunters and echo hearers,' as John Carey has neatly labeled them, a very large and disparate group of commentators. They break down into those tending to a 'history of ideas' approach, tracing certain concepts back to a welter of would-be philosophic sources—hermetic, neo-Platonic and neoPlotinian—and those finding precedents and analogues in classical, medieval, and Renaissance literature. As with H.M. Margoliouth earlier (see No. 99), J.B. Leishman in his posthumous *Art of Marvell's Poetry* (1966) was to point up one of the most tantalizing aspects of Marvell's technique with the suggestion that in some instances he may have been undertaking a witty response to a particular poem. All too obviously, it appeared, Marvell had appropriated phrases from his contemporaries to incorporate or adapt, a procedure raising questions as to whether a borrowing represented common idiom or subtle twist, an unconscious or a conscious echo recollected in tranquillity. If the latter, how its function as an internal comment can be demonstrated has yet to be made clear.<sup>27</sup> Other historical critics addressed themselves to the religious and political scene,

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coming up with a Puritan or a Cromwellian poet (despite Marvell's own minimizing of his role in *RT II*, p. 203), and in the process perhaps scanting the complexities of a prose writer who could be seen by others as a 'trimmer,' 'non-conformist,' or a 'semi-Arminian.'

A final group employing something of a historical approach were the allegorists. Legion in number, as unresponsive to tonal nuances as to literal statement, they saw a Marvell far removed from Eliot's witty and urbane poet working within the tradition of Latin culture. Instead they viewed him as one so wounded by the fall that he was compelled to reflect on the post-lapsarian state of the world in the slightest of his lyrics as well as the longest of his poems. For these commentators, Marvell (so Thomas Fuller might have put it) had evidently drunk more of the waters of Jordan than of Helicon.

As a result of these related and disparate approaches, the last fifty-odd years reveal no critical consensus, despite the varying depths and eddies that have been probed. What has been revealed is a prime concern for the poetry and, to a happier degree than in the later nineteenth century, some concern for the prose. Validation of some or all of the approaches adopted awaits the appearance of a synthesizing critic who, speaking at a time opportune for the last quarter of the twentieth century, may perhaps hoop together that dimorphic figure, the poet and the polemicist in prose.

## NOTES

- 1 In 1753 by Edmund Carter (*History of the University of Cambridge*), p. 323; in 1901 by H.C.Beeching (see No. 86). Quotations in the Introduction have been modernized.
- 2 Though undoubtedly the post-Restoration verse satires variously attributed to Marvell had a share in the later dissemination of this image, it is impossible to document his authorship, since the attributions date anywhere from eleven to nearly a hundred years after his death. As a consequence, commentary on them has generally been discounted in the pages that follow except for 'The Last Instructions to a Painter,' 'The Loyal Scot,' and the epigrams on Blood's stealing the crown (in Latin and English) which offer some evidence for his authorship.

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- 3 Whatever the private applause, two instances of publishers' shifting of early examples of Marvell's occasional verse ('To His Noble Friend Mr Richard Lovelace' and 'Upon the Death of Lord Hastings') afford evidence that in 1649–50 his name had a certain poetic cachet, at least in Cavalier circles. In the one case, his contribution was shifted from a position near the middle of the volume to pride of place at the beginning in some copies; in the other, to a position nearer the beginning in the second issue.
- 4 In the introduction to his useful collection of critical appraisals (Penguin Critical Anthologies, Harmondsworth, 1969), John Carey compares the neglect of Marvell's poetry with the neglect of Vermeer's painting, accounting for both on what he terms 'literary' and 'painterly' terms. Despite a certain validity, this explanation discounts the lack of publication in Marvell's lifetime. Before there can be readers, there must be texts. How much historical acclaim did a superlative lyricist like Thomas Campion receive before the first edition of his works in 1889?  
Further, it discounts the slight value assigned to lyrical poetry and to its critical evaluation in earlier periods. In 1912, for example, the American Edward B. Reed could announce that his was the first history of English lyric poetry (No. 95). The new critical attitudes developing in the course of the nineteenth century led to new methodologies which culminated in those of the New Critics; the emphasis on poems as artifacts introduced a difference, if not in principle, in critical practice.
- 5 In 1880, Goldwin Smith was struck by the 'depth of poetic feeling' in 'The Garden' that is wonderful to find 'in a political gladiator' (*The English Poets*, ed. T.H. Ward, 1908 edn, II, p. 382). Even in his own time he was called a 'gladiator' and a 'fencer' (see No. 22).
- 6 Richard Leigh (No. 1) calls him a coffee-house virtuoso (pp. 34ff.); Bishop Parker (No. 2) describes his loitering about Lincoln's Inn Fields and Charing Cross. For the daily enactment of 'farces and drolls' on political topics, see *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 1672–3*, p. 148.
- 7 Two anonymous pamphlets (*A Letter from a Parliament-Man to His Friend* and *A Letter from a Person of Quality to His Friend in the Country*, both 1675), taken as indicative of the compatibility of Marvell's political ideas with those of the Earl of Shaftesbury, were on occasion attributed to him by contemporaries (see No. 17). Two others (*A Seasonable Argument, 1677* [see Nos 17, 75] and *Flagellum Parliamentarium*, not printed until 1827) have also on occasion been attributed to him, the latter eliciting a long article by F.G. Walters, who purported to find evidence of the 'same fine Roman hand' in both (*Gentleman's Magazine*, 289 [1900], pp. 57–66).