

# Marvell's pronouns and the ethics of representation

Autor(en): **Hequembourg, Stephen**

Objektyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **SPELL : Swiss papers in English language and literature**

Band (Jahr): **25 (2011)**

PDF erstellt am: **03.05.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-389633>

## **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Inhalten der Zeitschriften. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern.

Die auf der Plattform e-periodica veröffentlichten Dokumente stehen für nicht-kommerzielle Zwecke in Lehre und Forschung sowie für die private Nutzung frei zur Verfügung. Einzelne Dateien oder Ausdrucke aus diesem Angebot können zusammen mit diesen Nutzungsbedingungen und den korrekten Herkunftsbezeichnungen weitergegeben werden.

Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. Die systematische Speicherung von Teilen des elektronischen Angebots auf anderen Servern bedarf ebenfalls des schriftlichen Einverständnisses der Rechteinhaber.

## **Haftungsausschluss**

Alle Angaben erfolgen ohne Gewähr für Vollständigkeit oder Richtigkeit. Es wird keine Haftung übernommen für Schäden durch die Verwendung von Informationen aus diesem Online-Angebot oder durch das Fehlen von Informationen. Dies gilt auch für Inhalte Dritter, die über dieses Angebot zugänglich sind.

# Marvell's Pronouns and the Ethics of Representation

Stephen Hequembourg

This article looks at the formulation in Andrew Marvell's prose of a complex theory of authorship in the field of political and religious polemic. It sees in his pamphlets a profound meditation on the ethics of representation (specifically, who has the right to speak for others, against others, or in the place of others) that did much to shape the notions of authorship and polemical style at the birth of early modern liberalism. As a guiding thread to his conception of authorship, the article takes Marvell's often comic obsession with pronouns, and looks at the troublesome group of rivals – we, thou, you, it – that clusters around the authorial “I.” His pronominal playfulness actually reveals a two-part inquiry, firstly into the relation between the author and the social group he claims to represent, and secondly into the relation of author and text. What the essay calls Marvell's ideal “I-thou” form of polemic address is shown to be undermined first by Parker's arrogant “we” and plural “you,” and then by Marvell's comic fictional third person “he.” Finally the essay explores the mysterious “It” of the late *Remarks* and Marvell's conception of an authorless text.

From 1671 to his death in 1678, Andrew Marvell, lyric poet and long-serving Member of Parliament for Hull, wrote a series of controversial pamphlets in favor of religious toleration and representative government, and deeply critical of absolute monarchy and episcopacy – all famously Miltonic stances, and Marvell had once written to Milton of having got most of the *Second Defense* by heart. But the reader coming to Marvell's prose from Milton's will notice that while the polemical ends are similar and often identical, the style of argumentation is vastly different. In place of Milton's strong single voice, confrontational and confi-

dent in its ability to speak of and often on behalf of the Commonwealth, Marvell's is more often playful, evasive, and light-hearted. Next to the image of Milton sallying forth to do single battle with Salmasius in the open field, we might picture Marvell rather as performing satiric guerilla raids on his polemical adversaries – always with a kind of Shandean distaste for hectoring and affectations of gravity. Leaving aside much of the explicit concerns of the pamphlets, I will explore here Marvell's more subtle formulations of authorship in the field of political and religious polemic. Marvell, I argue, takes his engagements in written controversy as an opportunity to elaborate an ethics of representation – to inquire who is able to speak for others, against others, or in the place of others – at the inception of early modern liberalism. "Ethics of representation" is a rather vague formulation, but I will narrow the inquiry considerably by focusing on the rather humble level of the pronoun, and Marvell's comic obsession with it. Unable and probably unwilling to adopt Milton's monolithic "I," Marvell finds himself caught in a network of rival pronouns – we, thou, you, he, and finally and most strangely, *It*. I will focus primarily on the earliest and latest of the pamphlets, the two parts of the *Rehearsal Transpros'd* (1671-72) and the *Remarks Upon a Late Disingenuous Discourse* (1678), to point to the evolution of Marvell's ideas on the subject as his concern shifts over the years from an author's right to speak for others to what would seemingly be a less complicated affair – the right of a text to speak for and in place of its author.

In his first and certainly most famous pamphlet, the two-part *Rehearsal Transpros'd*, Marvell sets his satiric sights on Samuel Parker, arch-deacon of Canterbury and spokesman for the harsh persecution of religious dissenters, who once infamously claimed that it is better to err with authority than to be in the right against it (308). From the opening pages of his first pamphlet, Marvell reveals his deep interest in all aspects of print culture as medium of the exchange of ideas. He speaks familiarly in his prose of various printers and presses, of everything from licensing and suppression to the minutiae of pricing, binding, circulating, and paragraph blocking. In fact Marvell's first direct address is not to Parker, or to Parliament, or to his gentle reader, but, oddly, to the medium itself: "O *Printing!* how hast thou disturb'd the Peace of Mankind!" (*Prose Works* I: 46). He muses about an earlier, happier time when all writing was in manuscript and the bounds of learning and opinion were more rigorously controlled, when "some little Officer, like our Author, did keep the Keys of the Library [. . .] But now, since Printing came into the World, such is the mischief, that a man cannot write a Book but presently he is answered" (*Prose Works* I: 45). And while the government has found the means to stop religious dissenters from

meeting in secret conventicles, "no Art yet could prevent these seditious meetings of Letters" (*Prose Works* I: 45). Marvell's nostalgia here is deeply ironic – he would certainly not enjoy a world in which someone like Parker exercised complete control of learned discourse, and Marvell's adamant defense of the right of dissenters to meet in conventicles would seem to imply a similar feeling about the freedom to print – to send abroad those noisy conventicles of letters, as he calls them. But Marvell goes on to admit the danger of the modern press, recognizing that "two or three brawny Fellows in a Corner, with mere Ink and Elbow-grease," can now "do more harm than a *hundred Systematical Divines* with their *sweaty Preaching*" (*Prose Works* I: 45). These opening pages of his first pamphlet concisely present Marvell's conflictual relationship with his medium – his recognition both of its advantages and its potential dangers. This recognition leads Marvell, in all of his pamphlets and whatever the issue of debate, to meditate on the rules of polite civic discourse in the brave new world of seventeenth century print culture – a meditation that often tends to focus on the use and abuse of pronouns.

Parker's gravest pronominal sin, and the one that most annoys Marvell, is his habit of always speaking "in the *Us* and *We* of himself" (*Prose Works* I: 277). Marvell quotes one of these instances from Parker's writing, "*For We all know*, you say" but interrupts himself with a parenthesis: "what *We* are you? I doubt you stand single, and no man else will vouch for you" (*Prose Works* I: 366). Marvell toys with his bombastic adversary, mockingly addressing him as "his *We-ship*" (*Prose Works* I: 276). Beneath this comic treatment of a minor linguistic habit lies a serious threat to Marvell's idea of civil discourse – the assumption that one's voice is representative, speaking on behalf of an unidentified many. Marvell accuses Parker: "But you imagine doubtless [. . .] that by the Doctrine of punishing Non-conformity more severely than the foulest Immorality, you have made your self the Head of a Party, and a World of People will clutter henceforward to shelter themselves under the Wing of your Patronage" (*Prose Works* I: 371). Marvell may have had much of the *Second Defense* by heart, but unlike Milton he never spoke from a position authorized as representative of England or any subsection of it, and he is deeply suspicious of those like Parker who attempt to claim such a status – in pronominal terms, of the insidious slide of "I" into "we." "But I wonder," he writes, "how he comes to be Prolocutor of the Church of England! For he talks as if he were a *Synodical Individuum*; nay, if he had a fifth Council in his belly he could not dictate more dogmatically" (*Prose Works* I: 65). In the later pamphlet *Mr. Smirke*, Marvell will make a similar accusation against Francis Turner, claiming that Turner speaks as if he contained in himself the whole of Parliament, as if he were called "to Represent in his peculiar person the whole Representa-

tive" (*Prose Works* II: 48). The problem is one of what we might call unwarranted self-pluralization, which Marvell likens at one point to the controversial practice of holding multiple ecclesiastical benefices – describing Parker as one of a particular brand of persons who “to shew they are Pluralists, never write in a modester Stile than *We, We*” (*Prose Works* I: 160). As we will see in the final pamphlet, Marvell’s stylistic and polemical concerns have a curious way of coming together.

The natural corollary to this unwarranted self-pluralization, and one which Parker is equally guilty of, is the practice of pluralizing one’s adversary and inflating him into an entire coherent sect. Marvell complains of the

pestilent way that he has of Younging me, and so making me an Epidemical person, affixing thereby what hath ever, he pretends to have been said or done by any in the Cause of Non-conformity at any time to my account: although [...] he had been more kind, if, as sometimes he does out of civility he had Thou’d me to the end of the Chapter. (*Prose Works* I: 267)

This “epidemical Person” is simply the negative other of Parker’s “synodical individuum” and the image of Turner as one-man Parliament; all are examples of the assumption of an unfounded representative status. Marvell is attempting the difficult task of speaking of and for the non-conformists while not on behalf of them – not as the head of a party to whose beliefs he subscribes. So while Parker wants to play at Milton and Salmasius – two doughty controversialists clashing, each the representative of a specific political or social group – Marvell’s ideal of written controversy seems to be one of two authors representing only themselves, speaking respectfully in the “I” and “thou” rather than the “we” and plural “you.” The problem is that at this point in his polemical career Marvell is far from living up to this ideal. If Parker sins in the first and second person plural, Marvell’s own particular vice is very clearly in the third person singular. Over the course of the *Rehearsal* he speaks much more frequently “of” rather than “to” Parker, offering the reader a brief and none too flattering biography of his opponent, speculating on all the possible Parker ancestors (such as Martin Parker, atheist purveyor of doggerel verse), and retailing the occasional bit of gossip – all of which however is quite common in the genre of animadversion. But Marvell takes it a step further, speaking in the third person not simply of Parker but of Bayes – the fictional adversary he creates by fusing the raw material of Parker with the ridiculous playwright from George Villiers, the Duke of Buckingham’s comedy *The Rehearsal* (just as his later antagonist Turner becomes Mr. Smirke, a minor character from George Etherege’s *Man of Mode*). In Marvell’s hands, Parker’s six main



theses against the nonconformists become the six scenes of one of Bayes' absurd creations. The grave personage of the arch-deacon can suddenly be seen in various ridiculous postures – running off to his publisher with his breeches down, flirting with the ladies of his parish in private chambers, or skulking around town attempting to overhear the good people praising his books.

While such poetic license clearly leads Marvell away from the ideal "I-thou" conversation, one can hardly wish the fault undone. It was after all his brilliant satire of Parker-Bayes that made the *Rehearsal* such an immediate sensation – a book Gilbert Burnet claimed was thoroughly relished by all ranks of society, "from the king down to the tradesman" (478). But beyond its spectacular entertainment value, Marvell's third person fictionalization of both Parker and Turner allows him to explore the causes of the unwarranted pluralizations these authors perform in their own work. By turning his antagonists into creatures obviously of his own making Marvell is able to provide his readers with novelistic glimpses into the secret workings of their minds – even to depict them at the moment they conceive their own devious polemical strategies. He describes Parker plotting his book:

But yet, thought he again [. . .] in all matters of Argument I will so muddle myself in Ink, that there shall be no catching no finding me; and besides I will speak alwayes with so Magisterial a Confidence [. . .] and plain men shall think that I durst not talk at such a rate but that I have a Commission. I will first, said he in his heart, like a stout Vagrant, beg, and, if that will not do, I will command the Question; and as soon as I have got it I will so alter the property and put on another Periwig, that I defie them all for discovering me or ever finding it again. (*Prose Works* I: 121)

Several strands of the pronominal narrative come together in this passage. Through Marvell's fictional "he" we see Parker at work, creating his magisterial "We" voice as a deep stratagem to cloak his weak and ineffectual "I." Finally Marvell is even able to offer a biographical account of Parker's fall from singularity into the state of degraded plurality. He describes a young Samuel Parker suddenly ravished with a sense of self-importance at the sanctity of his office, and being lifted off the ground in ecstasy – giving himself a strong crack on the head, which was the beginning of his unfortunate megalomania: "he grew beyond all measure elated, and that crack of his Scull, as in broken Looking-Glasses, multiply'd him in self-conceit and imagination" (*Prose Works* I: 76).

So far I have tried to show not only Marvell's tentative formulation of an "I-thou" ideal for polemical address, but also the ways in which this ideal fails in the *Rehearsal* – first through Parker's attempt to pluralize both himself and his adversary, to make it a pitched battle of champions representing different social groups, and then through Marvell's creation of a fictional "he" to describe Parker (and later Turner), which allows Marvell to explain psychologically the megalomania he sees behind the unjustified use of "*Us and We*" (*Prose Works* I: 277). But finally, in the second part of the *Rehearsal*, Marvell revisits the question of the first person plural and what exactly it signifies in the work of his *We-ship*, Mr. Parker-Bayes. When Parker claims: "*We derive not therefore the Magistrate's Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction from any grant of our Saviours*," Marvell abruptly breaks in: "*We derive it not*: that is, sure you and your Book. For if you meant it otherwise, you should have done well to shew your Plenipotence from all those that authorized you. However methinks betwixt You and your Book, you might have had more wit" (*Prose Works* I: 296). At last, Marvell seems to have cracked the pronominal mystery – if Parker cannot justify his assumed role as plural speaker by showing any official authorization ("your Plenipotence from those who authorized you") then the first person plural can only mean one thing – the author and his Book. For the remainder of the *Rehearsal* Bayes and his book travel everywhere together, even occasionally "lodg[ing] at one another's expense" (*Prose Works* I: 352). Marvell's "he" seems in danger of becoming "they" – man and book. But Parker and his Book more often appear in conflict, with Marvell playing the part of one trying to determine exactly how they relate to each other. Parker accuses Marvell of perverting the design of his treatise. Marvell responds: "What do I know the Designs that are managed betwixt him and his Book when they are together in Private? But when any discourse is made publick, it must abide the common interpretation" (*Prose Works* I: 292).

In the genre of animadversion, a very close author-text relationship is generally taken for granted – in the sense that every aspect of the text and its flaws (from logical mistakes and misattributed sources to a poor grasp of Latin) can be used by the animadverter to undermine the character of the author. After dividing Parker's "we" into man and book, Marvell begins jokingly to question how close this connection actually is:

Your Book hath said so and so concerning the Magistrate as you have seen in my former quotations. And now you come and would bear me down with more then ordinary confidence that your Book said no such thing, or else you understand its sense better than itself [. . .] But I hope at least, Mr. Bayes, that if I do convince you that the quotations are right on my part,

you will be so ingenuous as to put me upon no further trouble, but confess your Book misunderstood you and was in an errour. (*Prose Works* I: 293)

He advises Parker several times to admonish and reprove his book, for it seems to have a certain "felonious intention" separate from that of the author (*Prose Works* I: 293). However, at this point in his polemical career, Marvell does not consider very seriously the possibility of any author-text disjunctions. He is simply irritated by what he calls the "double drudgery" Parker is putting on him, of proving not only that Parker said what he said but also that he meant what he said (*Prose Works* I: 302). Marvell writes, "But, though I know this is only a piece of his Art, hoping to tire out the Auditory, not out of any belief of his own Innocence, yet a Guilty person ought not to be debarr'd from making the best of his own Case" (*Prose Works* I: 302). Far from the ideal of a personal "I-thou" correspondence, Marvell here reveals the more judicial or forensic nature of animadversion. It is a question of assigning guilt and innocence, and in this genre authors and their texts stand or fall together: "The crimes indeed are heinous, and if the Man and Book be guilty, may, when time comes, furnish special matter for an Impeachment" (*Prose Works* II: 49). So after all his playful speculation on the possibility that Parker and his treatise misunderstood each other, or that the Book had a separate, secret intention of which the author was unaware, Marvell's aim in the early pamphlets is ultimately to bring them back together, in order formally to impeach and condemn both. And this he accomplishes much to his own satisfaction: "And now I hope I have pretty well evidenced that your Book hath said what it did say, and that you meant what you said, and it was but the self same design which both of you managed together" (*Prose Works* I: 315).

In 1678, six years after the *Rehearsal* and only months before his own death, Marvell made one last appearance in the world of public controversy. In the previous year John Howe, a nonconformist minister and former chaplain to Cromwell, had published a treatise attempting to reconcile God's foreknowledge with his exhortations to his creatures. This rather innocuous work provoked the sharp response of Thomas Danson, another nonconformist minister but of a more strictly Calvinist persuasion, who turned the controversy into a debate on predestinarian theology. In the simplest terms, Howe had argued that God's immediate concurrence was necessary to our good works, while to our wicked deeds He enables but does not positively determine; Danson then replied by insisting that immediate concurrence was necessary to both. The intricacies of the argument do not concern me here, mostly because they did not concern Marvell either. He wrote his *Remarks Upon a Late Disingenuous Discourse* primarily because he was offended with Danson's



tone and style – his hectoring posture, his belittling of Howe, and his pedantic argumentation. Marvell has almost nothing to say directly about the question under discussion; his intervention is purely to teach people how civil discourse is to be conducted, for which he takes Howe as a positive example to be followed and Danson as representing everything to be avoided. The reader coming from the *Rehearsal* and expecting a similar pyrotechnic satire will be disappointed. The late polemical Marvell does not resort to *ad hominem* attacks, retail interesting gossip, or turn his adversaries into his own ridiculous *dramatis personae*. Annabel Patterson has claimed that in the act of refuting Parker, Marvell had abandoned his pacifist ideal (which I have been relating to his ideal of an “I-thou” form of polemical address) and that “the more successfully he attacked Parker’s personality, the closer he came to committing Parker’s own offences” (116). This led him to adopt what she calls “obvious strategies of depersonalization” in the late *Remarks* (116). In terms of my interest in pronouns, the authorial “I” disappears almost entirely as Marvell attempts to become a kind of vanishing mediator for other polemical adversaries. The pamphlet is signed only “By a Protestant.”

Perhaps more interesting than his own self-effacement is Marvell’s depersonalization of Danson in the *Remarks*. In fact, as far as Marvell is concerned, Danson’s treatise *De Causa Dei* does not even have an author. Marvell makes one final pronominal innovation, referring throughout the *Remarks* to Danson’s book merely as “It,” in contrast to Howe whom he simply refers to by name. Danson had placed his initials, T. D., on the cover page of his pamphlet. Marvell writes: “By which first Letters, seeing it appears he desires to pass *Incognito*, I will so far observe good manners, as to interpret them only *The Discourse*, heartily wishing there were some way of finding it Guilty, without reflecting upon the Author” (*Prose Works* II: 421). Marvell here revisits the idea of a book taking on a life of its own, distinct from the author. But what was said only in jest about Parker – that perhaps his book misunderstood him, or had its own secret intentions and hidden malice – is spoken much more earnestly in the case of Danson. In the *Rehearsal* the ultimate goal was to prove that Parker and his text (that mysterious “We”) were one and the same: man and book both found guilty. In the *Remarks*, however, the book is condemned so that the author may go free. By its self-aggrandizing “we” Parker’s text attempted to claim a representative status it did not possess; Marvell’s “It,” by contrast, makes Danson’s text entirely unrepresentative – even of its author. In terms of seventeenth century polemic, the *Remarks* is really the opposite extreme of Milton’s *Pro Se Defensio*, where he tells Alexander More:

If I find that you wrote or contributed one page of this book, or even one versicle, if I find that you published it, or procured or persuaded anyone to publish it, or that you were in charge of its publication, or even lent yourself to the smallest part of the work [. . .] for me you alone will be the author of the whole work, the culprit and the crier. (712-13)

Milton is prepared, if More has so much as breathed on the book, to insist that it belongs to and represents him entirely; Marvell on the other hand completely absolves Danson of authorship, making *The Discourse*, or “*It*,” something like what Milton’s devils image themselves to be: self-begot by their own quickening power. In this way Marvell protects the author from the contaminating effects of his own text, in order to “preserve his [. . .] former Reputation, and leave him a door open to Ingenuity for the future” (*Prose Works* II: 421).

With the author thus safely preserved, Marvell can focus his critique on the now autochthonous “*It*” of *The Discourse*. His personifications of “*It*” are remarkably strange and visceral. “*It*” is described at various times as having its own brain, memory, eye-sight, nervous system – even its own sweaty arm-pits. It is *The Discourse* itself that cites innumerable authors to show “*Its* great Reading,” and Marvell imagines this autonomous text reading Howe’s work with its eyes by turns open and shut (*Prose Works* II: 422, 450). It comes as little surprise to find a few pages later that not only is “*It*” capable of reading but that “*It*” has all the while been reading and writing itself, as Marvell describes “*Its* Pen” and all the faults it commits over the course of its own self-inscription (*Prose Works* II: 430). Not only does “*It*” read and write itself, but ultimately “*It*” comes to argue not with Howe or Marvell, but again only with itself:

This indeed will serve *The Discourse* for argument either of Discourse or Dispute with *It* self [. . .] But till *It* be better agreed with it, and can come to a clearer understanding of *It* self, no third person needs or can be interested in the Contest further than as a spectator of some strange sight for his money, like the double Child from Sussex. (*Prose Works* II: 431)

Against Parker’s self-important “we’s” and “you’s,” with their attempt to represent large undefined swathes of the population, this final “*It*” is perfectly self-enclosed, arguing only with itself, put on display like a carnival monstrosity. In the *Rehearsal*, Marvell indulged in a brief fantasy of Parker living in the time of Caligula, when the Emperor would force those authors whose works displeased him to blur them over with a sponge, eat them, or lick them out with their tongues. *The Discourse*, having no repentant author to publicly consume it, has to do the job itself.

Marvell writes: "and were *The Discourse* obliged to eat *Its* own words, and feed upon *Its* own Chain of syllogisms, 'twere a diet, though slender and unclean, yet fit enough for a *Barbarian*" (*Prose Works* II: 458). *The Discourse*, after reading, writing, and arguing with itself, will finally disappear by eating itself – a self-consuming artifact, if ever there was one.

At times Marvell's descriptions of the authorless text, the independent discourse, sound vaguely like Barthes' formulation of the death of the author, the key difference being that this for Marvell is not a description of literature *per se*, but only of bad literature, or literature with "felonious intention," as Marvell described Parker's work. In Marvell's formulation, encountering an authorless text like *The Discourse*, with its chains of entangled and often contradictory codes wound like human intestines, would not provoke any erotic *frisson* on the part of the reader. In fact Marvell's version of the death of the author is not in the service of any kind of emerging reader but remains very much author-centered, the author's death being also his possible redemption – that act of leaving the door open to future ingenuity. So while Barthes' removal of the author was "an anti-theological activity" (147), a refusal to impose a limit on the text, Marvell's entire formulation is deeply theological. In fact, his different treatment of Howe and Danson's texts seems to follow quite closely Howe's argument about God's influence over good and wicked acts. Howe's central claim was that God immediately concurs with our pious motions but not with our evil ones, while Danson insisted that God's will is necessary and immediate to both. While Marvell refuses to weigh in on the controversy, claiming "I [. . .] meddle not as an Opinionist either way," his author-text formulations mirror Howe's description of God-creature relations (*Prose Works* II: 433). An author retains a close connection to his pious productions, directly concurring to all of its statements, claims, and questions. Howe's book represents him, so closely in fact that Marvell expresses concern lest it be "defaced, mutilated, stabb'd in so many places" by Danson – "and the Author through it" he adds (*Prose Works* II: 420). Danson, on the other hand, cannot be hurt through any treatment of his text because Danson, as we have seen, is no longer the author. A bad text is a wicked creature whose demeanor has become entirely its own – a being with no authorial dependence. In aligning the God-creature and author-text relation in this way, Marvell may in fact have taken his cue from an analogy of Danson's which combines them both. Several times in *De Causa Dei* Danson illustrates his predestinarian theology by the image of a writing-master holding and guiding his pupil's hand as he forms the letters on a page. The creaturely hand concurs with the divine, tracing out a script predetermined by God. It is perhaps against this rigorous causal chain that Marvell improvises his image of the anonymous, autonomous dis-

course, holding its own pen in the act of self-inscription. If Danson's conception were true, he asks, "what Christian but would rather wish he had never known Writing-Master?" (*Prose Works* II: 469).

In closing, we might consider how Marvell views his own writing in the context of this perilous maze of pronouns. It seemed in the *Rehearsal* as if Marvell's ideal form of written controversy were a sustained "I-thou" dialogue deliberately shunning the unwarranted pluralizations of Parker – of speaking in the "us," "we," and plural "you." But his own treatment of Parker, the creation of a fictional "he" that Marvell can control and lampoon, conflicted with that ideal. The adversary of the *Remarks* is no longer a "thou," a "you," or even a "he," but an "*It*," and in thus adapting his polemical strategy Marvell's "I" drops out almost completely as he attempts to create in his own writing an impersonal field in which other authors and texts can interact with civility and respect. But in the end, how close does Marvell consider his relation to his own pamphlets? Do they accurately represent him? Is he close and implicit with them as Howe was – able even to be stabbed through his text, like some poor Polonius; or does he see the finished work more as an autonomous "*It*" which he releases so that it can pursue its own agenda? On the one hand, he wrote to Sir Edward Harley of his plans for the second part of the *Rehearsal*: "I am drawn in [. . .] I hope by a good Providence, to intermeddle in a noble and high argument" (*Poems and Letters* II: 328). But if he rises briefly here to a Miltonic strain, Marvell begins that same text with an argument against writing (especially invective), in which he concludes that "not to Write at all is much the safer course of Life" (*Prose Works* I: 236). He often likes to end his pamphlets with an appeal to a third party (such as Bacon in the *Rehearsal*) who does not so much side with him as seem to condemn both parties. "I am weary of such stuff, both mine own and his," he tells the reader of *Mr. Smirke*, and he ends the appended *Essay* with: "And upon this condition, *let my Book also* (yea my self if it were needful) *be burnt by the hand of the Animadverter*" (*Prose Works* II: 113, 176). But biographically, the author seems to have come off well enough in anonymously printing that same pamphlet. He describes its reception to Harley: "The book said to be Marvels makes what shift it can in the world but the Author walks negligently up & down as unconcerned" (*Poems and Letters* II: 345). Marvell seems to experience here a thrill of relief in his own separation from his text. Perhaps, in the larger context of Marvell's pronominal adventures, it would be more precise to rewrite this line: "*It* makes what shift it can in the world but *I* walk negligently up & down as unconcerned."



*References*

- Barthes, Roland. *Image, Music, Text*. Trans. Stephen Heath. New York: Hill and Wang, 1977.
- Burnet, Gilbert. *History of My Own Time*. Ed. M. J. Routh. Vol. 1. Oxford, 1833.
- Marvell, Andrew. *Poems and Letters*. Ed. H. M. Margoliouth. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.
- . *The Prose Works of Andrew Marvell*. Eds. Martin Dzelzainis and Annabel Patterson. 2 vols. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.
- Milton, John. *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*. Ed. Don Wolfe. Vol. 4. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966.
- Parker, Samuel. *A Discourse of Ecclesiastical Politie*. London: 1671.
- Patterson, Annabel. *Marvell: The Writer in Public Life*. Harlow: Longman, 2000.