The Metaphor of Perspective

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Declaration

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Abstract

This thesis interprets John Dryden’s *Annus Mirabilis* (1667) and Andrew Marvell’s *The Last Instructions to a Painter* (1667) in light of recent scholarship drawing on English and Dutch visual culture traditions. These poems were written in close temporal proximity, and both provide a highly politicised account of the Second Anglo-Dutch War (1664-7). Marvell’s poem is traditionally read as a satiric response to Edmund Waller’s panegyric on the war in *Instructions to a Painter* (1665), thus providing the final word in the series of satiric *Advice-to-a-Painter* poems that Waller spawned. Dryden’s, Marvell’s and Waller’s poems explicitly draw upon visual cultural traditions, and it is the purpose of this thesis to explore the political implications of those choices. In this thesis I am not making a claim for the indiscriminate, general reference to visual cultural or scientific material in Dryden’s and Marvell’s poem; I am arguing that the choices they make quite explicitly include certain things and exclude others, which suggests a knowing attitude.

Marvell employs Waller’s motif of giving instructions to a portrait painter; his poem conforms to principles of decorum long associated with “good” painting, but satirically subverts them to create a series of grotesque images of courtiers and parliamentarians in keeping with his corrupt subject matter. Dryden’s *Annus Mirabilis* also draws upon visual cultural material to give a more favorable account of the war, but the poem is to one side of the “painter poem” tradition. Dryden’s political argument is aligned with Waller’s, but he works to praise the English without direct reference to the Waller panegyric.

Waller and Dryden both allude to perspective techniques used in Renaissance court portraiture and painting in order to celebrate Charles II and his generals and to
portray a sense of national unity. Marvell alludes to English Mannerist and Dutch art traditions to create a poetic State Portrait designed to challenge Waller’s and Dryden’s Royalist interpretations of events. Marvell uses Mannerist stylisation to critique the decadence of Charles II and his court, while referring to Dutch painting techniques, characterised by a high attention to detail, to draw attention to unflattering features traditionally “painted” out.

In *Annus Mirabilis* order is achieved by combining classical imagery with principles of Baconian science that sought to taxonomise nature, and to “reform” language, strengthening the relationship between signifier and signified, and imposing a sense of order and unity on the world. In *Last Instructions* the metaphor of the microscope functions as a framing device for reading Marvell’s poem. This enables Marvell to distort his subject matter in the name of “scientific” truth, with the deliberate failure to provide a unified image leaving the reader to piece together the various episodes. As a result, Marvell demonstrates that any attempt to represent the war is going to be partial and subjective.

By studying the aesthetic and scientific techniques together, I argue that Dryden creates a poem in which the spatial design supports his praise for Charles II and the hierarchy in the state he wants to invoke. Conversely, Marvell creates a poetic State Portrait that alludes to Dutch painting techniques and the microscope to distort and fragment his subject matter, thereby challenging both Waller’s and Dryden’s imposition of order and unity on a war characterised by political corruption and strategic failure. Considering the aesthetic and scientific references concurrently draws attention to the use of perspectival cues that shape the political arguments of each poem. This method is important for drawing attention to Dryden’s and Marvell’s different approaches to engaging with key events of the Second Anglo-
Dutch war and the multi-disciplinary nature of these representations; an aspect that has, until now, been under examined in the critical tradition.

Chapter one, “Panegyric and Satire in Waller’s, Dryden’s and Marvell’s poems on the Second Anglo-Dutch War” sets the context for my analysis by focusing on Marvell’s satiric Advice-to-a-Painter poems to which Last Instructions provides the final word. I ask whether there is evidence of Marvell’s knowledge of Dutch and English Mannerist painting traditions, and conclude that Marvell alludes to these traditions explicitly and systematically. In chapter two, “The Ekphrastic portraits in Waller’s, Dryden, and Marvell’s Anglo-Dutch War poems” I focus on the portraits that appear throughout Dryden’s and Marvell’s poems, and examine these in light of English, Mannerist and Dutch portraiture traditions. Chapter three, “Poetry as History Painting: Renaissance and Mannerist perspectives in Dryden’s Annum Mirabilis and Marvell’s Last Instructions to a Painter;” builds upon my analysis of Dryden’s and Marvell’s portraiture to consider the genre of the istoria or history painting for which Marvell’s poem purports to represent the “third sitting.” I argue that the composition of Annum Mirabilis adheres to principles of linear perspective, while Marvell’s Last Instructions is more usefully considered in terms of Mannerist and Dutch compositional techniques. Chapter four “Natural philosophy, optics and theatricality in Dryden’s Annum Mirabilis” focuses on Dryden’s metaphoric staging of the action in terms of a Renaissance stage set. I use Dryden’s allusions to the physical space of the theatre, where audiences were seated in relation to the King at the centre, as a governing metaphor for the civil hierarchy and perspective established in the poem. In chapter five, “Marvell’s Metaphor of the Microscope and the Partial Perspective of Dutch Visual Culture,” I focus on Marvell’s reference to the microscope in Last Instructions as a metaphor for reading the poem. In contrast
to the aesthetically and politically unified structure of Dryden’s poem, the pluralism of the microscopic perspective and the overlaps with Dutch aesthetic techniques implies that any account of events will always be partial and subjective.
Notes on Editions

All references to Waller’s *Instructions to a Painter* are taken from George Gilfillan’s 1873 edition.

All references to Dryden’s poem are taken from the Paul Hammond and David Hopkins edition, which uses the 1667 third issue. The poem was reprinted in 1668 (probably pirated) and 1688, but there is no evidence Dryden oversaw these editions (Hammond and Hopkins 106). The 1668 edition makes some necessary corrections, but introduces new errors (106).

All references to Marvell’s poems are taken from Nigel Smith’s 2007 edition, which predominantly uses the 1681 copy text. Bodleian Library, MS Eng. Poet. D. 49 (Bod 1), an annotated copy of 1681, has readings that have often been accepted by previous editors and is assumed to have belonged to Marvell’s nephew William Popple. Bod. 1. also includes the Cromwell poems and the Restoration verse satires excluded from previous volumes over questions of authorship. Smith’s edition is greatly indebted to H.M Margoliouth’s extensive annotation of Marvell’s works published in 1927. Smith also draws upon more recent contributions from Crooke, Thomson, Grosart, Legouis, Duncan-Jones, Donno and Wilcher (Smith *The Poems* xiv-xv). Smith modernises spelling, but mostly retains original punctuation.

I have provided links to all images referenced in my thesis in the footnotes; where images are taken from databases not freely accessible, I have provided an alternative link. Each of these images is also referenced in the general bibliography as per the MLA style. For citations and bibliography, I have used the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (7th edition), including formatting changes from the
newly released 8th edition that can be located on the OWL Perdu website.

https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/22/
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Introduction

This thesis explores the use of perspectival metaphors in John Dryden’s and Andrew Marvell’s conflicting accounts of the second Anglo-Dutch War (1664-7). Dryden’s heroic account of the war in *Annum Mirabilis* (1667) uses humanist principles of decorum and European Renaissance theories of linear perspective to create a virtual three-dimensional representation of the war. Dryden draws upon classical texts and images, as well as emerging ideas about Baconian science, to prophecy England’s naval success. In doing so, however, he glosses over strategic failures and political divisions in order to create a harmonious image that reinforces the monarchist hierarchy of the state. Marvell’s satiric critique of the English war effort in *The Last Instructions to a Painter* (1667) employs the motif of a speaker instructing a painter to depict the nation at war. Marvell employs perspective techniques that appear to reference Dutch and English Mannerist visual culture, as well as emerging models of scientific experimentalism, in order to draw attention to details traditionally painted out of an official State Portrait. Until now, these poems have rarely been read together, despite being published in the same year. Marvell’s poem is traditionally

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1 Lady State portraits were a style of genre painting that metaphorically depicted the State as a Lady.
2 Paul Hammond and David Hopkins suggest that *Annum Mirabilis* was published ca. December 1666 - January 1667 largely on the basis of events depicted. These events span from March 1665- December 1666, and the prefatory address to his patron Sir Robert Howard is dated 10 November 1666 (106). Nigel Smith suggests that *Last Instructions* was composed between 31 August and 28 November 1667, on the basis that several MS copies and a printed edition carry the date 4 September 1667 (Smith *The Poems* 362). This was shortly after the Earl of Clarendon (against whom the *Second and Third Advices* are directed) resigned the seals of office (30 August 1667) and fled to France (29 November 1667) (362).
read against the background of Edmund Waller’s 1666 poem Instructions to a Painter for the drawing of the Posture and Progress of his Majesty’s Forces at Sea, under the Command of His Highness Royal; together with the Battle and Victory obtained by the Dutch, June 3 1665, and the ancient tradition of ut pictura poesis. This is an important backdrop for Last Instructions, but results in a narrow reading of the visual cultural materials alluded to — predominantly that of English Renaissance art which sought to create decorous and beautified images for the court. I move beyond this reading to explore Marvell’s Oppositional satire Last Instructions alongside Dryden’s Royalist Anns Mirabilis. Dryden draws upon visual cultural materials to create a highly politicised account of events, but does not use the Advice-to-a-Painter motif. In this way, Dryden separates himself from Waller’s Instructions that had become the focus of satiric attack after the war descended into a series of military and political failures. There are key differences in the visual techniques used by Dryden and Marvell in structuring their material. In particular, Marvell’s Last Instructions cannot be satisfactorily accounted for in terms of an inversion of Renaissance conventions of decorum. In order to more fully account for Marvell’s allusions to multiple media, multiple perspectives, and attention to detail, I consider alternative visual art traditions available to writers of the period. In particular, I examine English Mannerism and Dutch painting techniques, a combination of which more accurately characterises Marvell’s technique.

There is sufficient evidence to suggest Marvel’s familiarity with this material, given the high level of exchange of knowledge, artifacts and materials across Europe in the period. The extensive social, cultural and political exchange that took place between England and Holland has been document by Lisa Jardine’s book Going Dutch (2008). Jardine argues that both nations had a great deal in common politically
and commercially, and yet “each represented itself as absolutely independent and unique” (xv). The Royal Collection at Whitehall housed a number of Dutch paintings, including works by Albrecht Dürer, Hans Holbein the younger, Anthony van Dyck, Sir Peter Lely and Rembrandt, and there is evidence to suggest that throughout the 1650s and ’60s Marvell had access to the private galleries of Lord General Fairfax and Lord Wharton (Brown 82). 3 Both were aristocrats with a passion for architecture, painting, manicured gardens and poetry. Wharton built a gallery at Witchendon, one of his country estates, “120 feet long for his unparalleled collection of portraits by van Dyck and Lely” which Nicholas Von Maltzahn claims Marvell “had much occasion” to visit (259, 260). 4 Marjorie Rubright’s 2014 book Doppelgänger Dilemmas: Anglo-Dutch Relations in Early Modern English Literature and Culture has built extensively upon the identification of commonalities between the two nations, to argue that the Dutch played a crucial role in the shaping of English national identity in the period. So much so that “English representations of Anglo-Dutch relations engender and engender [a kind] of double vision” achieved through punning exchanges and ironic paradoxes evident in the literature. Rubright sets out to “tease apart the various double entendres that imbricate London and the Low Countries” (2) in order to revise our understanding of seventeenth-century Anglo-Dutch relations. Nigel Smith argues that the clearest evidence for foreign influences

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3 Philip Wharton, Fourth Barron Wharton (1613-1696) was a “northern magnate, godson of Philip III of Spain and close associate of Cromwell” (von Maltzahn 257). He was also a puritan and strong supporter of nonconformity with whom Marvell became close during the Restoration (257).
4 von Maltzahn also asserts, “The Lord Wharton had given his share of instructions to painters and may be thought the most likely patron to have commissioned the portrait of Marvell by Lely” (259).
on Marvell’s technique comes from his poetry.\(^5\) I draw upon Rubright’s study to suggest that the relationship goes beyond punning exchanges to include visual cultural references and techniques in *Last Instructions*, and that the increasingly nuanced nature of Marvell’s knowledge of Dutch culture is evident from a comparison of *The Character of Holland*, with *The Second and Third Advice to a Painter*, and *Last Instructions* to be set out in chapter one.\(^6\) To date, critical tradition has not considered Marvell’s employment of Mannerist and Dutch aesthetic techniques. My work draws attention to Marvell’s familiarity with these traditions in order to argue that they are being appropriated in *Last Instructions* to criticise both the sexual and political decadence of Charles II and his court, and Renaissance artists who seek to idealise and generalise their subject matter, despite the reality. In the opening lines of *Last Instructions*, Marvell explicitly suggests he will be experimenting with alternative painting techniques to compensate for the shortcomings of Renaissance art. I aim to show that Marvell’s references to Dutch and English Mannerist art also available in the period, results in a reading that further highlights the political nature of these metaphorical aesthetic choices.

Both Dryden’s and Marvell’s poems also depart from Waller’s *Instructions* by drawing upon contemporary scientific (or natural philosophical) theories about

\(^5\) Charles Hinnant and John Dixon Hunt also discuss Marvell’s knowledge of painting in the context of his travels in Europe, the revival of the portraiture tradition in the Renaissance, and English art collections see Hinnant and Dixon Hunt *Andrew Marvell*.

\(^6\) Hammond and Hopkins have noted that “There is evidence only for D[ryden’s] knowing Waller’s poem […] , but *A[nnumus] M[irabilis]* clearly responds defensively to the critical climate in which the others were written […] Waller’s analogues from natural history (parodied in the *Second Advice*) may have suggested to D[ryden] his own use of Georgic elements in *A[nnumus] M[irabilis]*. D[ryden] also use[s] Waller’s *Of a War with Spain* (1658)” (109).
nature and optics, giving further shape to each poet’s political argument. I build upon David Freedberg’s study *The Eye of The Lynx* (2002), a detailed study of the history of science and art in the seventeenth century which, he argues, is a story that seems divided between “New and direct observations of nature” and “arcane antiquarian researches” (1). Freedberg observes that experimental and empirical activity were “frequently accompanied by occult explanations from the fields of astrology and alchemy,” and that even though the emphasis was on observation and experiment, necromancy, physiognomy and “old magical explanations never seem to be entirely renounced” (1). Freedberg observes that the same division applies to the juxtaposition of science and poetry and the visual arts, noting the “overly poetic language in which scientific and observational breakthroughs are couched” and that this was visible in “not just the language, but also the form” (2). Claudia Swan has produced a number of studies on Dutch scientific naturalism and its influence on visual art and material culture. Her book *Art Science and Witchcraft in Early Modern Holland: Jaques de Gheyn II (1565-1629)* explores Dutch painter de Gheyn’s work in the contexts of the rise of scientific naturalism and witchcraft, and the parallels that existed between demonological and artistic theories. Swan is an historian rather than a literary scholar so her studies are slightly tangential to my project, but her insights into Dutch visual and scientific culture have provided a valuable context for my study. My reading of the relationship between science and art in Dryden’s and Marvell’s poems is couched in a recognition of the multiplicity and contradictions in the disciplines of science, visual arts and rhetoric in the period, and that each poet selectively and purposefully draws on particular theories to support his politics.

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7 “Scientific” is an anachronistic term for this period, as science and art are yet to become codified. I therefore use it interchangeably with natural philosophy throughout the thesis.
Dryden’s *Annus Mirabilis* has been discussed in terms of its references to Baconian natural philosophy, which sought to systematise nature and thereby impose a sense of order on a disordered world.\(^8\) Similarly, Marvell’s *Last Instructions* has predominantly been read in relation to Waller’s poem, and Renaissance art, or with a focus on the reference to the microscope and its association with satire.\(^9\) While insightful, these readings disregard the fact that the aesthetic and scientific imagery in the poems operates simultaneously.

In order to bring the aesthetic and scientific references in the poem together, it is first necessary to treat the key features separately. I begin by establishing the literary context with an analysis of Waller’s *Instructions* and Marvell’s satiric *Second* and *Third Advice to a Painter* poems that precede *Last Instructions*. I then turn to a study of the aesthetic techniques referenced by physical objects directly mentioned in the poems: the portrait, and the genre of history painting or *istoria*. This allows me to compare the allusions to perspective techniques in light of English, Dutch and Mannerist traditions and how they are integrated into the spatial design of Dryden’s and Marvell’s poems. I then consider the scientific dimension of each poem, and how the choice of scientific imagery corresponds to the visual techniques used. Finally, these are brought back together to show how each writer draws upon competing visual cultural references available in the period to represent the same subject matter, but from very different perspectives. In responding to Waller, Marvell’s satires further politicise the visual culture references. This prompts a reconsideration of both Waller’s and Dryden’s poems in light of my approach. A

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\(^8\) See Engetsu and Burke’s “*Annus Mirabilis.*”

\(^9\) Joanna Picciotto reads Marvell’s *Last Instructions* in the context of Baconian science, as well as discussing the relationship between the microscope and satire seen in Steven Zwicker’s reading of the poem (See “Virgins and Whores”).
study of *The Second and Third Advices* is also necessary for establishing the key aspects of analysis and setting the order in which I examine the material. The *Advices* provide a crucial context for identifying Marvell’s engagement with Waller’s *Instructions*, demonstrating that while he borrows the painter motif as a framing device, Marvell’s response to Waller is far more complex that simply inverting these techniques. Analysis of the *Advices* reveals a number of references to Dutch culture used to critique the English, as well as an interest in scientific and aesthetic “experiment” that I will argue are both developed and brought together in *Last Instructions* through the metaphor of the microscope. The metaphoric view through the lens results in a detailed account of the war from multiple perspectives — techniques characteristic of Dutch art — as well as the capacity to distort and manipulate his subject matter according to the methods of the “new” science.

To date, very little scholarship on these poems takes such an interdisciplinary approach to interpreting the poetic images of *Annus Mirabilis* and *Last Instructions*. From a methodological perspective, my work originates in Peter Erikson and Clark Hulse’s *Early Modern Visual Culture: Representation, Race and Empire* (2000). This collection of essays explores the social context in which visual cultural materials such as paintings, textiles, maps and artifacts were produced, and how their creation and collection played an important role in English self-fashioning. Erikson and Hulse argue for the need to examine “subcanonical materials” (2), as opposed to focusing on canonical art and artists. Rather than defining “visual culture” as “the study of the social construction of visual experience,” they argue that it is equally “the study of the visual construction of social experience” (Erikson 1). In the process of displacing interest from Italy towards England, references to the northern aesthetics of Germany and the Netherlands are alluded to in terms of their relative
poverty, a notion my own study is keen to overturn (Heal 216). More recent works have built on visual culture and identity, to include the study of visual cultural references in poetry of the period. One such study is Anne Hurley’s 2005 John Donne’s Poetry and early Modern Visual Culture, which focuses on the influence of various aspects of English visual culture on Donne’s poetry and prose. Each of Hurley’s chapters is structured around an instance of visual culture that is either directly or obliquely relevant to a selection of Donne’s work, in order to argue that his use of visual culture is “instrumental rather than mimetic,” in other words, deployed intentionally and selectively as “as a means to an end, rather than a focus in and of itself” (Hurley 206; Meakin 1326). I also argue that Dryden and Marvell are selectively using visual arts and scientific or natural philosophical materials in the service of their political arguments. Hurley draws upon examples from English visual culture such as civic rituals and spectacles rather than focusing on particular genres such as portraiture, genre and landscape. Hurley’s work has been generative of aspects of my study, however my references to visual culture focus predominantly on the visual arts and the theatre as governed by my subject matter.

Methodologically, my work is also indebted to Katherine Acheson’s important recent work on military and garden handbooks, and other forms of diagrammatic illustrations available in the period, which she applies to interpreting a variety of literary texts, including Marvell’s Last Instructions.10 I use Acheson’s ideas about “coding orientations” or perspectival cues operating in literary texts to establish the role these play in the metaphoric spatial construction of Dryden’s and Marvell’s poems. In this way, I intend to uncover the political significance to the

aesthetic techniques referenced in *Annus Mirabilis* and *Last Instructions*. I will draw upon Alexandra Buccheri’s recent work, which reconsiders the origin of Italian Renaissance and Baroque cloud compositions in light of the theatrical tradition. Buccheri demonstrates the mutual exchange of linear perspective techniques used in paintings, frescos and set designs. Acheson and Buccheri provide a general insight about mutual exchange between painting and literary works. I develop this by considering the metaphoric use of perspective and spatial design in the context of English and Dutch visual arts traditions. This will allow me to identify key differences in the poetic construction of the two poems, and to demonstrate the innovative ways Dryden and Marvell build on available materials to create unique representations of the second Anglo-Dutch war. I will argue that Dryden’s *Annus Mirabilis* draws upon the English Renaissance technique of linear perspective to create an historical narrative account of the war. Renaissance perspective cues are used in the portraits embedded in the poem, as well as the references to the Renaissance theatre that frame the action in terms of a metaphoric theatre of war, thus tying the microcosmic and macrocosmic worlds of the poem together. In contrast, I argue that Marvell’s *Last Instructions* draws upon Dutch perspective

11 Acheson use of the term “coding orientations” is derived from Kress and van Leeuwen’s 1996 book *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*, in which they offer methods and practices for the analysis and interpretation of visual messages (Stein 172). They explore the ideological processes of sign making and argue that rather than being depoliticised and decontextualised, this visual language “can only be understood in the context of, on the one hand, the range of forms of modes of public communication available in that society, and, on the other hand, their uses and valuations” (Kress and van Leeuwen 33) (Stein 171). Acheson defines coding orientations as “a set of assumptions and rules that a reader or viewer will use to extract information from a visual tableau, through which its effectiveness will be assessed” (Military Illustrations” 160).
techniques, which produced two-dimensional as opposed to three-dimensional images, and often experimented with multiple perspectives, to produce a detailed, yet partial account of the war that challenges the unity of Dryden’s narrative.

I begin by outlining the key events of the Second Anglo-Dutch war, and the set-piece battles that provide the background for Waller’s, Dryden’s and Marvell’s poems. I then provide brief biographical material on the three poets, before giving an exposition of the political and naval events directly referenced in each poems and the political stance taken.

1. The Second Anglo-Dutch War (1665-7)

It is not my intention to attribute causes to the Second Anglo-Dutch war, however an outline of key events is necessary for situating the political and visual aspects of Dryden’s and Marvell’s poems. Conflicting economic interests remained a source of friction between England and Holland, especially following the treaty of Westminster that brought an end to the First Anglo-Dutch war of 1652-4. The Restoration revived diplomatic discussions, but problems arose when the English sought to reinstate the 1651 Navigation Act that would restrict the use of foreign ships for trade between Britain and its colonies. After several attempts to reach a settlement, war broke out in January 1665 (Seaward 438).

The first major battle of the Second Anglo-Dutch War, the Battle of Lowestoft, took place in June 1665. The battle showed signs of early English success with seventeen Dutch ships taken or destroyed, compared to one English ship, and over six thousand Dutch men killed or captured (Jones 158). However, England’s initial victory was followed by numerous strategic failures, in part attributable to the
poor supply of the navy and factional infighting. In light of subsequent defeats, a series of satiric *Advices*, including two attributed to Marvell, were written in response to Waller’s panegyric that focused only on the heroics of the Battle of Lowestoft. The first naval debacle was the failed attack on the Dutch fleet in the supposedly neutral port of Bergen. The English, under the command of the Earl of Sandwich, had negotiated an arrangement with the King of Denmark to attack the Dutch in return for half the spoils (Hammond and Hopkins 137). When the government of Bergen sought to delay the attacks at the eleventh hour, the English fleet attacked anyway. The fleet was bombarded by the Dutch from the shore forts, and forced to withdraw with the loss of one hundred and eighteen men (137). In *Annus Mirabilis*, Dryden glosses over the details of this defeat, claiming the English were left bereft of the prizes due to poor weather. The account of the battle is also infused with imagery from Waller’s *Upon the Present War with Spain, and the First Victory Obtained at Sea* (1658-9), a greatly elaborated heroic poem about a naval victory in 1656 (Chernaik “Waller” 6).

The second set piece battle began in 1666, following an alliance between the Dutch and French. The French commander Beaufort was instructed to join his fleet with the Dutch, however Louis reneged due to the unknown strength of the Dutch and the English fleets (Jones 169). Caught off guard, the English knew little about the location of Beaufort’s fleet, believing it was about to enter the Channel, when in fact it had only just arrived at Lisbon. This confusion led to the infamous decision to divide the fleet, half going with Prince Rupert to intercept Beaufort, while the rest, under George Monck, moved to cover the Thames estuary to defend against Dutch invasion (Jones 169). Upon sighting the Dutch fleet at anchor some way off the

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12 For allusions to Waller’s *Of a War with Spain* see *Annus Mirabilis* lines 109, 110-12 and 113-6.
Flanders coast, Monck decided to attack, rather than waiting for support. This decision led to the overwhelming defeat satirised by Marvell in *The Second Advice to a Painter* (1666). The defeat marked the beginning of the Four Days’ Battle, which resulted in another disastrous loss for the English despite the admirals claiming a victory. The battle is also treated favourably in Dryden’s day-by-day account in *Annis Mirabilis* (lines 213-544), despite the fact that the English lost two generals and four ships, with a further six ships captured and thirty more needing major repairs (Jones 170). The remainder of the 1666 campaign was defined by the unsuccessful attempt of the French and Dutch to unite their fleets following their alliance, and of the English to intercept either of them.

Another decisive incident occurred in June 1667 when the Dutch attacked the English in the Medway — an event satirised in Marvell’s *Last Instructions* (523-96). The disastrous outcome was once again the result of naval mismanagement, and a failure of government intelligence. Rather than going out to fight, the English fleet remained in the harbor, a decision which J. R. Jones states is partly attributable to a shortage of resources, and the expectation of an early peace settlement on account of Charles II’s secret negotiations with France, and to (Jones 174). When Dutch General Michiel De Ruyter’s fleet anchored in the Thames estuary, the English falsely believed a chain would protect the ships laid up in the Medway. Instead, the Dutch fleet sailed through unhindered after the crew of the frigate guarding the chain abandoned ship (Jones 177). The result was the burning of three ships, and the towing away of England’s prize ship *The Royal Charles* — an outcome recounted cynically in Marvell’s *Last Instructions* (lines 611-20). With De Ruyter now controlling the Channel, and the parliament unwilling to grant further supply to the
King, the Treaty of Breda was signed on the 31 July 1667, with the English forced to make a number of concessions with regard to the Navigation Act.

The following sections will provide brief biographical details on Edmund Waller, John Dryden and Andrew Marvell and an overview of Instructions to a Painter, Annum Mirabilis and Last Instructions respectively. This overview is necessary to identify each poet’s political affiliations, and the temporal and stylistic relationship between the three poems. A comparison of the different approaches to representing the war will set the foundations for my argument that Waller and Dryden draw upon English Renaissance traditions to support their Royalist version of events, while Marvell appears to draw upon English Mannerist and Dutch traditions to construct an Oppositional version of events.

2. Biographical details of the three poets

Edmund Waller (1606-1687)

Waller was born into a wealthy Hertfordshire family on 3 March 1606, the eldest son of Robert Waller, a retired barrister with extensive landholdings, and his wife Ann. The young Waller was educated at Eton, before being admitted to King’s College, Cambridge in 1621, but left before completing a degree. Waller was elected to Parliament in 1624, and for the next five years sat for “Ilchester, Chipping, Wycombe, and Amersham in the House of Commons” (Chernaik “Waller” 3). In 1640 and 1643 he played an active role in the Short and Long Parliaments under Charles I, during which time he sided with those seeking greater moderation from the King (3). Subsequently Waller was accused of using his popularity in Parliament to capitalise on the strong desire among parliamentary moderates for reconciliation
with the King, by urging a negotiated settlement upon parliament (Chernaik “Waller” 4). When the negotiations turned violent, and the plot was brought to light in the House of Commons, Waller was banished from sitting in parliament until 1651 (Chernaik “Waller” 5). A decade later he was re-elected to parliament under Charles II and continued to serve until 1685 (Chernaik “Waller” 3). Chernaik argues that throughout the reign of Charles II, Waller played an active role in parliament, but “the stance he habitually assumed there was more independent of the court than in such poems as Instructions to a Painter,” and that he was appointed to some two hundred Parliamentary committees between 1661 and 1681 (Chernaik “Waller” 7).

In Chernaik’s opinion, “his allegiance, as under Cromwell’s Protectorate, was not to a particular ruler or administration, but to his idea of the nation” (7). Waller was a consistent proponent of religious toleration, and was concerned with the growth of trade; “Whether defending or attacking the government, Waller emphasised the primacy of the national interest, the importance of the law, and common sense” (Chernaik “Waller” 8).

Waller wrote poetry throughout his parliamentary career, and although he held no court office under Charles I, his work was very much admired at court on account of his lyric style, and his praise of Charles I, and his Queen (Chernaik “Waller” 2). Key influences on Waller’s political views and his poetry were the so-called “Falkland circle,” a group created by Lucius Carey, Lord Falkland, in the 1630s and known for its ideas of political moderation and religious tolerance, views Waller defended throughout his career, along with other Royalist writers such as John Evelyn and Thomas Hobbes (Chernaik “Waller” 2-3).
John Dryden (1631-1700)

Born on 9 August 1631 in Northamptonshire, Dryden was one of fourteen children to puritan parents Erasmus and Mary. He is believed to have attended the village school, before attending Westminster School around 1644 (Hammond “Dryden” 1). Westminster had a strongly royalist and Anglican ethos, and provided him with a thorough grounding in classical culture (1). Dryden’s interest in Greek and Roman literature, particularly the works of Ovid, Virgil, Horace, Lucretius, and Homer is evident in his literary imagery throughout his career (1).

In 1650, Dryden moved to the moderately puritan Trinity College, Cambridge, as one of five Westminster scholars (1). Cambridge was a Royalist stronghold, as well as a hub of the new science. He graduated in February 1654, and in 1657 joined the civil service of Cromwell’s Protectorate. In 1659 Dryden published Heroique Stanzas in celebration of Cromwell’s government. After the Restoration in 1660 his allegiances shifted in support of Charles II, whom he celebrated with the panegyric Astrea Redux (1660) (Hammond “Dryden” 2). In 1662 Dryden became an honorary member of the Royal Society, as well as venturing into writing heroic drama. Both of these interests are evident in Annus Mirabilis in which the action is staged in terms of a grand theatrical performance, and in which Dryden praises the Royal Society in two separate digressions: the “Digression concerning shipping and navigation” (617-56) and the “Apostrophe to the Royal Society” (657-64).

In 1668 Dryden signed a contract with the King’s Company, and on 13 April was appointed poet laureate (Hammond “Dryden” 12). On 18 August 1670 he was
appointed historiographer royal (12). Despite being in favour with the King and powerful patrons, his career was plagued with controversy from political rivals. His support of the Charles II during the exclusion crisis, thus favoring James II (a Catholic) as successor, and his conversion to Catholicism in 1685, both attracted further satire and abuse (Hammond “Dryden” 5). Nevertheless, Dryden continued to support the Catholic and Jacobite cause, with the latter part of his career largely taken up with a number of classical translations including works by Homer, Ovid, Virgil and Juvenal (Hammond “Dryden” 13-17). Dryden’s interest in the visual arts is conveyed through the images derived from painting and architecture in his poetry, as well as his later translation of Du Fresnoy’s De arte graphica (1695) and prose piece Parallel of Poetry and Painting (1695) (Hammond “Dryden” 16).

Andrew Marvell (1621-1678)

Marvell was born on 31 March 1621 in East Yorkshire, the eldest of four children born to puritan parents Reverend Andrew Marvell and Anne Pease (Kelliher 1). In 1624 they moved to Kingston upon Hull, the central trading centre in the north of England and where he attended Hull Grammar School (1). He continued his education at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he received a scholarship that was revoked following the death of his father in 1641 (Smith The Chameleon 7-8). After unsuccessful attempts to find work, he left for Europe in late 1642 or 3 to spend four years travelling in The Netherlands, France, Italy and Spain. During this he educated himself in foreign languages and cultures with the ambition of obtaining a secretarial

13 The role of historiographer royal was a new office in the British Royal Household from 1660, and referred to an “official historian appointed in connection with the royal court or public institution” (OED n. 2).
or diplomatic appointment (Smith *The Chameleon* 8, 45). Smith notes that the details of this part of Marvell’s life are uncertain, but his verse and prose provide a very rich resource for understanding the cultures he encountered (Smith *The Chameleon* 46).

Marvell returned to England in 1647, during the Second Civil War, and in 1650 pledged his allegiance to Cromwell with the publication of *An Horatian Ode upon Cromwell’s Return from Ireland* (1650).¹⁴ This coincided with the resignation of Thomas, Third Lord Fairfax, commander of the parliamentary forces, followed by his retreat to Yorkshire where Marvell was employed as tutor (Kelliher 3). By the end of 1652 Marvell had returned to London, where Milton recommended him for the position of Latin secretary to the council of state (3). Although unsuccessful on this occasion, Cromwell employed Marvell as governor to his ward William Dutton, a position he held for four to five years (3).

It was after this time that Marvell entered the civil service as Latin secretary to John Thurloe, secretary to the council of state and head of the government’s intelligence service (Kelliher 4). January 1659 saw Marvell take on the additional role of MP for Hull, a position he retained until the failure of Richard Cromwell’s Protectorate on 22 April 1659 (Smith *The Chameleon* 154, 155). Marvell continued in his role as Latin secretary (despite Thurloe having been dismissed). As well as translations, he handled documents negotiating a treaty with the Dutch, the failure of which lead to the Second Anglo-Dutch War (Smith *The Chameleon* 155).

Following the Restoration of Charles II in 1660, Marvell was in a difficult position as a former servant of Cromwell; however, having voted as an MP to invite

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¹⁴ The extent of his conversion to the parliamentarian cause remains a subject of debate among critics and historians, with Kelliher suggesting “the safest reading of his politics in the 1650s is probably that he was prepared to accept any government that would operate within a constitutional framework” (Kelliher 3).
the Stuarts back to the throne, he was elected to sit on the Convention Parliament (15 April to 29 December 1660). In 1661, Marvell was re-elected to the seat of Hull, a role he retained for seventeen years, during which time he served on some 120 committees (Kelliher 5). In 1665 Marvell and Waller were appointed to a Parliamentary committee investigating the embezzlement of prizes in the war. Smith claims that “this is highly significant, not only as a clear sign of a growing concern with corruption,” but also because it could help explain the motivation behind Marvell’s writing of the Advice-to-a-Painter satires and Last Instructions (Smith The Chameleon 184-5).

Having set the political and biographical context, I now provide an outline on the three poems, beginning with Waller’s Instructions to a Painter in order to outline his appropriation of the so-called painter motif for the purposes of panegyric, and to set the scene for my subsequent analysis of Dryden’s oblique reference to Waller before discussing Marvell’s satiric response to Waller’s hyperbolic representation of the war.

3. The poems

Edmund Waller’s Instructions to a Painter

Waller’s Instructions was published first as a broadsheet in 1665, then as a thin folio volume in 1666 (Smith The Poems 323). The poem gives a written account of the Battle of Lowestoft organised around the central episode of the Duke of York’s command of the fleet and the death of “three worthy persons” under his leadership (Gilbert 96). The design for Waller’s poem was based on a 1656 panegyric by Giovanni Francesco Busenello entitled A Prospective of the Naval Triumph of the
Venetians over the Turk to Signor Pietro Liberi, that Renowned and Famous Painter in which Liberi, is commissioned to represent the climactic battle in Crete that concluded a twenty-five-year war (Chambers Andrew Marvell 93). In Busenello’s poem, a painter, Liberi, is commissioned to represent a climactic battle in Crete that concluded a twenty-five-year war between the two nations (93). Waller's Instructions to a Painter offers a mythic celebration of the courage shown by the Duke of York in the Battle of Lowestoft in June 1665, and the “high motives of the war in general” (Patterson Civic Crown 127). It takes the painter motif as its central conceit, with the poem’s patron instructing a court painter on the construction of a State Portrait in the style of Anthony van Dyke, or Sir Peter Paul Rubens. The motif of giving advice to a portrait painter originated in Greek mythology, and by the seventeenth century it had become a popular organising device for the description of historical events, and as a way of raising them to “heroic and mythic proportions” (Patterson Civic Crown 137). Waller uses Busenello’s poem as a background for prefiguring English success, in light of the early stages of the Second Anglo-Dutch War, equating them with the Venetians and drawing typological associations between contemporary generals and those of ancient Rome. Details of events are generalised, and far removed from reality, a style characteristic of traditional court portraiture and painting’s iconographic style that Marvell chastises.

15 The Battle of Lowestoft was the first set-piece battle of the Second Anglo-Dutch War, at which time England was optimistic about a decisive victory following the success of the First Anglo-Dutch War, under Oliver Cromwell, from 1552-4. Shortly afterwards, however, it had become abundantly clear that England’s chance for a decisive victory had been squandered by poor governance and strategic failures — a situation Waller had no reason to anticipate at the time of writing (Patterson Civic Crown 130).
John Dryden’s *Annus Mirabilis*

Dryden’s poem depicts events from March 1665 to September 1666; according to Hammond and Hopkins, *Annus Mirabilis* was probably composed in the summer and autumn of 1666, with the prefatory address to his patron Sir Robert Howard dated 10 November 1666 (106). The poem was “licensed by Roger L’Estrange on 22 November 1666, and published by Henry Herringman early in 1667” (106). Two alterations were made after the initial printing; the second issue included a revised version of lines 416-20, and the third, a revised version of line 267. Some critics have argued that the title of Dryden’s poem is a response to three prophetic oppositional pamphlets entitled *Mirabilis Annus*, published between 1661 and 1662. These held that the war and fire were divine judgments on England for the ungodly behaviour of King and Court, a claim Dryden counters in lines 25-32 of the prefatory dedication “To the Metropolis of Great Britain, the most renowned and late flourishing City of London, in its representatives the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen, the Sheriffs and Common Council of it” (Hammond and Hopkins 107). Here Dryden portrays England’s current misfortunes “not as judgments, but as trials

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16 In the first issue, these lines read; “For now brave Rupert’s Navy did appear, / Whose waving streamers from afar he knows; / As in his fate something divine there were, / Who dead and buried the third day arose.” In the second issue, it was changed to “For now brave Rupert from afar appears, / Whose waving streamers the glad General knows; / With full spread sails his eager navy steers, / And every ship in swift proportion grows.” Hammond and Hopkins suggest this may have been changed to “remove the blasphemous connotations” (157). Line 267 was changed from reading: “Berkeley alone not making equal way” in the first and second issues to “Berkeley alone who nearest danger lay” in 1667. Hammond and Hopkins suggest that this “alteration was probably made to avoid any imputation of cowardice” (148).
which a virtuous country and city should bear patiently, submissive to the King and providence (107).

*Annis Mirabilis* defends Charles II’s decision to engage the Dutch in a Second Anglo-Dutch war, as provoked by commercial rivalry, and envisages great economic success befalling London once the Dutch are defeated. The opening stanzas amplify the battle to epic proportions using techniques of linear perspective to portray the inferior size of England’s navy and their struggles to gain the upper hand, with fortune strongly weighted against them. England’s future victory is prefigured with a typological parallel between Holland and Carthage, Rome and England: “Thus mighty in her ships stood Carthage [Holland] long, / And swept the riches of the world from far; / Yet stooped to Rome [England], less wealthy but more strong: / And this may prove our second Punic War” (17-20). 17 Although by many accounts England’s performance was significantly less grand, the stakes are immediately elevated, along with the supposed heroism of England’s commanders James II and the Duke of Albemarle who fight hard to support their King. By portraying a strong alliance between King, generals and subjects, Dryden establishes a sense of hierarchy in the poem that demonstrates his unwavering allegiance to Charles II. 18

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17 Hammond and Hopkins note, “The Second Punic War (218-201 BC) decisively established Rome as the dominant power in the Mediterranean: The Second Dutch War by no means achieved a comparable result for England. The First Dutch War had been fought successfully under Cromwell in 1653-4” (132).

18 Lines 185-8 state, “With equal power [the King] does two chiefs create, / Two such, as each seemed worthiest when alone; / Each able to sustain a nation’s fate, / Since both had found a greater in their own.”
Having set the scene, the longer first part of the poem proceeds with an account of the key battles of the war, beginning with the victory at Lowestoft (lines 73-6), the return of De Ruyter from India and Guinea, “[…] fraught, / With all the riches of the rising sun” and the attack on the English at Bergen (93-128). Lines 153-72 outline the Declaration of War by France, and France’s decision to unite with the Dutch on 6 January 1666 following Louis XIV’s failed negotiations with Charles II. Lines 213-52 give an account of the division of the fleet, and an extended account of the following Four Days’ Battle 1-4 June 1666. Rather than portraying Albemarle’s poor decision-making that resulted in English defeat, he is portrayed as a hero putting up a strong fight against a powerful enemy. Moreover, the disparity between the two sides is attributed not to England’s unpreparedness, but to the disparity in size of the ships: “On high-raised decks the haughty Belgians ride; / Beneath whose shade our humble frigates go” (233-4).

At line 617 the account of the war is interrupted by two digressions marked in the text. The first is entitled “A Digression concerning shipping and navigation” which outlines the development of shipping and navigation as modeled on the study of nature herself. The second digression is an “Apostrophe to the Royal Society” in which its members are praised for the devotion to understanding “art’s elements” (646), which they apply “to fit the leveled use of human kind” (664). Returning to

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19 Lines 221-24 for example give an account of the preparation for battle; “Both furl their sails, and strip them for the fight, / Their folded sheets dismiss the useless air: / ‘Th’ Elean plains could boast no nobler sight, / When struggling champions did their bodies bare.” James Kinsley has suggested the Dutch withdrawal is placed before the engagement of 25 July “to emphasize the cunning of ‘the wary Dutch’ who withdraw to the treacherous shallows” (Italics in original) (36).
the scene of the battle, the poem details the St James’s Day fight (25 July). The second part of the St James’s Day fight is described with a precision characteristic of military handbooks of the period. This allows Dryden to convey the skill of the English navy by narrating the tactics of Rupert and Albemarle who are both praised for leading the English to victory by forcing the Dutch to make an early retreat. Dryden’s account of the war ends with the attack on Dutch merchantmen that occurred off Vly Island on 8 August, in which one hundred and fifty vessels were burnt and the town of Terschelling sacked (Hammond and Hopkins 179). The sacking is made to appear justified, considering the perceived attempts of France and Denmark to spoil English markets, in some cases re-exporting their prime manufactured goods such as English wool (lines 825-8) (Hammond and Hopkins 180).

The second, shorter part of the poem transitions to an account of the Fire of London, in which England is shown again overcoming necessary adversity in order to triumph: “Great as the world’s, which at the death of time / Must fall, and rise a nobler frame by fire” (847-8). The subsequent stanzas recount the destruction of the city, with Charles II helping to extinguish the fire, and a series of images of the people uniting behind him. The final section of the poem prefigures the rebuilding of

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20 In lines 737-40 for example, Dryden then uses the Dutch retreat to convey an element of surprise placed upon them by the English who “summon them to unexpected fight” (738).

21 For more on military handbooks and strategic diagrams, see Acheson’s “Military Illustrations.”

22 Hammond and Hopkins qualify Dryden’s account, claiming “De Ruyter’s ship was closely engaged for several hours, and lost her topmast” and that this occurred “an hour after his van had turned and fled” (177).
London in the image of Augustan Rome, as well as the re-diversion of the world’s trades to English shores.  

Andrew Marvell’s *The Last Instructions to a Painter*

According to Nigel Smith, Marvell’s *Last Instructions to a Painter* was composed somewhere between 31 August and 28 November 1667, with several manuscript copies dated 4 September (Smith *The Poems* 362). The first known printed edition of the poem appears in *The Third Part of the Collection of Poems on Affairs of State* in 1689, and subsequently in *Poems on Affairs of State* in 1697. These dates of composition correlate with Clarendon, Charles II’s chief advisor, resigning the seals of office 30 August, and the appointment of the Duke of Buckingham (an associate of Marvell’s) on 4 September 1667 (363). These events are not mentioned in the poem, but Smith argues the dating of the poem suggests it may have been written “either for presentation to Buckingham, or for limited circulation among like-minded MPs as a new, hopefully uncorrupt and efficient, era of government had dawned” (362). In Marvell’s preceding satires, the *Second and Third Advice to a Painter* poems, he is highly critical of Clarendon and Charles’s ministry and what he considered their incompetent handling of the war. Clarendon was also a key player in Marvell’s claims about court corruption, with rumours circulating of his plans to marry his daughter to the Duke of York (Marvell *The Poems* 363). By comparison, Marvell’s criticism of Clarendon in *Last Instructions* is more opaque in its exposition.

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23 McKeon notes that the second half of the poem shares a number of features with the first half of the poem, the two events being brought together in a show of England’s united resolve when in reality, this was not the case (162-3).
of court corruption than the *Advices*. *Last Instructions* comprises a series of episodes, giving a detailed analysis of the war to counter Waller’s generalised account. Rather than detailing the battle itself, Marvell’s focus is on the debates in the Houses of Parliament over raising funds for the war. This is interspersed with a number of satiric portraits of key members of the court. Marvell creates images that portray the lascivious and corrupt character of his sitters; images that he suggests more accurately reflect widespread political and sexual corruption deliberately overlooked by Waller’s traditional portraits. The middle section of the poem also includes an extensive satiric catalogue of MPs criticised in military terms for their lack of discipline. Marvell claims that the parliament is ultimately responsible for England’s disastrous performance in the war, with members’ self-interest and greed leaving the navy underpaid, and poorly equipped.

The key political and naval events of the poem include the House of Commons debate on 12 October 1666, when the court party had unsuccessfully sought a general excise on goods to help fund the war effort (lines 235-39), an account of diplomatic and international relations, and England’s attempt to negotiate an alliance with Louis XIV without fully realising Louis’ ambitions on the Spanish Netherlands (lines 365-70) (Smith *The Poems* 380). Marvell also records the division of the fleet in 1666, and the King’s attempts to avoid recalling parliament after negotiations with France fail (lines 807-10). The defining aspect of Marvell’s account is De Ruyter’s raid on the Medway, while English ships lay out of action following the capture of the *Royal Charles* (lines 611-20) (Smith *The Poems* 387).

Marvell’s speaker’s attention then turns to the finding of a scapegoat for the disaster, all of which is mockingly attributed to Peter Pett, navy commissioner at Chatham, 1648-6, rather than to Clarendon and Sandwich, both of whom Marvell
believed were responsible (lines 767-790). The final section of the poem is an address “To the King,” in the style of Waller’s *Instructions*, advising Charles to remove his evil ministers, and replace them with the few upright men remaining, if unity and decorum are to be restored to the realm.

I now move from the political and publication context to the intellectual background, beginning with a discussion of the long-running debates about the mimetic relationship between poetry and painting and their respective attributes. This is necessary literary context because it directly informs Waller’s, Dryden’s and Marvell’s poetic musing on the most appropriate medium for representing the naval fight.

4. *Ut pictura poesis* and the humanist theory of painting

The humanistic theory of painting was a tradition that considered painting and poetry as “almost identical in fundamental nature, in content, and in purpose” (Lee 108). Plutarch attributed to Simonides the saying “painting is mute poetry, poetry a speaking picture,” a phrase frequently referred to in treatises on art and literature from the mid sixteenth to mid eighteenth centuries, as was Horace’s famous simile *ut pictura poesis* (*Ars Poetica* line 361). In the sixteenth century Leonardo da Vinci attempted to turn the perceived superiority of painting over poetry into “the development of a fundamental aesthetic,” as Aristotle’s *Poetics* and Horace’s *Ars* 24

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24 *Ut pictura poesis* translates as “A poem is like a picture.” Lee notes that “The habit of associating writers whose imagery is vivid or full of colour with painters was known to antiquity […] and critics for two centuries believed that it was in pictorial vividness of representation, or, more accurately, of description – the power to paint clear images of the external world in the mind’s eye as a painter would record them on canvas – that the poet chiefly resembled the painter” (198).
Poetica had done for poetry in the Classical tradition (Lee 200). Aristotle drew an analogy between poetry and painting, arguing that while they differ in terms of the “means” and “manner” of imitation; painting using “form and colour,” poetry, “rhythm, language, and harmony,” their intention, that of “imitation,” remains the same (Warrington 3). Throughout the treatise, Aristotle emphasises the importance of unity in the design or plot, and harmony of the parts with the whole, and how to achieve this by copying from ancient precedents (Poetics 16, 17, 22).²⁵ Horace follows Aristotle in arguing that the main duty of poet and painter is that of propriety, but also allows for some degree of innovation on the part of the poet. In addition to adhering to principles of order, including the choice of subject, and the rhythm and harmony of the parts, he states that “[…] with a nice taste and care in weaving words together, you will express yourself most happily, if a skillful setting makes a familiar world new” (Ars Poetica lines 46-49). In drawing attention to the similarities between the two arts, he emphasises the importance of poetry’s ability to continually please by surprising the viewer with elements of variation:

A poem is like a picture: one strikes your fancy more, the nearer you stand; another, the farther away. This courts the shade, that will wish to be seen in the light, and dreads not the critic insight of the judge. This pleased but once; that, though ten times called for, will always please.

(Ars Poetica lines 361-5)²⁶

²⁵ All references to Aristotle are taken from Waddington ed. Aristotle’s Poetics: Demetrius on Style: Longinus on the Sublime.

²⁶ Horace argues against lack of decorum to the point of the grotesque, but allows for some variation of style stating: “Works with noble beginnings and grand promises often have one or two purple patches so stitched on as to glitter far and wide” (Ars Poetica 14-16).
Waller and Dryden apply Horace’s principles of decorum when composing their heroic accounts of the war, each producing a narrative account of events in which the metaphoric use of colour and style is concordant with their heroic and royal subject matter. Marvell also claims to adhere to principles of decorum in the construction of his poem, but inverts these principles to create a series of grotesque images that he claims are decorous with the subjects and subject matter he has to work with.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Horatian principles of decorum were further developed to include the use of perspective in art, and possible techniques for ensuring all aspects of a painting were spatially arranged so as to mirror the effects of natural vision. One of the most influential treatises on the use of perspective was Leon Battista Alberti’s *De Pictura*.\(^{27}\) Alberti devised a method by which artists should divide the canvas into a grid based upon a central point, meaning that individual parts of a painting were in proportion with the overall design, and that shifts in scale could be used to indicate proportional distance from the viewer.\(^{28}\)

I will argue that Waller’s and Dryden’s poems are constructed in reference to principles of geometric linear perspective as outlined by Alberti, with events described as though viewing a Renaissance genre painting. Subjects are described in proportion, and at varying distances from the viewer to produce a sense of narrative

\(^{27}\) Alberti claims that “the painting of a ‘history’—a significant human action—is the chief business of a serious painter, whose duty it was to bestow ideal beauty upon their subject matter” (Alberti in Lee 201). Alberti’s theory was developed by Leonardo da Vinci, who insisted on the importance of representing “human emotion through bodily movement” in art (Lee 202). Leonardo claimed that individual parts must be in proportion with the overall design, in order to achieve the effect of three-dimensional linear perspective.

\(^{28}\) Linear perspective was not only applied to painting in the period, but also to set design, as seen in the elaborate designs by Inigo Jones, which I will discuss in chapter two.
and therefore temporal progression. Marvell does not allude to Alberti’s principles of linear perspective to create a unified image, and instead portrays events from multiple incongruous perspectives and oblique angles to create a fragmentary account of events that is spatially rather than temporally arranged.

The *ut pictura poesis* tradition is central to Annabel Patterson’s authoritative claims about Marvell’s authorship of the *Second and Third Advices* and *Last Instructions*, and necessarily plays a foundational role in my analysis of the poetic use of painting conventions used in these poems. Patterson argues that the increasingly politicised nature of Marvell’s reference to in the satires compared to *The Gallery* (1651) can be traced back to his return from a diplomatic mission to Russia and Sweden, where he found that his own perception of the Second Anglo-Dutch war “differed radically from that being expressed by the public poetry of the day” (Patterson “Lady State 124).

I acknowledge this stylistic development, but my primary interest lies in Marvell’s departure from the Renaissance principles of decorum and linear perspective. In what follows I discuss alternative sources for Marvell’s indecorous application of rhetorical ornament and perspective in *Last Instructions* — that of English Mannerism and Dutch art. This thesis will argue that Marvell draws upon Dutch and English Mannerist painting traditions to challenge Waller’s (metaphorical) Renaissance aesthetic and perspectival techniques, techniques that Marvell implies create an idealised and therefore false image of the court by hiding its corruption and naval failures.

I now move from a discussion of *ut pictura poesis* and its significance in Renaissance art to another important intellectual background for my study of perspective and Marvell’s political argument in *Last Instructions*, that of the tradition
of English Mannerism. Mannerism is a term anachronistically applied to an aesthetic that directly succeeded the High Renaissance and, until the mid-nineteenth century, was associated with anti-classicism and decadence, making it a suitable medium for Marvell’s “Oppositional poetic” that has received limited critical attention in the context of this poem.

Rubright notes that “The social history of Anglo-Dutch relations was shaped throughout the late medieval and early modern periods by geographic, religious, commercial, and proximities that open onto the complexities of the intermingled diversity of northern European life” (6). There were many Dutch nationals living in England and vice versa, including Dutch artists Peter Paul Rubens and Sir Peter Lely commissioned by the English court. The relationship between citizens of the two nations, however, was “largely antagonistic” (Rubright 6). By the seventeenth century, the United Provinces was a fellow Protestant nation, but one that promoted religious toleration that exceeded that of England. It was also a republic, and as England’s nearest neighbour, a rival when it came to trade. It is on account of these commercial and political rivalries that the English court regarded the Dutch (and by extension certain genres of their art) as antimonarchical.

5. Marvell and the Mannerist aesthetic

Mannerism marked a revolution in the history of art following the High Renaissance, emerging as a style that expanded on the classical traditions focused on harmony and balance in order to create perspectively unified image.29 Italian Mannerist artists

29 There is variation in critical literature with regards to the capitalisation for “Mannerist” and “Mannerism.” Arnold Hauser has chosen to use lower case, but, in accordance with Semler, I use
often quoted meaning borrowed from these forms, but did so in order to challenge their authoritative status. The Mannerist style is typically a highly polished courtly style with artists favouring “unnaturally elongated figures”, compositions lacking in symmetry, and “unreal spatial structures”, exemplified by the works of Michelangelo, Raphael, Titian, Correggio and Pontormo and Bronzino (Bury 1). Mannerism is typically a highly polished courtly style with artists favouring “unnaturally elongated figures,” compositions lacking in symmetry, and “unreal spatial structures,” exemplified by the works of Michelangelo, Raphael, Titian, Correggio and Pontormo and Bronzino (Bury 1). The idea of Mannerism in art is important to my study as it counters the periods of classical and Renaissance art that were “characterised by the absolute discipline of form, the complete permeation of reality by the principles of order, and the total subjection of self-expression to harmony and beauty” (Hauser 4). Renaissance principles form the basis of Waller’s metaphoric approach to aesthetic representation, but, as I intend to argue, only

upper case for stylistic consistency with my use of “Renaissance.” In referring to Mannerism throughout my thesis I am referring to the English Mannerist style as opposed to the broader category of Mannerism. Mannerism started in Italy in around the 1520s, and was embraced by the courts of Europe before its decline in the 1590s. It was, therefore, an “international style” with cultural peculiarities depending on the place and context.

30 Hauser writes that “The path that led to the revaluation of mannerism was laid by modern expressionism, surrealism, and abstract art, without which its spirit would have remained basically unintelligible” (4). He claims that “A proper understanding of mannerism can be obtained only if it is regarded as the product of tension between classicism and anti-classicism, naturalism and formalism, rationalism and irrationalism, sensualism and spiritualism, traditionalism and innovation, conventionalism and revolt against conformism; for its essence lies in this tension, this union of apparently irreconcilable opposites” (Hauser 12).
provide a limited context for Marvell’s experimentation with literary and pictorial genres and styles. Rather than simply inverting the principles of Waller’s poem, I argue that Marvell uses elements of the Mannerist style as an anti-classical aesthetic to describe the decadence of Italian painting associated in the period with aristocracy and the court (Manfred 4).\textsuperscript{31} Mannerist artists also quoted High Renaissance works of art, which is another feature that makes it a useful model for Marvell, but when referring to Marvell’s “Mannerist episodes” I am specifically referring to elements of the Mannerist style. In chapter two, I will argue that Marvell incorporates two Mannerist episodes into the poem, and that these are reserved for the subjects in the poem most greatly removed from the court: The Catholic “hero” Sir Archibald Douglas, and the Dutch General De Ruyter, both of whom Marvell implies are, ironically, the only subjects of his poem worthy of rhetorical ornament and excess.

In order to explore Marvell’s use of the Mannerist style, I use L. E. Semler’s work, \textit{English Mannerist Poets and the Visual Arts}, in which he outlines a general framework for identifying an English poetic Mannerist aesthetic in the poems of John Donne, Robert Herrick, Thomas Carew, Richard Lovelace and Andrew Marvell. In referring to “Mannerism,” Semler does not use the term to refer to a particular historical period, “but as the sobriquet for a particular aesthetic that develops in and through various aspects of the sociocultural make-up of time and place,” and it is on

\textsuperscript{31}Patterson argues that “at the heart of Marvell’s objections to the war was the Opposition view that it was neither a ‘just war’ in the legal sense, nor an ‘expedient trade war that would enrich the country’” (Patterson “Lady State” 124). Many, including Marvell, felt that the war was “merely an excuse for extracting from them […] an exorbitantly large Supply, most of which quickly vanished with very little to show for it” (124). Marvell contradicts Waller’s and Dryden’s views that it was a just and necessary war in order for England to regain sovereignty of the English Channel, and this sets the foundation for his highly politicised challenge to Renaissance aesthetic techniques.
these terms that I also consider Mannerist aspects of Marvell’s poem (16). Semler primarily focuses on Marvell’s earlier lyric poems, but I will argue that Mannerist episodes are also evident in Last Instructions. I intend to argue that when Marvell mobilises an analogy with a Mannerist set of allusions we should see this as the rejection of the High Renaissance aesthetic associated with monarchy and absolutism. Marvell’s rejection of the Renaissance aesthetic for representing Charles II and his court’s handling of the war is important because it paves the way for him to experiment with a variety of other genres and techniques and to create an alternative set of unflattering images of the court, images that focus instead on the disorder and corruption that lie behind the beautiful façade. I do not intend to give a full account of the genre, but will discuss relevant features as they arise in my chapter analysis.

L.E. Semler has identified Marvell’s earlier lyric poems as bearing the hallmarks of a stylised Mannerist poetic, and his study has been invaluable for providing a framework in which to further explore evidence of a so-called Mannerist poetic in Marvell’s satiric Advices and Last Instructions. Smith has also identified Mannerist features in the portraits comprising Marvell’s earlier poem The Gallery, but the implications of this have not been explored in his later poems. The idea of the double-sided portrait in a gallery metaphorically inscribed in a lover’s heart becomes, in Marvell’s Last Instructions, a way of creating a virtual gallery of parliamentary and court figures portrayed from oblique angles that expose new details about each sitter. At the same time, the stylised Mannerist episodes depicting the Catholic Douglas, and Dutch General De Ruyter work to complicate Marvell’s Oppositional politics.

In the following section I turn to Dutch visual culture as another cultural background for my study of Marvell’s Last Instructions. While Mannerist art was
focused on the artificial and the abstract, Dutch art was focused on capturing the intricate details of their subject matter, and could include experimentation with form and genre, each of which will be explored in my thesis. Both were considered by the English to be anti-classical and anti-Monarchical aesthetic traditions.

6. Dutch visual culture and the metaphoric aesthetic techniques in *Last Instructions*

A critical difference between the Dutch and Italian approach to art in the seventeenth century is the Netherlandish focus on pictorial description of their subject matter. This included an interest in individuals and their private lives, images of objects or landscapes that they sought to capture with verisimilitude, as opposed to the grandiose or narrative (biblical, mythological, historical) style of Italian and English Renaissance paintings. For seventeenth-century Dutch artists, paintings were considered a valuable medium for conveying knowledge about the world and therefore they aimed to convey a “true” form of representation. The Netherlands did not have the literal classical origins that formed the basis for humanism and classical dominance in Italy. Dutch artists were, however, exposed to English Renaissance art. The cultural exchange of ideas between the two nations meant that there was a mutual stylistic influence between both regions. Despite this exchange, Dutch art retained key aesthetic differences, including the approach to perspective.

Alpers notes that in Dutch visual culture, “Perspective” is not used to describe the representation of an object in respect to its spatial relationship to the viewer, as it is in Renaissance art, but is “taken to refer to the way by which

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32 See Olson “Knowledge and its Artifacts” 231-46.
appearances are replicated on the pictorial surface” (Art of Describing 51-2).

Moreover, Dutch artists did not use the principles of linear perspective that Renaissance artists used to create the impression of three-dimensionality in their pictures; instead, depth was created with the light and shade or chiaroscuro. This resulted in a spatial rather than temporal or narrative arrangement of objects on the canvas, and a focus on capturing the details such as the reflection of light from surfaces, the texture of fabrics, and patterns on floors, as opposed to creating a harmoniously integrated image. Moreover, without any compositional boundaries, the subject matter often extended beyond the edges of the frame. I propose that on account of these significant differences between Renaissance and Dutch approaches to perspective and composition it is quite plausible that Marvell would have found Dutch art a useful medium for his Oppositional aesthetic in Last Instructions.

Another important feature of Dutch art for my study is the interest in using an optical instrument such as the microscope or camera obscura to enhance the detail of their art. Not all Dutch artists were using optical instruments or highly detailed techniques, but there was a burgeoning national interest in optical technologies, both in the context of trade and commerce, and the flourishing art market. The camera obscura was a development upon the pinhole camera, which had been used primarily in astronomy from antiquity to the Renaissance (Levêvre 55). In the seventeenth century, the pinhole camera was “equipped with lenses and mirrors and transformed into the optical camera obscura of the early modern period” (55). Wolfgang Lêvêvre explains that in its simplest form, a lens was fastened in the pinhole, so that it “projected an inverted and reversed image on a vertical screen opposite the aperture” (55). A more complex version included a second mirror to correct the left to right reversal of the projected image. Lefèvre notes that, in the seventeenth century, the
camera obscura was “primarily a gadget for creating spectacular entertainment,” but it also had applications for surveying, mapping, astronomical observation and painting.\(^{33}\) The camera obscura played a significant role in the optical revolution brought about by experiments with “crystalline spheres, lenses and mirrors,” in the late sixteenth century (55).

The development of the microscope (ca. 1590), along with the subsequent development of the telescope in Holland in 1608, also brought about a new means of studying nature. The telescope and the microscope were considered a different category of scientific instruments to the old category of “mathematical instruments” (Malét “Telescope” 237). Antoni Malét notes the category of “mathematical instruments” was associated with measurement “according to well-established, unproblematic principles and theories” (“Telescope” 237-8). Optical instruments “increase[d] the power of sight when accommodated to the eye” (“Telescope” 238). “Mathematical instruments ‘were for doing’,” and helped to confine scientific enquiry to familiar parameters, while optical instruments were “for knowing,” and, in accordance with the principles of speculative philosophy, opened up discussions without providing the same kind of certainty (Malét “Telescope” 238). Dryden’s *Annus Mirabilis* references older mathematical theories based on geometry, and what Malét labels “sight-measuring instruments,” which were used in astronomy, navigation, surveying and cosmography from the sixteenth century (Malét “Telescope” 237). *Annus Mirabilis* makes reference to each of these disciplines in

\(^{33}\) Camerota notes that in the Renaissance, apart from its astronomical application in the observation of eclipses, the camera obscura was used in “the production of topographic views for wall decorations, printed books or military maps. But even here, no evidence can be found before the second half of the sixteenth century, and nothing authorizes us to assume a widespread use of this optical tool among painters and mapmakers before the invention of the telescope” (“Artificial Eye” 264).
order to foreshadow the positive change in England’s fortune as a result of the war and fire. When navigational instruments feature, it is as a result of a Baconian approach to studying nature. Marvell, on the other hand, makes reference to optical instruments for the kinds of visual effects they produce. Filippo Camerota has explored the association between mathematical instruments and the linear perspective tradition, with optical devices such as “concave mirrors, convex lenses and camera obscuras” being considered “mechanical expressions of a geometric principle, namely the intersection of the visual pyramid” (“Artificial Eye” 264). Camerota’s work has inspired my analysis of the association between optical instruments and Dutch perspective techniques in chapter five, and the ways in which Marvell departs from the mathematical or geometric perspective tradition.

While there is no direct reference to the camera obscura in Waller’s, Dryden’s or Marvell’s poems, Marvell does directly reference the microscope in lines 15-16 of Last Instructions: “Or if to score out or compendious fame, / With Hooke then, through the microscope take aim” (15-16). I use these lines to argue that the microscope is not just a momentary instrument of satire in the poem, but a metaphor for reading. Even more useful to Marvell’s Oppositional purpose is the overlap between visual cues crafted for the two dimensional and often incongruent appearances of Dutch paintings, and microscopic images, an overlap which, until now, critics have not identified.

Before discussing the metaphor of the microscope in Last Instructions, I will give an account of the different uses of perspective in Dryden’s and Marvell’s poems and how scientific and aesthetic visual cues incorporated into their respective poems help to shape the political argument each poet seeks to make. This is necessary for developing my argument that Dryden’s images are based on geometric linear
perspective and the desire to impose a sense of order on his material. In contrast, Marvell is interested in holding his political subjects up to scrutiny in order to discrediting the idealised accounts of Waller and Dryden. Marvell experiments with multiple genres and perspectives to produce a version of events that resists closure, thereby challenging the idea of any form of authoritative representation.

7. “Perspective” in the seventeenth century, and the employment of “visual cues” to structure the political arguments of *Annis Mirabilis* and *Last Instructions*

In making my argument about the metaphoric use of perspective in *Annis Mirabilis* and *Last Instructions*, I build upon Katherine Acheson’s 2013 book, *Visual Rhetoric in Early Modern England*, in which she identifies so-called “coding orientations” implicit in technical illustrations, military and garden handbooks, dichotomous tables and anatomical drawings. Acheson argues that diagrammatic drawings established ways of thinking that could “migrate [...] away from images themselves to affect concepts and communication in other forms” such as literature (Acheson *Visual Rhetoric* 54). I will argue that Dryden’s and Marvell’s poems embed perspectival cues that imply a method of reading, and that these perform a political as well as a formal function by influencing the reader’s interpretation of events.34 The

34 Ernest Gilman notes that the English use of the term “perspective” expanded in the early period to “accommodate the new connection between optics and the visual arts. By the seventeenth century, it could refer to the theory of linear perspective; to a telescope (perspective glass) in particular, but also to a microscope or other refracting lens; to an expansive view in nature or to the representation of such a view in painting that made conspicuous use of linear perspective; or to a perspective device” such as Alberti’s window (Gilman 17).
perspective cues used in *Annum Mirabilis* are derived from theories and techniques of the English Renaissance tradition of the late sixteenth century. Dryden’s perspectival metaphors share a basis in geometric linear perspective, with Dryden attempting to create a unified three-dimensional image of events by depicting them from a pre-determined frontal perspective. In this case, the reader’s perspective is limited, to enable unfavourable details of the war to be covered over or left out of the metaphorical frame. Renaissance artists based their work on ancient precepts of good painting, their emphasis being on harmony and unity of design, and linear perspective techniques, in order to represent heroic events from a pre-determined vantage point. Theatrical metaphors placed throughout the poem are one example of how Dryden uses geometric principles to structure his work. Stephen Orgel has noted that many Renaissance and Baroque theatres were built according to principles of linear perspective, with stage sets designed around “one focal point, one perfect place in the hall from which the illusion achieves its fullest effect. At court performances this is where the King sat, and the audience around him at once became a living emblem of the structure at court” (Orgel 10-11, 149.)

35 Orgel notes “perspective settings require a proscenium, a frame at the front of the stage” (20). This frame separated the viewer from the scene, imposing the effects of single point perspective, as well as “direct[i]ng his attention and provid[ing] a context for the action it contains” (20). In chapter four I will argue Dryden frames his poem as though the audience is peering through a proscenium arch in order to position the

35 Perspective boxes enabled artists to create a convincing illusion of an interior space using a triangular perspectival construction within a wooden box to be viewed through a small peep hole at one of the corners. The four walls of a wooden box were painted to simulate a scene that created the three-dimensional illusion of a room inside a house. When viewed through the top, however, the room appeared empty (Gilman 59-60).
reader in relation to the action, and impose a sense of order on his material. This effect is achieved with the use of “coding instructions,” or perspective cues, based on the techniques of linear perspective used in Renaissance art and theatre to create a “spectacle” for the King. The poem, like the Renaissance court theatre is structured to reflect the hierarchical order of the state (the King at the centre with the ideal view, subjects positioned at varying distances around him). The technique of framing is also seen as an expression of Dryden’s politically motivated desire to bring events to order, despite the political and social disorderliness that hindered the performance of the English navy.

Marvell’s *Last Instructions* uses a different set of “coding orientations” which are set out in the opening section of the poem. A patron instructs a painter on a variety of inferior media for representing England’s military failures, such as the burnt end of a candle, graffiti, or Indian feather painting. The speaker then proclaims that, should the painter wish to reveal the true significance of England’s achievement, he should “take aim” with the microscope (lines 15-16). By taking aim with the microscope, the poem becomes a virtual experiment, with Marvell using multiple media and perspectives, none of which add up to a unified image. The craftsmanship of seventeenth century optical instruments was excellent; however, poor focusing mechanisms, unevenly ground lenses, and diffraction of light rays meant they nonetheless yielded very poor images. Marvell capitalises on the distortions and inconsistencies surrounding microscopic images, and by ensuring his specimens remain metaphorically out of focus, he demonstrates to the reader that a single interpretation is always partial and subjective. Dryden, by contrast, deploys perspective cues that are based on geometry to create a unified, and therefore supposedly authoritative account. Marvell uses a variety of perspective cues that do
not have a basis in linear perspective, and while they may have been familiar to the reader, as Acheson suggests of military diagrams, the skill with which they are used means they may not have been as easily recognised by an uninformed reader. This also supports Smith’s view that *Last Instructions* was written for an educated audience of MPs (Smith *The Poems* 362).

The approach I take is to discuss Dryden’s *Annus Mirabilis* in the context of what Gilman identifies as an apparent relationship between “displays of metaphysical wit in poetry [...] and] displays of visual wit in what the seventeenth century called the ‘curious perspective’” (Gilman 1). The curious perspective is a term Gilman uses to describe “pictures or devices which manipulate the conventions of linear perspective to achieve ingenious effects” (1). He argues that the “curious perspective” in Renaissance art “undermines the viewer’s authority by dislocating him from the ‘centric point’ and obliging him to see the work of art from multiple ‘perspectives’ before he grasps it fully” (50). This could be achieved through “anamorphic distortions, […] double or reversible images, [and] the unexpected concealment and clarifications made possible through the use of mirrors and lenses” (50). In other words, such artworks functioned like the controlled experiments performed by natural philosophers in that they worked to manipulate the viewer; by analogy, the poet controls the viewer’s perspective on the action.

I will then discuss Marvell’s *Last Instructions* in the context of the emerging culture of experimentalism, and the increasing use of optical instruments for studying the natural world in the later half of the seventeenth century. When considered in the context of Renaissance and Dutch painting techniques, Marvell is seen to draw on the contemporary (mid seventeenth century) interest in optics and optical instruments to challenge Dryden’s more conservative approach based on increasingly outmoded
media. The scientific or natural philosophical theories Dryden and Marvell draw upon were concurrently available in England and in Holland, but will be discussed separately for analytical purposes.

8. The Renaissance and Baconian natural philosophical context in *Annus Mirabilis*

In my discussion of *Annus Mirabilis* in chapter four, I intend to situate Dryden’s poem in the context of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century scientific interest in understanding naturally occurring optical illusions, in addition to the tricks of perspective possible with the aid of lenses, mirrors, perspective boxes, telescopes and prisms (Gilman 1). As natural philosophy attracted an increased popular following, public demonstrations were performed before captivated audiences (Jardine “Jokes of Nature” 319, 321). Dryden’s treatment of natural philosophy in *Annus Mirabilis* draws upon this popular interest in optical illusion, which, due to its performative nature, is easily integrated into “staging” of the war as a metaphorical theatrical performance. The study of catoptrics (a branch of optics that focuses on reflection) also provides Dryden with the materials he needs to manipulate the reader’s perception of the relative size and strength of the English and Dutch navies.

The other aspect of Dryden’s scientific imagery is that of Baconian science which, like Renaissance art, was concerned with bringing to order a disordered world.

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36 For a discussion of late sixteenth century optics, see Clark “Reformation of the Eyes” 143-60.
through a new empirical approach to the study of nature (Jardine Bacon 125). According to Bacon, this study would involve mapping out the entire field of knowledge in a way that showed all aspects to be parts of the same comprehensive system, rather than separate categories as they were in Aristotle’s Organum (Jardine Bacon 120). Bacon’s method required the extensive collection and observation of specimens, and forms the “Primary History” in Bacon’s Novum Organum, a proposal for the study of nature under six general headings: The Partitions of the Sciences; Novum Organum or Directions concerning the Interpretation of Nature; The Phenomena of the Universe, or Natural and Experimental History for the building up of Philosophy; The Ladder of the Intellect; Precursors, or Anticipations of the Philosophy to Come; And, The Philosophy to Come, or The Active Science (Novum Organum 27; Jardine Bacon 139). Bacon’s argument moves from the discovery of first principles (as opposed to “discovery of arguments”), to generalisations that can be “drawn from and established on the kind of legitimate, chaste and rigorous form of investigation” (Novum Organum 29, 45). Bacon’s focus is the systematisation of nature for the purposes of ordering experience. The knowledge obtained from the classification and subsequent study of the natural world could then be used for the benefit of mankind. Bacon’s ambition was underpinned the work of the Royal Society, founded in 1662, and is strongly reflected in the argument of Annus Mirabilis. In particular, two “digressions” in the poem praise the work of the Royal Society.

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37 Jardine notes that, “Bacon devotes the major part of the discussion of the Novum Organum to specific instructions for ensuring that the best possible use is made of the senses and memory in assembling the material for the natural history, and for tabulating its contents” (Bacon 124).

38 Michel Malherbe notes Aristotle’s Organum governed all knowledge until the sixteenth century, when Bacon published his Novum Organum (78).
Society whose development of navigational technologies initiates a turning point in the war in favour of England.

The natural philosophers of the Royal Society were anxious to remove themselves from accusations of mysticism and “false” philosophy associated with earlier scientific practices. Baconian science, which prided itself on its rationality and unbiased observation and recording, provided a useful means for moving beyond this reputation and adding creditability to their work (Jardine Bacon 135). The positive change in England’s fortune by the end of the Annus Mirabilis is attributed to a combination of Fate, and astrological alignments of the planets, and technological advancement. This makes Dryden’s use of scientific material appear more outdated to our eyes than that seen in Marvell’s Last Instructions, which focuses on the experimental and instrumental capabilities of the new science and its employment for satire.

Bacon’s approach to natural philosophy was accompanied by the pursuit of language reform, and a reevaluation of the use of metaphor and rhetorical embellishment in favour of a so-called “plain style” of speech. Eliminating the “colours” of rhetoric, Bacon argued would reduce the confusions of meaning (Jardine Bacon 218). A plain style of language was considered the most appropriate form for scientific reporting due to its ability to convey experiments with accuracy and clarity. Paradoxically however, while the correct scientific terms are used at various instances in Annus Mirabilis, the poem as a whole is structured on an extended metaphorical conceit. Dryden uses metaphoricity to bring disparate elements of the poem together, as I will elaborate on in chapter three.

39 Members of the Royal Society, including Dryden, who headed the commission into language reform in the early 1660s, supported Bacon’s views.
In addition to the developments in natural philosophy in the mid seventeenth century, developments in optics and optical theory are equally important background to my argument about the different approaches to perspective (scientific and aesthetic) in Dryden’s and Marvell’s poems. It is also a necessary foundation for my argument about the deliberate choices made by each poet to select aesthetic and scientific theories that will best express their deeply politicised stance on the Second Anglo-Dutch war.

9. Seventeenth century experimental philosophy and the advancing interest in optical instruments

By the mid seventeenth century there was a degree of skepticism about the Baconian search for universal “truths” in nature, and experimentalism and hypothesis were becoming the order of the day (Jardine “Jokes of Nature” 325). Natural philosophers were turning to optical instruments such as the telescope and the microscope to gain new insights into the visible world. This development in natural philosophy was accompanied by a newly emerging understanding of optics. For natural philosophers such as Robert Hooke, optical instruments opened up the possibility of yielding empirically reliable knowledge by allegedly removing the subjective aspect of observation that had come to be associated with Baconian science. In the preface to the Micrographia, Hooke claims all that is required of an observer is “a sincere Hand, and a faithful Eye, to examine and to record, the things themselves as they appear” (9). Marvell’s speaker adopts Hooke’s argument about the ability of optical

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40 Robert Hooke (1635-1703) was educated at Oxford, and a staunch Royalist throughout his career. He was appointed curator for the newly established Royal Society in November 1662. The
instruments to correct the “infirmities of the senses” with the “adding of artificial Organs to the natural” (Hooke 8). Marvell then takes this a step further by investing the findings of his poetic experiment with a moral “truth” about the subjects of his inquiry.41

Modern conceptions of optical instruments are associated with objectivity but in the seventeenth century there was no such certainty. Malét writes “in the first half of the seventeenth century, the telescope was understood to work by modifying in some way or another the angles of the rays reaching the retina, thereby producing magnification” (“Telescope” 239). The modern view that “telescopes are machine-like, impersonal producers of objective images [...] is a late invention, which did not gain widespread currency before the mid-seventeenth century” (Malét “Telescope” 261). This lack of certainty meant that optical instruments were treated with a mixed response throughout the period. On the one hand there were members of the Royal

Micrographia or, Some physiological descriptions of minute bodies made by magnifying glasses, with observations and inquiries thereupon (1665). The Micrographia was one of earliest publications of the Royal Society, and initiated the field of microscopy (Pugliese ODNB). David Thorley notes that the text “seems to have been especially successful in appealing alike to readers who were literate in scientific theory and practice, as well as those with a general interest” (Thorley 874). 41 For more about the seventeenth century concept of “objectivity” and details of its complex etymological history see Daston “Objectivity and Perspective.” In the eighteenth century, the idea of objectivity and the ability of optical instruments to provide a “true” (consistent and unbiased and useful) insight into nature remained problematic. As seen in Shaftsbury’s play The Virtuoso and Johnathan Swift’s Gulliver’s Travels, there was a turn back to the general, with the microscope and the virtuoso himself becoming the object of satire. I will return to Shadwell and Swift’s satiric treatment of experimentalism in the conclusion of my thesis, in order to reinforce the variable reception of experimental science throughout the early modern period, and how it continued to be employed to support Royalist and Oppositional political agendas.
Society such as Hooke who praised optical instruments for their revelatory power. Johannes Kepler was one of the most influential philosophers who argued for the reliability of the telescope, and was the first to produce a theory about their workings via comparison with the human eye (Malét “Telescopes” 245). Kepler argued that the telescope should be thought of as an extension of normal vision, and therefore that the images it produces are as reliable as that obtained by direct sight (Malét “Telescopes” 245). That the images produced by optical instruments could not be physically located, and that images were inconsistent and capable of distorting and deceiving the viewer, were causes for skepticism. Margaret Cavendish for example, was openly distrustful of the information they provided on account of her materialist theory of vision, while others sought new theories for explaining the phenomena. In Last Instructions Marvell exploits the microscope’s and the telescope’s association with “truth effects” as outlined in the work of Robert Hooke. At the same time however, he expresses his own skepticism about the reliability of the images produced. While the telescope and microscope were important sources of knowledge, they could not provide the degree of certainty that writers such as Bacon and Dryden

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42 “Neither geometrical optics nor theoretical arguments about vision were used to turn the telescope into an authoritative instrument.” Many influential writers chose to “fuse” the telescope with the eye rather than to emphasize the telescope’s singularity qua instrument” (Malét “Telesopce” 245).

43 Cavendish challenges Robert Hooke’s claims to “objectivity” and “truth,” by showing that objects seen through the microscope are subject to optical distortion, and that conclusions drawn are inseparable from subject who observes them (Walters 383). Hooke believed he was contributing to the reformation of natural philosophy in which “the eye, helped by the lens, was a means by which men were able to turn from the misleading world of Brain and Fancy to the concrete world of things” (Alpers Art of Describing 73). Cavendish counters this by arguing that “Microscopes only distort surfaces of objects; they do not provide the observer with increased information about their interiority” (Walters 385).
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seem to have preferred. Marvell, however, embraces the multiplicity and distortion associated with the microscope in order to discredit Dryden’s artificially unified view. Marvell depicts his subjects from multiple, incongruous viewpoints that deny the reader an objective view. This episodic and fragmented approach has a cumulative effect on the reader, with a series of startling revelations leading readers to question the “truthfulness” of images.44

The extent to which the metaphor of the microscope informs the spatial design of Last Instructions has received limited critical attention. Further, the relationship between the microscopic perspective and Dutch painting techniques has until now not been explored.45 Joanna Picciotto’s Labors of Innocence in Early

44 Marvell’s approach supports what Svetlana Alpers describes more generally as a “Dutch reading of Bacon,” whereby the study of nature as a source of knowledge, rather than the desire to systematise it, is the focus of the artists’ attention (Art of Describing 102).

45 Paul Carter has written about “spatial history” in The Road to Botany Bay (1987), a text considered a classic in the field of cultural and historical geography. Carter examines the poetic constitution of colonial society and the ways in which language, history, and geography of a particular time and place can be used to recreate the territorial landscape of nineteenth-century imperialism. I am not using Paul Carter’s idea of spatial history nor the concept of “spatial form” from ‘modernist’ critical practice. The idea of spatial form in Modern literature (works published between the end of the nineteenth century and World War II has been extensively theorised by Joseph Frank (Smitten and Daghistany 15). In “Spatial form in Modern Literature” (1945) he discusses a seamless connection between “language, structure and perception” in a text, arguing that: “modern aesthetic theory has evolved from the inextricable relationship between “aesthetic form and the human mind” (Smitten and Daghistany 17). Spatial form in this sense refers largely to “experimental narratives”, though it can be applied to works from other literary periods (Smitten and Daghistany 14). I use “spatial form” in the context of Dryden’s and Marvell’s poems making direct reference to the visual arts. I use the idea of a “spatial design” to discuss the virtual composition of Waller’s, Dryden’s and Marvell’s poems based
Modern England (2010) builds on the association of the microscope with discovery of previously hidden truths, and locates the authorial invisibility in Last Instructions with the experimentalist frame (355). In doing so however, she places her reading of the poem within a Baconian context, and man’s attempt to bring nature to order following the fall (355). Picciotto claims that “the authority of the [text’s] author rests less on his personal signature than on what he can make visible; the heroic labor he invests in dragging remote objects and hidden processes into public view is his signature” (italics in original) (355). Picciotto’s innovative analysis of Last Instructions against the backdrop of the biblical narrative of the Fall and Baconian science has been an enabling precursor for my study (356).

11. Summary

This thesis interprets John Dryden’s Annum Mirabilis and Andrew Marvell’s Last Instructions in the context of English Renaissance, Mannerist and Dutch painting traditions. Critical tradition has discussed the influence of Renaissance art, and its emphasis on aesthetic decorum, but other visual cultural traditions and techniques referenced in these poems have received considerably less attention. By comparing Dryden’s Royalist approach to producing a favourable account of the Second Anglo-Dutch war with Marvell’s satire, I intend to highlight important stylistic and compositional differences between the two poems, and to explore alternative “Oppositional” influences on Marvell’s work. I argue that the aesthetic choices made on their employment of visual cues as opposed to a relationship between the relationship between visual appearance of a text and reader perception.
by Dryden and Marvell are deliberately chosen to serve their political aims. My argument about the “intention” behind these choices is developed in reference to competing scientific and optical theories also available in the period. Scientific and aesthetic aspects are largely treated separately by contemporary critics, but given the extensive bi-directional exchange between the two disciplines throughout the seventeenth century, I argue is necessary to treat them as working simultaneously. My method is designed to show that by virtue of shared visual cues, Dryden’s and Marvel’s references to aesthetic techniques and natural philosophy are brought together. Dryden’s poem appears to be structured around Renaissance principles of order, and harmony of parts, and provides a primarily narrative account of the war held together by underlying principles of geometry and linear perspective. Marvell appears to incorporate a different set of visual cues brought together by an overlap between Dutch painting and perspective techniques and the metaphor of the microscope. The microscope is undoubtedly important in Marvell’s poem as an instrument of satire, but when read in the context of Oppositional aesthetic techniques and Dryden’s poem, new light can be shed on the interdisciplinarity of these works, and on the extensive variety of sources Marvell draws upon in order to discredit the idea of an historically authoritative account. The order in which I approach this material will be outlined in the following section.

12. Chapter summaries

Chapter one, “Panegyric and Satire in Waller’s, Dryden’s and Marvell’s poems on the Second Anglo-Dutch War,” sets the context for my analysis by focusing on Marvell’s satiric Advice-to-a-Painter poems to which The Last Instructions to a
*Painter* provides the final word. It asks whether there is evidence of Marvell’s knowledge of Dutch and English Mannerist painting traditions, and if so, whether their use is systematic, or only implicit. Marvell’s *Second and Third Advice to a Painter* poems are typically read against Edmund Waller’s *Instructions to a Painter* and the Italian Renaissance visual art tradition. I begin with a study of Marvell’s earlier poem’s *The Character of Holland* and *The Gallery* in order to demonstrate Marvell’s long-standing interest in Dutch culture, and experimentation with multiple genres including English Mannerism. I use my analysis of these earlier poem to argue for the increasingly nuanced experimentation with alternative genres and forms in his Anglo-Dutch war satires, as well as setting up an alternative frame of analysis for *Last Instructions* and opening up the possibilities of Marvell’s appropriation of an Oppositional aesthetic. Laura Knoppers has suggested Marvell’s satires explicitly refer back to the Protectorate regime of Oliver Cromwell during the First Anglo Dutch War (1552-4).\textsuperscript{46} Cromwellian references shape my reading of Marvell’s critique of Charles II in the *Advices*, as well as suggesting how we might interpret Marvell’s more oblique politics in *Last Instructions*. The fact that Cromwell favoured a so-called “plain style” of painting that portrayed the sitter’s physical imperfections in what was supposed to be a morally upright style lies behind some of the choices we see Marvell making in *Last Instructions*. Cromwell’s preference for a style that shows a subject’s imperfections was also important to Dutch portrait painters, as explored in chapter two.

Chapter two, “The ekphrastic portraits in Waller’s, Dryden’s, and Marvell’s Anglo-Dutch war poems,” focuses on the satiric portraits that appear throughout Dryden’s and Marvell’s poems, and examines these in light of English and Dutch

\textsuperscript{46} See Knoppers “*The Politics of Portraiture*” and *Constructing Cromwell* (1998).
portraiture traditions respectively. Dryden’s poem, sitting outside the *Advice-to-a-Painter* genre per se, does not use the painter motif, nor create sealed off portraits in the style of Waller and Marvell. Built into *Annus Mirabilis* however, is a series of heroic portraits of Charles II, and his generals Prince Rupert and James Duke of York. These heroic portraits instill a sense of power and authority in the sitter through the use of classical and biblical typology characteristic of the Dutch émigré Sir Peter Lely.\(^{47}\) I contrast Waller’s and Dryden’s heroic portraits of the English generals with Marvell’s satiric representations of members of parliament and the court. Marvell’s satiric portraits have been widely discussed by critics including Smith and Zwicker as inverting Renaissance principles of decorum characteristic of Renaissance portraiture, with a grotesque physical appearance being indicative of a corrupt soul (*Last Instructions* lines 863-6). The inversion of Renaissance artistic precepts explains some of Marvell’s references, but I argue the portraits show greater affinity with Dutch portraiture, which sought to capture the sitter in minute detail.

Focusing on Dutch as opposed to Italianate aspects of Marvell’s satiric portraits reveals new connections with Marvell’s opening reference to microscopic observation that, in subsequent chapters, I argue functions as a metaphor for reading the poem.

Chapter three, “Poetry as history painting: Renaissance and Mannerist perspectives in Dryden’s *Annus Mirabilis* and Marvell’s *Last Instructions to a Painter,*” builds upon my analysis of Dryden’s and Marvell’s portraiture techniques to consider the genre of the istoria or history painting for which Marvell’s *Last Instructions* purports to be the “third sitting.” I argue that Dryden’s *Annus Mirabilis* incorporates what Katherine Acheson terms “coding instructions,” or perspectival

\(^{47}\) Sir Peter Lely was appointed the official court portraitist at the court of Charles II in 1661.
“cues,” that conform to Renaissance principles of linear perspective to create a highly ordered and controlled space from which to represent the war. Critics have identified the unifying aspects of Dryden’s poem in terms of the discussion of decorum that prefaces the poem, but the construction of the poem according to principles of linear perspective has not been considered. This orderliness is contrasted with Marvell’s Last Instructions, which lacks consistent framing devices and references to geometric perspective. The effect of Marvell’s poem is episodic and experimental in its metaphoric use of perspective. This contradicts the notion of a traditional portrait of “Lady State” that the opening lines suggest, and through which the poem is widely interpreted by critics. The method for structuring his material is consistent with Dutch genre paintings such as Rembrandt’s The Night Watch (1642) that also lacked framing devices, and is focused on creating highly detailed, yet two-dimensional images. Marvell presents his poem as if metaphorically painted on a flat canvas; his various images having a layered and cumulative effect, each part adding up to give a broader, though necessarily partial impression of the metaphorical scene. The result is a representation of the war that is very different from those produced from a theoretically single vantage point such as Dryden’s Annus Mirabilis, as I explore in chapters four and five.

Chapter four, “Natural philosophy, optics and theatricality in Dryden’s Annus Mirabilis,” focuses on Dryden’s metaphoric staging of the action of Annus Mirabilis in terms of the Renaissance and Baroque stage set. Following Stephen Orgel, I use the idea of the physical space of the theatre, where audiences were seated in relation to the King at the centre — the prime position for experiencing the optical illusions

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48 See Acheson “Military Illustration” 146-88.
— as a metaphor for the hierarchy and perspective established in the poem.\(^4\) The metaphorical theatrical frame of Dryden’s poem functions in a manner analogous to the proscenium arch: situated in front of the stage scenery, the “arch” is like a picture frame through which the action is viewed. It also means the entire audience had a restricted (frontal) view of the stage, which is analogous to the predetermined viewing point established in Renaissance art. I argue that this idea of a viewing point is used by Dryden to reinforce his support for Charles II by giving the King the privileged position at the centre of the poem, while closing off alternative perspectives to the audience, and shrouding unfavourable details in the cloak of metaphorical optical illusion. The second half of the chapter connects the use of perspective in the theatre to that of Baroque science and the late-sixteenth century culture of “curiosity” to demonstrate that Dryden’s scientific metaphors are consistent with early seventeenth-century scientific and aesthetic theory that preceded the culture of experimentalism evident in Marvell’s *Last Instructions*. Identification of Dryden’s engagement with existing, yet increasingly outdated natural philosophical theories is important for my study of overlaps in visual cues used in Renaissance art and theatre.

Chapter five, “Marvell’s metaphor of the microscope and the partial perspective of Dutch visual culture,” focuses on Marvell’s reference to the microscope in *Last Instructions* as a metaphor for reading the poem. Critics have noted the reference to Robert Hooke’s 1665 book on microscopy, the *Micrographia*, as a source for the poem, but a connection between the “microscopic view,” and the Dutch aesthetic design of *Last Instructions* has not been explored. In contrast to the aesthetically and politically unified structure of Dryden’s poem, Marvell uses the

\(^4\) For Orgel’s detailed study of the politics of the Renaissance theatre see *The Illusion of Power*. 

pluralism of microscopic perspective to imply that all representations are in the eye of the beholder. I draw upon the works of influential Dutch painters such as Pieter Saenredam and Johannes Vermeer to draw attention to compositional features that depart from English Renaissance aesthetic and perspectival conventions. Characteristically “Dutch” features include attention to minute details at the expense of the bigger picture, the lack of a defining boundary, and the spatial rather than narrative arrangement of events. I argue that Marvell metaphorically employs many of these perspectival and aesthetic techniques in Last Instructions in order to challenge Waller’s and Dryden’s narrative accounts of the war. I then compare these characteristically Dutch techniques with those associated with microscopic observation such as optical distortion, partiality and the lack of depth perspective. By demonstrating the overlaps of perspectival cues in the two disciplines, I aim to show that Marvell’s reference to the microscope is not only an instrument of satire but also a vehicle for engaging with Dutch visual culture and, therefore, a metaphor for reading the poem.
Chapter 1: Panegyric and satire in Waller’s, Dryden’s and Marvell’s poems on the Second Anglo-Dutch War

Introduction

Andrew Marvell’s The Last Instructions to a Painter has been widely discussed as a satiric response to Edmund Waller’s 1665 flattering Instructions to a painter for the drawing of the posture & progress of His Majesties forces at sea, under the command of His Highness Royal together with the battle & victory obtained over the Dutch, June 3, 1665. Marvell’s poem belongs to a series of satirical Advice-to-a-Painter poems, written to counter Waller’s hyperbolic representation of England’s victory at Lowestoft in June 1665. Two of these verse satires — The Second and Third Advice To a Painter — have also been attributed to Marvell, with Last Instructions supposedly providing the final word when Waller’s Instructions to the King appeared to have been acted upon.\(^5\) The satiric Advices take their form from Waller’s, with each framed as one of three sittings for a Lady State portrait. Rather than constructing a series of heroic images for the court, Marvell employs “a license that is faithful to Horace’s original dicta *ut pictura poesis*” to produce a series of unflattering images for the corrupt figures of the English court (Marvell The Poems 246). Marvell uses the Painter device to critique Waller’s poem on its own terms,

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\(^5\) *Last Instructions* has been widely attributed to Marvell, despite the first manuscripts being signed by John Denham. The authorship of the *Second and Third Advices* has been a subject of critical contention in light of the *Fourth and Fifth Advices* that are not attributed to Marvell. For a comprehensive discussion of debates surrounding the authorship of *Second and Third Advices* see Burrows, Patterson “Lady State” and Smith *The Poems* (Burrows 323-5).
while allowing him the freedom to experiment with new techniques and perspectives that challenge the heroic narrative used by Waller, Dryden and other supporters of the government (Smith *The Poems* 328).\(^{51}\) Nigel Smith argues that, “in this context, the Painter poems may be seen as a central part of a critical counter-culture of official portrayals of national life” — an interest that Marvell appears to have held long before the Advice satires were written (*The Poems* 280).\(^{52}\)

Marvell’s Advice satires in turn “spawned a whole generation of imitators” and although Dryden did not adopt the Painter conceit, he did “perceive the theoretical relationship between the pictorial ‘conceit’ and the problems of political iconography” (Patterson *Civic Crown* 9). Dryden’s *Annus Mirabilis* first appeared in print in January 1667. Like Waller’s, it is another piece of Royalist propaganda celebrating England’s anticipated success in the Second Anglo Dutch War. Dryden’s prefatory “Account,” addressed to Sir Robert Howard, presents his “political motives […] in an elaborate dress of generic and rhetorical theory” that justifies the treatment of his subject matter in a manner Patterson identifies with an “ideal pictorialism” (*Patterson Civic Crown* 144-5).\(^{53}\) The poem offers a

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\(^{51}\) Smith writes that “the fusion of heroic narrative and painting was a feature of influential Italian art theory (e.g. in the works of Gianpaolo Lomazzo (?1538-1600)” (*The Poems* 328). The satiric connection between poetry and painting “was [also] particularly appropriate in light of the widespread fashion of heroic portrait and naval painting [and that] [s]uch works are frequently noted in contemporary descriptions of public and private rooms (328).

\(^{52}\) Patterson states that Marvell had held a longer interest in the *ut pictura poesis* tradition, and that it is invoked with “heavy irony” in his 1677 poem *An Account of the Growth of Popery and Arbitrary Government* with a painter “affecting the breach of a treaty” (*Patterson Civic Crown* 124).

\(^{53}\) From this point on, Dryden’s “An Account of the Ensuing Poem, in a letter to the Honourable Sir Robert Howard” that precedes *Annus Mirabilis* will be referred to as the “Account.” The dedication “To the Metropolis of Great Britain, the most renowned and late flourishing City of London, in its
Neoclassical panegyric to Charles for his wisdom in dividing the fleet, to interpret Monck’s narrow escape, which had included having his breeches shot off, as ‘naked valour,’ and to make the whole account of the fire subservient to a praise of Charles’s grief for, and munificence to, his devastated London, and a prophecy of its rising anew like the phoenix from its flames. (Patterson Civic Crown 145)

A. B. Chambers, Patterson, and Smith also note the potential thematic and topical influence of Dryden’s *Annus Mirabilis* on the *Second* and *Third Advice*, based upon the date of publication. According to the Popple manuscript, the *Second Advice* had been written in April 1666, and circulated in manuscript since then. Dryden’s prefatory “Account” to the poem is dated 10 November 1666, with the poem licensed for publication on 22 November, and entered in the Stationer’s register for 21 January 1666/1667 (Patterson Civic Crown 146). On the basis of this, Patterson argues it is “virtually certain that *Annus Mirabilis* was inspired in part by the parliamentary committee to investigate the causes of the fire, to which Marvell was appointed on the 2 October” (146). Moreover, if *Annus Mirabilis* was published after Marvell’s *Second Advice*, it “could also be seen as a counter-proposition to [Marvell’s] assertion that the war was neither just, necessary nor successful” (146).

Patterson goes on to suggest that “if *Annus Mirabilis* had been circulating since representatives the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen, the Sheriffs and Common Council of it” will be referred to as the “Dedication.” Similarly, the “Verses” is the convention used by Hammond and Hopkins to refer to the prefatory poem “Verses to her Highness the Duchess on the memorable victory gained by the Duke against the Hollanders, June the 3 1665, and on her journey afterwards into the north.” They were first printed as part of the prefatory material to *Annus Mirabilis*. The “Verses” circulated in manuscript, but no separate copy is known.
November, it would help to explain why the Third Advice, reported by Pepys to be in circulation by 20 Jan 1666/7, divides its focus between the Four Days’ Battle and the Fire of London” (italics in original) (*Civic Crown* 146). By drawing upon the same content, Marvell sets out to counter Dryden’s claims that the war was for the good of England, and carried out under the capable leadership of Charles II.

The *ut pictura poesis* tradition is central to Annabel Patterson’s authoritative claims about Marvell’s authorship of the Second and Third Advices and Last Instructions, and necessarily plays a foundational role in my analysis of the poetic use of painting conventions in these poems. My primary interest lies with the increasingly political nature of Marvell’s use of *ut pictura poesis* in the Advice-to-a-Painter Poems when compared to his 1651 poem *The Gallery*. Patterson has observed that this change in Marvell’s poetry can be traced back to his return from a diplomatic mission to Russia and Sweden, where he found that his perception of the Second Anglo-Dutch war “differed radically from that being expressed by the public poetry of the day” (Patterson “Lady State” 124). Patterson further states that “at the heart of Marvell’s objections to the war was the Opposition view that it was neither a ‘just war’ in the legal sense […] nor an expedient trade war that would enrich the country” (124). Many in the House of Commons, including Marvell, felt that the war was “an excuse for extracting from them […] an exorbitantly large Supply, most of which quickly vanished with very little to show for it” (124). Marvell contradicts Waller’s and Dryden’s views that it was a just and necessary war in order for England to regain sovereignty of the English Channel, and sets the foundation for his highly politicised challenge to Renaissance aesthetic techniques. This chapter also moves beyond a consideration of Marvell’s manipulation of Renaissance conventions to identify references to the Mannerist style, and a deep knowledge of
Dutch culture, which becomes increasingly nuanced between the 1650s and 1660s. In what follows, I take a comparative approach to the representations of the war in Waller’s Instructions, Dryden’s Annus Mirabilis and Marvell’s Second and Third Advices. I argue that the Second Advice incorporates references to elements of the Mannerist style as a way of mocking the already excessive heroism portrayed by Waller, while adhering more closely to its offending model than the Third Advice or Last Instructions. I turn to Marvell’s earlier poems The Gallery and The Character of Holland in order to demonstrate that Marvell’s aesthetic concerns in the Painter poems have evolved from an earlier interest in (metaphorically) experimenting with aesthetic techniques, exploiting Dutch propaganda of the English and using it against his own countrymen. Analysis of the Second and Third Advices in the context of The Gallery and A Character of Holland is necessary for setting the terms of my analysis, and demonstrating that Marvell’s concern with Mannerist and Dutch visual culture was not spontaneous in Last Instructions, but a nuanced and more complex version of his references to these traditions in his previous works.

1.1 The Painterly context for Waller’s Dryden’s and Marvell’s representations of the Second Anglo-Dutch War

In its celebration of the English success in the Battle of Lowestoft in June 1665, Edmund Waller’s Instructions (written as a piece of Royalist propaganda) offers a mythic celebration of the courage shown by the Duke of York, and the “high motives of the war in general” (Patterson Civic Crown 127). It takes the painter motif as its central conceit, with the poem’s patron instructing a court painter on the construction of a State Portrait in the style of Anthony van Dyke, or Sir Peter
Lely. The motif of giving advice to a portrait painter originated in Greek mythology, and by the seventeenth century it had become a popular “organising principle for the description of historical events,” so as to elevate them to “heroic and mythic proportions” (Patterson Civic Crown 137). It has been widely accepted that Waller’s Instructions takes its structure from Giovanni Francesco Busenello’s 1656 panegyric A prospective of the naval triumph of the Venetians over the Turk to Signor Pietro Liberi, that renowned and famous painter, in which a painter, Liberi, is commissioned to represent a climactic battle in Crete that concluded a twenty-five-year war between the two nations (Chambers Andrew Marvell 93). Waller uses Busenello’s poem to draw a typological association between the English and the Venetians, the Dutch and the Turks, while taking the analogy a step further to associate England with Rome and Holland with Carthage, outrageously suggesting the current stakes are higher than the epic battle between Romans and Carthaginians at Troy (Chambers Andrew Marvell 87):54 “For a less prize, with less concern and rage, / The Roman fleets at Actium did engage; / They, for the empire of the world they knew, / These for the Old contend, and for the New” (Instructions 113-16). In the service of panegyric, Waller abandons any pretense of historical realism, and his painter is instructed to replace actual events with an idealised image of the Second Anglo-Dutch war. John Dryden’s opening statement in Annus Mirabilis takes a prospective view of the historical landscape as does Waller’s Instructions, and

54 The Battle of Lowestoft was the first key battle of the Second Anglo-Dutch War, at which time England was optimistic about defeating the Dutch following the success of their campaign in the First Anglo Dutch War (1552-4) under Oliver Cromwell. It was not long before it became clear that England chances for success were being hampered by poor political governance and strategic failures that Waller had no reason to anticipate at the time of writing his Instructions (Patterson Civic Crown 130).
throughout the poem, an omniscient narrator invites someone to “Behold” (25) and “See” (29) objects of interest, as though inviting the reader to view a picture. These invocations to an artist are not used as a framing device in the manner of Waller’s and Marvell’s poems, but their association with the pictorial tradition is evident. In lines 25-29 the reader is invited to “Behold two nations then, engaged so far / That each seven years the fit mush shake each land; Where France will side to weaken us by war,/ Who only can his vast designs withstand” (italics mine). In the second half of the poem, as the city of London is destroyed by fire, the narrator describes “A dismal picture of the general doom” (1014) reminding the reader that what is being described is essentially being played out before them on a virtual landscape.

Observing how linear perspective is used in Dryden’s poem, Chambers observes that the initial effect of these lines “is diminution since a greater world can only contrast with a smaller one presumably less significant” (Chambers Andrew Marvell 95). At the same time, the naval battle between England and Holland is elevated to such an extent that this “theatre of war” may be smaller “in size, but not in significance” (Chambers Andrew Marvell 96). In both poems the Dutch navy is portrayed as a powerful enemy so as to elevate England’s bravery and ultimate victory, as seen in lines 227-30 of Waller’s Instructions that describe the fleet confronting the English with aggression which would have “made others yield” (228); this only increases English resolve as they take “delight” (230) in the

55 Compare to opening lines of Waller’s Instructions: “First draw the sea, that portion which between / The greater world and this of ours is seen; / Here place the British, there the Holland fleet, / Vast floating armies! Both prepared to meet. / Draw the whole world, expecting who should reign, / After this combat, o’er the conquer’d main” (1-6).

56 For further discussion of the use of perspective in Waller’s Instructions and Dryden’s Annus Mirabilis see Gallagher.
challenge. Waller and Dryden nonetheless undermine the representation of Dutch courage with satiric references to cultural stereotypes such as a predilection for alcohol which, in Waller’s *Instructions*, leads to a series of mishaps that initiates their own demise: “But Bacchus now, which led the Belgians on, / So fierce at first, to favour us begun; / Brandy and wine (their wonted friends) at length / Render them useless, and betray their strength” (241-4). Waller suggests alcohol gives the Dutch a delusional sense of strength that deserts them in the midst of battle.57

Given the purpose of Waller’s panegyric, it is not surprising that at the centre of the poem is a portrait of Charles II, a figure noticeably absent from the rest of the poem. In the formal address to the King at the end of the poem, Charles II is invited “to step inside the picture and be his own living portrait,” with the poem’s speaker asserting; “Great Sir, disdain not in this piece to stand, / Supreme commander of both sea and land!” (311-12) (Chambers *Andrew Marvell* 104). This is quite clearly a portrait still in the making. In order for art and life to come together, Charles II is required to fulfill Waller’s ambitious view of England’s handling of the war, which, at the time of writing, had only just begun.

Shortly after the publication of Waller’s poem, English hopes for another victory over the Dutch were “undermined by an inability to exploit naval advantages, and by a failure of the war administration” to adequately equip and direct the fleet”

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57 In lines 249-5 of Waller’s *Instructions*, the Dutch are described as being so drunk, “their reeling ships on one another fall, / Without a foe, enough to ruin all” (249-50). Another example occurs in lines 41-6 with the poem’s speaker asserting: “Our first success in war made Bacchus crown, / And half the vintage of the year our own. / The Dutch their wine, and all their brandy lose, / Disarm’d of that from which their courage grows; / While the glad-English, to relieve their toil, / In health to their great leader drink the spoil.”
The result was a proliferation of satiric *Advice-to-a-Painter* poems that adopt the painterly conceit, critiquing Waller’s “pro-government eulogistic account of the first phase of the Second Dutch War, and especially the conduct of James, Duke of York as Admiral” (Patterson “Lady State” 395). I will now move to an examination of the *Second Advice* as a response to Waller’s *Instructions*, in order to explore how Marvell’s references to Mannerist stylisation and excess in the *Second Advice* prefigure its highly politicised appropriation in *Last Instructions*.

1.2 *The Second Advice to a Painter* as satiric answer to Waller’s *Instructions*

Marvell’s *Second Advice* has been interpreted as his initial answer to Waller’s *Instructions*, and the one that adheres most closely to the Painter motif in order to exploit the pictorialist tradition (Patterson *Civic Crown* 138). Marvell engages with the debates surrounding the advantages of poetry over painting that resulted from the dictum *ut pictura poesis*. In doing so, he issues a direct challenge to Waller’s assertion that painting is inferior to poetry for representing the tumult of battle, by claiming his depiction of the war is more accurate on account of its expressive use of paint. Marvell’s speaker claims that had Waller “drawn or painted rather than written verse, he would have had to tell the truth” (Marvell *The Poems* 332):

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58 Waller suggests the battle is most naturally represented by the poet, as “only poetry can ‘Light and Honour to Brave Actions Yield, / Hid in the Smoak and Tumult of the Field’” (293–4). Waller therefore challenges Leonardo’s claim that painting is superior to poetry in representing a battle, while Marvell sides with Leonardo for the purposes of satire.
Nay, Painter, if thou dar’st design that fight
Which Waller only courage had to write;
If thy bold hand can without shaking draw
What ev’n the actors trembled when they saw;
Enough to make the colours change like theirs,
And all thy pencils bristle like their hairs;
First in fit distance of the prospect vain,
Paint Allin tilting at the coast of Spain: (Second Advice 1-8)

In this statement, the reader is made aware that Marvell’s painter will be using paint in a way that cannot be mistaken for the smooth, idealised exteriors of Royal portrait painters. Instead the painter’s brush strokes will reflect the fear and violence of the participants in the battle in a Mannerist style. Lines 109-116 explicitly reference Mannerist painter Michelangelo’s *The Last Judgment* (ca.1635-41). Marvell’s painter is instructed to draw the battle “[…] more terrible to show / Than the Last Judgment was of Angelo. / First, let our navy scour through silver froth, / The ocean’s burden and the kingdom both” (111-114). Patterson notes that the Italian critical term *terribilità*, used to describe awesomeness of conception and execution, was used to describe the work of Michelangelo and his school, whose style was subject to “accusations of stylistic impropriety and irreverence” (Patterson *Civic Crown* 139). The expressive naturalism and licentious subject matter of *The Last

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60 Michelangelo’s work marked the early part of Mannerism in England, as the style emerged from the latter years of the High Renaissance. James Hall interprets Michelangelo’s *Last Judgment* as an example of “visual self-mockery” claiming: “This […] self-portrait is the grisly apogee of the penitential self-portrait. Bartholomew, holding up the butcher’s knife which was his traditional
Judgment, as well as his portrayal of Christ without a beard, saw it condemned by Renaissance artists as an example of pictorial indecorum that was later covered in the appropriate places (139).\(^6^1\) Marvell draws this parallel to suggest that the English fleet is in such an improper state that it will require an image even more indecorous than Michelangelo’s to make it even partially acceptable to an audience. Smith notes that the analogy drawn at line 8 between Sir Thomas Allin and “Don Quixote’s tilting at windmills which he mistakes for giants” is a way of implying that Allin, while he may have the trappings of heroism, is not to be taken seriously (Smith The Poems 333).\(^6^2\)

Mannerist excess is used throughout the Second Advice as a way of critiquing Waller’s heroic representation and, by virtue of its extravagance, highlighting the fact that Waller’s claims were already in excess of what the reality required. The English navy is shown engaging in “All luxury of war” (211) (a reference to their wild unrestrained behavior), only to be quickly overcome by Dutch fire power: “Marlb’rough, that knew and dared too more than all, / Falls undistinguished by an iron ball” (215-16).\(^6^3\) Marvell’s speaker suggests the battle is all pomp and ceremony attribute, turns to Christ as if to appeal on Michelangelo’s behalf for pity and for admittance to the realm of the blessed” (The Self Portrait 110). Patterson interprets Marvell’s reference to the Last Judgment as “a statement of the poet’s audacity, since painting itself was motivated by political disillusionment following the Fall of Rome, which was the most celebrated Renaissance example of stylistic impropriety” (139).

\(^6^1\)Indecorum in Renaissance art also incorporates changes to consistency in the pictorial language of iconography. See James Hall, Michelangelo and Frederika H. Jacobs “Aretino and Michelangelo”.

\(^6^2\)Sir Thomas Allin had been responsible for “a disastrous and unprovoked attack on the Dutch Smyrna fleet on 2 December 1664” which Smith notes was the trigger for the Second Anglo-Dutch war (Smith The Poems 332).

\(^6^3\)James Ley, Third Earl of Marlborough (1618-65).
with little substance (“No mayor till now so rich a pageant feigned / Nor one barge all the companies contained”) (23-4). The suggested choice of the most expensive pigments is also used mock-heroically, with the speaker instructing the painter to “Use nothing but ultramarinish blue” (30), to “express” (29) Sir William Coventry’s “hue” (29), as a Pluto-like keeper of the underworld” (Smith The Poems 333).

Another example of Marvell’s replacing Renaissance decorum with Restoration excess is the portrait of the Duchess of York, in which the painter is mockingly instructed to “prepare, t’ enrich thy piece, / Pencil of ermines, oil of ambergris” (53-4). Marvell likens the Duchess to Venus, painted by Botticelli rising from a seashell, but in this case, she is jokingly portrayed in a tiny boat, “One thrifty ferry-boat of mother-pearl” (63) (Smith The Poems 332). The whole display, Marvell suggests, is a “small sea-masque” (66), arranged by the Duke to court her, following a lack-luster wedding ceremony: “O Duchess if thy nuptial pomp were mean, / ’Tis paid with int’rest in this naval scene” (69-70) (Smith The Poems 334). Marvell’s state portrait of England’s naval performance is high in pomp and ceremony, but weak in strength.

It is the more composed Dutch who are the true heroes of Marvell’s poem as he works to mercilessly expose English failures: “Then let the Dutch with well-dissembled fear / Or bold despair, more than we wish draw near” (127-8). As the English continue to make poor strategic decisions, the Dutch are portrayed fulfilling the duties the English fleet could not; “The Dutch *Urania* fairly on us sailed, / And promises to do what Opdam failed” (197-8) (italics in original). Having begun the

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64 Coventry was the Duke of York’s secretary, and one of the four English navy commissioners. He was “held to have instigated an early attack on Clarendon through the bill against the embezzlement of prize gods on 18 October 1665” (Smith The Poems 333). Ultramarine blue an expensive, dark blue pigment made from crushing lapis lazuli, a bright blue rock into a powder.
poem by making a mockery of the numerous disasters celebrated by Waller, Marvell concludes the *Second Advice* by challenging Royalist claims about its being a just and necessary war (317-18): “Thus having fought we know not why, as yet / We’ve done we know not what, nor what we get.” Marvell expresses his despair at the war and his inability to find anything resembling a worthwhile gain for England. He also responds to Leonardo’s claim by stating the only reason the battle cannot be properly represented is due to the scale of destruction rather than to the limitations of art itself. He goes on to suggest that the entire war was motivated by greed, and that all the English navy have to show for their efforts are a few “triumphant checkstones” (325) for the “Duchess’ closet” (326). Marvell further suggests that the only reason Waller sought to put a heroic gloss on the war was a political gesture motivated by guilt for having figuratively written “Cromwell’s epitaph” when he penned *Upon the late storm and the Death of his Highness Ensuing the same* (1659) (Smith *The Poems* 338). In fact, the war, according to Marvell, equated to little more than a failed experiment, synonymous with Sir William Petty’s design of “Four double keeled ships,” the third of which was launched in December 1664 only to sink a few months later (Smith *The Poems* 342). In the final section addressed to the King, Marvell reinforces the idea of the war as a game of chance by claiming “Kings are in war but cards: they’re gods in peace” (368), suggesting that in war, they are merely instruments of other forces such as fortune, or powerful courtiers such as Clarendon. Marvell suggests that by removing his corrupt and self-serving advisors,

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65 “Triumphant Checkstones” is a reference to the “small, smooth round pebbles, used to play a children’s game” (Smith *The Poems* 342).

66 Patterson argues that, “Marvell not only recalled himself in these satires, but in important instances deliberately parodied his poems to and about Oliver Cromwell, in order to show how the heroic days
his eyes will be “cleared” (361) and he will be able to “View those kingdoms calm of joy and light / Where’s universal triumph but no fight” (363-4). Only then would Waller’s “art,” as a prospective ekphrasis, be truly appropriate, whereas in the Second Advice Marvell uses poetic Mannerism to critique the English war effort. In turning now to the Third Advice, I intend to show that Marvell uses his knowledge of Dutch visual culture, associated with excessive naturalism and attention to detail, to satirically diminish the performance of the English navy. The relationship between the excessive naturalism of Dutch art, and scientific experimentalism is prefigured in the Third Advice, but, as I will argue, is not fully explored prior to Last Instructions.

1.3 The dangers of Dutch naturalism and the ironic revelations of the minute in Marvell’s Third Advice

The problem of finding the appropriate style for representing the current situation is raised again in the opening of the Third Advice. The subject matter is the Four Days’ Battle (1-4 June 1666) in which General Monck encountered considerable

of the Protectorate had been replaced by the mock heroics of the Second Dutch War” (Patterson “Lady State” 396).

Smith identifies Christopher Wase’s Divination (1666), as a possible source for the Third Advice. Wase’s poem defends the regime and war policy, and launches an attack on the political critique of Marvell’s Second Advice. In the Third Advice, Marvell appears to reference some of Wase’s accusations (Smith The Poems 345). As stated earlier, another possible source is Dryden’s Annus Mirabilis published January 1667, which also offers a heroic account of three notable English failures: the division of the fleet, the Four Days’ Battle and the Great Fire of London. If Marvell were responding to Dryden’s poem, he would have to have seen a manuscript copy prior to its publication, which Smith deems unlikely (The Poems 345).
losses against Dutch General De Ruyter’s fleet. This was largely due to false
intelligence provided by Arlington, which had meant that, in late May, Prince Rupert
had commanded a squadron of twenty ships to encounter a French fleet in the Bay of
Biscay. By the time Prince Rupert realised the ships were in the wrong location,
General Monck was required to engage De Ruyter’s superior fleet without the
squadron’s support. Dryden also represents the Four Days’ Battle in *Annus Mirabilis*,
but downplays English strategic failures by conveniently covering over unfavourable
details, or leaving them out of the poem’s frame altogether. Marvell begins the *Third
Advice* with a satiric assertion that he will bring the missing details into the frame by
calling upon the famous dwarf miniaturist Richard Gibson (1615-90) to “[Draw] in
little, how we do yet less” (10).68 The fact that Gibson was official portraitist to
Cromwell is telling, because he would have been versed in what Laura Knoppers
describes as the “plain style” of portraiture that remained true to individual
imperfections, a style that Cromwell had favoured over traditional portraiture.69 The
emphasis on modesty and naturalism over artifice in “plain style” portraiture aimed
to augment the authenticity of the sitter’s likeness, and in turn, suggest a timeless

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68 Gibson began his career as a page to Charles I, before becoming Cromwell’s portraitist. After the
Restoration, he worked as official miniaturist to Charles II’s (Patterson *Civic Crown* 147).

69 For more on Cromwell and plain style portraiture as an alternative mode to the piety and power of
traditional portraiture which endured post 1660, see Knoppers *Contrasting Cromwell*. For discussion
of Marvell and “plain style,” see Knoppers “Politics of Portraiture” (1283-1319). Patterson also
discusses the Commonwealth style as featuring figures that “often appear painted simply in ovals,
without elaborate pose or background, and the severity of dress and expression is relieved only by the
characteristic Lely eyes — fine, long and mildly challenging” Patterson *Civic Crown* 148. This could
also be seen as another example of Marvell’s oppositional sympathies in light of Knoppers argument
that “the differences between Cromwellian images and those of the monarchy are less inept and more
purposeful than has hitherto been recognized” (“Politics of Portraiture” 1287).
truthfulness. Lely, a pre-eminent England-based portrait painter, had also served as official portrait painter to Cromwell, during which time he had been known for his “Commonwealth style” (Patterson *Civic Crown* 148). Under Charles II, this was developed to conform to the King’s preference for Renaissance style portraiture. Marvell ironically rejects Lely as the painter for the *Advice*, on account of “the traditional association between Dutch painting and excessive realism, which, as a mode of representation, could also impart ‘intelligence’ to the poem’s audience” (Patterson *Civic Crown* 147):

Lely’s a Dutchman, danger in his art:  
His pencils may intelligence impart.  
Thou Gibson, that among thy navy small  
Of marshalled shells commandest admiral;  
Thyself so slender that thou show’st no more  
Than barnacle new hatched of them before:

*(Third Advice 3-8)*

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70 Patterson notes that, “In contrast to van Dyck, who became, of course, the greatest of the Caroline iconographers, Lely responded to the climate of Civil War and the Puritan ethos. By 1651 he had painted a portrait of Cromwell, for which Cromwell had reportedly issued his own ‘instructions’, insisting that it be fully realistic, without flattery, even to the inclusion of ‘roughnesses, pimplles, warts’” (Paterson *Civic Crown* 149). After taking up the position of principle painter for the Restoration court, “his series of naval portraits commissioned by the Duke of York to commemorate the Battle of Lowestoft were or great topical interest” (149). The terms of Lely’s commission for painting the portraits required that he “make to distinction” between the comparative heroism of his sitters (149).

71 For further discussion on Marvell’s choice of Gibson see Chambers 129-31.
In choosing Gibson, the speaker of the poem suggests that while painting the embarrassing details in miniature might make them less obvious than if Lely were to paint them, they will be glaringly obvious nonetheless.

The comparison between the Battle of Lowestoft and the Four Days’ Battle is made immediately apparent; for example, in recounting Monck’s encounter with the Dutch following the division of the fleet, he is portrayed attacking them alone, his ego inflated by his successes in the First Anglo Dutch War (line 39). Quickly overcome by Dutch fire power, the poem’s speaker remarks that outward valour without skill can only have dismal consequences: “But Victory does always hate a rant: / Valour her brave, but Skill is her gallant. / Ruyter no less with virtuous envy burns; / And prodigies for miracles returns” (71-4). The satire on Monck’s misplaced courage in the face of a superior enemy is described through a mocking list of negatives (lines 97-104), before the speaker deems the subject matter so humiliating the painter should, “[…] rather than transmit our scorn to Fame, / Draw curtains, […] o’er this shame” (105-106), as Dryden and Waller have done. 72 The shift to the need for ironic concealment to preserve English dignity sets the scene for recounting a series of other embarrassing incidents. These include Sir George Ascue’s ship running aground before being burned, and the company taken prisoner, which is to be concealed in a “dark cloud” (119). 73 Accordingly, the account of General Monck being shot in the breeches is to be replaced with a story “of his hand or thumb” so as to “Conceal, as honour would, his Grace’s bum” (124-5) (Smith The Poems 349).

Having drawn attention to the fortuitous use of mist to veil over embarrassing details such as in lines 159-60 which state “Old Homer he did never introduce, / To

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72 Patterson also discusses the strategy of ironic “draping” of indecency (Patterson Civic Crown 152).

73 George Ascue was an admiral in the English squadron commanded by the Duke of Albermarle.
save his heroes, mist of better use” (159-160), the poem’s focus and perspective dramatically shifts to reveal the “truth” behind the lies of political propaganda:

Now joyful fires, and the exalted bell,
And court-gazettes our empty triumph tell.
Alas: the time draws near when, overturned
The lying bells shall through the tongue be burned;
Paper shall want to print that lie of state,
And our false fires true fires shall expiate.

(Third Advice 163-68) 74

To do so, the putative instructor suggests, will require a new painter — one who will not “vex the future times with nice survèy” (170), and will tell it without embellishment. The most fitting person “to paint the rest” (172), the instructor suggests, is the Duchess of Albemarle, a common seamstress with a reputation for being neither attractive, nor clean (Smith The Poems 350-51). 75 Patterson notes that, in addition to being a “grotesque herself,” the Duchess was excluded from Cavalier and Anglican circles, while being close to Monck, making her a useful vehicle for delivering the more serious component of the satirist’s message (Patterson Civic Crown 153).

Playing upon her profession, the Duchess is portrayed as a crude version of Homer’s Penelope, who rather than weaving scenes together to tell a story, is

74 In the “Dedication” prefacing Annum Mirabilis, Dryden suggests the War and the Fire of London are “not more the effects of God’s displeasure […] than occasions for the manifesting of [the English peoples] Christian and civil virtues” (28-32). Marvell suggests it is a punishment for the lies of State.

75 In lines 235-6, the Duchess asserts “As if (to show you fools what ‘tis I mean) / I chose a foul smock, when I might have clean.”
portrayed metaphorically cutting and joining them together so as to make Albermarle look like a hero. In lines 355-74 for example, Albemarle is portrayed in a losing battle against De Ruyter, before the Duchess intervenes. Referring to the rigging of De Ruyter’s ship, she asserts (“’Tis strong and coarse enough) I’ll cut this shift” (371), allowing her to re-join the scenes so that Albemarle’s damaged rigging will appear “as good as new” (372). As in the Second Advice, the Dutch are clearly the true heroes, with intervention by the poem’s painter required to make them look otherwise. By the time the Duchess begins her story in line 193, she has undergone a metamorphosis into a “witch” (199) and prophetess (196), like “Presbyterian sibyl” (200). This aspect of her persona allows her to prophecy the downfall of the nation on account of corruption, cowardice and greed, and paves the way for the revelations made in the concluding address “To the King.”

Echoing the Second Advice, Charles is advised against evil councillors such as Clarendon and his ministry who are working duplicitously to undermine the realm: “Hark to Cassandra’s song, ere Fate destroy, / By thy own navy’s wooden horse, thy Troy” (447-8). Although the King may not like what he sees when the mask of pretense is taken off, he claims that he has done the King a favour: “What servants will conceal, and couns’llors spare / To tell, the painter and the poet dare; And the assistance of an heav’nly muse / And pencil represents the crimes abtruse” (439-

76 Sibyl was a woman in antiquity that possessed the powers of prophecy and divination (Smith The Poems 350).

77 Patterson notes, the accusations of both the Second and Third Advices are directed at “Clarendon, the two Coventry’s, Sandwich, Arlington,” and Royalists who sought exile in France and Holland during the Interregnum rather than staying to support the Royalist cause (Patterson Civic Crown 159).
Marvell refuses to offer up a definitive image of a bright future for England, but, with the final transformation of the Duchess of Albemarle into the mythic truth teller Philomela, he suggests there is a glimmer of hope that the current trajectory can be averted. According to the myth, Philomel lost her voice after being raped and mutilated by her theoretical protector, and as a result, she set about creating a speaking picture, albeit not a flattering one (Chambers Andrew Marvell 137).

Eventually Philomel is transformed into the nightingale and can sing, a transformation Marvell suggests might also be possible for England as long as she is heard. The conclusion also appears to issue a final challenge to Waller’s dismissal of the powers of art, with Marvell re-asserting the revelations made possible with the expressive use of paint:

So Philomel her sad embroid’ry strung,
And vocal silks tuned with her needle’s tongue.
(The picture dumb, in colours loud, revealed
The tragedies of court, so long concealed.)
But, when restored to voice, increased with wings,
To woods and groves, what once she painted, sings.

(Third Advice 451-6)

Painting, Marvell suggests, has the power to transform a negative story into a positive one in a way that poetry alone cannot. This is an illustration of Simonides’ motto that “poetry is a speaking picture, painting dumb poetry,” and as Patterson notes, “echoes the poet’s earlier prophecy of a time when the ‘lying Bells’ of political propaganda ‘shall through the tongue be burn’d’” (Patterson Civic Crown 78)

78 Compare to lines 957-8 of Last Instructions which read; “Blame not the Muse that brought these spots to sight, / Which in your splendor hid, corrode your light.”
Patterson points out that Philomela’s “metamorphosis into the nightingale, long established as a symbol of the poet, replaces painting with poetry as the revelatory medium” (157). Philomel’s metamorphosis also demonstrates that they work best when working in unison; until now, word and image have been working incongruently – an irony that resolves itself through the Duchess’s/Philomel’s metamorphosis.

Marvell’s experimentation in the *Third Advice* with different forms of painting to suitably represent England’s performance in the war is continued in the opening lines of *Last Instructions*. In *Last Instructions* a new and unskilled painter is instructed in adding the final touches to the canvass. These final touches once again take the form of an inverted pictorialism, in which the painter is encouraged to experiment with a variety of media, before the speaker concludes that the most appropriate means of doing justice to the navy’s performance is, ironically, with no colour at all (lines 5-6). Smith identifies the paradoxical reference to colour in *Last Instructions* with a parody of the disavowals of heroic poetry, this time presenting the metaphorical painter with an impossible task. The opening discussion of the type of representation appropriate to the subject matter connects *Last Instructions* thematically to Waller’s *Instructions* and the *Second* and *Third Advices* which are also concerned with principles of Renaissance decorum. The speaker’s attention in *Last Instructions*, however, quickly shifts from a consideration of the application of paint to the use of perspective, as the poem’s painter is instructed to “take aim” (16) with a microscope in order to capture to details previously unseen. The reference to the microscope in line 16 also appears to reference the idea of minuteness at the beginning of the *Third Advice*, in which the miniaturist painter Gibson is mockingly chosen for his ability to make England’s shortcomings less visible. In *Last*
Instructions, as I intend to show, the idea of focusing on minute details is a way of making them monstrously apparent. With the veil of deception having been metaphorically lifted by the Duchess of Albemarle, the truths she had begun to uncover are to be magnified even further with the use of optical instruments. The shifts in perspective enabled by Duchess’s profession as seamstress, become even more pronounced in Last Instructions as a result of the distorted images characteristic of microscopic observation. The political and aesthetic effects produced by microscopic observation will be thoroughly addressed in chapter five.

My current interest is to determine the trajectory of Marvell’s interest in experimenting with aesthetic techniques, in particular his knowledge of Mannerist and Dutch visual culture, and how this might have evolved from his earlier works. In order to further evaluate Marvell’s exposure to these cultures and visual art techniques, I turn to his two earlier poems: The Gallery, significant for its experimentation with aesthetics, and demonstration of Marvell’s knowledge and manipulation of traditional Renaissance art; and The Character of Holland, in which Marvell critiques the English by drawing parallels with Dutch cultural stereotypes. The techniques illustrated in both of these poems provide a framework for my subsequent argument regarding the highly nuanced application of these techniques in Last Instructions.

1.4 Aesthetic and perspectival experimentalism in Marvell’s The Gallery

Marvell’s interest in the pictorial tradition as a means of critiquing the decadence of the Stuart portrait tradition is evident in his ca.1650 poem The Gallery, which is
apparently modelled on Giambattista Marino’s ekphrastic sequence *La Galeria* (1619).  

79 *La Galeria* comprised “a lengthy collection of poems evoking individual paintings and sculptures, real or imaginary, and paying tribute, in the case of actual works, to their makers” (Hinnant 29). Critics disagree on the extent to which Marvell’s *The Gallery* engages with the pictorial tradition, and whether or not Marvell may have modeled his portraits on specific paintings of the period. However, the speaker’s suggestion that his gallery is larger than that at Whitehall or Mantua (lines 47-8) has suggested to Charles Hinnant that Marvell’s engagement with the culture of collecting was inspired by “the growing consciousness of the arts in the Caroline period” (Hinnant 27). Charles I’s collection at Whitehall included “the acquisition of the cabinet of Vincenzio Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua, in 1627-28,” a transaction that included works by Mannerist artists Correggio and Andrea del Sarto (27).  

80 In addition to the five images of Clora detailed in each stanza, the lover states “These pictures and a thousand more, / Of thee, my gallery dost store; / In all the forms thou can’st invent / Either to please me, or torment” (41-4). This statement is applicable to the (metaphorical) paintings themselves, which contain allusions to an extensive range of literary and pictorial traditions. The effect, as in the virtual

79 Charles Hinnant argues that *The Gallery* is indebted to the pictorial tradition, with Marvell’s knowledge of visual art possibly having been acquired on his travels in Europe, as well as his employment as a tutor under Sir Thomas Fairfax, a puritan General, who had his own expensive art collection (28). *The Gallery* does not make reference to any specific paintings, but does suggest Marvell’s knowledge of various genres popular in the period. Dosia Reichardt disagrees with the emphasis placed on the pictorial reading of the poem, and focuses instead on its literary sources, such as the Elizabethan “looking-glass [sonnet]” 98.  

80 Andrea del Sarto was an Italian painter from Florence, whose career flourished during the High Renaissance and early Mannerism.
Marvell frames his poem as an adaptation of the well-worn Renaissance conceit of a mistress engraved on her lover’s heart, but manipulates the convention to reveal “a darker side” to traditional images (Reichardt 97). Accordingly, the (metaphorical) paintings of Clora as “enchantress” (lines 25-32) and “murderess” (lines 9-16) appear to reference Baroque mythological portraits, but in doing so Marvell also innovates, rather than drawing a direct connection with any of his sources (Hinnant 29). The fact that Marvell’s portraits are highly artificial and stylised, with the true nature of the subject remaining unrecognisable, is a feature characteristic of Mannerist portraiture. For Louis Martz, *The Gallery* is a poem that “stands forth almost as a definition of mannerist art” (205). Dosia Reichardt’s argument appears to support Martz’s identification of a Mannerist aesthetic, claiming “the lover’s view of Clora is a panorama of surfaces, a progression but not necessarily a deeper revelation of Clora’s essence, so that error and illusion are always present” (110). Picking up on the features of stylisation and abstraction characteristic of Mannerist art, she observes that Clora is represented “as various characters, all artificial, and the whole notion of fabrication and falsification is underlined by the deliberate fictiveness of such a gallery” (Reichardt 110). The portrait of Clora as enchantress, for example, makes use of chiaroscuro and reflected images to produce an image that reveals little of her true identity. She is described “Vexing [her] restless lover’s ghost” (26) “[…] by a light obscure” (27), and, as

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81 Dosia Reichardt also identifies this feature of the poem when she states that “The reader invited into Marvell’s gallery can never comprehend the totality of Clora, while she will see versions of herself but nothing of the speaker’s self” (Reichardt 113).
though seeing her own image reflected back at her, “Divining thence, with horrid care, / How long [she] shalt continue fair” (29-30). The dark aura given to the enchantress also encapsulates baroque tones complementing the image of Clora as Shepherdess that concludes the poem by revealing a “darker side” to pastoral innocence (Reichardt 97). 

As I will show, this notion of perspectival distortion enabled by mirrors is developed further in *Last Instructions*, with the metaphor of the microscope being held responsible for the optical distortions and grotesque images revealed in the satiric portraits. The fact that *The Gallery* refers to mirrors rather than optical instruments implies that Marvell has not yet drawn an association between aesthetic techniques and scientific experimentalism, nor is the experimental approach to perspective and aesthetic techniques as highly politicised as it is in *Last Instructions*. The reference to mirrors does suggest, however, that this was a

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82 The pastoral episodes in *Last Instructions* also reveal a darker side to that genre that I will discuss below in terms of Mannerist stylisation. It becomes explicitly sexualised in the portrait of De Ruyter in *Last Instructions*.

83 For further discussion of seventeenth century mirror symbolism and its employment in Marvell’s *The Gallery* see Reichardt, especially pp. 98-100. Here she notes that images of women gazing into mirrors were common in both painting and poetry in the period, but “whereas painters often point symbolically to the woman’s vanity, or lust (while taking advantage of the genre’s obviously erotic possibilities), Cavalier poets seek to draw the woman’s and the reader’s attention to themselves” (99).

84 Reichardt points out that the notion of experimenting and investigating characteristic of empirical science, as well as the dissection and multiplication of images of the subject is made possible with the association of the lover’s soul functioning as kind of mirror (101). She argues that “*The Gallery* is not so much a poem about the paragone between poet and painter, or a piece of art criticism, but the critical heir of many minor poems in which the image of the beloved is integral to the poet’s inner sense of self.” (98).
developing interest for Marvell, as he sought new ways to convey his dissatisfaction with the Parliament and the Court. In each case, the imagery in *The Gallery* and *Last Instructions* fails to resolve itself into a unified image, as competing images continue to contradict themselves and prevent any certainty, either about the subjects’ identities or Marvell’s politics. I now move to an examination of *The Character of Holland* in order to further demonstrate Marvell’s familiarity with Dutch visual culture prior to *Last Instructions* and to draw conclusions about the trajectory in which it evolves in the satiric *Advices* and *Last Instructions*.

1.5 Marvell’s ironic critique of the English in terms of Dutch cultural stereotypes in *The Character of Holland*

*The Character of Holland* was published during the First Anglo-Dutch War and draws upon the growing anti-Dutch sentiment in England as a result of conflict over trade. Patterson notes that Marvell “had not yet established personal connections with Holland” but constructs “an educated ecphrasis [sic]” of the Dutch national character based upon “the anti-Dutch pictorial broadsides, which circulated in England during the three wars of 1652-3, 1665-7 and 1672-4” (Patterson *Civic Crown* 120). Its stereotypical treatment of the Dutch is by no means as comprehensive as the knowledge of Dutch culture expressed in the *Advice-to-a-Painter* poems, but nonetheless retained its political relevance. Patterson notes that

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85 Hinnant contradicts this view stating that, “There can be little doubt that the paintings are arranged in a meaningful sequence in which opposites are reconciled in the figure of the shepherdess” (37).

86 In contrast to the ekphrastic effect identified in *The Character of Holland*, I have deliberately chosen not to discuss Marvell’s *Last Instructions* as an ekphrastic poem due to the fact it does not give the impression of a speaker describing a finished work of art, but rather one still in the making.
the poem was “Republished, presumably without Marvell’s consent, to serve the purposes of government propagandists in both the Second and Third Anglo-Dutch wars” (Civic Crown 123). By 1666, disillusioned by another campaign against the Netherlands, Marvell had returned to satire, this time directed towards the English side (123). Patterson and Smith point out that a closer inspection of the political argument behind The Character of Holland reveals that Marvell’s criticism is directed as much toward the English, as it is the Dutch. He also implies that the religious and political toleration of the Dutch, and their prowess at sea would serve as a productive model for the English.87

The Character of Holland also conveys a sense of envy directed towards Dutch commercial and mercantile success. For example, lines 47-54 praise the Dutch upkeep of dikes and sea-walls, but satirise their “dirtiness which comes from working with drains and ditches,” analogising the institutions of Government in the Netherlands with a pack of playing cards: “To make a bank was a great plot of state; / Invent a shovel and be a magistrate. / Hence some small dyke-grave unperceived invades / the power, and grows as ’twere a King of Spades” (47-50) (Smith The Poems 252). Marvell satirises the Dutch republican government and its division of power between the “communal assemblies in the cities and the States General, and the protective role of the Stadholder,” likening the organisational structure to that of “the English body centrally in charge of drainage throughout the provinces” (Smith 252): “But for less envy some joint State endures / Who look like a Commission of the Sewers” (lines 51-2).

87 Patterson notes that at the end of The Character of Holland, Marvell turns “from describing the Dutch ‘character’ to recommending, however obliquely, the direction in which he hoped the English national character would develop” (Patterson Civic Crown 122).
A common theme of *The Character of Holland* is the metaphor for submersion, which Smith notes was a popular theme in seventeenth-century Dutch painting (*The Poems* 251). Marvell appropriates this to suggest that due to the flat geographical landscape of the United Provinces they are constantly engaged in battle to retain dominion of the seas, which continually wash over them like a game of leapfrog (251).

Yet still his claim the injured ocean laid,
And oft at leap-frog o’er their steeples played;
As if on purpose it on Land had come
To show them what’s their *Mare Liberum*.
A daily deluge over them does boil;
The earth and Water play at level-coil.

(*The Character* 23-30)

The image suggests the Dutch are fighting a losing battle for a foothold they will be unable to hold on to by playing on their flat landscape, lack of clearly defined geographical borders and classification as the Low Countries (Rubright 17). Just as the landscape is described as doubly situated in land and water, its inhabitants, the

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88 Smith identifies the republican connotations associated with frogs, stating: “in satirical iconography, the Venetian Republic was represented as a frog […] In the Commonwealth newsbooks, frogs also became an image of religious extremism” (*The Poems* 251).

89 Smith notes the *Mare Liberum* was a text published by Dutch jurist Hugo Grotius in 1609. Grotius argues that the sea could not be made the subject of private possession, and therefore it played an important role in the later disputes between the English and the Dutch concerning navigation rights in the First and Second Anglo-Dutch wars (251). “Level coil” is a reference to a noisy game played at Christmas and which became, in the late 1640s “a token of resistance and disaffection for defeated Royalists” (251).
“frogs” are described as “Half-anders, half-wet, and half-dry” (53) (Italics in original) (Rubright 18). Religious toleration in the United Provinces is also satirised through the metaphor of submersion, the waters washing over the land, mockingly described as a baptism (60). As noted by Smith, religious freedom is described in terms of sexual profligacy and multiple births, which also carries the implication of dirtiness: “Faith, that could never twins conceive before, / Never so fertile, spawned upon this shore” (63-4). In Last Instructions, this language of sexual degeneracy will be directed towards the English parliament and the excise tax devised to fund the costly war.

Marvell appears to be directing his criticism towards the Dutch on account of their republican government and religious toleration, but the criticism ironically reveals the similarities between the two nations.90 The concluding lines reinforce the fact that the difference between the two superficially resides in a mere reversal of Dutch images of the English:

For while our Neptune doth a trident shake,
Steeled with those piercing heads, Deane, Monck and Blake,
And while Jove governs in the highest sphere,
Vainly in Hell let Pluto domineer.91 (The Character 149-52)

By the time he writes the painter satires on the Second Anglo Dutch War under Charles II, Marvell’s sympathies with and mocking admiration of the Dutch becomes

90 For a detailed discussion of the similarities between England and Holland in the period see Rubright Doppelgänger Dilemmas.

91 Smith identifies that lines 151-2 are a “direct reversal of Dutch images of the English” where England was associated with Hell, and the men with Devils (Smith The Poems 256).
increasingly apparent.\textsuperscript{92} In \textit{Last Instructions}, having now spent time travelling in Europe, Marvell builds upon his knowledge of Dutch political and visual culture to critique English absolutism and decadence. At the same time he looks back to England’s success in the First Anglo-Dutch war under Oliver Cromwell even though this too was a government he never unequivocally supported.\textsuperscript{93}

Conclusion

Waller’s, Dryden’s and Marvell’s poems all draw upon visual cultural traditions to some extent as a political tool for apportioning praise or blame on the English Court, and Navy. Rather than using Renaissance conventions of decorum to represent the war, Marvell appears to reference English Mannerist art in the \textit{Second Advice} to draw attention to the hyperbolic nature of Waller’s, and possibly Dryden’s panegyric, although evidence for Marvell’s having read \textit{Annus Mirabilis} prior to publication remains uncertain. In the \textit{Third Advice}, Marvell draws attention to the relationship between Dutch visual culture, and minute attention to particulars before satirically choosing a miniaturist painter to construct his metaphoric portrait so as to

\textsuperscript{92} Patterson argues that considering Marvell “had spent a year from 1662-5 staying at the Hague with George Downing, a contact from his work in Cromwell’s Secretariat, and that he had so far identified with the Dutch in 1667 as to publish to of the \textit{Advices} under a false ‘Breda’ imprint, and to make De Ruyter one of the Heroes of the Last Instructions, such a development is not surprising […] if one remembers how Marvell must have seen the war, as an unjustifiable attack of one Protestant country upon its nearest Protestant neighbour, and one which would primarily benefit an imperialist and Roman Catholic France” (Patterson \textit{Civic Crown} 41).

\textsuperscript{93} Smith notes that “some of the details in the poem no doubt have their roots in personal observation” derived form his travels in Holland during the 1640s, while others were derived from English publications about the Dutch (Smith \textit{The Poems} 246).
“hide” the shameful details. At the same time, the poem’s speaker ironically implies these details will be impossible to miss without “draping” something over them, as he suggests Waller has done. Marvell’s interest in Mannerist and Dutch visual culture did not begin with his satires on the Second Anglo-Dutch war, but appears to have evolved from his earlier poems of the 1650s, even though these allusions were yet to become as highly politicised as I will claim they become in Last Instructions. In The Gallery there is no evidence of Marvell referencing Dutch painting traditions, which appears to be a later innovation in the context of the Anglo-Dutch wars. A look at The Character of Holland reveals that Marvell did have an interest in Dutch culture in the early 1650s, but that this was largely based upon English propaganda and cultural stereotypes, as opposed to his own experience. The fact that Marvell’s later allusions to Dutch culture reveal a more intimate knowledge supports the suggestion that the Second and Third Advices and Last Instructions were written after his travels in Europe in the 1650s.

Marvell’s interest in the emerging scientific culture of experimentalism, to be discussed in chapter five, is not explicit in The Gallery or The Character of Holland, and appears to have been a topic that sparked his interest in the 1660s with the emergence of the Royal Society in 1662. Scientific references are used sparingly in the Advices and unlike Last Instructions, there is no suggestion of an explicit connection between optical instruments and perspective that I intend to argue becomes a central structuring device as Marvell issues his final word in response to Waller’s Instructions. The metaphor of the seamstress, cutting and pasting events to create a particular account of the war in the Third Advice, as well as the assertion that the war represents a failed experiment, can be seen as a precursor to the microscopic
perspective in *Last Instructions*, which, I will argue, consolidates a connection between aesthetic and scientific experimentalism.

The key stylistic differences identified in this chapter between Waller’s and Dryden’s panegyrics and Marvell’s satires on the Second Anglo-Dutch wars can be further explored by studying the perspectival construction of the metaphorical portraits which punctuate each of these poems, and which I will explore in more detail in the next chapter.
Chapter 2: The ekphrastic portraits in Waller, Dryden, and Marvell’s Anglo-Dutch War poems

Introduction

This chapter explores the metaphorical use of the portrait in Dryden’s *Annus Mirabilis* and Marvell’s *Last Instructions*, in the context of fifteenth and sixteenth century treatises that informed the art of the Italian and English Renaissance. These treatises form the basis of Waller’s, Dryden’s and Marvell’s engagement with the pictorial tradition, an analysis of the representation of individuals in light of Renaissance portraiture is used to draw attention to features of Marvell’s satiric portraits that represent a departure from these conventions. Attention to the posture of the sitter, and the use of perspective in the portraits, will set the terms of my subsequent analysis of Dryden’s and Marvell’s prospective picture of the English nation at war. Waller’s and Dryden’s metaphoric portraits conform to Renaissance visual art conventions with an emphasis on decorum, a frontal perspective, and orchestrated poses to portray a countenance of power, beauty and heroism. Marvell’s satiric portraits exploit Renaissance conventions to produce a series of indecorous images for the court, while also referencing Dutch and Mannerist portraiture in order to challenge English courtly modes of representation. Dutch portrait artists sought to represent their subjects as naturally as possible, capturing their expressions and physical imperfections.\(^9\) The majority of Marvell’s portraits conform to Dutch ideals

\(^9\) While many Dutch artists sought to convey a sense of high verisimilitude, there was a sub-genre of Dutch portraiture and self-portraiture called a ‘tronie’ (the Dutch word for “face”). The tronie allowed
of naturalistic representation, the exceptions being the portraits of Douglas and De Ruyter, characterised by the stylisation of Mannerist portraiture. Both of these portraits portray their subjects in relation to the genre of Elizabethan pastoral, but rather than using it to represent an idyllic escape from the world of politics for the purposes of contemplation and reflection, the portrait’s excessive stylisation and sexual overtones ensure they are highly politicised. It is not without irony that Marvell’s most embellished portraits’ are reserved for the nation’s enemies — the Catholics, and the Dutch, but also those at the greatest remove from Charles II and his court. As stated in the general introduction, Marvell’s portraits have traditionally been read as satiric inversions of Renaissance conventions. Such readings overlook distinctive references to Mannerist stylisation and decadence, and realism as opposed to idealised verisimilitude. Comparing the technical features of Renaissance, Mannerist and Dutch portraiture can be productively used to explore the relationship between the metaphoric choice of aesthetic and the partisan politics informing Royalist and oppositional accounts of the Second Anglo-Dutch war.

2.1 Renaissance decorum and the idealisation of the sitter in Waller’s and Dryden’s panegyric portraits

In keeping with the Italian Renaissance of the fifteenth century, the art of portraiture occupied an increasingly central place in the artistic production of sixteenth and

artists to experiment with a wider range of facial expressions than were acceptable in conventional portraits, which could then be used in narrative history paintings. It is possible that Marvell recalled these when creating the grotesque portraits in Last Instructions. See David R. Smith “Irony and Civility” and “Rhetoric and Prose.”
seventeenth century England. Portraiture was a genre reserved largely for the Renaissance courts, including the papacy, and royalty in other parts of Europe, and was considered to present a unique opportunity for “objectifying a person’s appearance” by associating the privilege of likeness with the quality of status following ancient precedent (Christiansen et al. x). It is this connection between power and image that the poetic portraits of Waller and Dryden are appealing to, as they attempt to convey their subjects’ virtue or heroism with “a sophisticated balance of idealisation, emblematic allusion, and attractively detailed naturalism […] that became the mode for a generation of the ruling elite of the Italian peninsula” (Rubin 6). In Waller’s Instructions for example, the Duchess of York is described typologically as “Thetis” (82) and “the Paphian Queen” (83), and a woman whose virtue metaphorically leaves an impression on those around her: “The soldier here his wasted store supplies, / And takes new valour from the ladies’ eyes” (89-90). In Dryden’s prefatory “Verses” to the Duchess, she too is praised for her virtue, having generously relinquished her husband for the benefit of the nation:

Ah, what concerns did both your souls divide!

Your honour gave us what your love denied;

95 Alpers writes that, “Italian portraits are principally about resemblance […] Rather than revelations of personality, they are conveyors of social conventions and cultural identities” (Art of Describing ix).

96 Christiansen states that “what distinguishes Italian portraiture of the fifteenth century from those created north of the Alps is an emphasis on artifice of style and artistic ingenuity — what in the critical language of the day was referred to as ‘artificio’ and ‘invenzione’ — as a means of transforming their observation into something beautiful to behold” (x).

97 The tension between realism (verisimilitude of likeness) and idealism is articulated in Alberti’s On Painting (1435) Book II, chapter 40. In Mannerist portraiture, realism is superseded by hyper-idealism.
And ’twas for him much easier to subdue
Those foes he fought with, than to part from you.

(“Verses” lines 9-12)\(^98\)

In return, the soldiers who have flocked to greet her feel their strength restored after looking into her eyes.\(^99\) The idealisation that characterises the virtual portraits in Waller’s and Dryden’s poems is typical of a Renaissance understanding of nature, whereby “To imitate nature was to see its inherent principles of perfection, not to replicate its accidental effects” (Rubin 4). Stephan Weppelmann notes that when it comes to “judging a likeness” in a painting, “there are typological codes and representational modes as well as narrative and allegorical intent that have to be taken into account” (64). This is evident in the increasing emphasis that artists and patrons gave to the simulation of so-called “presence” in portraits through the use of shadows behind the sitter, and communicative poses and gestures that directly engage the viewer.

Male figures in Waller’s and Dryden’s poems are also defined according to a set of well-circulated ideals intended to invoke the viewer’s appreciation. In Della Famiglia (On The Family) (1435-44), Alberti states that “the beauty of a man accustomed to arms,” for example, “lies in his having a presence betokening pride […] limbs full of strength, and the gestures of one who is skilled and adept in all

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\(^98\) This is the convention used by Hammond and Hopkins to refer to the prefatory poem “Verses to her Highness the Duchess on the memorable victory gained by the Duke against the Hollanders, June the 3. 1665, and on her journey afterwards into the north” that was first printed as part of the prefatory material to Annus Mirabilis. These circulated in MS, but no separate MS copy is known” (Hammond and Hopkins 128).

\(^99\) Portraits of the highest members of society were generally seen as a means of political and social control in order to encourage obedience and respect.
forms of exercise” (II, 115). Waller and Dryden use analogy to draw comparisons between the contemporary English generals and the heroes of antiquity in order to emphasise their suitability for such positions, and, by extension, to cement the power of the King whose dreams of imperial greatness depends upon them.\textsuperscript{100} In Waller’s Instructions, the Duke of York is represented in the midst of battle, with emphasis on his royal lineage and strength matching that of Achilles:

There York appears! So prodigal is he

Of royal blood, as ancient as the sea,

Which down to him, so many ages told,

Has through the veins of mighty monarch’s roll’d!

The great Achilles march’d not to the field

Till Vulcan that impenetrable shield,

And arms, had wrought; yet there no bullets flew,

But shafts and darts which the weak Phrygians threw.

\textit{(Instructions 123-130)}

Waller’s representation of York foregrounds humanist attitudes to portraiture, and the idea that moral characteristics of inner strength or virtue needed to be displayed through the sitter’s physiognomy (Brown 30).\textsuperscript{101} The relationship between

\textsuperscript{100} Patricia Rubin argues that, “As the century progressed, there was a significant crossover between the way [subjects] were judged and remembered as actual people and how they existed as poetic figures” (Rubin 17).

\textsuperscript{101} Pompiño Gaurico in 1504 defined physiognomy as “a way of observing which we deduce the qualities of souls from the features of bodies” (Roskill 130-31). Beverly Brown writes that the courtly profile portraits of Antonio di Puccio Pisanello (ca. 1395- ca. 1455) “appealed specifically because they catered to the needs of prince and mercenaries whose identities were subsumed by their political
physiognomy and Renaissance portraiture enhanced the manipulative power of portraits in allowing the artist to highlight or omit specific features of a sitter's distinctive identity.\textsuperscript{102} The artist was required to negotiate the relations between “seeing and being, between artifice and reality and between imagination and memory,” in order to create images that would please the viewer, while conforming to the established principles and expectations of decorum (Rubin 18).

In England, as in Italy, such portraits became a conspicuous part of palace decoration and, being painted by commission, were concerned with depicting the sitter or patron from the best possible angle.\textsuperscript{103} In addition to angle of presentation, the subject’s expression and gestures are similarly constructed to present a particular image, regardless of the sitter’s true feelings. In \textit{Annum Mirabilis} for example, “The General (George Monck, Duke of Albemarle),” is portrayed in a visual tableau that resembles a portrait devoted to military and courtly honour, with the narrator asserting: “Our watchful General had discerned from far / This mighty succor which made glad the foe; / He sighed, but like a father of the war / His face spake hope, while deep his sorrows flow” (289-92). Albermarle presents an image of stoicism; he is deeply conscious of preserving his honour and dignity, and strives to conceal his roles and whose desires to be remembered as exemplary statesmen or warriors outshone their need to be portrayed with exact similitude” (30).

\textsuperscript{102} Lomazzo’s \textit{Trattato dell’arte} (1584) also emphasised that artists should dissimulate and conceal nature's inadequacies in order to amplify the 'good parts' of the physical self and its most pleasing features.

\textsuperscript{103} The standard portrait format in fifteenth-century Florence was the profile, which, according to Leonardo da Vinci, was imbued with certain communicative nuances that made it the most distinctive and memorable aspect of the face. The three-quarter portrait generally superseded the profile view towards the end of the fifteenth century, but both formats continued to be made into the early nineteenth century.
emotions behind an expression that necessarily speaks hope. Rather than portraying a
sense of weakness or uncertainty, Dryden constructs an image that emphasises
Albermarle’s paternal care for his men. Hammond and Hopkins have observed that
Virgil’s Aeneas “feigned to look hopeful, stifling the grief in his heart” (Aeneid I,
209), thus demonstrating how Dryden works to combine contemporary material with
classical ideals that he refashions into his own analogy.

The sitter is aware that he is presenting himself to be beheld, and works
closely with the painter to ensure he is presented in the best way possible. Further, in
assuming the presence of a beholder, Renaissance portraits are suggestive of
cooperation between the painter and the sitter in order to memorialise the subject in a
positive way. Waller’s portrait of the “victorious” Duke is one such example of a
subject apparently posing ready to be commended:

And now, our royal Admiral success
(With all the marks of victory) does bless;
The burning ships, the taken, and the slain,
Proclaim his triumph o’er the conquer’d main [….]
‘What wonders may not English valour work,
Led by th’example of victorious York
Or what defense against him can they make,
Who, at such a distance, does their country shake?

(Instructions 259-62, 277-80)

The carefully constructed setting, perspective, and props bespeak an effort of
historical reconstruction and to create a dramatic image that merges observation of
the Duke with an idealised conception of how he would want to be remembered. The
composition has a theatrical effect, with his actions and expressions marked by a
quality of deliberate restraint, as in a *tableau vivant*.\(^{104}\) The *tableau vivant* was an effective mode for creating drama, and in turn capturing the viewer’s attention. More importantly, it deepened the engagement of the viewer, thus making it a potent political instrument. In this sense, Waller’s representation is also distinctly reminiscent of Sir Peter Lely’s own portrait of the Duke, commissioned in 1672-3 to hang in the sitter’s chamber.\(^{105}\) Lely depicts him, posing hand-on-hip, beside his battle attire in the foreground, while the Dutch War rages behind. The Duke and the background scene are separated by a reference to elaborately tasseled stage curtains, highlighting the sense of theatricality that pervades the poetic portraits by Waller and Dryden. The theatrical device of the sweeping, voluminous Baroque curtain that features in the opening lines of *Annus Mirabilis* was a popular feature of both Dutch and English seventeenth-century portraits. The curtain creates the illusion of framing a picture within a picture, culminating with a portrait at the centre of the composition.

In addition to an impression of theatricality in his portraits, Dryden overcomes Leonardo da Vinci’s assertion that a picture was unable to capture the true character of a subject by freeing himself from the constraints of achieving a

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\(^{104}\) *Tableau vivant* or “living picture”: A silent and motionless person or group of people posed and attired to represent a well-known character, event, or work of art. In extended use: a person or group of people forming a striking or picturesque scene” (OED n. 1). I am using ideas about “theatrical” and “anti-theatrical” poses as defined by Michael Fried. Fried discusses the subject’s awareness, or lack of awareness, of a beholder in eighteenth century French portraiture. Fried’s study of eighteenth century art may appear anachronistic, but the concept of the direct gaze was a familiar one. Painters were working with the same conventions in the preceding centuries, but their meanings varied at different historical moments. See Fried, especially chapter two, 31-60.

\(^{105}\) Sir Peter Lely (1618-1680) produced numerous portraits of sophisticated Restoration courtiers and renowned beauties that often incorporated arcadian and musical themes (Dethloff *ODNB*).
In the prefatory “Account” Dryden asserts he has “copied” (242) many of his images from Virgil, whose masterful strokes allow the reader to:

See the objects he represents us with in their native figures, in their proper motions; but we so see them as our own eyes could never have beheld them so beautiful in themselves. We see the soul of the poet, like that universal one of which he speaks, I informing and moving through all his pictures. (Lines 204-9)

By modelling his rhetoric on the classical style of Virgil, Dryden compromises the accuracy of his images by exaggerating the positive attributes and veiling over the negative.  

In his bid to make his work both appropriate to the time and for all time, Dryden’s poetic portraits appear more contemporary to the time of writing than Waller’s. Dryden combines references to Classical history with references to Baconian natural philosophy, and its empirical and utilitarian influence on the Royal Society’s work as articulated in Thomas Sprat’s *The History of the Royal Society of London for the Improving of Natural Knowledge* (1667).  

Sprat’s text will subsequently be referred to as Sprat’s *History*.

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106 For Leonardo, “the portrait was accorded a new level of expression, one that was no longer explained on the basis of the accuracy of its likeness” (Preimesberger 72). His portraits were composed “out of individual expressive components,” with outward beauty symbolising the beauty of the subject’s soul (Preimesberger 75).

107 Dryden claims to have “mastered the use of technical terms,” but also wants to imitate Virgil in order to create “some lively and apt description, dressed in such colours of speech that sets before your eyes the absent object as perfectly and more delightfully than nature” (“Account” 162-5).

108 Sprat’s text will subsequently be referred to as Sprat’s *History*. 
natural way of speaking […] [that brings] all things as near the Mathematical
plainness, as they can” by claiming to use “the proper terms which are used at sea”
(“Account” 92-3). However, by situating this discussion about language within the
broader literary discussion about decorum, any claim to historical accuracy remains
compromised (Hammond and Hopkins 109; Sprat 113). 109

Dryden’s use of similes drawn from the discoveries of natural philosophy is
explicit in his portrait of the King, described as a natural philosopher determining
England’s good fortune (51-2). The scientific references are brief, and less than two
stanzas later, Dryden draws upon Virgil’s Georgics to draw an analogy between
Charles and Proteus, suggesting England’s promising future is also in the hands of a
wise ruler (Hammond and Hopkins 134). These examples from Annus Mirabilis
reveal stylistic developments in Dryden’s portraits, allowing a greater degree of
innovation that that seen in Waller’s panegyric. At the same time, it signals Dryden’s
interest in the new science of experimentalism, and the utilitarian benefits this could
bring, without having to fully subscribe to it, as will be explored in chapter four. In
Last Instructions, Marvell takes the process of innovation a step further, to create
portraits that do not adhere to any one tradition. Marvell experiments with a variety
of genres to challenge cultural assumptions regarding the truthfulness of English
courtly portraits, and to demonstrate that any such representation is subject to
manipulation by the painter. A discussion of Marvell’s experimental treatment of
perspective and style identified in the poetic portraits is developed in relation to the

109 Hammond and Hopkins note that lines 67-8 of Annus Mirabilis were altered in the third issue of
the poem “to avoid any imputation of cowardice, of which Sir William Berkeley […] had been
accused in the Battle of Lowestoft.” The lines initially read: “Berkeley alone not making equal way /
Did a like fate with lost Creusa meet,” but was changed to “Berkeley alone who nearest danger lay /
Did like a fate with lost Creusa meet” (148).
microscope and experimental science in chapter five, where I will argue that
Marvell’s aesthetic relativism, and exploitation of the distortion associated with
optical technologies is a reflection of his partisan politics. For the present, I turn to
examine the naturalistic approach of Dutch portraiture, and how the interest in
individual detail supports Marvell’s desire to produce a supposedly more accurate
image of his sitters.

2.2 *Last Instructions* and the naturalistic impulse of Dutch
portraiture

Marvell’s satiric portraits draw upon Renaissance theories of decorum, but at the
same time, they appear to reference Dutch and Mannerist portraiture in order to
challenge Waller’s representation of events. In the opening lines of *Last Instructions*,
the Speaker articulates the need for alternative techniques that will suit his
indecorous subject matter. These include painting with the burnt end of a candle (9-
11), which Gearin-Tosh argues is suggestive of the disproportioned and grotesque
figures characteristic of *grottesco* art, and Indian feather painting (lines 13-14), both
of which were richly decorated but comparatively unskilled (51). Receiving less
critical attention is the Speaker’s prior observation of the thick application of oil
paint in lines 3-4, in which the Speaker invites the prospective painter to observe the
present state of the canvas: “But ere thou fall’st to work, first painter see, / It ben’t
too light grown, or too hard for thee” (369). Smith has discussed these lines as
referring to the solidification of oil paint indicating the poor quality of the canvas.

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110 Smith also notes that in the seventeenth century, pre-conquest Mexican feather paintings were
often referenced as “another version of the Roman Catholic Other” (Smith *The Poems* 234).
The Speaker’s assertion however, can also be interpreted as a possible reference to Dutch painter Rembrandt’s portraits, which were created using thick slashes of oil paint. Alpers discusses Rembrandt’s “rough studio mode” by drawing attention to his characteristic working and reworking of the paint that often led to criticism about the “lack of finish” to his paintings (Alpers Rembrandt 99). Rembrandt’s paintings were highly expressive, and captured a different side to the sitter’s identity with a lively splash of colour and texture. Marvell’s satiric portraits also focus on expression and colour in an attempt to capture the features of a sitter’s distinctive identity. His focus, like that of Dutch portraiture, is on individuality as opposed to generalised features, which gives him the freedom to experiment with perspectives and techniques that depart from the traditional profile portrait and so-called “smooth style” favoured by Renaissance portrait artists. The intended effect of Marvell’s satiric portraits is the delightful revelation of an ironic likeness, as grotesque or disproportionate as this may be.

In *Last Instructions*, the speaker’s discussion of materials and appropriate technique is followed by a series of individual portraits of figures close to Charles II:

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111 Alpers notes that “Writers, invoking ancient precedent, commonly distinguished between two modes of painting — a smooth and a rough one, or a finished and a less finished […] This was related to the distinction between those paintings appropriately viewed close up and those appropriately viewed from farther away, which was instanced by Horace when he came up with his long-lived phrase ‘ut pictura poesis,’ though Horace did not introduce the rough/smooth distinction” (Rembrandt 16-17). Alpers further notes that “Certain social and artistic values came to be attached to the difference between the two manners” (Rembrandt 99). By not adhering to the Italian preference for the smooth style, Rembrandt’s portraits presented a challenge to the normal way of calculating painterly value (99).

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Henry Jermyn, Earl of St Albans and Ambassador to the French Court; Anne Hyde, Duchess of York, and Lady Castlemaine, mistress of Charles II but in love with Henry Jermyn (Smith *The Poems* 370-72). Marvell exploits traditional beliefs that “depicted bodily actions must be expressive of the spiritual and emotional state of the [subject]” and that the type of action be “appropriate to the sex and age of the figure depicted,” creating instead a series of grotesque images to reflect their moral characters (Semler *English Mannerist* 29). Henry Jermyn, for example, is to be painted with “drayman’s shoulders, butcher’s mein, membered like mules with elephantine chine” (933-4), and Anne Hyde “with Oyster lip, and breath of fame, / Wide mouth, that ’sparagus may well proclaim” — a clear pun on her sexual proclivities which are satirised throughout the portrait. Liana De Girolami Cheney has also noted the centrality of the oyster in Flemish and Dutch genre paintings of the period, where it “serving as a vehicle for moral comment and just as often as a token of erotic intent” (135). Anne Hyde is portrayed shamelessly pursuing her footman who is described in terms of equine features; “His brazen calves, his brawny thighs (the face / She slights) his feet shaped for a smoother race” (85-6). Once caught, Castlemaine is seen bending down to wash his “sweaty hooves” (96) in a parody of Luke 7:37-8 that describes a sinner anointing the feet of Jesus (Smith *The Poems* 272). Rather than showing her repentance, it is an attempt to cover up her crime (line 95).

Genre paintings of licentious women were popular among some Dutch painters, and it would not be surprising if Marvell had found some of his inspiration

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113 De Girolami Cheney also notes the use of the oyster was not unique to Dutch art, but extends back to antiquity where it was associated with “fertility, pleasure and sex” and was symbolised by the goddess Aphrodite (135).
in the brothel scenes frequently appearing in works by the Utrecht Caravaggisti. Kahr notes that these works often featured uncouth tavern scenes depicting all kinds of lascivious acts, along with other reprehensible behaviour including smoking, drinking and gambling (42-3). The thread of eroticism can be traced through much of the Dutch seventeenth-century painting, but the erotic content is often disguised with subjects appearing to be “elegant, proper, and even aristocratic” (Kahr 43). These genre scenes were a celebration of burgeoning Dutch national identity, and were often imbued with a moral message about Protestant values, while satisfying the demand for such sensuous subject matter (Kahr 43). At the same time, Marvell is satirising the court portraits of Sir Peter Lely.

Marvell’s court women, including Anne Hyde and Lady Castlemaine, are portrayed as though participating in such scenes, their sexual conquests being used as a reflection of their political corruption. Anne Hyde, for example, is described conducting experiments upon the crown (a reference to her relationship with James Duke of York), while Lady Castlemaine is described pursuing a footman several years her junior, in what Smith identifies as an inversion of the traditional image of

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114 Utrecht Caravaggism refers to a group of artists mostly active in the Dutch city of Utrecht that were distinctly influenced by the art of Caravaggio, known for his interest in painting nocturnal scenes and experiments with luministic effects (Kahr 28). In the seventeenth century the chiaroscuro of Caravaggio’s later style was highly influential, as were his mythological subjects and genre scenes.  
115 Alpers claims that “There is no doubt that rituals of courting and whoring were represented by Dutch artists as overlapping each other,” and that “painters treated the behavior of women as a vehicle for distinguishing between economic virtue and economic vice. If the household economy, the economy in the Aristotelian sense, with which women were properly concerned, was a model for the proper use of money, prostitution represented its obverse” (Art of Describing 15-17). For further discussion of interpretations of Dutch painting in the seventeenth century see Richardson.  
an of an aging nymph pursuing a young satyr (The Poems 372). In other instances, the connotations are subtler, but nonetheless contribute to the continuing thread of eroticism that can be traced through the poem. Kahr writes that the Dutch artists’ characteristic interest in creating ambivalently erotic images often went hand in hand with an experimental use of light, with candles, fires and other light sources providing illumination within a picture (Kahr 39). Gerrit van Honthorst was just one of the Utrecht Caravaggists known for nocturnal scenes in interior settings. His painting often featured candles either as a focal point, as seen in Samson and Delilah (1619), or concealed behind one of the figures, as in The Procuress (1625), the effects of which were enhanced by the use of chiaroscuro (Kahr 40-41). These brothel scenes cast light on the female figures that appear brilliantly illuminated, while the male figure remains in darkness, almost merging with the shadows, and create an atmospheric effect such as that seen in Marvell’s portrait of the King (41). In The Procuress, we see a young man, angled away from the viewer, grasping a money bag and offering payment to the young woman whose breast is brightly illuminated by the nearby candle while her face remains in partial shadow (Kahr 41). In Marvell’s portrait of the King, he appears to reference the painting style of the Caravaggisti, with the light of a candle illuminating the subject of the King’s sexual desires rather than the monarch himself. The speaker asserts; “Paint last the King, and a dead shade of night / Only dispersed by a weak taper’s light, / And those bright gleams that drift along and glare / From his clear eyes, yet these too dark with care” (885-8). At this point, the reader’s attention is to be cleverly directed away from the

117 Samson and Delilah (ca. 1621). Oil on canvas, 129 x 94 cm. Museum of Art, Cleveland. 

The Procuress 1625. Oil on panel, 71 x 104cm. Centraal Museum, Utrecht, Netherlands. 
http://www.wga.hu/html_m/h/honthors/2/05procur.html.
figure of the King toward the object of his gaze, the spectre of “England or the Peace” (906) appearing as a beautiful woman. The darkness, however, ironically draws attention to Charles’ corrupt sexual proclivities as he reaches out to touch her (lines 900-90).

In addition to the individual portraits of the celebrated individuals of the catalogue, the poem comprises a catalogue of Members of Parliament in the House of Commons. The descriptions of these MPs are brief, yet highly detailed and grotesque, in accordance with Marvell’s more detailed portraits of court figures. They are not intended to function as closed off individual portraits, with the catalogue appearing to be modeled on another genre of painting unique to the Dutch; the large-scale group portrait.

The large group portrait was an innovation in the seventeenth century, prior to which large secular works intended for public display had been relatively rare (Kahr 75). A major contributor to the development of the group portrait was Dutch painter Franz Hals, renowned for painting six life-size portraits of militia groups “to be hung publicly in the headquarters of the organizations” (75). The earliest was *Banquet of the Officers of the St. George Militia Company* (1616), and would have been available to Marvell on his travels in the Netherlands in the early 1650s.

118 Franz Hals, *Banquet of the Officers of the St George Civic Guard Company* (1616). Oil on canvas, 1.75 x 3.24 m, Frans Hals Museum, Harlem.

[http://www.oxfordartonline.com.proxy.library.adelaide.edu.au/subscriber/article/img/grove/art/F015027?q=Banquet+of+the+Officers+of+the+St+George+Civic+Guard+Company&search=quick&pos=2&_start=1 - firsthit](http://www.oxfordartonline.com.proxy.library.adelaide.edu.au/subscriber/article/img/grove/art/F015027?q=Banquet+of+the+Officers+of+the+St+George+Civic+Guard+Company&search=quick&pos=2&_start=1 - firsthit). Rembrandt was equally important in making contributions to Dutch portraiture, self-portraiture, and group portraiture of various types of social collectives, his most famous example being his so-called “Night Watch” or *Militia Company of District II under the Command of Captain Frans Bannick Cocq*, 1642. The “Night Watch” was somewhat controversial in Rembrandt’s own
Each group portrait shows its subjects engaged in a common activity, but looking in various directions with carefully delineated treatment of fabrics and objects that aid in distinguishing one man from the next (Kahr 76). Figures are not organised in a regular way, but only so as to ensure visibility. Marvell’s portrait of Parliament (mockingly related in terms of poorly disciplined military personnel) is arranged so as to momentarily capture each individual, with a disorderly arrangement notably different to the individual portraits of this type commissioned by the English. The doors of the House of the House of Commons open, and in rolls a long line of MPs, quickly identified and described by the speaker in terms of their most conspicuous features: “Of early wittols first the troop marched in, / For diligence renowned and discipline: / In loyal haste they left young wives in bed, / And Denham these by one consent did head” (151-54). The list begins in a general manner, but immediately captures the corruption lurking beneath the exterior with the term “wittols” (151). One figure that stands out to Marvell’s speaker is Sir John Wood, responsible for

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120 Smith glosses “wittols” as “contented cuckolds” (The Poems 374).
Wood was an unpopular man known for his eccentric behavior, which Marvell’s prospective portrait accentuates with a series of puns on his physical deformities:

Then damning cowards ranged the vocal plain,
Wood these commands, Knight of the Horn and Cane.
Still his hook-shoulder seems the blow to dread,
And under’s armpit he defends his head.
The posture strange men laughed at of his poll,
Hid with his elbow like the spice he stole.
Headless St. Denis so his head does bear,
And both of them alike French martyrs were.

*(Last Instructions 161-68)*

Wood is portrayed controlling the “horn of plenty,” whilst hiding his head under his armpit to shield himself from blows, a posture that doubles as a representation of his hunch back and poor posture (Smith *The Poems* 374). The description concludes by satirically hailing him a “French [Martyr]” (681) connoting his being a victim of venereal disease (374). As the speaker’s gaze continues to scan the metaphorical canvas, pausing to describe particular individuals, the reader feels as though he is viewing a group portrait of the Ministers mockingly paraded as heroes, but in fact

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121 John Wood was Clark of the Spicery to Charles II, MP for Hythe, and responsible for maintaining order in Charles II’s household, including taking care of the accounts (Smith *The Poems* 374).

122 St Denis was a patron saint of France, beheaded in 272, and who, according to the myth, “carried his head in his hands for six miles to the site where his cathedral would stand” (374).

123 In seventeenth century England, venereal infection was dubbed ‘the French disease’, in reference to the nation’s supposed sexual promiscuity.
representing a “picture” of the widespread corruption. In contrast with the
meticulously detailed observations of corrupt individuals are two equally complex
Mannerist portraits of Sir Archibald Douglas, and Dutch General De Ruyter, which
use a different set of techniques to condemn the corruption of the English court. It is
these portraits to which I now turn.

2.3 Marvell’s stylised ekphrastic portraits of Sir Archibald
Douglas and General De Ruyter

Providing further evidence of Marvell’s blending of aesthetic and literary forms are
the Mannerist portraits of Sir Archibald Douglas, and Dutch General De Ruyter.\footnote{124}
These metaphoric portraits are invested with satiric irony, but the rhetorical and
visual excess sets them apart from Marvell’s other portraits. Marvell draws upon the
tradition of pastoral literature that he characteristically manipulates to challenge the
reader’s expectations. Renaissance pastoral typically serves to portray an escape
from natural life, as it does in some of Marvell’s early lyric poems.\footnote{125} In the
Mannerist portraits in Last Instructions, however, pastoral references deliberately


\footnote{125} For example, *Clorinda and Damon* (ca. 1650-52), which is heavily indebted to Spenserian Pastoral, and *Upon Appleton House* (1651), in which gardens are represented as an escape from the demands of an active life, albeit an escape that Marvell does not fully sanction (Smith *The Poems* 59).
contradict the idyllic world they pretend to convey. Unlike Elizabethan pastoral, there is no rejection of aspiration, or idealisation of a lowly life in Marvell’s portraits, nor do they display a particularly Georgic interest in agriculture. Instead, pastoral imagery is highly stylised, overtly political and sexualised, satirically commenting on a lost world of pastoral innocence, supposedly the Cromwellian era of the 1650s. The prospective portrait of Dutch Admiral De Ruyter reads like a version of the pastoral retreat, but the pastoral ideal is functioning as a deceptive cover for the exploitation he intends to carry out (Montrose 444). The portrait begins as a celebration of “*otium,*” typically exemplifying a mood of solace and contemplation, as he sails idly along the Thames:

Ruyter the while, that had our ocean curbed,
Sailed now among our rivers undisturbed,
Surveyed their crystal streams and banks so green
And beauties ere this never naked seen.
Through the vain sedge, the bashful nymphs he eyed:
Bosoms, and all which from themselves they hide.
The sun much brighter, and the skies more clear,
He finds the air much brighter, and all things sweeter here.

*(Last Instructions* 523-30)

The tone of the passage dramatically shifts, as we realise De Ruyter’s motivations run beyond the possession of land, to possession of the inhabitants themselves, for his own, and for his navy’s pleasure:

The sudden change, and such a tempting sight
Swells his old veins with fresh blood, fresh delight.
Like am’rous victors he begins to shave,
And his new face looks in the English wave.

His sporting navy all about him swim

And witness their complacence in their trim.

(*Last Instructions* 531-36)

Rather than being a picture of tranquility between man and nature, where a shepherd is portrayed keeping a watchful eye on his flock, De Ruyter is preoccupied observing his reflection in the English wave. Cousins notes that the use of the so-called “reflection motif” as a way of bringing together “pathos and the grotesque in a moment of comic narcissism,” had long been a popular pastoral convention (Cousins 530-31). As De Ruyter continues along the river, Marvell employs mythological imagery, possibly drawn from Dutch poetry on the raid at Chatham, which “satirized the Duke of York as a mock ‘sea-god’,,” and applies it to the Dutch bombardment of Sheerness on 10 June 1666 (Smith *The Poems* 384). Here the Duke of York (a commander of the English navy) is referred to as “Old Neptune” (543), springing the tides to aid the Dutch, with the satiric assertion “(the gods themselves do help the provident)” (543-4). Meanwhile, De Ruyter is portrayed surrounded by “Tritons” blowing shell-trumpets as they guide him toward the Isle of Sheppey from where the Dutch ships bombarded those of the English (Smith 385).

In the final sequence, the description becomes a visual tableau as Marvell in effect assembles the elements of a picture through the process of moving upstream.

Marvell’s speaker asserts:

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126 For example, Theocritus’s version of Homer’s *Polyphemus*, despite proclaimed ugliness, sees only “beauty” when he catches his reflection in “the calm sea” (Cousins 530). Polyphemus perceives he has “two handsome cheeks […] / One Handsome eye […] [and] the gleam / Of [his] teeth, […] [is] whiter than Parian marble” (Theocritus in Cousins 530).

127 Tritons are “male sea-deities (Smith *The Poems* 385).
So have I seen in April’s bud arise
A fleet of clouds, sailing along the skies;
The liquid region with their squadrons filled,
Their airy sterns the sun behind does gild;
And gentle gales them steer, and heaven drives,
When, all on sudden, their calm bosom rives
With thunder and lightening from each armèd cloud;
Shepherds themselves in vain in bushes shroud.
Such up the stream the Belgic navy glides,
And at Sheerness unloads its stormy sides.

_Last Instructions 51-60_

Marvell draws together segments from the previous descriptions and enriches them with ornamental flourishes, in what Smith suggests “may be regarded as an ironic continuation of [the use of epic similes] in the Cromwell poems, since the Dutch are described triumphally entering the Thames” (385). By using such imagery to represent the Dutch bombardment that caused the evacuation of the garrison under Sir Edward Spragge, Marvell mocks the idealism of Renaissance art that Waller and Dryden reference to direct the reader’s attention to instances of flawed naval strategy and tactics.

Literary criticism has overlooked Marvell’s assembly of events into a stylised tableau. English Mannerist art provides an alternative context for Marvell’s ambiguous politics, and demonstrates how his diverse aesthetic interest is a powerful vehicle for a satiric attack. Semler draws upon several key stylistic features of Mannerism including elegance, invention, abstraction, and stylistic difficulty, to define what he calls “poetic mannerism” (English Mannerist 43-44). Semler
acknowledges that Mannerist techniques are not directly transferrable from visual art to poetry, but suggests the idea of Mannerism’s usefulness for approaching the visual aesthetic of seventeenth century poets such as Marvell. Semler relates the Mannerist characteristics of visual art to the rhetorical features of technical precision, elegance, grazia and the so-called difficoltà: facilità formula (English Mannerist 44). This formula denoted the idea that considerable complexity and art is to be concealed with the impression of grace and ease, thereby “assert[ing] the artist’s creative virtù over and against prior art and other artists” (44).

Semler further suggests that poets are seen to draw upon these elements in various combinations and degrees, helping to define their own “personal maniera” (English Mannerist 45):

For the artist of high Maniera, the realm of art is a laboratory-refuge in which the adept can perform artistic experiments on concepts of art and reality in highly controlled conditions. Essentially, the aesthetic context enables the artist simultaneously to distance himself from and minutely scrutinize both reality and the relationship between reality and artifice. (English Mannerist 212-13)

Marvell’s tableau is one such example in which technical precision and embellishment are experimented with in a controlled environment, with conventional narratives and techniques being scrutinised and called into question. For example, the use of artifice in the self-contained descriptions of abstracted beauty — the “armèd clouds” (557) and “airy sterns guilded by the sun” (554) — evoke the deceptiveness of attractive surfaces, while calling into question the authenticity of

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128 My use of capitalisation and italics for Mannerism, maniera and the high Maniera are taken from Semler.
Renaissance representations. Rather than pastoral *otium*, the Shepherds in Marvell’s pastoral episode experience fear, running for cover in anticipation of impending doom (lines 558-60).

The other Mannerist portrait is that of Catholic Hero Sir Archibald Douglas, a commander of a company of Scottish troops, who died defending England’s prize ship, the Royal Oak, during De Ruyter’s raid on the Medway in June 1667 (Smith The Poems 387). The passage also draws upon the genre of Renaissance pastoral, beginning with a description reminiscent of Peter Paul Rubens’s painting Landing of Marie de’ Médici at Marseilles (ca.1623-5), where voluptuous nymphs also occupy the foreground of the picture. In keeping with traditional pastoral imagery, Douglas is described in terms of androgynous features, eroticised for readers’ pleasure (387).\(^{129}\)

Not so brave Douglas, on whose lovely chin
The early down but newly did begin;
And modest Beauty yet his sex did veil,
While envious virgins hope he is a male. […]
Among the reeds, to be espied by him,
The nymphs would rustle; he would forward swim.

*Last Instructions* 649-52, 657-8)

The description combines the heroic and the erotic, but this time Marvell portrays a scene of uncorrupted pastoral innocence. The only Captain who remained at his post on board the burning ship, Douglas is portrayed as retiring and chaste, being pursued


For extensive scholarship on the cycle and paintings see Geraldine A. Johnson.
by nymphs who “hope he is a male” (652). This vignette is followed by a shift in tone and Douglas associated with a melting bronze statue:

Like a glad lover, the fierce flames he meets,
And tries his first embraces in their sheets.
His shape exact, which the bright flames enfold,
Like the sun’s statue stands of burnished gold.
Round the transparent fire about him glows
As the clear amber on the bee does close,
And, as on angels’ heads their glories shine,
His burning locks adorn his face divine.
But when in his immortal mind he felt
His altering form and soldered limbs to melt,
Down on the deck he laid himself and died,
With his dear sword reposing by his side, [……]
His ship burns down, and with his relics sinks,
And the sad stream beneath the ashes drinks.

\textit{(Last Instructions 677-88, 691-2)}

The pastoral scene transitions into an image of Douglas standing defiantly on the ship’s deck. Beautiful and lifelike, he embraces the flames that preserve him in death alongside other saints and martyrs venerated by the Roman Catholic Church (Smith \textit{The Poems} 388). The scene is an ekphrasis of a statue, but one in which the statue melts, and seems to enact the opposite process to the final paragraph of the De Ruyter portrait (lines 551-60), which was freeze-framed, capturing the sense of impending doom. Here the tableau of Douglas creates the sense that we are watching the process of aestheticisation in slow motion, while being encouraged to take in the
beauty, rather than the horror, as the artwork transforms before our eyes. The experimental aspect of this description, and its elaborate staging, is a feature characteristic of artists of the high Maniera (19). These artists valued the “display of virtuosity in the achievement of ingenious […] artifice,” and produced works of art in which “spatial relationships […] function in a purely abstract way” (Cousins Coming of Mannerism 541). Semler asserts that the art of the high Maniera documents a:

Push away from classic mimesis typified by firm ease and balance and towards a greater abstraction: a push resulting in either disruptive or disrupted images of highly charged emotion or utterly contained and perfected version of ideality. (English Mannerist 23)

In both the episodes I have discussed, the stylised transformation of nature into a brilliantly polished artifact encourages readers to examine the gap that exists between the human condition and visual representation (23). Stylisation of the pastoral mode in particular enables Marvell to push the boundaries of a familiar set of pastoral literary conventions, and to assert his political views in a unique and densely allusive way.

A third pastoral allusion occurs at the end of Last Instructions, and draws upon yet another strand of pastoral — the country-house poem. The genre of country-house poetry was initiated by Ben Johnson’s famous English poem To Pensurst (1612), in which the domestic space is a site for reflection on the demise of the pre-capitalist economy and the hospitality associated with the English manor house, and the emerging culture of agrarian capitalism (Wayne 3, 18). Marvell’s vision for restoring the relationship between King and courtiers in lines 985-90 also has a sense of nostalgia for the older, feudal order, and functions to tie the Mannerist
episodes of the poem into an overarching formula for restoring Monarchical unity to the realm. Marvell instructs Charles to cast off his evil councillors, and surround himself with more upright men like Douglas,

    Whose gen’rous conscience and whose courage high
    Does with clear councils their large souls supply;
    That serve the King with their estates and care,
    And, as in love, on Parliaments can stare,
    (Where few the number, choice is there less hard):
    Give us this court, and rule without a guard.

    (Last Instructions 985-90)

Suggesting a preference for Parliamentary Monarchy, Marvell concludes with an oblique allusion to the politics of the country house poem sub-genre in the hope of reinstating a hierarchy analogous to that of an aristocratic landowner supporting the community, and overseeing the orderly management of his estate. The slippage between detailed description and Mannerist stylisation in Marvell’s portraits, however, leaves the reader unable to perceive a unified image of the sitter, drawing attention to the subjective nature of all art regardless of the (metaphoric) visual techniques used.

Conclusion

Waller’s and Dryden’s poetic portraits draw upon the tradition of Renaissance portraiture and its characteristic tension between verisimilitude and idealism in order to portray their subjects in the best possible light. Typological associations between classical heroes and contemporary figures enhance the manipulative power of their
portraits, emphasising features of beauty and virtue, power and heroism, but say little about the true nature of the sitter. Marvell’s satiric portraits engage with the concerns of Renaissance portraiture, but the politics behind these representations is complicated by his subscription to aesthetic relativism. Marvell’s adherence to Dutch concerns with capturing a particular likeness, and expressing the individualism of a sitter allows him to “unmask” the idealised images of Waller, portraying a different side to the sitter’s appearance, and, according to Renaissance understandings of beauty, something of their moral character. In the two pastoral portraits of De Ruyter and Sir Archibald Douglas, Marvell diverges from his concern with Dutch realism to portray the “true” heroes of the poem — the leader of the enemy’s fleet, and a loyal Roman Catholic — with rhetorical excess that ironically surpasses Waller’s. By combining Mannerist excess with a manipulation of the inherited literary genre of Elizabethan and Jacobean pastoral, Marvell re-politicises an apparently outmoded form, and puts it to new use as a motivation for the processes required to restore decorum to a monarchy faltering under the weight corruption. In chapter three, I broaden my focus to consider the compositional features of *Annus Mirabilis* and *Last Instructions* in light of the use of perspective, and apparent references to Renaissance, mannerist and Dutch aesthetic techniques. I will explore the correlation between visual techniques and political motivation and question whether these choices play a deeper structural role in the composition. I will focus on the use of perspective in the poem, in order to argue that Dryden and Marvell use perspectival cues to guide the reader in his visualisation of their respective representations of the war and that while Dryden’s visual cues are based on Renaissance linear perspective, Marvell’s are best studied in the context of the new science of experimentalism and Dutch art.
Chapter 3: Poetry as history painting: Renaissance and Mannerist perspectives in Dryden’s *Annus Mirabilis* and Marvell’s *Last Instructions to a Painter*

Introduction

I now move from the analysis of individual poetic portraits to an exploration of the compositional elements that go into the prospective ekphrasis of a large-scale history painting. In Renaissance art, the term *istoria* refers to the subject or story, and takes on a number of nuances, which may refer to the compositional principle applied, or to the action depicted (Bodart 50). In the *istoria*, Diane Bodart notes that “perspective acts as a kind of syntactical tool to build up the narrative in keeping with criteria of intelligibility […] in order to establish a spatial setting directly linked with how the action is articulated” (Bodart 51). For Leon Battista Alberti, the representation of human beings in their setting was the ultimate use for linear perspective, helping the artist to geometrically reconstruct “three-dimensional depth on a flat surface” (Bodart 24). Albertian perspective was to be complemented with expressive poses and gestures in order to create a coherent spatial structure or composition. I intend to argue that Dryden references Renaissance principles of linear perspective in art to reconstruct the events of the Second Anglo-Dutch war, and that the composition is arranged symmetrically around the figure of the King.130

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130 Diane Bodart notes that the human figure was the primary unit of measurement for perspective, helping to define the size of the spatial structure, and being used to determine the distance ratios (24).
Linear perspective is referenced in *Annus Mirabilis* to depict the various elements as an organic whole, and to create the illusion that the reader himself is viewing the action from a predetermined vantage point. I will argue that Dryden uses the extended metaphorical conceit to draw the disparate elements of the poem together. And further, that the subject matter, set out in orderly stanzas, produces a pattern that gives the impression of an underlying geometric grid. In the second part of the chapter I contrast Dryden’s Albertian principles of composition in *Annus Mirabilis* to the composition of Marvell’s *Last Instructions*. I intend to argue that rather than drawing upon Renaissance principles of linear perspective, Marvell’s poem is spatially arranged, appropriating compositional techniques of the English mannerists in order to dispute Waller’s and Dryden’s Royalist accounts of the war. Mannerist art sought to challenge the orderly foundations of Renaissance art, exploiting generic boundaries with regard to subject matter, often employing excessive stylisation. With no central vanishing point from which to establish a sense of perspective, the effect for the viewer was typically that of an overwhelming sense of “narrative incongruity” (Bodart 138).  

For further scholarship on Alberti, see Grafton, “Historia and Istoria”; Greenstein, “Alberti on Historia.”

131 See also James Elkins, *The Poetics of Perspective* pp.154-9, especially 158 where he notes: “[Mannerist] painters did not tend to question perspective as a science, nor did they bypass or destroy it. Instead, they ‘transformed’ perspective in the geometric sense of that word: they skewed, magnified, and displaced the symmetrical perspective box in order to bring out things that were distant, peripheral or hidden […] they worked within the bounds of perspectival rule to reshape perspective.”
I follow Harry Berger in suggesting that interpretation of a poem is determined by its visual conditions, such as spatial arrangement, positioning of figures and the display of text, in order to argue that Dryden’s conservative techniques are a method for containing the broader range of reference the words and images generate (Berger 151). Dryden, concerned to ensure that his poem is interpreted positively by posterity, draws upon compositional principles of Renaissance art to establish spatial and political order. In contrast, Marvell focuses on exploiting and challenging Renaissance conventions, ensuring the proliferation of meaning through a playful approach to language and perspective.

Berger considers the construction of space in Renaissance and Mannerist art in terms of a shift from mimesis and idealisation to stylisation. Bodart also argues that the anachronistic terms “Renaissance” and “Mannerism” do not correspond to two separate and successive periods, with Mannerism being the style that continued, but reacted against, its classical ideals […] To this end, and in order to define this style in keeping with its own chronology, it is possible to coin the expression ‘Mannerist Renaissance,’ which is not as paradoxical as it may at first seem. (16) Arnold Hauser’s authoritative work on Mannerism also discusses the temporal relationship between Renaissance and Mannerist art in terms of continuity, but highlights the fact that stylistically, it represented a dramatic break in the history of art (3). Houser discusses Mannerism’s “radical departure from the classical ideal,” and suggests that this break “involved the ruthless dethronement of aesthetic doctrines based on the principles of order, proportion, balance, of economy of means, and of rationalism and naturalism in the rendering of reality” (3). In what follows, I intend to navigate a middle ground in the definition of Mannerism between the
notion of stylistic continuity and a dramatic break with Renaissance style. As noted in the general introduction, Mannerist artists played with and expanded upon the traditions centered on balance, harmony and linear perspective: for example, borrowing forms from art of the High Renaissance, and manipulating it in order to challenge its authoritative status. The fact that Mannerism could express political, playful and parodic ideas by referencing and expanding upon classical Renaissance forms, adds to the likelihood that Marvell would have found it a useful style for his politicised response to Waller’s panegyric. I will discuss Marvell’s apparent deference to Mannerist art in order to construct an anti-classical response to Waller’s and Dryden’s Renaissance aesthetic. Rather than demonstrating a complete break from Renaissance art, I intend to demonstrate that Marvell experiments with spatial design and rhetorical ornament, thereby calling into question the illusions of unity enabled by geometric linear perspective. And, by extension, the status of the classical High Renaissance as the ultimate authority in art.

Hauser writes that in Renaissance art, “The whole system of perspective, proportions, and tectonics was only a means of creating the effect of space. Mannerism led to a breaking up of this structure” with scenes divided up into “areas separated from each other externally and differently organized internally, and the result of this process of atomization was that the dimensions and the spatial position of the figures ceased to bear any logical relationship to their significance from the point of view of content” (Hauser 278). In Last Instructions there is also an emphasis on the spatial quality of Marvell’s images, with figures represented in an

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132 In Mannerist architecture, the experimental approach to style and spatial form was reflected in buildings that renounced the “uniformity, balance, and harmonious rhythm” of Renaissance and Classical architecture, replacing them with “senseless dimensions,” “exaggeratedly heavy frames,” “shallow looking windows,” and features that appeared to have no useful purpose (Hauser 281).
abstract space lacking in organic continuity and composed of heterogeneous elements and perspectives (Hauser 378). Marvell’s aesthetic interest lies in calling into question the viewer’s expectations of courtly images, accusing Peter Paul Rubens of recreating or “refreshing” his subject matter to make it more appealing to the viewer; “For so too Ruben with affairs of state, / His lab’ring pencil oft would recreate” (119-20) (Smith The Poems 373). A similar accusation is also levelled at “Old Waller, trumpet-general, [who] swore he’d write / This combat truer than the naval fight” (263-4), “trumpet-general” being a reference to his fame for writing panegyrics relating to war (Smith The Poems 377).

Anne Lowenthal has drawn attention to the fact that Mannerism also flourished in the Netherlands at the end of the sixteenth century, which supports my broader thesis claim about certain stylistic and perspectival overlaps between Mannerist and Dutch art in Marvell’s Last Instructions. Lowenthal writes that Mannerism reached its peak in Holland in the 1590s, but declined in popularity in the first decade of the seventeenth century, at which time “new forces had entered the Dutch scene” (Lowenthal 20).

In order to prepare the ground for my main discussion, I turn first to the compositional components of the Renaissance istoria. As stated in the main introduction, Dryden does not explicitly use the painter motif, but the poem incorporates visual cues that suggest the poem is intended to represent a virtual history of the war.

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133 Analysis of Marvell’s apparent references to Dutch perspective and compositional techniques will be discussed in detail in chapter five. The current chapter will focus on Marvell’s metaphorical use of perspective in relation to English Mannerist art.

134 For further detailed discussion of Dutch Mannerism refer to Hauser 4253-6.
3.1 *Annus Mirabilis* and the Renaissance approach to the *istoria*

For Renaissance artists, the construction of a history painting required careful planning. According to Alberti, an artist should use the principles of geometry to ensure *concinnitas*, or “the regular correspondence between the different parts and between the parts and the whole” (Archer 12). Dryden’s adherence to the principle of *concinnitas* is evident at the structural level, with *Annus Mirabilis* divided into two halves. The first half details the “history of [England’s] destruction” (“Dedication” 47): the second, “a prophecy of [its] restoration” (“Dedication” 47-8) as Dryden’s anticipates England’s future greatness in the image of Ancient Rome. The relationship between the two halves of the poem is substantiated in the prefatory *Account* where he claims to have chosen:

> The most heroic subject which any poet could desire: I have taken upon me to describe the motives, the beginning, progress and successes of a most just and necessary war; in it, the care, management and prudence of our King; the conduct and valour of a royal admiral, and of two incomparable generals; the invincible courage of our captains and seamen; and three glorious victories, the result of all. After this I have, in the fire, the most deplorable, but withal the greatest argument that can be imagined: the destruction being so swift, so sudden, so vast and miserable, as nothing can parallel in my story. (“Account” 13-25)

Dryden indicates that he has selected only the “best” aspects of the war for inclusion in his panegyric. In the poem itself, the vast “destruction” (“Account” 23) will be set against the “courage, loyalty and magnanimity of the city” (“Account” 37-8), but, due to the poem’s shorter length, it will take the form of an “historical” (40) poem,
not an “epic” (40). Historical poems comprised a combination of fact and fiction, further suggesting that Dryden intends to produce an idealised version of events. Dryden also appears to follow Alberti’s recommendation that in order to ensure the viewer follows the intended narrative path, the artist should include a figure “who admonishes and informs us of what is happening, a figure who turns to the viewer to point out, with a movement of the hand or facial expression, the significance of the episode depicted” (Bodart 52). Throughout *Annus Mirabilis*, an omniscient narrator guides the reader by directing his attention with phrases such as “Behold” (25) and “See” (29). These directives not only help to convey the meaning of the narrative; they also help to “ensure appreciation of the quintessentially pictorial qualities of the representation” (Bodart 52).

The intersection between the various parts of *Annus Mirabilis*, and the narrative trajectory it will take, is established in the opening stanza, which positions Charles II at the centre of the action. War with the Dutch is justified in terms of an analogy between disruption of trade and illness in the body, whereby England’s “treasures” have become obstructed in their channels. This obstruction is communicated via circulation to the “heart,” in effect the King, who reacts to redress the distemper in the body (*Hammond and Hopkins* 130). The well-worn analogy between the King’s natural body and the political body of the state sets the scene for the narrative to follow, and draws attention to the Renaissance architecture of the poem (Bodart 10).

In *Annus Mirabilis*, the city of London is an architectural model for the civil order of the state, and an example of how Dryden uses the metaphorical conceit to unify his subject matter. The King, at the centre, has registered the warning that English trade is under threat, and sees it as his duty to respond appropriately. The
need for action is communicated to the two generals — Prince Rupert and the Duke of Albermarle — who are the “counterbalance” (48) to the King in carrying out his directives. Beneath the generals are the people, who are also important in maintaining unity and stability in the state, and whose relationship to the King is one of mutual exchange, such as that which exists between husband and wife. By granting supply for the war, and demonstrating their support for the King, they are protected in kind: “The doubled charge his subjects’ love supplies, / Who in that bounty to themselves are kind: / So glad Egyptians see their Nilus rise, / And in his plenty their abundance find” (181-4). The architectural relationship between the City and the State also serves to thematically connect the two halves of the poem. In the first half of the poem, the King coordinates and oversees the repair of the fleet, and finds “passive aptness” in his subjects, as they work like bees to fulfill their duty; “All hands employed, the royal work grows warm: / Like laboring bees on a long summer’s day, / Some sound the trumpet for the rest to swarm, / And some on bells of tasted lilies play” (573-6). The relationship of mutual exchange between King and subjects is mirrored in the second half of the poem, as the people throng to the streets with buckets and water pipes to help fight the fire, “so much the pity of a king has power” (960): “So weary bees in little cells repose, / But if night-robbers lift the well-stored hive / An humming through their waxen city grows, / And out upon each

135 “With equal power he does two chiefs create, / Two such, as each seemed worthiest when alone; / Each able to sustain a nation’s fate, / Since both had found a greater in their own” (185-8).

136 For a description of the role of the two generals functioning as a counterbalance to the King, see lines 185-202. Hammond and Hopkins suggest the reference to the “bounty” could refer to the supply granted to Charles II by the House of Commons to fund the war. The House granted £2, 500,000 on 9 Feb 1665, and a further £1, 250, 000 in October 1665 (142-3).
other’s wings they drive” (909-12).\textsuperscript{137} Both analogies draw attention to an “organic” and hierarchical relationship between the King and his subjects. At the end of the poem this unity brings victory to England, and paves the way for the plans to rebuild the city in an even greater “mould” (1170).\textsuperscript{138} Bodart observes that in Renaissance architecture “the plan of the ideal city was usually enclosed either within the harmonic shape of the circle, […] or within the human form” (27), and, as such, could be mapped onto ideas about order and civic harmony.\textsuperscript{139} The relationship between trade and the political body of the State is used to reinforce the centrality of the King to England’s united front against the Dutch. The image of civic unity is reinforced through the poetic use of perspective as the following section intends to demonstrate.

3.2 \textit{Annus Mirabilis} and the principles of linear perspective

In \textit{Della Pittura} (1435) Alberti encourages artists to employ a set of geometric techniques to construct a perspective scene as though it were being observed through

\textsuperscript{137} Another example of relationship between prince and people occurs in lines 59-60 where Charles is compared with Proteus: “So hear the scaly herd when Proteus blows, / And so to pasture follow through the sea.” Hammond and Hopkins have noted this is a version of Virgil’s \textit{Georgics} iv 388, 394-5 in which “sea green Proteus drives his huge flock […] to pasture under the sea,” probably serving “as an emblem of the qualities of the wise ruler” (Hammond and Hopkins 135).

\textsuperscript{138} McKeon has identified further thematic and imagistic parallels between the two halves of the poem, but not in terms of Renaissance art and the use of linear perspective, which will be explored below. See \textit{Politics and Poetry} 163.

\textsuperscript{139} Bodart notes, “Francesco di Giorgio Martini applied the human form to town planning projects; the head corresponded to the fortress, the navel was aligned with the centre of the square, and the city walls followed the extension of the limbs” (27).
an “open window” (Gilman18). Correct proportions required the use of a perspective grid constructed within the frame of the “window.” The grid was constructed with a series of “orthogonal lines” (perpendicular to the picture plane) converging towards a “centric point”. The orthogonal lines were crossed by transversal lines running “parallel to the picture plane” (18). The distance between the lines on the grid was calculated in relation to the desired size of a human figure, and was used for determining the “spatial relationships of objects in the painting, as well as to suggest the illusion of depth” (Gilman 18-19).

The metaphoric use of perspective in Annus Mirabilis draws upon features of geometric linear perspective, but does not strictly conform to Alberti’s method. Instead, Dryden innovates on Alberti’s recommended technique in a manner consistent with Leonardo da Vinci’s more lenient approach (Gilman 18-19). Bodart notes that Da Vinci claimed to improve on Alberti’s strict method by:

Introducing irregular elements, such as how and where the light fell, or imprecisely executed outlines in relation to distance. Finally, he added aerial perspective, which alters forms and colours seen from a distance in relation to atmospheric humidity or how blue the sky is. Alberti’s

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140 Bodart notes that Dutch artists achieved the illusion of depth in paintings with the application of oil paint rather than linear perspective (14). She explains that oil paint “allowed the artist to achieve remarkably precise effects of depth and relief, thanks to the highly physical rendering of light falling on different surfaces” (14). The expressive use of paint is a common feature of both Mannerist and Dutch art, but whereas Mannerist art is concerned with pushing the boundaries of familiar forms, Dutch art is concerned with representing detail. The Dutch relationship to Marvell’s use of perspective will be addressed in detail in chapter five in relation to the metaphor of the microscope.
geometric scheme was thereby infused with a vital spark that spread to every particle of human knowledge. *(De Pittura 23)*

Dryden’s reference to long distance, close up, and birds-eye views in the poem will be thoroughly treated in chapter four; suffice to say here, the combination of these views gives the reader the impression that he is viewing the action as it unfolds. In lines 269-72 for example, Dryden makes the reader feel as though he is sailing among the English fleet, with the use of the inclusive pronouns “we” and “our”:

“The night comes on, we eager to pursue / The combat still, and they ashamed to leave: /Till the last streaks of dying day withdrew, / And doubtful moonlight did our rage deceive.” This stanza exemplifies Dryden’s incorporation of optical illusions caused by reflection of light, or the movement of objects in relation to the horizon to capturing the effects of natural vision.

Dryden’s use of the extended metaphorical conceit makes the reader feel as though he is viewing the action for himself. The conceit also draws the compositional elements of the poem together. The most obvious example of this is Dryden’s set-piece description of the *Loyal London*, the flagship of the English navy, and symbol for the city of London itself:

The goodly *London* in her gallant trim

(The phoenix daughter of the vanished old)

Like a rich bride does to the ocean swim,

And on her shadow rides in floating gold.

Her flag aloft spread ruffling to the wind,

And sanguine streamers seem the flood to fire;

The weaver charmed with what his loom designed
Goes on to sea, and knows not to retire.

With roomy decks, her guns of mighty strength

(Whose low-laid mouths each mounting billow laves),

Deep in her draught, and warlike in her length,

She seems a sea-wasp flying on the waves.

This martial present, piously designed

The loyal city gave their best-loved King;

And with a bounty ample as the wind

Built, fitted and maintained to aid him bring.

(Italics in original) (601-6)

While the passage appears to be constructed around a loose association of disparate images; it also satisfies Dryden’s desire for order, by referring to elements addressed elsewhere in the poem (Miner Personality and Public Experience 26). For example, the image of the phoenix is used in reference to the city of London, and to the Duchess of York, while serving as a recognisable symbol of Elizabethan iconography: “So when the new-born phoenix first is seen, / Her feathered subjects all adore their queen” (“Verses” 52-3). The image of the “rich bride” (603) also has several points of reference both within and outside the poem. It recalls the separation of lovers, the Duke and Duchess of York, before he goes to battle: “Ah, what concerns did both your souls divide! / Your honour gave us what your love denied”

141 Earl Minor suggests the Loyal London symbolises the pinnacle of English progress imagined in the poem “Personality and Public Experience” 28.
(“Verses” 9-10); it describes the close ties between Charles II and his subjects in contrast to the Dutch; “These fight like husbands, but like lovers those” (109), and it fulfills the decree that Charles “shouldst wed the main” (78). The passage also incorporates rhetorical ornament, with phrases such as “gallant trim” (601) and “floating gold.” Rhetorical ornament is also used at the end of the poem in a projected image of London, the prospective city being described as “Rich as the town which gives the Indies name, / With silver paved, and all divine with gold” (1171-2).

Finally, the Loyal London is a “martial present” for the King, just as the poem stands as a “monument” to London (“Dedication” 35).

The reference to the weaver “charmed with what his loom designed” at line 607 is a significant element of the description that has been overlooked by critics, and could be interpreted as a reference to Alberti’s perspective window or “veil,” which enables the various elements of the poem to be seamlessly brought together. The result of Dryden’s metaphoric use of the perspective veil is a pattern of allusions through which he is able to contain the readers’ search for meaning and referentiality within the text, as opposed to the vast range of subjects otherwise suggested by

142 The idea of wedding the main is a reference to “the annual ceremony on Ascension Day when the Doge of Venice married the sea and cast a ring into it” (Hammond and Hopkins 136).

143 Two references to the loom occur in the poem. The first at lines 607-8 states: “the weaver charmed with what his loom designed / Goes on to sea, and knows not to retire.” A second reference occurs at line 825, which refers to the commerce of “[…] English wool, vexed in a Belgian loom.” The references to weaving, and the commerce in wall hangings further supports my argument that Annus Mirabilis incorporates visual cues that imply the poem is to be read as though it were creating a virtual image.
The correspondence between different parts of the poem also allows the words and images to develop simultaneously, each helping to illuminate the other in the reading of the metaphor (Hamilton *John Dryden* 98).

The complex set of allusions also functions to bring together the aesthetic and scientific references in *Annus Mirabilis*. The relationship between aesthetic and scientific use of perspective in Dryden’s and Marvell’s poems will be the subject of Chapters four and five; it is enough to say here that scientific imagery in the *Annus Mirabilis* plays an important role in the poem, both in terms of panegyric (praising the King via his connection to the work of Royal Society), and as a vehicle for narrative progression. In lines 49-52 for example, the King is represented as a natural philosopher judging that “like vapours that from limbecks rise, / It would in richer showers descend again.” Charles II is portrayed as a natural philosopher, conducting alchemical experiments that will help bring about the best possible outcome for England.  

The overarching narrative connecting the various episodes described in the poem is that of Apocalypse, implied by the title of the poem. The narrative of Apocalypse situates Dryden’s poem in relation to the oppositional *Mirabilis Annus* pamphlets prophesying that 1666 would be a year of disaster, and propelling the action toward Dryden’s desired end, a new Golden Age (Hammond and Hopkins 144).

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144 In *Della Pittura*, Alberti describes his use of the veil as “loosely woven of fine thread, dyed whatever colour you please, divided up by thicker threads into as many parallel square sections as you like, and stretched on a frame. I set this up between the eye and the object to be represented, so that the visual pyramid passes through the loose weave of the veil” (69).

145 A “limbeck” or alembic was an early apparatus used for distilling that consisted of two vessels connected by a tube. One contained the substance to be distilled, the other, a flask for collecting the condensed product (OED n. 1).
In the first part of the poem it appears Apocalypse is immanent as the English are forced to rely on chance to identify the Dutch: “Alas, what port can such a pilot fined, / Who in the night of fate must blindly steer!” (139-40). It is not until we reach the Digression concerning shipping and Navigation in line 617 that Dryden provides a practical solution for the English navy which must take control of its own destiny.

Dryden’s reference to Renaissance principles of linear perspective results in a prospective ekphrasis of a history painting that is narratively arranged with the disparate elements drawn together to produce an image of harmony and order. In Last Instructions, Marvell challenges this compositional approach for creating idealised representations of the war. The composition of Last Instructions is spatial, rather than temporal, and is best characterised by English Mannerist paintings, to be detailed in the following sections.

3.3 Marvell’s Last Instructions to a Painter and the Mannerist response to Renaissance composition

When Mannerist artists set about composing a painting, whether it be a portrait or the istoria, their concerns were not distinct from that of the preceding style of the High Renaissance, but rather born out of them. This meant that the system of forms evolved from “consultation of nature” in the Renaissance evolved into a style based on “the study of already idealized precedents” of its precursors (Freedberg Painting of the Maniera 188). As Freedberg has observed, art constructed in this way “cannot but tend to more abstraction” (188):

Referring to his models within the classical style, far more than to nature, the Maniera painter is fabricating one art out of the material of another.
He is not concerned with that basic principle of a true classicism which makes a synthetic adjustment between aesthetic preference an actuality [...] And, to be concerned, as the Maniera painter is, with the classical model chiefly as a treasure of ideal forms is to become, exactly, formalistic; purely aesthetic values, and intellectualizing ones, will dominate a picture of which the vocabulary has been studied in this way.

(Freedberg 188)

It is in the context of the relationship between the Renaissance and Mannerist styles that the metaphoric compositional techniques of Dryden and Marvell can be productively explored. As an answer to Waller, and, by association Dryden, Marvell imitates his predecessors, demonstrating his thorough knowledge of Renaissance treatises, but goes beyond them, as demonstrated by a degree of stylistic complexity that works to comment on the shortcomings of Renaissance art. This is not to say that Marvell wholly subscribes to the Mannerist aesthetic, any more than the other genres he draws upon. Marvell’s reference to it should be seen, like his references to Dutch art, as engaging in seventeenth century criticism against what had come to be seen “a profound and not always perfectly successful self-deception” on the part of the Mannerist painter that they were the “first great masters of the ‘modern manner,’” (Freedberg Painting of the Maniera 188). Contrasting with the more favourable reception of the Mannerist style in the late sixteenth century, “the seventeenth century critics over characterized the distinct temper of the Maniera; it was they who first formed the depreciating and persistent historical image of a style afflicted by a ‘plague of affectation’” (188). I will now turn to the compositional elements of Last Instructions in order to explore how Marvell combines his knowledge of Renaissance art with the Mannerist treatment of space on the flat surface of the picture plane.
3.4 Last Instructions and the stylised abstraction of form

As discussed in relation to the composition of Dryden’s Annus Mirabilis, in Renaissance compositions, the artist’s efforts went into the making of a work of art in which the disparate elements were to be “fused in a synthetic whole” (Freedberg Painting of the Maniera 190). In the opening lines of Last Instructions, the reader is made aware that what follows will be comparatively experimental in its metaphorical application of colour as Marvell’s speaker and the prospective painter struggle to find a technique in accord with the “decorum” of their subject matter. The poem is framed by Marvell’s speaker’s assertion that the poem will describe the third sitting in the construction of the Lady State portrait. This was the stage when colour and embellishment were added to the design. This assertion is immediately followed the speaker’s observation of the difficulties faced by the prospective artist on account of the poor quality of the subject matter and the use of a cheap synthetic paint (lines 3-4). The speaker also suggests several unbecoming techniques such as graffiti and Indian feather painting that would ironically do justice to the material the painter must represent. The speaker’s comment is clearly intended as a jibe at Waller’s Instructions. It also gives the impression that what will follow with be a poor quality representation by an unskilled painter. Characteristic of the mannerist style, however, the impression of ease is a veil for the technical precision involved in the poem’s composition, as my following analysis aims to demonstrate.146

146 Michelangelo’s, whose later works are associated in art criticism with the beginnings of a Mannerist aesthetic were focused on making a work appear effortlessly done, when in fact it had been meticulously and laboriously created (Clements 303, 05). It was on account of the intense level of detail that they require significant effort on the part of the spectator to fully appreciate the overt and covert meanings of his paintings, ideally over several viewings (305). In drawing comparisons
Rather than revealing an interest in creating a unified, three dimensional image, Marvell’s metaphorical canvas is a distinctively flat surface on which, in keeping with mannerist compositions, the stylistic possibilities open to a poet are endless, and can be freely combined on a single picture plane. Freedberg explains that the artist of the Maniera had “an acute sense of the identity, as an aesthetic factor […] of what was projected on the pictorial surface” (*Painting of the Maniera* 193).

It is on this plane that he arranges the complex pattern of his forms pointed and precious or mellifluously ornamental; […] But this is no simple conception of a planarity: the pictorial surface is in fact more often a plane of reference in respect to which subdivisions and complications have been contrived so that it becomes a set of strata, formed of levels close-knit and multiplied like the other factors in the work of art. (193)

Rather than attempting to unite each of these components, “The multiple, disjunctive strands of meaning are presented to the spectator simultaneously” whose own duty it is to “affect a synthesis” of the whole (Freedberg *Painting of the Maniera* 194). Onto a single prospective canvas, Marvell juxtaposes satiric portraits with those reminiscent of the highly stylised *Maniera*, interspersed with extended descriptions of the debates taking place in the Houses of Parliament. Within these distinct episodes, he juxtaposes a variety of aesthetic techniques and literary genres that have been manipulated to take on a different meaning than they were originally intended to convey. The result is a distinctively Mannerist tension between Marvell’s *Last Instructions* I intend to suggest that Marvell’s poetry is equally demanding of the reader if they are to fully appreciate his skilful manipulation of familiar materials. Freedberg notes that in Mannerist art, “the spectator, not the artist, may be regarded as the agent who affects a synthesis” (194).
speaker’s intention to represent the “truth of nature and aesthetic distortion,” a tension that extends to the way the reader is required to view the image (Freedberg *Painting of the Maniera* 190). Discussing the process involved in creating a mannerist work, Freedberg notes that due to its predominantly “abstracting temper,” it was commonplace for the artist to incorporate “contrasting episodes of illusionistic realism; and there are many stages — almost always disconnective, however — that he may make between abstraction and illusion” (Freedberg *Painting of the Maniera* 191). In other words, a single work can demonstrate a “multiplicity of levels between the experience of nature and its polar antithesis in the world of art” (191). It is through the shifting between the worlds of art and nature that Mannerist art “asserts its kinship with exemplars of the High Renaissance” but at the same time betraying them by “making a duality of professed kinship and its negation” (191). In *Last Instructions*, Marvell makes references to Waller’s poem throughout, but challenges the unified and idealised nature of his (and by association Dryden’s panegyric) by creating a virtual account of the war that lacks a central, preeminent place of reference, and instead, “figures which were of secondary importance in the story are allowed to invade the foreground” (Bodart 141). The result in Marvell’s poem is a chaotic pictorial space in which satiric portraits collide with extended descriptions of parliamentary figures and debates over the excise tax. Marvell establishes multiple points of focus, as the speaker metaphorically moves from one aspect of the painting to the next, without giving a complete description of any of them. Marvell does not include an Albertian “omniscient narrator” as in Dryden’s poem; instead, his

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147 Bodart notes that Mannerism “sought to go beyond the rational harmonic measurements of the Renaissance without, however, denying them” (101). In order to achieve a sense of visual incongruity, artists created works that “tended toward artifice and abstraction as opposed to the imitation of nature and classical precedents” (101).
speaker’s focus continually moves between individual portraits, creating the impression of a mosaic-like arrangement of objects presented to the prospective viewer simultaneously. When all these elements are compounded inside a single image, as Freedberg notes, “the multiplicity of meaning can be beyond all precedent” (Painting of the Maniera 191).

3.5 Marvell’s experimentation with perspectival distortion as ironic response to Horatian decorum

The confusion created by a spatial arrangement of objects is further complicated In Last Instructions (as in Mannerist art) by an inversion of the proportional relationships between “architectural structures” and “the scale of the figures depicted”; an expressive strategy for revealing hidden things from new angles (Bodart 143). Bodart writes that figures could be made to appear disproportionately large, their predominant position within the compositional space achieved by using “tight framing devices and lack of depth,” while “small figures” were widely used to highlight the incomparable grandeur of ancient monuments” (Bodart 144). Bodart notes that because of its “potential for invention and variety, the idiom of the grotesque easily lent itself to Mannerism’s investigations of form” (151). The grotesque portraits discussed in chapter two are also a way that Marvell invokes what Horace condemns in the Ars Poetica as “idle fancies […] shaped like a sick man’s dreams (lines 8-9). Horace allowed the poet or painter some license for artistic invention, but “not so far that savage should mate with tame, or serpents

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148 Mannerist art reacted against the theory of proportion adhered to by Renaissance artists (Pope-Hennessey 94).
couple with birds, lambs with tigers” (lines 14-15). For Mannerist artists, the visual distortions that arise from pushing representations to the extreme are precisely the kind of visual challenge they sought to invoke.

Freedberg notes that “another, no less frequent, device of transposition [of meaning] in Maniera rhetoric, [… is] virtual invention” in which human forms can begin “[take] on the look of semiprecious, polished stone” as they become a living symbol of artifice and abstraction — a feature identified in the portrait of Sir Archibald Douglas and De Ruyter in chapter two (Painting of the Maniera 192). In the description of Douglas, every feature has been “painstakingly reworked,” such that his form, and the description, is “worked to smooth and arbitrary perfection” (Freedberg Painting of the Maniera 189). Any trace of the Renaissance image is erased, and “instead, the surfaces have been translated into a limbo between flesh and tinted stone, or porcelain whose glazes evoke, but only faintly, a quality like that of life” (190). What this abstracted image appears designed to invoke is an assertion by Marvell that appearances are shaped in the mind of the poet or painter, as opposed by being determined by actual appearance.

The portraits of Douglas and De Ruyter also demonstrate a Mannerist “quotation” of other literary or pictorial genres and their abstraction so as to take on new meanings. In the portrait of De Ruyter for example, Marvell makes reference to the nymph — a common figuration in the literary and pictorial genre of pastoral — and manipulates it to new effect. Nymphs were typically portrayed against a pastoral backdrop, as a “precautionary mythological setting” for the “evocation of eroticism” (Smith The Poems 272). The pastoral tableau of De Ruyter sailing up the Thames in lines 523-560, exploits the Renaissance association between pastoral setting and erotic male spectacle, creating what Bodart describes as a “bridge between the
inaccessible world of the naked goddesses and the modern world of the beholder” (132). The speaker’s description of De Ruyter’s arousal draws the reader into the scene, making us feel complicit in the sins the poem’s speaker describes (Bodart 121). Semler notes the “classic paradigm of pastoral […] was itself decorously ideal, graceful and beautiful” (English Mannerism 211). Marvell elaborates on the artifice of the received aesthetic by pushing it into the realm of ideal abstraction in a manner typical of the Maniera (211). At the point Pastoral reaches the realm of extreme refinement, however, it is juxtaposed with images of violence and destruction.

3.6 Disjunction between word and image, and the uncomfortable multiplicity of meaning generated in Last Instructions

Freedberg notes that the tension characteristic of Mannerist art extended beyond the composition of its images to define the relationship between word and image, further complicating and potentially obstructing the viewer’s derivation of meaning. According to Freedberg, it:

Should not be imagined that this [disjunction] is an unwanted result of the different nature of the literary ideas of the Maniera […] On the contrary, it would seem the Maniera painter may intend to keep the verbal meaning out of joint with the aesthetic sense of his picture.

(Painting of the Maniera 192)

The reason, Freedberg suggests, is that by creating this effect, the painter “acquires an opportunity to add another level, and another kind of meaning, to his work.” (192). In Last Instructions, Marvell’s decision to write in iambic pentameter, often with a medial pause separated by a comma, also adds a sense of order and refinement
to a poem whose content the speaker is knowingly judgmental about. By juxtaposing the heroic couplet with a visual representation that lacks a sense of narrative order or stylistic heterogeneity, Marvell creates the effect of mock-heroic prestige. In lines 107-8, for example, the speaker asks the painter to “Describe the court and country, both set right / On opp’site points, the black against the white,” but what he actually goes on to describe is not an organised image of Parliament resembling a checkerboard, but a disorderly rabble playing games with the nation’s finances for their own advantage: “The dice betwixt them must the fate divide / (As Chance doth still in multitudes decide). / But here the court does its advantage know, / For the cheat Turnour for them both must throw” (lines 111-14). When the speaker describes the debate over supply for the war in the House of Commons, Marvell draws an unmistakable parallel between the disorderly rabble in court and the language used, only to contradict this once again with the orderly use of couplets:

Thick was the morning, and the House was thin,
The Speaker early, when they all fell in.
Propitious heavens, had not you them crossed,
Excise had got the day, and all been lost.
For th’other side all in loose quarters lay,
Without intelligence, command, or pay:
A scattered body, which the foe ne’er tried,
But oftn’er did among themselves divide;

(Last Instructions 235-42)

Throughout Last Instructions Marvell’s painter is given conflicting instructions, but the momentum created by the couplets enables the speaker to keep pace with the events unfolding before him. It creates the visual effect of rhetorical order, but the
complex interaction between orderly description and disorderly imagery undermines coherency, as the above example demonstrates. The framing device of the painter motif sets the reader up to expect a congruous relationship between word and images characteristic of Waller’s Instructions, but this motif proves to be one among many rhetorical tropes and competing modes of representation at play in Last Instructions, with Marvell refusing to settle on any one of them.

Conclusion

A study of composition in Dryden’s Annus Mirabilis and Marvell’s Last Instructions draws attention to the principles of order and decorum that underpin the Renaissance istoria, and the Renaissance artists’ underlying motivations of restoring order to a disordered world. Dryden structures his account by appearing to reference Albertian principles of linear perspective, allowing the disparate elements of the poem to be (artificially) arranged into a narrative unity. The harmony brought about by the metaphorical conceit, and the concordant relationship between of word and image in Annus Mirabilis, directly contrast with the incongruity that defines Last Instructions. By appearing to reference Mannerist compositional techniques, Marvell creates a poem defined by complex spatial schemes and figurative forms that distinguishes Last Instructions from the Renaissance model of Waller’s Instructions. Rather than attempting to recreate the effects of linear perspective, Last Instructions is intended to delight the informed reader, who is required to extract meaning from the abstract references to literary and pictorial sources. Mannerist artifice is central to Marvell’s anti-classical response to Waller, allowing him to critique the idealism of the Renaissance istoria by referencing a style that explicitly set out to challenge these
ideals by fracturing the notion of synthetic unity and making “an artistic principle of multiplicity and multivalence (Freedberg *Painting of the Maniera* 94). The Mannerist freedom to push the boundaries of literary and pictorial models would have appealed to Marvell as an oppositional satirist who sought to challenge the grandiose claims of Waller’s *Instructions*. Mannerist compositional techniques would also allow him to level a political attack on Charles II and his court. As stated in the main introduction, the artificiality and affectation of Mannerist art was associated with anti-classicism and decadence, an aesthetic code Marvell uses to allude to a moral code.

Taken together, Marvell’s experimentation with literary and pictorial forms implies a preference for aesthetic relativism, an argument I will develop in chapter five. In the following chapters, I move from discussing the aesthetic practices and painterly perspective in Dryden’s and Marvell’s poems to an exploration of the scientific approaches to understanding and representing nature in the period. I intend to explore the relationship between the representation of scientific developments and (metaphoric) aesthetic choices made by Dryden and Marvell, and how perspective cues are employed to develop and support their respective political arguments.
Chapter 4: Natural philosophy, optics and theatricality in

Dryden’s Annus Mirabilis

Introduction

In this chapter I move from an examination of geometric linear perspective in Annus Mirabilis in the context of the visual arts, to an exploration of visual cues in the context of natural philosophy and early modern optical theory. Helen Burke and Katsuhiro Engetsu have both identified the poem’s “Digression concerning shipping and navigation” (617-56) and “The Apostrophe to the Royal Society” (657-64) as being an expression of Dryden’s political argument that it is through advances in natural philosophy, England will overpower the Dutch. For Burke, these “Digressions” suggest that it is through “technological advances in the areas of warfare and navigation that England will finally achieve its goal of mastering nature and gaining access to the world and its wealth” (308). Engetsu by contrast, argues that Annus Mirabilis is structured according to the Baconian method of natural history “because it starts with the invention of ‘Nature’ as the single origin in reference to which all the varieties with their specific qualities are constantly contained in the growing system” (236, 239). The degree to which Annus Mirabilis expresses enthusiasm for the new science remains a matter of contention among critics. Engetsu argues that Dryden’s support for scientific experimentalism is directly associated with his desire for civic order and unity that Bacon claimed could be brought about by a systematic approach to understanding the natural world. Burke suggests Dryden’s support is more qualified, claiming that,
On a deeper structural level, the poem could be said to articulate the tensions inherent in the development of a coherent ideology of science and the difficulties of incorporating a new natural philosophy into existing symbolic structures. (Burke *Annus Mirabilis* 308)

I intend to argue that *Annus Mirabilis* represents a dialogic relationship between sixteenth century natural philosophy and seventeenth century experimental approaches to studying the natural world. And, that Renaissance and Baconian theories are selectively appropriated to serve Dryden’s political and civic ambitions.

I will argue that *Annus Mirabilis* is structured around the seventeenth century interest in the geometry inherent in the natural world, and the belief that “the eternal law in God’s mind was discernable in the physical laws of nature” (Cope xxx). Sir Francis Bacon (and later Thomas Sprat, as spokesperson and publicist for the Royal Society) believed that “matter would make its own patterns of meaning of the hands and eyes of the virtuosi who continued to compile facts” (Cope xxxi). ¹⁴⁹ This knowledge could then be put to the utility of humankind in areas such as warfare and navigation, which was particularly pertinent to the time and which Sprat proclaimed gave credence for a “sense of glorious destiny bursting upon England” (Cope xx). Charles II, as financier of the Society, was credited with the furtherance of scientific investigation in England, with Sprat proclaiming:

¹⁴⁹ Thomas Sprat became a fellow of the Royal Society in 1663, around which time he was commissioned to write a ‘history’ of the society” — a public statement of its aims, methods, and achievements,” in response to criticisms of the Society's limited productivity since its inauguration, and to “quell fears that experimental science would challenge the belief structures of Restoration society” (Morgan 1). Sprat’s *The History of the Royal Society* was published in early 1667, and entered in the Stationer’s Register on July 25, 1667 (Cope ix).
The King has not only given succour to the Royal Society, in the prosecution of their labours; but has also led them in their way [...] and with this propitious inclination of his Majestie, and the highest Degrees of Men, the Genius of the Nation is it self irresistibly conspires. (Sprat 150)

Dryden’s focus on the commercial utility of technological developments and their use by the Royal Society, and the central focus of the poem on the King, is revealing of how scientific discourse in *Annus Mirabilis* is made to conform to Dryden’s Royalist politics.

Renaissance natural philosophers were fascinated with natural and artificial illusions and deceptions of vision and sought to understand the workings of the eye. In the seventeenth century, natural philosophy was focused on a detailed study of nature in order to understand its basic principles. By discovering God’s script in nature, members of the Royal Society claimed that new optical technologies would help to correct the natural fallibilities of the senses, and could not only reveal new details about the world, but could also be put to use for the military, navigational and commercial benefit of the state. References to the telescope in *Annus Mirabilis* (a visual apparatus which had astronomical, cartographic, and military applications) represents the ideology of progress that replaces the primitive technologies currently available to the English navy, while being made to conform to the poem’s civic (and Monarchical) focus.

This chapter will begin by giving an overview of key concerns of sixteenth century natural philosophy and experiments with mirrors and lenses as a context for exploring Dryden’s reference of optical illusions in his description of the war. I will then move to a discussion of early seventeenth century Baconian natural philosophy
and developments in optical technologies and Dryden’s references to these in order to prefigure England’s military success.

4.1 Optical illusion and the Renaissance stage

The opening of *Annus Mirabilis* sets up an immediate connection between the supposedly epic scale of the Second-Anglo-Dutch war, and the world of the theatrical performance. It also sets up a connection between the world of sixteenth century natural philosophy, and that of the Renaissance theatre with lines 61-4 stating: “To see this fleet upon the ocean move, / Angels drew wide the curtains of the skies;/And heaven, as if there wanted lights above, / For tapers made two glaring comets rise” (61-4). The theatrical setting brings us towards Albertian space, and into the world of Inigo Jones, who, from 1605, employed Albertian principles of linear perspective to create elaborate stage sets renowned for the sheer spectacle of optical illusion. Stephen Orgel notes that Jones designed his sets based upon a single focal point, with movable scenery and spectacular machines used to create the effects of three dimensions, and heighten the oratorical effects of the drama (20). The English court masque was enacted on an open stage extending out into the audience, and as a result, encouraged the metaphorical blending of the real and fictional worlds. The stage set was not merely

A setting for the drama, but was itself the action […] its transformations were those of the human mind, the imaginative expressing itself through perspective machinery, the imitation of nature creating a model of the universe and bringing it under rational control. (Orgel 36)
With the metaphorical assistance of lights and mirrors, Dryden creates an illusionary setting for the battle intended to seamlessly blur the boundaries between fact and fiction. As in the theatre, the King and the reader (or prospective viewer) are encompassed as participants within the drama, with the King being directly addressed or included within fictions; debates are referred to [his] wise judgment; conflicts are resolved, savage men are civilized [...] simply by virtue of [his] magical presence. (Montrose “Of Gentlemen” 170)

Louis Montrose notes that spectacles involving the King were, in the Early Modern period, always “framed within a larger social drama” and were an implicit “part of the unwritten story of government propaganda” (170). In *Annus Mirabilis*, the metaphor of the theatre also stands as a metaphor for the state, with a return to “order” at the end of Dryden’s theatrical representation of the war symbolised by a closing down of the scientific and political uncertainty brought about by technological advancement.

The connection between the Renaissance stage and the sixteenth century interest in recreating naturally occurring optical illusions for scientific study has not been lost on Paula Findlen, who writes that: “Defining nature and defining culture were complementary activities in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries” (“Carnival and Lent” 244). The treatment of optics and natural philosophy in *Annus Mirabilis* reflects this connection. In the opening part of the poem, Dryden gives the impression the war is fated in favour of the Dutch, and that progress in natural philosophy, particularly optics, is necessary if the English navy is to succeed against them. In lines 137-40 the English are described sailing blindly towards the Dutch ships; hampered by poor visibility and limited navigational technology, they are
unable to distinguish friend from foe. Dryden’s narrator asserts, “Such are the proud designs of human kind, / And so we suffer shipwreck everywhere! / Alas, what port can such a pilot find, / Who in the night of fate must blindly steer!” In the following stanza the narrator suggests that what is required is the ability to understand God’s script, which “Heaven in his bosom from our knowledge hides, / And draws them in contempt of human skill, / Which oft for friends mistaken foes provides” (142-4). Natural philosophy is represented as “a divinely inspired guessing game in which natural philosophers attempted to infer what neither God nor nature would ever tell them” (Findlen “Carnival and Lent” 247). The poem’s narrator’s optimism that the heavens will ultimately favour the English develops as the poem progresses, but at the outset, his emphasis is on the power of nature over man. In lines 9-12, Dryden draws upon popular debates about the origin of metals and stones to suggest “For [the Dutch] alone the heavens had kindly heat, / In eastern quarries ripening precious dew; / For them the Idumaean balm did sweat, / And in hot Ceylon spicy forests grew.” The suggestion that the elements are aligned against the English is reinforced in the subsequent stanza which describes the moon and tides also working in favour of the Dutch: “The sun but seemed the laborer of their year; / Each waxing moon supplied her watery store / To swell those tides which from the line did bear / Their brim-full vessels to the Belgian shore” (13-16). It is through images of

150 Hammond and Hopkins note that, “at a meeting of the Royal Society on 27 May 1663 some members argued ‘that the minerals were produced by certain subterraneous juices, which passing through the veins of the earth, and having mingled therewith, do afterwards precipitate and crystallize into stones, ores and metals of various kinds and figures, according to the various kinds of salts contained in the juices and the earth’” (131).

151 Hammond and Hopkins note that, “Descartes proposed in his Principia (1644) that tides result from lunar pressure, rather than lunar attraction” (131).
natural phenomena that men are yet to fully understand, that Dryden suggests the need for advancements in natural philosophy. The poem implies that the ability to understand and harness the workings of nature will help them to stem the flow of Dutch trade, as well as enhancing their navigational capabilities as opposed to feeling the outcome of the war is to be determined by Fate.

The competing theories of natural philosophy are treated alongside competing theories of optics in *Annus Mirabilis*. Natural philosophers sought to understand the nature of apparitions and naturally occurring optical illusions by recreating them with the use of mirrors and magic lanterns before captivated audiences (Clark *The Reformation* 148). By staging his poem as theatrical performance, Dryden takes advantage of spectacular stage machinery and optical illusions to demonstrate that English strategic failures were due to failures of vision rather than lack of determination or skill. In lines 271-2 the English are described fighting “Till the last streaks of dying day withdrew, / And doubtful moonlight did our rage deceive,” while in lines 311-12 the atmosphere is described as being “So thick with navy scarce could shear their way, / But seemed to wander in a moving wood.”

In addition to facilitating the effects of optical illusions in *Annus Mirabilis*, glass objects such as mirrors and crystal pyramids add to the decidedly Christian dimension of natural philosophy in the poem. Reflecting ideas of medieval theologians whose work still informed Renaissance natural philosophy, the transfer of knowledge between Man and God is represented as occurring through a series of images involving the transfer of light. The transfer of light connects the earthly and heavenly realms of the poem, and appears to reference medieval experiments in
which light is passed through glass objects to explain how God transmitted his divine grace to the human soul (Edgerton 11). Samuel Edgerton notes that:

In the Renaissance and well after, certain geometric figures composed of squares, circles, and triangles linked in some sort of grid pattern were considered ‘magic’ because people thought they contained a clue to the power of God and his master plan of the universe. (“Mental Matrix” 11)

According to this view, “If the human soul were ‘clean,’ God’s grace would touch it perpendicularly, entering it as light does transparent glass, undiminished and unrefracted” (Edgerton “Mental Matrix” 14). The divine relationship between God and King is made evident throughout the poem, no more so than in lines 1009-12 where the King is described “lend[ing] his beams” to illuminate the streets for those fighting the fire, before stepping in to extinguish it with a heavenly fire extinguisher described as a “hollow crystal pyramid” (1120).

Antoni Malét notes that in the Renaissance, understandings of human vision were also based on the notion of direct transference, explaining it was widely understood that:

Retinal pictures were made out of light and, according to Kepler […] light was the privileged vehicle of communication between the material and the spiritual realms. Furthermore, retinal pictures were susceptible to geometrical definition and reproduced the physical world in its true proportions. (“Keplerian Illusions” 1)

Dryden’s awareness of the Renaissance theory of direct transference and apprehension of knowledge by virtue of the passage of light is suggested in lines 209-12, which describe the Generals’ Rupert and Albermarle as “Diffusive of themselves where’er they pass, / They make that warmth in others they expect: /
Their valour works like bodies on a glass, / And does its image on their men project” (145). The first part of this description appears to reference the direct transference of information between the minds of the Generals and the minds of the people. The metaphor appears to suggest that the Generals’ “virtue” is transferred to the people as though refracted from a mirror or, as Hammond and Hopkins suggest, an “optic glass” (145). The “glass” could also be taken to refer to the Claude Glass, a black, slightly convex mirror in a hinged fold out box that was popular among seventeenth century landscape painters who sought to create visual effects characteristic of works by Claude Lorrain (Bertelsen 182, 185). Bertelsen explains that, when held up before the viewer, the mirror produced “an enfolded, slightly distorted perspectivistic projection of the surroundings into the operator’s eye, allowing him/her to read the world like a text” (182). The Claude Glass provided a unified, if slightly distorted image that was tinted, thus producing an idealised image of the landscape (Bertelsen 185). In order to achieve the effects of verisimilitude, it ironically required the painter to “[turn] away from the world only to be able to become more thoroughly intoxicated by its reflections in the grey glass” (Bertelsen 189). The blending of art and nature on the surface of the mirror is characteristic of the deliberate blending of art and nature in *Annus Mirabilis*, a feature of the Claude Glass that Bertelsen describes as representing “a picturesque ‘Will to Art’ — an effort to see thorough nature as though it were already artificial from the outset” (185).

The poem’s possible reference to the Claude Glass is also significant, as it appears to draw attention to the dual approaches to understanding images available in

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152 Claude Lorrain (1604-82) was a “French painter, draughtsman and etcher, active in Italy. He has long been known as the greatest of all ideal landscape painters” (Kitson *Grove Art Online*). Lorraine’s paintings reflected the “courtly values of ‘high finish’ and decorum, and […] his most important patrons were members of the European nobility and higher clergy” (1).
the period. The first two lines appear to reference Renaissance optics in which vision was understood as being “accomplished through the species of the thing seen eventually reaching the sensus communis” (“Keplerian Illusions” 3). Sensus communis broadly translates as “common sense,” but in Aristotelian times referred to the ability of different individual senses to perceive the physical characteristics of the object seen. Malét notes, “The only refractive phenomena considered in pre-Keplerian optics had to do either with atmospheric refraction, [...] or with the well known bending of rays at the surface of water vessels or pools” (“Keplerian Illusions” 2). The refraction produced an image that was then calculated with the so-called Cathetus rule. Malét notes, “The Cathetus rule was used to determine the image of a point by reflection or refraction” in classical and medieval times, but also appeared in sixteenth and seventeenth books on optics (2). Medieval writers denied the existence of optical images, claiming that “Images did not send forth species that enter the eye — they were misapprehensions only” (2). The second two lines appear to draw upon Kepler’s “notion of picture to comprehend experimentally produced projected images,” the location of which could be “geometrically determined by the refraction of light rays” (“Keplerian Illusions” 3) (Italics in original). Malét notes that at the turn of the seventeenth century, Kepler’s experiments with the camera obscura and the refraction of light through glass cylinders formed the basis of a new theory of vision, as well as a new geometrical notion of picture (“Keplerian Illusions” 10). The Keplerian picture (pictura) has a determined location in space, and is “an accurate, inverted representation of visible things created by thick, curved,

153 For discussion of the sensus communis in Aristotle’s theory of perception, see Hulyalkar.

154 For a detailed account of the medieval perspectivist theory of vision, see Lindberg Theories of Vision.
transparent bodies denser than the air — spherical or cylindrical water vessels, and also lenses” (“Keplerian Illusions” 3). Kepler claimed that “pictures were produced only by lenses, not by mirrors, and only when the visible object and the lens stood in such a relative position that (what later came to be called) a real geometrical optical image (as opposed to a virtual one) is yielded” (Italics in original) (“Keplerian Illusions” 5).

Kepler observed that when a spherical water vessel is placed just before the aperture of a Camera Obscura, one can observe “everything that can reach the flask through a small window […] very neatly and nicely drawn through the glass on the facing sheet of paper” (“Keplerian illusions 1). The picture, Kepler notes, “only appears at a particular distance, approximately half the diameter of the globe” (10). In *Annus Mirabilis*, Dryden draws attention to anxieties about the fallibility of natural vision that in the early stages of the poem has left the English sailing blindly, and suggests that with the emergence of new navigational technologies such as the telescope, the distortions of natural vision can be corrected, thus creating new opportunities in the areas of trade, cartography and military strategy. Before turning to the navigational abilities brought about by the development of the telescope, as referenced by the narrator, I will discuss Dryden’s use of geometric perspective cues to compensate for the distortions of representing the naval battle on a flat surface,

155 Kepler proceeds to suggest, “the flask’s optical effect on the eye is just the contrary one. For when the eye is placed a half diameter away from the globe, where the picture was most neatly depicted, nothing is seen but a blur” (“Keplerian Illusions” 10). Kepler’s experiments with glass objects as well as the anamorphic images of the period both demonstrate an interest in the study of optics, and the widespread attempts to understand the nature of human vision in the period. Both aesthetic and scientific aspects of the study appear to influence Dryden’s imagery in *Annus Mirabilis*. 
and for creating a connection between the microcosmic world of theatrical performance, and the macrocosmic world of commercial and geographical expansion.

4.2 Geographical landscape and perspective

In attempting to compensate for perspectival distortion associated with representing the battle on the curved surface of the ocean, Dryden also appears to reference Ptolemy’s *Geography* which as Alpers notes, “became part of the Renaissance verbal and pictorial tradition” (“Mapping Impulse” 67). Ptolemy gives “instructions for making an image based on a projection from a single eye point,” with the book itself containing maps with “various kinds of mathematical projections of large areas of the world rather than detailed pictures of places or regions” (Alpers “Mapping Impulse” 67, 70). Ptolemy’s cartographic system represented the globe “not as amorphous topography but as a homogeneous surface ruled by a uniform geometric grid” (Edgerton “Mental Matrix” 13). This grid allowed him to represent the three-dimensional sphere onto a two-dimensional mapped surface. In the attempt to compensate for the effects of optical illusion, Ptolemy experimented with a variety of projection methods in the attempt to convey to the viewer that “distances between latitudes and longitudes are always the same no matter how distorted they appear on the curving globe” (Edgerton “Mental Matrix” 36-7). Edgerton argues that Ptolemy’s perspective technique corresponds to Alberti’s vanishing point perspective, with both

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156 Ptolemy’s *Geography* (ca. 1411) is also known as the *Geographia* and *Cosmographia*. It comprises an atlas and treatise on cartography that was translated into Latin in 1406 and remained highly influential on Renaissance geographical and cartographic traditions.
employing principles of geometry to compensate for the effects of natural vision. Svetlana Alpers disputes Edgerton’s claim about the geometric basis of the Ptolemaic grid, on account of the intended position of the viewer. She asserts that “Whereas Albertian perspective posits a viewer at a certain distance looking through a framed window at a putative substitute world, Ptolemy and distance point perspective conceived of the picture as a flat working surface” (“Mapping Impulse” 70). The difference she argues, “is a matter not of geometry — in basic respects effectively the same — but of pictorial conception” (70). Although Ptolemy’s grid “share[s] the mathematical uniformity of the Renaissance perspective grid, they do not share the positioned viewer, the frame, and the definition of the picture as a window through which an external viewer looks (71). On account of this, she argues the Ptolemaic, cartographic and Albertian grids should be considered separately (72). 157 For the purposes of my discussion of the perspectival grid and the composition of Annus Mirabilis, I follow Edgerton by treating the Albertian and Ptolemaic as similar in methodical approach, with both grids used to help represent three-dimensional space on a flat service. In Annus Mirabilis, Dryden appears to reference Albertian and Ptolemaic approaches to representing three-dimensional space on a flat surface, with the aesthetic and geographical landscapes being united through shared perspective cues. Throughout the description of the war, Dryden draws attention to delusions of the senses on account of the curved surface of the globe. In lines 497-504 for example, the momentary English defeat of the Dutch is portrayed in terms of the Dutch vessels retreating against the backdrop of the 157 Alpers asserts that “contrary to what is assumed, such mapped images have a potential flexibility in assembling different kinds of information about or knowledge of the world that is not offered by the Albertian picture” (“Mapping Impulse” 72).
horizon: “Plied thick and close as when the fight begun, / Their huge unwieldy navy wastes away: / So sicken waning moons too near the sun, / And blunt their crescents on the edge of day.” In this instance, the naturally occurring effects of optical illusion are used to diminishing effect. The apparent shrinking in size of the Dutch ships as they move against the horizon is an example of Dryden’s attempts to capture the effect of movement across a curved surface on a metaphorically flat canvas. In lines 215-16, optical illusion is used to the opposite effect, to exaggerate the size and grandeur of the Dutch fleet as it leaves the harbor in preparation for the Four Days’ Battle: “The narrow seas can scarce their navy bear, / Or crowded vessels can their soldiers hold.”

Todd Butler notes that the printing of Ptolemy’s Geography, and the increasing scientific emphasis on quantification and measurement were met with enormous growth in map making and cartography, both of which were considered essential to England’s continued prosperity (45). Atlases could “proclaim the breadth of a monarch’s domain,” while surveys of individual plots of land were designed “to ensure such lands remained productive and peaceful” (Butler 55). Portrayed simultaneously as surveyor and natural philosopher, the King evaluates the situation via analogy with the alchemical experiment, before reaching the decision that war is a necessary evil for the long-term good of England. When he surveys the land, it is as though he is imagining it divided into plots, as he contemplates extending his power beyond English shores (lines 49-52). Accompanying the flourishing market for mapping and cartography was an increasing focus on the use of instruments and technologies for developing their art. The perceived benefit of navigational

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158 Hammond and Hopkins note that the “crescent” was also a common battle-formation for ships (161).
technologies such as the telescope, and the variety of disciplines to which telescopes were applied, will be the subject of the second half of this chapter.

4.3 Cartographic visual cues as a way of providing a unified perspective on the scientific and commercial interests in *Annus Mirabilis*

Through geographical and cartographic references Dryden incorporates perspectival cues or “coding orientations” into *Annus Mirabilis* (Acheson *Visual Rhetoric* 4). Katherine Acheson has defined coding instructions “a set of assumptions and rules that a reader or viewer will use to extract information from a visual tableau” (*Visual Rhetoric* 23). They can be naturalistic or abstract or a combination of both depending on the level of detail required (24). The perspectival view, discussed in the previous section, is an example of a “naturalistic coding” orientation according to which “the viewer will expect objects to diminish in size as their distance from the foreground increases” (23). In contrast, the incorporation of abstract or “analytical coding orientations” result in a “point of view [that] is neutral or omniscient,” as exemplified by schematic diagrams and military manuals of the period (23). Dryden also incorporates abstract coding instructions into his description of the battle to

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159 In the context of the idealising view of *Annus Mirabilis* it is of note that military handbooks “combined classical and contemporary knowledge” and “often proposed the use of incredible equipment […] ornate and even impossible formations and encampments for thousands of soldiers” (Acheson *Visual Rhetoric* 14-15). Acheson also notes that these features, and the fact that they were published in pocket-sized formats and thick folios in both the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries “suggest[s] that books of military strategy and tactics had a wide audience that included those with particular interest in the topic, and those with broader curiosity about history, technology, international affairs, and gentlemanly knowledge” (15).
suggest the orderly and strategic approach of the English. Before engaging the Dutch fleet, the poem’s narrator describes the admirals preparing for battle; “Their eyes “describe the lists as they come near / And draw the lines of death before they fight” (747-8). Here, the formation of the oncoming Dutch fleet is perceived by the English admirals in the context of a pre-planned schema of their own attack. By assessing the situation, the English navy is able to maximize their use of artillery, as described in lines 745-6. The seaman, having judged “The distance […] for shot of every size, / The linstocks touch, [and] the ponderous ball expires” (749-50). Strategic formations described in other sections of the poem are also reminiscent of those taken from a military handbook, such as line 1225 which describes the English fleet filing past each other, “Born each by other in a distant line,” firing at the enemy before circling around behind the rearmost ships to repeat the attack (Hammond and Hopkins 146). When Albermarle loses ground and is forced to retreat, he sets up a different formation to protect his fleet by drawing “[…] his mighty frigates all before, / On which the foe his fruitless force employs; / His weak ones deep into the rear he bore, / Remote from guns as sick men are from noise” (361-4). By placing his weak and disabled ships behind his greatest, Dryden suggests that Albermarle ensured that the best sailors of the Dutch fleet met with those of strongest firepower.

Acheson argues that many seventeenth century military diagrams were topographic, highly abstracted, and used simple geometric shapes to depict formations, while others incorporated “coding orientations” to convey perspectival information, and were drawn up in such a way as to conform to the assumptions of the viewer (“Military Illustration” 160). Rather than being represented from a neutral

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160 Hammond and Hopkins gloss “linstocks” as referring to “staves for holding lighted matches” (176).
overhead perspective, she suggests they often took an oblique view, taking into account light, shadows and proportions as determined by optical effects such as the diminishing size of receding objects, and how they “appear to obey the laws of the physical universe” (Acheson 162). Similar visual cues can be seen in the portrayal of Prince Rupert’s fleet as it approaches Albermarle’s in lines 416-20. Rupert appears from afar “[…] waving streamers the glad General knows; / With full spread sails his navy steers, / And every ship in swift proportion grows” (416-20). By combining modes of presentation, Dryden’s description, like the more complicated military diagrams, is able to represent the spatial arrangement of objects (e.g. flags flying, angle of the approaching ships), as well as the “activity, scale and movement of the components within that space” (Acheson “Military Illustration” 163). The virtual quality of Dryden’s images in *Annus Mirabilis* can be attributed to the combination of natural and abstract visual cues. By combining aesthetic principles of linear perspective with the abstract coding orientations characteristic of schematic diagrams, Dryden is able to shift perspective to give virtual close up, a birds-eye, or surveying point of view, while implying the fixed location of the viewer. Further, like the notions of mapping and geographical expansion represented in the poem, these methods of representation can be seen to support the social and political dimensions of the poem by functioning as a further “conceptualization upon which systems of philosophy, orders of economy, and modes of social organization in empire are built” (Acheson “Military Illustration” 147-8). The mapped landscape, as well as the birds-eye-view of cartographic drawings also allow for the envisioning of the transfer of commodities across the poem’s virtual landscape. The unification of different continents via trade is emphasised in lines 821-24 which describe the English intercepting Dutch vessels, “Some bound for Guinea, golden sand to find, /
Bore all the gauds the simple natives wear; / Some for the pride of Turkish courts
designed / For folded turbans finest Holland bear.” Unlike the civil hierarchy
represented in the poem, the English Channel represents an open space that once
controlled, can place the city of London the centre of the global trade network.
Acheson explains that military diagrams “imagine the physical world as it is
measured, traversed, and used, not as it is conceived of mythologically,
metaphorically, or ontologically” (Visual Rhetoric 5). In order to precisely represent
military configurations, they

Embed and articulate the conventions of seeing the world that are
germane to scientific, economic, and regulatory practices that emerged in
the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in northern Europe, and
[…which] provided key support for the development of the modern
nation-state. (Visual Rhetoric 6)

Dryden’s incorporation of visual cues associated with military diagrams
complements his argument about the importance of trade to England’s commercial
success, which in turn was to be aided by developments in optical theories upon
which navigational technologies were based, as the follow section will discuss.

4.4 Seventeenth century natural philosophy and the changing conception of the image

In the early 1600s, natural philosopher Sir Francis Bacon set out to accomplish a
“total reconstruction of the sciences” that was designed to replace the Aristotelian
system which he claimed was based on “abstract and useless generalities” with new
principles that were “grounded in matter,” therefore eliminating the conjectural
element in traditional methods” (Jardine Bacon 78-9). Lisa Jardine explains that the first step towards achieving his goal was the identification of “simple natures,” or natural configurations of matter, such as heat (Bacon 109). The various instances were tested and tabulated, with the fundamental rule of operation being used to define the simple nature and to make further deductions (Jardine Bacon 126). Jardine explains that by tabulating the results, an investigator can

Reduce the instances of a given simple nature to be examined to a small number of significant ones which manifest that nature in particularly suggestive ways. These form the Table of Presence. A second table [The Table of Absence] matches each instance in the first with an instance of absence of the nature, […] Elimination between the table of presence and the table of absence provides the final stage in the deductive method.

(Italics in original) (126)

Bacon argued that a systematic approach was the only way to separate rational activity from subjective interpretation. The resulting knowledge could then be used to develop technologies to benefit the state, as asserted in lines 661-4 of Annus Mirabilis which praises the natural philosophers of the Royal Society as: “O truly royal! Who behold the law / And rule of beings in your Maker’s mind, / And thence, like limbecks, rich ideas draw, / To fit the leveled use of human kind.” Katherine Acheson has explored the use of Dichotomous tables in Early modern literature from the disciplines of “theology, science, philosophy, history, medicine, and linguistics,” arguing that they were familiar to Dryden’s contemporaries, and a highly useful method for presenting information in a logical way:

They establish relationships between whole and parts, between event and story, between time and space, and between cause and effect that
condition not only what is known, but how it is known, remembered, and used. \((Visual Rhetoric 51)\)

In the Baconian context of classification, the quatrains in *Annus Mirabilis* can be understood to function not only as an analogy for the conquest and division of land, but as a systematic approach to ordering the material by establishing thematic and linguistic relationships across different parts of the poem.\(^{161}\)

In the “Digression concerning shipping and navigation,” Dryden traces the development of ships from their crude beginnings based on the observations of fish, to the epitome of technological advancement represented by the *Loyal London* (Burke 320). Dryden further suggests that the same process of careful observation has led to developments in navigation, from reliance on the pole star, to the design of compasses and telescopes: “By viewing Nature, Nature’s hand-maiden Art / Makes mighty things, from small beginnings grow: / Thus fishes first to shipping did impart / Their tail the rudder, and their head the prow” \((Annus Mirabilis 617-20)\). Dryden argues that until recently, with “No useful compass or meridian known” (634) sailors had to rely on the pole star to navigate the seas. He claims that, since the development of the Royal Society, the English have made the greatest contribution to advancements in navigation: “Beyond the year and out of heaven’s highway / They make discoveries where they see no sun” (639-640). Making reference to the telescope, Dryden argues that once equipped with new optical instruments, and a

\(^{161}\) Engetsu argues that Dryden employs Bacon’s classifying method of natural history according to the elements of fire and water, and that by doing so, he arranges the fragmented narrative into an invented “textual order” (246). Helen Burke also discusses the idea of elemental classification in the poem, drawing a connection between the Great Fire and political anarchy, asserting that the “fire is at once self-activated matter in motion, the revolutionary forces that destroyed the crown, and the philosophy that undoes providential order” (325).
more exact knowledge of longitude, the English will be able to navigate the channels with a precision that will not only help them to win the war, but also to advance their trade: “The ebbs of tides, and their mysterious flow / We as art’s elements shall understand; / And as by line upon the ocean go, / Whose paths shall be familiar as the land” (645-8). The English Channel, which, until recently had been water difficult to navigate (and therefore map) will make even the remotest regions of the globe accessible: “Instructed ships shall sail to quick commerce, / By which remotest regions are allied, / Which makes one city of the universe, / Where some may gain, and all may be supplied” (649-52). The Royal Society’s dedication to developments in navigation is discussed in Thomas Sprat’s History of the Royal Society, which states that:

The King has been most ready to reward those, that shall discover the Meridian. They have employ’d much time in examining the Fabrick of Ships, the forms of their Sails, the shapes of their Keels, the sorts of Timber, the planting of Firr, the bettering of Pitch, and Tarr and Tackling. And in all Maritime affairs of this Nature, his Majesty is acknowleg’d to be the best Judge amongst Seamen, and Shipwrights, as well as the most powerful amongst Princes. (Italics in original) (Sprat 150)

In lines 565-600, Dryden describes the refurbishment of the fleet under the auspices of Charles II, with a description that references Sprat’s claims about the King’s dedication to the Royal Society’s cause. Dryden describes the sourcing of the best materials from around the globe and the “new-cast cannons” (593) to be tested by

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162 Hammond and Hopkins note that “despite various attempts, there was as yet no sound way of measuring longitude at sea” (170).
Charles himself: “Our careful monarch stands in person by, / His new-cast cannons’ firmness to explore: / The strength of big-corned powder loves to try, / And ball and cartridge sorts for every bore” (593-6). Once the English have achieved military greatness, he suggests the natural philosophers will point their telescopes to the heavens, in order to see beyond the confines of their portion of the globe and observe the wider universe: “Then we upon our globe’s last verge shall go, / And view the ocean leaning on the sky; / From thence our rolling neighbours we shall know, / And on the lunar world securely pry” (653-6). The telescope had the ability to dramatically change the way society views the world as well as to correct the natural distortions of vision as will be discussed in the following section.

4.5 Seventeenth century technological developments and their impact on England’s military and commercial endeavours

Malét notes that in the seventeenth century, optical instruments such as the telescope and microscope were considered as a different category to “mathematical” or “sight-measuring instruments” used prior to 1600 (Malét “Telescope” 237). He notes that ‘Mathematical instruments’ measured angles, lengths, times, astronomical positions, and so on, according to well-established, unproblematic principles and theories. The telescope, on the other hand, produced ‘information’ about nature that was otherwise unavailable. By producing new ‘facts,’ […they] mediated the observation of nature in unprecedented ways. (238)

The telescope was also “assumed to facilitate the serious consideration of what hitherto was unimaginable or perhaps just unthinkable” (“Telescope” 242). In the
“Apostrophe to the Royal Society,” Dryden highlights the relationship between science and religion, with the poem’s omniscient narrator asserting: “This I foretell from your auspicious care, / Who great in search of God and nature grow; / Who best your wise Creator’s praise declare, / Since best to praise his works is best to know” (657-60). Dryden is referring to the Royal Society’s empirical approach to nature, whereby experiments and detailed studies of nature were focused on the discovery of God’s script in nature, carried out according to Francis Bacon’s method for rediscovering nature’s basic principles.

The benefits of the new science are set out in the poem’s two “Digressions,” but Dryden’s representation of the war remains grounded in sixteenth century optics, and geometrical and mathematical correspondences. The uncertainty about natural phenomena is clearly expressed in the four possible explanations for comets that appear to illuminate the theatre of war. In lines 65-6, Dryden draws upon a variety of theories about comets; including Aristotle’s traditional theory that they are “produced by vapours drawn up from the sun,” and Galileo’s claim that they are merely “illusions” (Hammond and Hopkins 135). Dryden also references prophetic texts of the period that had claimed comets portend dire consequences. Dryden omits these negative implications, declaring one of the comets to be “that which greeted the birth of Charles II and has now returned” (135): “And now a round a greater years begun / New influence from his walks of light did bring” (71-2). Dryden’s selective application of competing theories is used to give the impression of the harmony of the universe according to a geometric understanding of nature. The privileging of order and unity also suggests that Dryden’s endorsement of the new science is compromised. Dryden’s primary interest is the endorsement of Charles II, as opposed to the rhetorical possibilities opened up by new optical technologies and
new ways of viewing the world, as the following discussion of Bacon’s utopian fiction *The New Atlantis* will demonstrate.\(^{163}\)

4.6 The fictional utopia as a frame for the scientific discourse in *Annus Mirabilis*

Bacon’s vision for a renewed systematic scientific enterprise was set out in his utopian fiction *The New Atlantis*, the description of his own scientific academy Solomon’s House providing the model for the Royal Society in 1662 (Sargent 164). Dryden appears to draw upon Bacon’s quasi-utopian fiction in *Annus Mirabilis* by turning the second Anglo-Dutch war into “a grand vision of how the cooperative labour of many workers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge would yield innumerable benefits for the commonwealth [sic]” (Sargent 151). The fact that the cooperative research institution remains a vision, even at the time of writing in 1667, suggests that Dryden’s optimism about the Society’s success is doubtful, especially given the difficulty it experienced retaining Charles II’s financial interest in its work. There was therefore, a continued need to assert the Society’s relevance to the State in terms of utility.\(^{164}\) By exploring the new science within the utopian frame, Dryden

\(^{163}\) Bacon condemned rhetoric for its ability to work on the senses and the imagination, therefore persuading the reader in a way that was not solely based on reason (Jardine *Bacon* 218). Dryden also appears to share this view in his claim that he has tried to use the “proper terms that are used at sea” (“Account” 92-3), therefore controlling the proliferation of meanings that metaphor is capable of.

\(^{164}\) Sargent notes that Bacon had voiced similar concerns in the *Instauratio Magna* (1620), claiming that given the current circumstances, his vision might not “easily be conceived or imagined” (Bacon in Sargent 151).
ensures subversive social and political forces in the poem are contained.\textsuperscript{165} The popularity of the genre of utopian fiction in the early seventeenth century was part of a desire to protect against the perceived disorderliness of mechanical philosophy and the atomistic thinking that had come to be associated with fears about a breakdown in social order (Burke 324-5). The fictional utopia’s association with an idealised form of government, whether parliamentarian or monarchic, is also relevant to Dryden’s representation of the Royal Society’s work as a way of bringing nature, and (by its Royal associations) society to order. Emphasing the Society’s status as “truly Royal” (161), Dryden portrays the King as both military leader and natural philosopher, and therefore at the centre of commercial, military, scientific, cartographic and architectural enterprises portrayed in the poem. Not only Members of Parliament and the Royal Society were dependent upon the King’s patronage and political support, but also mapmakers and cartographers who touted their work as necessary for promoting “England’s power and prestige,” as well as being “a tool for political control” (Butler 49).

The problem faced by Dryden, as a Royalist seeking patronage from the King, is not dissimilar to that of members of the Royal Society who also sought to entertain the King with demonstrations of their work. Hunter and Cooper recount that:

In July 1663, responding to the Royal Society’s anxiety over preparing an entertainment for an anticipated visit from the king, [Christopher] Wren [was] troubled by the impossibility of finding a ‘contrivance’ that would match an almost impossible set of conditions. [He was instructed that] it should be ‘luciferous’ in philosophy, its ‘use and advantage’

\textsuperscript{165} Mary Campbell notes, “the utopian concept, whether strictly literary or purely political, is an enclosed space” (621).
should be ‘obvious without lecture,’ [that] it should ‘surprise with some unexpected effect,’ and be ‘commendable for its ingenuity’ (73).

In other words, it should entertain with its originality and revelatory effect, whilst clearly demonstrating its commercial value. The Society, like the Royalist poet, needed to promote its work in commercial terms, and yet, as Wren’s concern suggests, “the court’s values seemed incompatible with the experimental virtues of mechanical philosophy” (Wren in Hunter and Cooper 73). It can reasonably be suggested that Dryden was faced with a similar challenge, in representing the war in a commercially valuable, and popular manner, and therefore constructs a poem in the form of theatrical entertainment, the purpose of which is both to delight its Royal spectator, and promote the work of the Royal Society of which he was an honourary member.

Consistent with the use of metaphorical conceit throughout the poem, England’s destruction and rebirth also bear the marks of theatricality. Like the resolution and containment at the end of the court masque (in response to the disruptive themes of the anti-masque), political non-conformists are once again brought under the ruler’s control. For example, the ironic invocation of “fanatic spectors” (890) rejoicing with the “ghosts of traitors” (889) is an allusion to the fire reaching London Bridge where “the heads of traitors had been impaled” (Hammond and Hopkins 184). The other theatrical reference is to Jove, who was used to represent France poised to throw lightening balls at the English toward the beginning of poem, setting the scene for their entrance into war; “[…] high-raised Jove [is,] from his dark prison freed /
(Those weights took off that on his planet hung)” (1165-7). The large-scale action is once again cast in astrological terms, with Jupiter, believed to be a propitious planet described moving away from Pisces, its negative sign, as occurred in 1666, toward the more positive position of Jupiter in Aires, which introduces a more optimistic set of signs for a return to a time of peace and plenty (Hammond and Hopkins 199). The narrator, in a manner reminiscent of an epilogue, states “Methinks already from this chymic flame / I see a city of more precious mould: / Rich as a town which gives the Indies name, / With silver paved, and all divine with gold” (1169-1170). Dryden anticipates the completion of the alchemical process in which the flame has transmuted base metals into gold, but London’s future greatness remains an idealised vision.

To date, critics have omitted to note that this process of rebuilding also serves as a point of connection between the principles of aesthetic design, and natural philosophy detailed in *Annus Mirabilis*. On 7 April 1613, Inigo Jones, responsible for the design of elaborate stage sets that created the illusion of linear perspective, was appointed Surveyor General to the King. He was charged with helping to mark out territory for the rebuilding the city, thus literally implementing the principles the theatre sought to represent. Christopher Wren, who had been responsible for preparing a suitable demonstration of the Royal Society’s work for the King, was responsible for making plans for the repair of St Paul’s, destroyed during the Great Fire (Hammond and Hopkins 195). Although the details of Jones’ and Wren’s involvement in the plans for the rebuilding are directly mentioned in the poem, they highlight the extent of the King’s power, and the close connection between the King and royal favour to which the poem appeals. Dryden positions himself as a poet whose writings could secure his own position of patronage after the Restoration by
representing the Second Anglo Dutch War as a united effort under the authoritative government of Charles II to secure English trade routes against the Dutch.

Conclusion

By bringing the reader into the world of optical illusion and the Renaissance theatre, Dryden creates a space in which to explore the problems associated with natural vision and the delusions of the senses. It is also an environment in which the outcomes can be controlled by the hand of the poet with the “special effects” able to be turned in England’s favour as the action resolves itself at the end of the virtual performance. In voicing his support for the Royals Society, Dryden appears to draw upon the fact that natural philosophy on the period involved public experiments in order to demonstrate the value of the Society’s work, meaning that the theatrical and natural philosophical aspects of the poem can be brought together in the extended metaphorical conceit. The degree of overlap between the two disciplines is strengthened by the scientific interest in creating optical illusions to mirror naturally occurring phenomena, and therefore the shared visual cues based on geometric linear perspective involved in achieving these aims.

Combining ancient and modern approaches to optics and the experimental science practiced by the Royal Society within the theatrical space also allows Dryden to explore the empirical and technological advantages of the new science without fully relinquishing their relationship to existing “symbolic structures” (Burke 308). Dryden turns to the telescope and the experimentalism of the Royal Society in the interests of panegyric, and prophesises about the future of the English nation as a result of technological advancement in the fields of shipping and navigation. On a
structural level, however, the fact that Dryden is only cautiously invested in the emergence of new technologies and scientific method, and focuses instead in Renaissance optics and mathematical approaches to representing space, is consistent with the Royalist and utilitarian focus of the poem.

Dryden’s appeal to alchemical transmutation is also consistent with the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century approach to natural philosophy that characterises the first part of the poem. Dryden suggests that just as it takes time for base metals to transmute into gold (lines 9-12), developments in technologies must also evolve over time, but will ultimately help to bring the new city into being: “Methinks already from this chymic flame / I see a city of more precious mould: / Rich as the town which gives the Indies name, / With silver paved, and all divine with gold” (1169-72). From the rubble, Dryden imagines a new city in which London’s “narrow lanes” (942) will be rebuilt, with architects and town planners taking advantage of the new technologies and materials available from across the globe. England’s future remains a prophesised vision as the virtual theatrical performance is brought to a close.

Mary Campbell has discussed the move away from utopian fiction in the seventeenth century as at least in part attributable to the new kinds of aesthetic and scientific space opened up to writers with the developments in optical technologies. She argues that “utopian discourse […] depends on the availability of metaphorically resonant images of social wholes,” but the emergence of scientific empiricism saw the utopian landscape replaced by one that focused on the parts (638). It is to the new kind of aesthetic and scientific space resulting from developments in optics and optical instruments in Marvell’s Last Instructions that I now turn. In chapter five, I contrast Dryden’s conservative approach to optics and natural philosophy with the
metaphoric appropriation of optical technologies in *Last Instructions*. I will argue that *Last Instructions* is thoroughly (if ironically) grounded in the supposed “revelatory” benefits of new instruments such as the telescope and the microscope, in keeping with the style of Robert Hooke’s *Micrographia*. 
Chapter 5: Marvell’s metaphor of the microscope and the partial perspective of Dutch visual culture

Introduction

In chapter four I argued that Dryden is drawing on a combination of old and new optical theories and visual technologies, and that these are deployed in the service of his Royalist political agenda. The Royal Society offers continuity between old and new technologies, and is praised for its dedication to utilitarianism: in particular, the developments in navigational aids that will help England win the war. Dryden’s references to the Royal Society, optics, and optical technologies relate to his interest in the systematisation of nature, and ultimately, the restriction of competing frames of reference. In part one of this chapter, I will contrast Dryden’s utilitarian and politically conservative approach to new optical technologies in *Annus Mirabilis* with Marvell’s experimental approach to optics in *Last Instructions*. Building on the ground covered in relation to Dutch portraiture techniques in chapter two, I will begin with an exposition of notable features of Dutch history, genre and landscape paintings, in order to draw attention to a number of key features of particular interest to my study of perspective in *Last Instructions*.

Svetlana Alpers notes that in Dutch visual culture, “Perspective” is not used to describe the representation of an object in respect to its spatial relationship to the viewer as it is in Renaissance art, but is “taken to refer to the way by which appearances are replicated on the pictorial surface” (*Art of Describing* 51-2). This definition of perspective can be repurposed to describe the world as viewed through the microscope, in which depth, distance, and positioning of the viewer is sacrificed.
for a detailed view of surfaces. Alpers has discussed the Dutch interest in the new science and the attention to detail that characterises their paintings, but questions about how this bi-directional exchange influenced the poetry of the period is beyond the scope of her work. Acheson and Picciotto have each discussed the microscopic perspective in the context of satire, but mention nothing about the connection with Dutch visual culture.

Commentators including Alpers, Alina Payne and Claudia Swan, have drawn attention to the Dutch interest in detail and the capturing of “optical phenomena that are symptomatic of the use of viewing lenses.” Catherine Wilson argues that, “Optical devices, especially convex mirrors and concave lenses, [could] enhance the appearance of a landscape and heighten its colors, and the use of the camera obscura explains many of the innovative and sometimes peculiar features of mid-seventeenth-century painting” (“Aesthetic Appreciation” 50). Wilson acknowledges that lenses had been available since the late medieval period, but as grinding of lenses improved, they became “essential for painting details of texture” common to much Northern European art of the period (50). The fact that some details are so intricate they require magnifying glasses to see them, also suggests to Wilson that lenses may have been used in their composition (50). Critics of art history disagree about whether there is any conclusive evidence that optical aids were used by Dutch painters, but the widespread availability of lenses, and the culture of exchange between natural philosophy and painting in the period suggests that genre and still-life painters such as Johannes Vermeer are likely to have come into contact with them (Swan 25).\footnote{Johannes Vermeer (1632-75) is known as one of the greatest painters of the so-called Dutch Golden Age of the seventeenth century, particularly renowned for his genre paintings and still lifes. In} In the first part of the chapter I explore the perspectival and
aesthetic features characteristic of seventeenth century Dutch paintings in order to argue that Marvell’s employment of visual cues is analogous to familiar modes of Dutch cultural expression.

In the second part of the chapter I move from a discussion of perspectival features of Dutch visual culture to a study of perspectival effects achieved with the microscope. Microscopist Robert Hooke was fascinated with the patterns and details that could be uncovered with the use of the microscope, and set about representing the “beauty” of the insect world in *The Micrographia* (1665). I extrapolate upon Marvell’s direct reference to Hooke’s *Micrographia* (1665) in lines 15-16, which state: “Or if to score out our compendious fame / With Hooke then, through the microscope, take aim” in order to explore the metaphoric effect of this visual apparatus on the spatial design of *Last Instructions*. I will argue that the satiric portraits and episodes are non-narrativistic, but through the use of visual cues associated with microscopic observation, and Marvell’s exposure to Dutch visual culture, the poem represents an intricately arranged, technologically mediated and highly politicised form of satiric advice to a painter. I will argue that Marvell knowingly draws upon Dutch painting techniques to critique the English, at the same time as he exploits the perspectival distortions associated with lenses, to reveal what he sees as the systemic corruption plaguing the English court.

For Hooke, the microscope was associated with scientific “truth” on account of its perceived ability to correct the natural fallibilities of the senses. He praised Dutch art, paintings of scenes of people engaging in activities of daily life that produce “convincing rendition of ‘reality’” are often referred to as “genre scenes” by our contemporaries, but the term is anachronistic (Muller 154). See Steadman “Realism and Vermeer” and Vermeer’s Camera.

In the preface to the Micrographia, Hooke asserts that; “By the addition of such artificial Instruments and methods, there may be, in some manner, a reparation made for the mischiefs, and
their ability to “[reveal] the fabulous intricacy and beauty of a microworld lying beneath the threshold of their God-given optical equipment and long hidden from them” (Wilson “Aesthetic Appreciation” 61). For Hooke, even the fly is an elaborate creature when subjected to magnification; its body is described as:

Cover’d with a most curious blue shining armour, looking exactly like a polish’d piece of steel brought to that blue colour by annealing, all which armour is very thick bestuck with abundance of tapering brisles, such as grow on its back, as is visible enough by the Figure. (*Micrographia* 184)

In addition to the microscope’s ability to reveal these minute features, Hooke also makes claims about the ability of optical instruments to remove problems associated with subjective viewing positions. The perspective in the *Micrographia* is established as one of (supposedly) “artless, ingenious, innocent apprehension” (Hunter and Cooper 76), a position Hooke thought could bring about with:

A reformation in Philosophy, if it be only by shewing, that there is not so much requir’d towards it, any strength of Imagination, or exactness of Method, or depth of Contemplation […] as a sincere Hand, and a faithful Eye, to examine and to record, the things themselves as they appear.

(*Micrographia* Preface 4)

This is not to say that this new and revelatory way of seeing the natural world was free from limitations and optical distortion. Despite his prefatory claims about the imperfection, mankind has drawn upon it self, by negligence, and intemperance, and a willful and superstitious deserting the Prescripts and Rules of Nature, whereby every man, both from a deriv’d corruption, innate and born with him, and from his breeding and converse with men, is very subject to slip into all sorts of errors” (Preface 1).
ability of microscopes to correct the senses, Hooke had also identified that the images they produced were falsifying, with specimens appearing different in different lights and when subject to different levels of magnification, stating:

Because of these kind of Objects there is much more difficulty to discover the true shape, then of those visible to the naked eye, the same object seeming quite differing, in one position of light, from what it really is, and may be discover’d in another. And therefore I never began to make any draught before by many examinations in several lights, and in several positions to those lights, I had discover’d the true form.

(*Micrographia* Preface 24)

Hooke indicates that images produced by the microscope are variable, depending on the conditions under which the specimen is observed, indicating that not only size but also texture and appearance are relative. Marvell’s speaker endorses Hooke’s view that the microscope will allow him to correct the misconceptions about the war resulting from representations such as Waller’s *Instructions*; but, as I intend to show, the metaphorical picture plane in *Last Instructions* paradoxically serves Marvell’s interest in visual distortion.

I now turn to an exposition of perspectival and aesthetic techniques incipient seventeenth century Dutch visual culture in order to suggest that what Marvell is doing in *Last Instructions* is an analogy with this as a familiar kind of cultural expression. The analysis of features including perspective, the arrangement of objects, the use of colour, shading and lighting effects will be considered as important points of contrast with the Renaissance techniques discussed in chapter four.
5.1 Dutch perspective and the metaphor of the microscope in *Last Instructions*

In the seventeenth century, Dutch paintings had begun to reflect a number of characteristics of scientific drawing (Alpers *Art of Describing* xxv). These included: the frequent absence of a clear predetermined viewing point, allowing multiple perspectives to be juxtaposed within a single image; the lack of a perspectival grid, meaning that the size of objects is relative to the manner in which they are viewed; the absence of a prior frame, meaning that images frequently appear to exceed their boundaries, and, finally, the sense of the painting as a flat surface, with objects represented from multiple viewpoints producing a distinctly crafted appearance (xxv).168 These features can be productively explored with reference to renowned Dutch painter Pieter Saenredam (1597-1665), whose works it is highly likely Marvell would have encountered when viewing private collections such as that of General Fairfax and Lord Wharton in Britain, or on his travels in the Netherlands. Saenredam began his career in portraiture, before turning to specialise as a painter of “perspectives” around 1628 (Giltaij and Jansen 99). Saenredam’s later architectural paintings of church interiors, some two hundred of which were painted between 1627 and 1665, were produced from meticulously executed site drawings (99). The centric point of the original drawings was then replaced with multiple points on the canvas.

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168 Alpers also notes “The Dutch approach to perspective does not involve the creation of a ‘fictive, framed window’ from which to view the action; instead, the impression of depth is achieved with chiaroscuro” (*Art of Describing* xxi).
that he used to combine drawings taken from several vantage points.\textsuperscript{169} Martin Kemp has described the final paintings as exploiting a “highly unusual range of viewpoints, […] while […] retaining a powerful sense of the parallelism of major elements in the building relative to the picture plane” (“Simon Stevin and Pieter Saenredam” 244). He further claims that “The science of projection is not only the servant of [Saenredam’s] choices, but also richly informs them at every stage of the process. Flexibility is the essence of the process” (247). In \textit{Last Instructions}, flexibility of viewpoints is achieved with the metaphor of the microscope, and in \textit{Last Instructions} it is the instrument that informs the aesthetic decisions Marvell makes. I am not suggesting that Marvell is drawing on Saenredam’s work explicitly, but the concept of Dutch images produced from an aggregate of viewpoints would have appealed to Marvell. In \textit{South Ambulatory of the St Bavokerk, Haarlem, with the Presentation in the Temple} (1635), for example, we are presented with a view into the ambulatory, where a priest stands waiting for a group of figures from between the columns on the

\textsuperscript{169} For a more detailed description of Saenredam’s approach to his on-site drawings see Giltaij and Jansen 100. Limouze and Leidke argue that, “extensive evidence suggests that Saenredam fully understood the practice of artificial perspective and was well aware of the differences between looking at architecture […] and transcribing it on to a flat surface. His on-site sketches of church interiors usually bear a circled dot and even a measurement indicating the vanishing point, which in the underdrawing of a corresponding painting occurs in the same place. However, the sketches were made without the help of a straight edge or a system of orthogonals, and Saenredam paid only scant attention to his vanishing-point as he looked in many directions, which together considerably exceeded the angles of view recommended in perspective treatises of the period. Only a camera with a wide-angle or ‘fish-eye’ lens could record the subjects found in most of Saenredam’s paintings, but the distortions he allowed (being free of unwanted curves) are comparable to the contemporary Mercator projection, a system of representation used in mapmaking” (\textit{Grove Art Online}).
The width of the drawing coincides with the width of the original construction drawing, but, “there is a discrepancy in the height of the two pieces, with the top of the painting appearing as though it has been sawn off” (Giltaij and Janson 105). The fact that there are two upper horizontal lines marked on the original drawings suggests to Jeroen Giltaij and Guido Jansen that Saenredam “deliberately designed the composition in this manner” (105). The central point of the painting is positioned low exaggerating the grandeur of the Church, while diminishing the size of the figures in the foreground, while the arches that lead the eye toward the rear of the ambulatory are positioned left of centre in the attempt to capture the curvature of the room. The central points of the arches appear misaligned, the sense of which is exaggerated by the positioning of the overhead candelabras emanating from unrealistic fixtures on the ceiling. Alpers argues that, “such pictures are not properly architecture viewed, in which an external viewer is presented with a view of architecture, but rather views of architecture viewed” (My italics) (“Mapping Impulse” 54). The idea of painting representing a person viewing the architecture applies to the use of perspective in Last Instructions, which details the poem’s speaker viewing the subject matter, meaning that the picture the prospective artists presents will, ironically for Marvell, be even further removed from the original. In Last Instructions, Marvell’s use of perspective is also experimental, with no attempt to reconcile the various aspects into a harmonious unity, and this incongruity is used

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170 South Ambulatory of the St Bavokerk, Haarlem, with the Presentation in the Temple 1635. Oil on panel, 48.2 x 37.1cm. Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Gemaldegalerie, Berlin.
https://www.pubhist.com/w2979

171 For another example of the intricacy with which Saenredam combines viewpoints in a painting, see Nave of the Buukerk 1644. Oil on panel, 58.4 x 49.5 cm. Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas.
https://www.pubhist.com/w5242.
to make a political comment on the relativity of all images and the “truth” to which they pertain. Just as Saenredam achieved these effects using detailed drawings that manipulated recognizable visual cues, Marvell creates the same effect with a poem that combines his intricate knowledge of English political culture with the metaphor of the microscope. I will return to Marvell treatment of perspective in section 5.2, but first, I will examine several Dutch paintings of the Second Anglo-Dutch wars in order to draw attention to other characteristically Dutch painting techniques. Some of these examples are an apparently anachronistic analogue of the Dutch painting of the Anglo-Dutch wars, but are intentionally chosen as corroborating evidence of an existing tradition that starts early, and was still being used in representations of The Third Anglo-Dutch War (1672-4).

Willem van de Velde I’s *The Battle of Terheide* (1653), for example, is a meticulous pen painting celebrating Dutch naval commander Maerten Harpertsz Tromp in the first Anglo-Dutch war.\(^{172}\) The painting is generated from drawings he made when witnessing the battle from aboard a ship. The scene lacks a central vanishing point, leaving the English and Dutch vessels to crowd the surface of the canvas, extending into the distance and beyond its margins. Due to the level of detail, only the ships in the foreground are clearly distinguishable by the viewer, while the details of those in the middle and background become too small to see as they blur into the rising smoke of gunfire. Because the drawing is only black and white, the impression of depth and movement is created with the use of shading. Moreover, without a sense of scale, the size of ships is a matter of relativity. I will return to van der Veldt’s *The Battle of Terheide* in section 5.2 in my discussion of Marvell’s

disorderly catalogue of Ministers of Parliament that spans lines 151-372 of *Last Instructions*. Marvell’s catalogue is, like van der Veldt’s painting, highly detailed and spatially arranged, with the size and shape of objects on the prospective picture plain being distorted relative to the eye of the poem’s speaker.

Another characteristic feature of Dutch representations of the war is the attention placed on capturing the texture of clouds, the ripples of the ocean, the sunlight reflecting from the sails, and bursts of light generated by gunfire. Willem van de Velde II’s *Encounter during the Battle of Kijkduin* (ca. 1675) represents a confrontation between Dutch commander Cornells Tromp and English commander Sir Edward Spragg in the Third Anglo-Dutch war (21 Aug 1673). The battle appears to be taking place at night because of the dark clouds of smoke and gunpowder fumes, and the ships form ghostly shadows, illuminated only by distant explosions.

In Marvell’s depiction of Ruyter’s sailing up the Medway, there is a distinct overlap with such Dutch representations in terms of subject matter as well as style. I have identified the hallmarks of English Mannerism in the discussion of the tableau at the end of the De Ruyter portrait in chapter two. Here, I wish to suggest that the reference to “airy sterns” (554) gilded by the sun, and the description of the tranquil Medway suddenly disturbed by “[...] thunder and lightening from each arméd cloud” (557) are aesthetic elements that also attracted the attention of Dutch painters; for example, Jan Abrahamsz Beerstraten’s *The Battle of Terheide* at the centre of which

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is the largest vessel in the Dutch fleet, the Brederode, firing its cannons at the English. Here the sunlight dances across the surface of the sea, while flames illuminate the sails of ships distinguishable by their red and blue flags. In Marvell’s description of De Ruyter in the Medway, he too describes the “streaming silks” (537) flying from the topmasts, “inveigling colours court[ing] the air” (538) — a symbol of victory with distinctively Dutch overtones.

In Last Instructions, Marvell represents significant moments of the battle that were not so much English victories, but moments that came to be celebrated as part of Dutch national history. These include the capture of the flagship of the English navy, Royal Charles (lines 611-14), the disastrous division of the fleet (lines 403-4) and the raid on the Medway (lines 585-596). Rather than relating events from a single perspective, Marvell metaphorically incorporates multiple perspectives (or visual cues) into his account, as exemplified by the description of the Medway raid:

Our wretchèd ships within their fate attend,
And all our hopes now on a frail chain depend:
(England so slight to guard us from the sea,
It fitter seemed to captivate a flea).
A skipper rude shocks it without respect;
Filling his sails more force to recollect.
Th’English from shore the iron deaf invoke
For its last aid: ‘Hold chain, or we are broke.’
But with her sailing weight, the Holland keel
Snapping the brittle links, does thorough reel;

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And to the rest the opened passage show;

Monk from the back the dismal sight does view.

*(Last Instructions 585-96)*

Marvell describes the raid by focusing first on the “frail chain” (586), before shifting perspective to describe the Dutch “skipper” (590). In the following line, he details the gasps from the English onlookers on the shore (591), and Monck’s view “from the bank” (596). Marvell uses a variety of perspective cues to give the reader a detailed impression of England’s strategic failures and ultimate defeat. The emphasis on England’s weakness gives the impression that events are being described from a position of Dutch victory such as that seen in Willem Schellinks’ *Burning of the English Fleet at Chatham, June 1667, During the Second Anglo-Dutch War (1665-7)* *(ca. 1667-78).*

Schellinks’ landscape painting represents the fort at Sheerness catching alight while the Dutch ships sail triumphantly up the Thames; further up stream columns of smoke rise from English ships burnt in the surprise raid. These examples have demonstrated Marvell’s apparent employment of existing stylistic features of Dutch art, and how perspectival and aesthetic techniques continued to be used by the Dutch post the Second Anglo-Dutch war.

I now turn to a discussion of the visual cues associated with microscopy. In addition to being an instrument of satire, the metaphor of the microscope would have been a particularly useful tool for Marvell as an Oppositional satirist, and, as I will demonstrate, allows him to incorporate the “techniques of the enemy” into his political attack.

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176 *Burning of the English Fleet at Chatham, June 1667, During the Second Anglo-Dutch War (1665-7)* *(ca. 1667-78).* Oil on canvass, 114 cm x 171 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.  
5.2 The perspectival effects of microscopy and Marvell’s representation of the English parliament

Like much Dutch art, which does not rely on principles of geometry for arranging objects on a picture plane, microscopic images are also two-dimensional and therefore lack a sense of perspectival depth. Moreover, just as Dutch artists took care positioning their light source to create the desired atmospheric effect, the microscopist also required a carefully positioned light source to illuminate the surface of the slide. When a specimen is placed beneath the lens, individual features are distorted out of their natural proportion, leaving the viewer with a partial impression of the larger body. In *Last Instructions*, the microscopic view allows Marvell to show that rather than being a court and navy defined by professionalism and discipline, they are as divided, disorganised, and as insignificant as minute insects viewed beneath the microscope. At the same time, the reader is denied a unified view of the action; his eye, like the microscopist’s, metaphorically placed directly among the action.

The reader is taken inside the House of Commons and rather than representing the Parliamentary Monarchist view, in which the two sides sit opposite each other to rationally debate the excise tax, Marvell incorporates the familiar visual cues of a game of backgammon (the doors of parliament representing the folding board) to show that the House is in fact set up as an irrational game of chance:

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Draw next a pair of tables op’ning, then
The House of Commons clatt’ring like the men.
Describe the court and country, both set right,
On opp’site points the black against the white.
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The discourse of chance in Marvell’s poem contrasts with the discourse of fate that Dryden references in *Annus Mirabilis* in which he suggests that without the innovative work of the Royal Society the outcome of the war lies in hands of the Gods. Similarly, Dryden draws upon the discourse of natural philosophy to reveal an underlying order (a focus on the general), whereas Marvell uses the metaphor of the microscope to focus on the particular, demonstrating that external appearances are deceptive. It is quickly revealed that the House is being administered by a corrupt Speaker, Sir Edward Turnour (1661-73), who has having received gifts from the treasury and the East India trading company, and is therefore inclined to turn a blind eye to the squandering of government finances (Smith *The Poems* 372). Marvell makes it clear that the outcome of the debate is not in the hands of fate, but determined by the Speaker and the corrupt individuals he will move to protect — a bias that is conveyed through the lack of order in the poetic composition.

Marvell uses the metaphor of the parliament to suggest that the political divisions, corruption, and lack of discipline in the House have resulted in an unruly and poorly supplied navy:

Those having lost the nation at tric-trac,
These now advent’ring how to win it back
The dice betwixt them must the fate divide
(As Chance doth still in multitudes decide).
But here the court does its advantage know,
For the cheat Turnour for them both must throw.
As some from boxes, so he from the chair
Can strike the die and still with them goes share.

(*Last Instructions* 105-17)
Thick was the morning, and the House was thin,
The Speaker early, when they all fell in.
Propitious heavens, had not you them crossed,
Excise had got the day, and all been lost.
For th’other side all in loose quarters lay,
Without intelligence, command, or pay:
A scattered body, which the foe ne’er tried,
But oft’ner did among themselves divide; (235-42)\(^{177}\)

Overseen by a Speaker who lacks authority, members of the house are free to act as they please, crowding the surface of the proposed canvas. The only sense of the boundary in the chaotic scene is the one arbitrarily imposed by the microscopic field of view, just as the only boundary for van der Velde’s representation of the action in his painting \textit{The Battle of Terheide} is the edge of the painting.

In \textit{Last Instructions}, the debates over the excise tax for the funding of the war occupies the centre of the action, as the site for Marvell’s attributing of responsibility for the debacles at sea. The highly detailed, extended description of the action metaphorically employs a number of the technical features evident in van der Velde’s pen drawings, as well as the detailed sketches of insects in Hooke’s \textit{Micrographia}. Some of Marvell’s subjects are held up to scrutiny and therefore able to be seen in full view, while others are passed over relatively quickly, receding into the background commotion. The reader is metaphorically denied a sense of

\(^{177}\) Marvell’s description of the English fleet in disarray contrasts with Dryden’s description of the refurbishing of the fleet under the supervision of Charles II in lines 565-600. In \textit{Annus Mirabilis} Dryden claims that the English fleet was restored with materials sourced from across the globe as based on the findings of the Royal Society’s extensive research into ship building materials (lines 565-600) (Hammond and Hopkins 165).
perspective from which to obtain a complete view of the action, but invited to draw his own conclusions based on the partial aspect view provided.

The description of Sir Henry Wood is a witty example of the way in which the speaker selects notable individuals from the crowd and holds them up to scrutiny. The speaker asserts that of the “damning cowards [that] ranged the vocal plain, / Wood these commands, Knight of the Horn and Cain. / Still his hook-shoulder seems the blow to dread, / And under’s armpit he defends his head” (161-4). Within four lines, Marvell alludes to Wood’s poor posture, eccentric behavior and unpopular attempts to curb consumption by punishing offenders with the “Cain” of office (Smith The Poems 374). The catalogue of MPs continues, with the phrases “to them succeeds a despicable rout” (155) and “next a squadron came” (155), creating a virtual effect of movement. The extended scene engages what Brusati refers to in the context of Pieter Saenredam’s paintings as “the work of a ‘mobile eye’” to describe the juxtaposition of incongruent viewpoints.179

178 Sir Henry Wood (1597) “Clark of the Spicery to Charles II, MP for Hythe, and a Clerk Comptroller of the Board of the Green Cloth” (Smith The Poems 374). Throughout his career as a courtier, he holding a number of positions on boards for members of the Royal household including the role of Treasurer to Henrietta-Maria (1644) and as a member of Catherine of Braganza’s council (from 1662) (374). Wood was responsible for order in the royal household, including maintaining its accounts, and his efforts to curb consumption were widely known (374).

179 In referring to the “mobile eye,” Brusati refers to the varying perspectives and degrees of detail in Saenredam’s paintings, essentially requiring the viewer to change positions in order to fully appreciate the work. Kemp also notes that Saenredam’s paintings of church interiors were “constructed with an elaborate armature of lines, and not a few with precise indications of actual scale on the horizontal and vertical coordinates” (244). Another example of Pieter Saenredam’s treatment of perspective is evident in the Interior of the Buur Church, Utrecht (1636). Here Saenredam depicts a view into the church interior that is comprised of two oblique views originally drawn from either side of the central
The play with perspective and optical distortion enabled by the microscope in *Last Instructions* is a “visual” manifestation of the cheating and corruption that is taking place within the parliament. Therefore, rather than detailing the orderly military strategy and selfless heroism of the commanders, as portrayed in *Annus Mirabilis*, the details of the naval battle are transposed onto the deliberate mismanagement of the State’s finances. Rather than raising money to supply the navy, the belligerent Ministers have left English ships in a state of disrepair:

> Each day they bring the tale, and that too true,
> How strong the Dutch their equipage renew.
> Meantime through all the yards their orders run
> To lay the ships up, cease the keels begun.
> The timber rots, and useless axe does rust,
> Th’unpractised saw lies buried in its dust;
> The busy hammer sleeps, the ropes untwine;
> The stores and wages all are mine and thine.

(*Last Instructions* 315-22)

The decaying ships are a literal embodiment of the fragmentary relationships in the parliament, with Marvell suggesting the Ministers are using “The seamen’s clamour” (313) to raise revenue with which to line their own pockets: “[…] like fair thieves, pillar. The incongruity is identified by Alpers who explains that: “Without moving one’s head and eyes a viewer in the church, situated at the eye point noted by Saenredam, could not at once see to the left and the right. The work therefore does not present a fictive, framed window through which we look into the church interior” (*Art of Describing* 52).

180 For comparison with Dryden’s description of the rebuilding of the fleet under the auspices of Charles II himself, see *Annus Mirabilis* lines 565-600.
the Commons’ purse they share, / But all the Members’ lives, consulting spare” (313-18). Marvell makes it clear that rather than being the result of an isolated problem of corruption among specific MPs, the ringleaders he identifies are responsible for setting the (mock) “heroic” standard for the rest of the House. Sir Richard Temple, MP for Buckingham for example, is referred to as a “conqueror” (255), while Sir Robert Howard is described as a man “of birth, state, wit, strength and courage” (265) and wearing the dress of a decorated warrior in a feathered costume similar to that worn by the Aztecs (266) (Smith The Poems 377).

Continuing with the military terminology, in lines 295-303 Marvell’s speaker describes “the van and battle” (the technical term for the foremost division of the army) entering

> Without disorder in their intervals:
> Then, closing all in equal front, fall on,
> Led by great Garway and great Littleton.
> Lee, equal to obey or to command,
> Adjutant-general, was still at hand.
> The martial standard, Sandy’s displaying shows
> St Dunstan in it, tweaking Satan’s nose.

*(Last Instructions 296-303)*

In *Annus Mirabilis*, military terminology and descriptions that appear to be based on military handbooks of the period enhance Dryden’s representation of the war as carried out by the English with strategic precision. Here military terms are used to describe the sittings and prolonged “intervals” between sessions of parliament. As the description becomes more complicated and allusive in the description of Sandy, it becomes clear that the “martial standard” (301) he sets is far from admirable, and
that Marvell is actually describing the group’s lack of integrity and partiality to
temptation by the predominantly corrupt Ministers. Smith notes that William Garway
(MP for Chichester), Sir Thomas Littleton (MP for Much Wenlock) and Sir Thomas
Lee (MP for Aylesbury), had all been critical of government finances, and had
initially made an attempt to examine corruption before deciding instead to follow the
example set by Colonel Samuel Sandys (MP for Worcester) (Smith *The Poems* 378).
Sandys is held up as a symbol of moral fortitude, only to be undone by a punning
reference to Dunstan, Bishop of Worcester (942–88), who, according to the myth,
was “tempted by Satan in the form of a beautiful woman while at work on his forge.
He attacked her with pincers, putting Satan to flight” (Smith *The Poems* 378). In
lines 290-294 Marvell suggests that corruption in the parliament is so widespread
that even the originally upright men cannot escape the temptations of the devil:
“Candidly credulous for once, nay twice / But sure the devil cannot cheat them
thrice” (293–4).

The description of Ministers of Parliament is concluded with the mock
heroic claim that

Never, before or since, a host so steeled
Trooped on to muster in the Tothill field:
Not the first cock-horse that with cork where shod
To rescue Albermarle from the sea cod,
Nor the late feather-men, whom Tomkins fierce
Shall with one breath, like thistledown disperse.

*(Last Instructions* 219-24)*

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181 Smith notes that “cockhorse” translates as “toy horse” (*The Poems* 376). He suggests “Cork were
shod” is a reference to fashionable footwear worn by gallants during the Restoration (376).
Alluding to Prince Rupert’s rescue of Albermarle in the Four Days’ Battle (1-4 June) after his ship’s hull was “caulked,” Marvell mock-heroically praises the work of those in parliament by comparing it to Albermarle’s embarrassment at the hands of the Dutch (Smith *The Poems* 376).

Marvell uses the metaphor of the microscope to bring these previously unseen details to light. This is not to say, however, that Marvell resoundingly endorses microscopy, even though his speaker holds Hooke’s view about its ability to reveal a new scientific “truth.” Evidence for Marvell’s skepticism of instruments is seen in lines 397-409, which detail another humiliating instance in the war when the English navy had made the fateful strategic decision to divide the fleet. As discussed in chapter four, Dryden glosses over this event, but Marvell places the blame firmly on the incompetence of MPs Bab May and Arlington who had miscommunicated the positioning of the Dutch Fleet. The poem’s speaker proclaims:182

Bab May and Arlington did wisely scoff
And thought all safe, if they were so far off.
Modern geographers, ’twas there, they thought,
Where Venice twenty years the Turk had fought,
While the first year our navy is but shown,
The next divided, and the third we’ve none […]
But Morise learn’d demonstrates, by the post,
This Isle of Candy was on Essex coast.

(*Last Instructions* 399-404, 409-10)

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182 According to Smith, both May and Arlington had received letters of intelligence concerning the whereabouts of the Dutch Fleet (see Pepys, 8.502) but still failed to act (381).
Marvell suggests that it is the government’s complacency, and general lack of interest in the war itself, that resulted in the disaster at sea. In playfully suggesting MPs mistook Candy Island for Candia in Crete, which the Venetians had been defending against the Turks since 1645, Marvell satirically references Bussenello’s account of a supposedly far more successful war on which Waller’s Instructions was based.\(^{183}\) When the fateful decision is confirmed in Parliament, Marvell reveals that rather than working to support the fleet and resolve the issue, they become so shaken that their ability to view the situation, even with the help of optical instruments such as the telescope, invariably fails them: “False terrors our believing fears devise, / And the French army one from Calais spies” (413-14). Smith suggests these lines refer to the telescope, and that Marvell is possibly citing a letter from John Cooke to Charles Beale on 13 June 1667, which states:

You are not ignorant how the deceitfull optick-glasses, where rumour is at one end & fear at the other, do commonly misrepresent all things …

the Countrey … swarnees with the relations of horror and & stupefaction, that … a numerous Army of French are to be poured in vpon vs [sic].

(Cooke in Smith The Poems 381)\(^ {184}\)

\(^{183}\) Comparisons between England and Crete point back to Waller’s, Instructions to a Painter, II. 329-36. “The Roman fleets at Actium did engage; / They, for the empire of the world they knew, / These, for the Old contend, and for the New (114-16). Smith also notes that “Candy” was the name for Crete; [and] that much of Castlemaine’s An Account of the Present War between the Venetians and the Turk (1666) was concerned with Crete, as well as the heroic service of Britons for the Venetians, another embarrassing parallel for the English navy” (381).

\(^{184}\) Cp. John Cooke to Charles Beale, 13 June 1667 (Bod., MS Rawl. Letters 113, fol. 66r) referenced in Smith The Poems 381.
Despite Hooke’s (and the Speaker’s) claims about the reliability of optical instruments, this passage highlights the fact that Marvell does not necessarily share such confidence. In fact, Marvell asserts his skepticism of the telescope, and its ability to correct the fallibilities of the senses, by suggesting that the “intelligence” it reveals is always confounded by the subjectivity of the observer.

By relating individual instances of military and parliamentary incompetence, Marvell encourages the reader to draw a broader conclusion about Charles II’s handling of the war. Rather than being exemplary, Marvell uses the metaphor of the microscope to reveal a pervasive problem that must be dealt with by the King before the corrupt courtiers and ministers devastate the realm:

Not so does rust insinuating wear,
Nor powder so the vaulted bastion tear,
Nor earthquake so a hollow isle o’erwhelm,
As scratching courtiers undermine a realm,
And through the palace’s foundations bore,
Burrowing themselves to hoard their guilty store.
The smallest vermin make the greatest waste,
And a poor warren once a city razed.

*(Last Instructions 975-82)*

Recalling Marvell’s earlier reference to Hooke’s louse to describe Lord Clifford, here Marvell refers to the majority of the court via analogy with the “smallest vermin” (981). He suggests that despite their apparent insignificance, they will undermine the stability of the realm if they are not effectively dealt with. In lines 495-500 Marvell also the grotesque analogy of “horse-leeches circling at the haem’rhoid vein” (497) to describe the symbiotic relationship between King and
court and the large amount of public revenue siphoned off to the pockets of the bankers (499-500). In the final address “To the King,” the perspective in the poem shifts to the heavens to describe the courtiers as “spots” on the sun. An unidentified person peers through a telescope to once again bring the metaphorical blemishes on Charles II’s realm “to sight” (957): “So his bold tube man to the sun applied, / And spots unknown to the bright star descried; / Showed they obscure him, while too near they please, / And seem his courtiers, are but his disease” (949-52). These spots, like Hooke’s louse, can look deceptively appealing to Charles II, who has also lost his “exemplary” status. The spots, however, are deeply revealing of the canker within, and Marvell, via the poem’s speaker, suggests that it is not until he pays attention to these revelations by the microscope and the telescope that Charles will be able to root out the corruption and replace his advisers with the few virtuous nobles remaining (985-90); those whose souls are disproportionately large for their bodies rather than vice versa:

Whose gen’rous conscience and whose courage high
Does with clear counsels their large souls supply;
That serve the King with their estates and care,
And, as in love, on Parliaments can stare,
(Where few the number, choice is there less hard):
Give us this court, and rule without a guard.

(Last Instructions 985-90)

With the aid of the microscope, the reader is invited to “view” for himself the extensive corruption that has led to the strategic failings of the Second Anglo-Dutch war. The telescopic vision at the end of the poem provides a different, yet equally detailed image of the corruption plaguing Charles II’s government. The political
implications of the poem however, remain defined by partiality and relativity. Marvell appears be endorsing some form of parliamentary monarchy, at the same time as the poem appears to harken back to the years of the Cromwellian government and the English success in the First Anglo-Dutch war.

In light of my preceding analysis of the overlaps in visual cues between Dutch techniques of cultural expression, and the metaphorical “effects” produced by the Microscope, I conclude by offering an alternative model for Marvell’s State Portrait; in particular, the distinctly “crafted” composition of Johannes Vermeer’s *The Art of Painting* (1666), which incorporates several of the Dutch techniques previously discussed.185

5.3 Marvell’s “craft” and the bringing together of art and science

Vermeer’s *The Art of Painting* (ca. 1666-7) was coincidentally produced in the same year as *Last Instructions*, and both portray the artistic rendering of a work of art.186

The foreground of Vermeer’s painting is occupied by a rear view of a painter in the

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185 Vermeer was also a friend and contemporary of Dutch microscopist Antoine van Leeuwenhoek, portrayed in two of his paintings of the 1660s, *The Astronomer* and *The Geographer*.

*The Astronomer* ca. 1668. Oil on canvas, 50 x 45 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris.


*The Geographer* ca. 1668-9. Oil on canvas, 53 x 46.6 cm. Städelisches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt.


Leeuwenhoek’s work in microscopy may also have sparked Vermeer’s interest in optical instruments, regardless of whether or not they were used in the production of his work (Swan 25).

process of depicting his female subject, identified as Clio, History’s Muse, who stands before a large decorative map of the United Provinces spread across the back wall (Alpers “Mapping Impulse” 55). Alpers notes, “we cannot tell where [the painter’s] attention is directed,” because his back is to the task (as it appears to be in Last Instructions), which takes place in a studio setting. In the top left hand corner of the map, barely visible to the viewer, is a cartouche containing the portrait of two female figures. One of the figures is holding a “cross staff and a pair of compasses, the other a brush, palate and city landscape view”; they represent the bringing together of the worlds of art and science (Welu 147). At the borders of the canvas, a chandelier and a piece of tapestry obscure parts of the picture. The painting portrays Vermeer’s careful attention to capturing the reflection of light from surfaces, and the textures of fabrics. Moreover, rather than using linear perspective, the objects depicted appear to overlap giving the scene a distinctly “crafted” appearance (Alpers Art of Describing 122). Each part of Vermeer’s painting tells part of a larger history that the reader is invited to piece together from the visual materials provided. With some of the features of the painting being obscured from view, either by the tapestry or due to being too small to see; the painting, like Marvell’s poem, resists a single or definitive interpretation. The painting of the portrait, which occupies the foreground, is brought to the viewer’s attention because of its relative size, but the details included on the map play an equally important part in Vermeer’s representation of Dutch national history.

The relationship between maps and painting as kinds of Dutch cultural expression is also revealing in terms of the way that Marvell combines genres and visual cues in Last Instructions. Unlike in England, where maps were considered separately from painting, and were primarily used to mark out the possession of land,
Dutch maps included topographical and artistic features. Alpers notes the “coincidence” between the two genres was “based on a common notion of knowledge and the belief that it is to be gained and asserted through pictures” (Alpers “Mapping Impulse” 54). In addition to providing topographical information, maps were often embellished with decorative cartouches — small yet elaborate framing devices that exhibited the latest styles of Mannerist and Baroque ornamentation, the inside of which could feature portraits, allegorical images or inscriptions (Wilson “Aesthetic Appreciation” 61). The ways in which Vermeer incorporates scientific material into the poem, and sets it against Mannerist cartouches and the portrait, are examples of how Dutch painters experimented with genre and perspective and the knowledge that could be obtained through the juxtaposition of forms without being dependent upon narrative. In chapter two, I argued that the Mannerist elements in Last Instructions could be explained, at least in part, in relation to the association of Mannerism with decadence and anti-classicism. By studying these Mannerist episodes in the context of Vermeer’s painting The Art of Painting, I have offered visual cultural analogue for the way Marvell combines Mannerist and ‘Dutch’ spatial cues. The combining of these cues works to support my argument about Marvell’s employment of visual arts traditions considered “anti-classical” in the seventeenth century for his satiric answer to Waller’s (and by association Dryden’s flattering representations of the Second Anglo-Dutch War.
Conclusion

In this chapter I have drawn attention to aesthetic and perspectival techniques characteristic of particular representational traditions during the period of the Anglo-Dutch wars, in order to argue that Marvell deliberately draws upon his knowledge of Dutch visual culture in *Last Instructions*. Dutch painters set out to capture defining moments of the war with remarkable verisimilitude as opposed to the construction of a linear narrative. Features such as the experimental use of perspective, crowded scenes that exceed the boundaries of the frame, and decentered compositions in which scale is determined by the manner in which the subject matter is viewed, are all correlatives of the spatial approach to composition in *Last Instructions*. By drawing on these features of Dutch art, Marvell is able to challenge Waller’s representation of the war, while simultaneously using the “techniques of the enemy,” thus drawing attention to the fact that all representations are relative and subjective by refusing to provide the viewer with a unified image. I have also shown how many seventeenth century Dutch paintings deploy visual cues that overlap with those of microscopic images. The microscope can bring to light new revelations that are invisible to the naked eye, but the price of such a view is the inability to calculate depth and distance. By using the microscope as a metaphor for reading the poem, Marvell allows the reader to see beyond the generalised representations of Royalist poets such as Waller and Dryden, and focus instead on the minute details that fascinated the Dutch. The microscope also allows him to exploit the distorting capabilities of lenses to reveal the grotesque physical and moral character of his sitters, and to use these details to create the desired impression on the viewer: that of the corruption that is compromising the whole of the parliament and the court.
Drawing attention to the overlap between aesthetic and scientific techniques in *Last Instructions* opens up new possibilities for poetic models that support Marvell’s Oppositional politics, which have previously not been considered. The experimental approach to genre and perspective in Dutch visual culture, for example, provides a new way for studying the poem’s Mannerist episodes, and for identifying how these fit into Marvell’s critique of Renaissance courtly images by metaphorically drawing upon the “techniques of the enemy.”
Conclusion

This thesis has moved beyond the tradition of reading Marvell’s Last Instructions through the paradigm of Edmund Waller’s Instructions to a Painter, the ut pictura poesis tradition and Renaissance art. By examining Marvell’s poem on the Second Anglo-Dutch war alongside Dryden’s Annus Mirabilis written in the same year, I have drawn attention to the competing theories of perspective and of natural philosophy available to writers wishing to convey a politically motivated account. I have argued that Dryden and Waller draw upon Renaissance pictorial theory to produce a favourable version of events that praises Charles II as well as the decisions made by the military commanders. In Annus Mirabilis, visual cues based on geometric linear perspective that are common to Renaissance portraiture and history painting, theatre set design, and sixteenth century natural philosophy are incorporated into the virtual account and function to draw the aesthetic and scientific discourses of the poem together. I have argued that in contrast to Annus Mirabilis, to read Last Instructions primarily as a direct inversion of Renaissance pictorial theory is to overlook the spatial and fragmented nature of its composition. In order to overcome this limitation of critical readings of Last Instructions, I have argued that a study of the poem in light of approaches to perspective used by English Mannerist and Dutch artists reveals a deeper political and satiric motive informing Marvell’s images. In particular, the Mannerist interest in abstraction and excess can be understood as evidence of Marvell’s anti-classicism and criticism of monarchic decadence. By the same token, Marvell’s apparent reference to the Dutch visual arts tradition and its concern with the individual and the particular, overlaps with visual cues associated with microscope, which I have argued functions as a metaphor for
reading *Last Instructions*. Using the microscope as an instrument of satire, complemented by Dutch aesthetic techniques, Marvell condemns individuals he holds responsible for England’s military failures, while using synecdoche to suggest that they are not exemplary, but representative of a more generalised problem affecting the government and naval administration.

I have explored Marvell’s metaphoric use of Dutch painting techniques in *Last Instructions* by comparing the experimental perspective techniques used in both individual character portraits and large-scale genre painting, with the perspective techniques that inform Dryden’s imagery in *Annus Mirabilis*. Dryden incorporates visual cues that reference Renaissance linear perspective to depict events from a single, pre-determined vantage point. This allows him to present an idealised view of events, with Charles II and his generals portrayed as heroes, while unfavourable details are covered over or left out of the metaphorical frame. Further, by staging *Annus Mirabilis* in terms of a global theatrical performance, with the metaphorical stage (the ocean) constructed according to principles of linear perspective, Dryden instills a sense of order and hierarchy while controlling the audiences’ perspective on events. In this way, Dryden appeals to Royal patronage, while presenting his material in a new way that ensures his own poem is not negatively associated with Edmund Waller’s earlier panegyric.

The images of order and hierarchy informing Dryden’s metaphoric theatre of war are contrasted with Marvell’s account of the war that takes a very different approach. Rather than using perspective to bring the disparate elements of the poem together into a unified narrative of events, Marvell represents his subject matter from multiple incongruous perspectives. His primary concern is to portray the minute details of parliamentary and court corruption traditionally painted out of a State
Portrait. In order to achieve this, Marvell references perspective techniques used in Dutch painting of the period. Dutch artists were motivated by a desire for naturalism and detail as a way of representing things as they actually are, rather than as they ought to be. By (metaphorically) appropriating these techniques, Marvell discredits the ability of traditional Renaissance art, and therefore Waller’s and Dryden’s poems, to provide a truthful account of the war by instead revealing what lies beneath the glossy exterior. Despite the stylistic differences between Dutch art and the Mannerist episodes identified in the poem, both serve the same political purpose: that of critiquing the decadence of Charles II and his court, and using the “techniques of the enemy” to achieve this.

Late sixteenth and early seventeenth developments in natural philosophy play a decisive role in Dryden’s narrative of events. *Annus Mirabilis* begins with references to optical illusions and delusions of the senses in order to elevate the significance of the war and the power of the Dutch. These references also set the context for his argument about the civil and scientific importance of the Royal Society’s work in the fields of shipbuilding and navigation that will turn the war in England’s favour. Unlike *Last Instructions*, Dryden’s interest in experimental science is not grounded in the rhetorical effects that can be achieved with allusions to optical instruments, but rather the Baconian science upon which the Society was founded. The ideal of a systematised approach to nature and language is used as an analogy for the hierarchy and order of the Stuart state, while Dryden’s use of technical terms functions to ensure the possible meanings of his scientific metaphors are specific and therefore circumscribed.

Until now, Dryden’s references to Baconian science in *Annus Mirabilis* have not been discussed in the context of the metaphoric use of Renaissance visual
techniques. Studying these together reveals a greater level of order in the design in Dryden’s poem than has previously been recognised. Paul Hammond, for example, has argued for the episodic nature of *Annus Mirabilis*, and likened its structure to that of Ovid’s metamorphoses. Hammond’s reading overlooks Dryden’s references to single point perspective. Michael McKeon has identified important structural and thematic links between the two halves of the poem, but has not discussed the use of perspectival “cues” embedded within the metaphorical conceits.

The perspectival overlaps between Dutch art and microscopy and the Oppositional politics behind the spatial composition of Marvell’s *Last Instructions* have also, until now, not been explored. While Marvell’s metaphorical use of the microscope has been discussed in terms of Robert Hooke’s methodology in the *Micrographia*, and the association of optical instruments with satire, it has not been studied in terms of perspectival cues that appear to reference the art of Britain’s Dutch enemies. This gives new significance to the microscope as a metaphor for reading the poem, with the microscope enabling a double-edged attack on the decadence of Charles II, and on the corruption of the parliament and court. The *Second* and *Third Advices* and *Last Instructions* were not the first time Marvell has used Dutch culture to critique his own countrymen. In *A Character of Holland* Marvell makes extensive reference to Dutch cultural stereotypes; by the time of writing *Last Instructions*, Marvell’s incorporation of references to Dutch visual culture are more nuanced and built into the metaphoric use of perspective.

By developing a method that treats the scientific and aesthetic imagery concurrently, based upon shared “perspectival cues” metaphorically embedded in the poems, I have demonstrated how the selection of materials shapes the spatial design of the poems in ways that fulfill their respective political agendas. Dryden is a
royalist, whose poem works to instill a sense of order and hierarchy and to rally support for the King. Marvell, as an Oppositional satirist, is not tied to traditional techniques; neither does he need to express his allegiance to Charles II, nor to the Royal Society from which he was excluded on the basis of his political allegiance. Instead, he is free to experiment with allusions to a variety of media, without having to settle on any one of them.

Due to the necessarily limited scope of my thesis, I have only just begun to uncover some of Marvell’s references to Dutch visual culture and its use of perspective. I have identified Saenredam’s architectural drawings as offering insights into Marvell’s experiments with perspective and juxtaposition of incongruent viewpoints. I have also identified Vermeer’s genre and still life paintings as providing a useful analogy for Marvell’s method of composition; Marvell combines intricate knowledge of parliamentary debates with (rhetorical) ornament, while appearing to analogise the battle on a two-dimensional picture plane. It would require another project to explore whether Dutch visual culture is a useful way of studying Marvell’s other poems of the period. Given what I have uncovered, this is a direction future study of Marvell’s satires is likely to take, particularly in light of recent publications by Marjorie Rubright and Mary Bryan H. Curd, which are suggestive of a revived interest in Anglo-Dutch relations in the period more generally.

My method of bringing art and science together in considering the politics of these poems could be productively applied to other poems by Marvell and Dryden, as well as their contemporaries, including Republicans John Milton and Thomas Shadwell, and Royalist Margaret Cavendish, who engaged with natural philosophical theories in their writing. Margaret Cavendish’s prose fiction “The Description of a
New World Called The Blazing World” (1666) was published a year prior to both Annus Mirabilis and Last Instructions and provides particularly fruitful ground for analysis using my integrative method. “The Blazing World” was published as a companion piece to “Observations Upon Experimental Philosophy,” a prose work outlining her Royalist and materialist philosophy, written after returning from eleven years’ exile in Paris and Antwerp during the Interregnum. Like Marvell, Cavendish would have been exposed to Dutch visual culture, but this does not appear to overtly influence her work. Cavendish draws upon a number of the materials used by Dryden and Marvell, but her aesthetics and her scientific argument occupy a kind of middle ground between Dryden’s and Marvell’s poems.

Margaret Cavendish’s “Blazing World” as expression of her skepticism of optical instruments

The spatial design of Cavendish’s “The Blazing World” is unique, in that it is shaped by a materialist philosophy of nature and vision, according to which all particles of matter are “infused with spirit and self-movement” (Walters 386). Because matter is “self moving” and “perceptive,” Cavendish implies it cannot be controlled, nor fully understood; an assertion that counters Bacon’s belief in the human ability to understand and ultimately control nature (Walters 386; “Observations” 1.206). Cavendish’s materialism is supported by a vitalist theory of vision that she describes as a process in which “an individual copies or makes a pattern of external objects” (“Observations” 1.209; Walters 31).

Cavendish’s theory of vision builds on theories of ancient Greek optics that argued perception was dependent upon an unhindered line of vision between the
object and the eye. Rather than being induced by the transfer of invisible rays, however, she claims that vision occurs as the sensory organs of the eye constantly create replicas of objects (Walters 381). Vision is therefore an active rather than a passive process, in which we “actively create our own interpretation of an object and not necessarily a ‘true’ or objective account” (Walters 382). The naturally occurring confusion of real and copy that results are compounded by the fact that matter itself is also capable of patterning out objects, a concept that informs her skepticism of optical instruments which she claims only serve to reveal how “distortion is the basis for all acts of perception” (Spiller 195). As both the eye and the glass create patterns of the specimen, Cavendish suggests the image seen by the observer is at a further remove from reality than when viewed with the naked eye, even though this too provides “no absolute connection to the truth” (Walters 382).

The problems associated with optical instruments, resulting from the theory of vision and matter outlined in “Philosophical Observations,” are explored in “The Blazing World” through the creation of a world that is comprised of multiple worlds. The Blazing World is governed by an Empress who creates a fictional Academy resembling that of the Royal Society, but rather than praising their work as Dryden does in *Annus Mirabilis*, she challenges the accuracy of their work. The Empress asks the various groups of philosophers to demonstrate their work with the telescope and microscope, only to reveal they create confusion, and trigger debate among

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187 Walters argues that the “extramission” theory of perception, (derived from Plato),” provides a type of subjectivity in which the individual actively affects the outside world through their gaze” (Walters 379). For Plato, visual rays or a subject’s “inner light,” were though to issue from the eyes to strike external objects (379). The “intromission” theory of vision considered the individual’s eye a “receptor of images” […] Epicurus, for example, believed that all objects continuously emit streams of atoms that enter the sense-organs” (379).
philosophers who cannot agree on what they see (140-141). When they are asked to look at three stars through a telescope, for example, the philosophers cannot agree on whether they see two, or three stars, much less which are real and which are copies (141). The Empress concludes that telescopes “give no better intelligence” (141) and that “instead of discovering the truth, delude your senses” (141). Rather than relying on their telescopes, she instructs them to “trust […] their natural eyes, and examine celestial objects by the motion of their own sense and reason” (141). The microscope is dismissed on similar terms, with observations of a flea and a louse (a direct parody of Hooke’s *Micrographia*) shown to monstrously distort their subject matter, making “a louse appears as big as an elephant, and a mite as big as a whale” (142), but the Empress and the philosophers cannot agree on whether they are observing a “perfect eye” (143) or “glassy pearls” (143). Nor could the microscope “hinder their biting, or at least show some means how to avoid them” (144).

In *Annus Mirabilis* Dryden avoids the problems associated with images produced by instruments to focus instead on their utility in the service of the State. In *Last Instructions* Marvell capitalises on these problems associated with lenses by using the grotesque particular to make a comment on a more generalised political corruption. Cavendish’s skepticism of optical instruments is used to suggest that individuals are better served to rely on natural vision and reason “as it has been in former ages before those microscopes were invented” (143).

Elizabeth Spiller argues that Cavendish uses the telescope as a metaphor for reading the text, in the same way Galileo had attempted to do in *Sidereus Nuncius* or *The Starry Messenger* (1610) (209). Rather than using it to promote telescopic vision, Cavendish uses it to show that observations made with telescopes are limited to the image framed by the lens which does not help viewers to comprehend the full gamut
of reality itself (Spiller 213). In the case of “The Blazing World,” this reality is the simultaneous existence of multiple worlds, which cannot be effectively viewed in isolation:

> It is impossible to round this world’s globe from Pole to Pole, so as we do from East to West; because the Poles of the other world, joining to the Poles of this, do not allow any further passage to surround the world that way; but if any one arrives to either of these Poles, he is either forced to return, or to enter into another world [...] [E]ach of these Worlds having its own Sun to enlighten it, they move each one in their peculiar circles; which motion is so just and exact, that neither can hinder or obstruct the other. (126)

By constructing a unique fictional space in which to explore her philosophical theory of perception, and therefore the greater accuracy of natural vision, “The Blazing World” is another example of how the representation of space, and the visual cues are deliberately chosen to serve a writer’s political ambition. The numerous competing theories about perspective and the images produced by optical instruments, as well as the different ways of viewing the world they offered meant that scientific discourses were fertile ground for rhetorical experiment.

Cavendish’s “Blazing World” and Marvell’s Last Instructions appear to voice each writer’s skepticism about experimentalism, and this skepticism is expressed through the (metaphoric) use of visual cues associated with optical instruments. There are however, aspects of “The Blazing World” that work against the notion of an experimental aesthetic propounded by Marvell because Cavendish situates her argument within a utopian frame. Spiller argues that the fictional utopia functions to “represent a disparity between an ‘actual’ and an ‘ideal world’” (212). It is, however,
also a way of closing down competing frames of reference. The Empress appears open to experiment with competing ideas by asking questions of members of the Academy, but these questions are aimed at discrediting ideas that are incompatible with her materialist philosophy and promoting her idealised view of the world. By the same token, the Empress appears to critique Baconian philosophy, and its attempts to systematise nature, by creating a world inhabited by hybrids that resist any such classification. At the same time however, she expounds a “triumvirate” theory of matter, according to which “all objects contain degrees of rational, sensitive and inanimate matter” (Walters 390; “Observations” 1.190). This theory is, paradoxically, also an attempt to see the world in a systematic way, which is reflected in the spatial design of the text. Cavendish creates a fictional world in which multiple worlds exist simultaneously and operate according to a vitalist theory of vision, but like Annum Mirabilis scientific references are contained within a utopian frame. This utopian frame produces a genre Spiller describes in terms of an enclosed space where the shortcomings of an actual world are overcome in an ideal one (212). Alternative ways of thinking are discounted, and the Empress of the Blazing World exerts her authoritative control over the fantasy world she has created. The structure of the text is also representative of its underlying politics, with the world she has created offering a (fictional) space for her to challenge contemporary scientific theories, one that is at a remove from the masculine world of the Royal Society where she struggled to gain acceptance.

The apparent correlation between Royalism and aesthetic order, and experimentalism and an Oppositional aesthetic that emerges from my study is another line of inquiry it would require a further project to explore. As Royalists, Cavendish and Dryden both produce texts that engage with scientific theories of the
period, but these ideas take place within a framed space. Here subversive elements can be controlled, and the “natural” hierarchy of the state is reinstated. Marvell, however, is open to experimenting with perspective and different media, and makes no attempt to delimit competing frames of reference. The existence of shared visual cues underpinning the aesthetic and scientific references of Dryden’s and Marvell’s poems leads me to question the analytic usefulness of claims to strictly Royalist and Oppositional aesthetics in the period. In light of my analysis, I would argue that such distinctions are not particularly helpful and that there is plenty of overlap: the main difference is how they are used and the perspective taken. The direction of satire in the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century is one example of how the continued debates about the usefulness of instruments remained at the forefront of the cultural imagination of the period, with the microscope and the virtuoso becoming the objects rather than the instruments of satire.

Eighteenth century satire and the microscope

Along with the continued skepticism of optical instruments, British art theory in the late-seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries saw a shift in attitudes away from an interest in representing the detailed and the particular, and a return to privileging the generalisable (Mount 125). Harry Mount notes that this shift in values is clearly reflected in negative connotations that came to be associated with the word “minute” (126). He explains that:

Eighteenth-century writers on art use the words ‘minute’ and ‘minuteness’ to describe high finishing, and, less commonly, to refer to small paintings or small figures within paintings, but they used them
more normally to denote a style in which the subject is depicted in great
detail. Attacks on minuteness of the latter sort tend to form part of the
familiar argument advising painters to represent ideal and generalised
forms rather that copy particular nature. (126)

Writers were once again encouraged to represent idealised forms, in accordance with
the Renaissance view that minute detail detracts from a comprehension of the “united
view” (Mount 127). Mount further suggests the negative connotations of highly
detailed images were in part attributable to the association of “minuteness” with
Hooke’s *Micrographia*, as well as its being a defining feature of Dutch art (127). To
take such an approach, it was argued, was “to focus upon disgusting minutiae at the
expense of the beauty of the whole. Even beautiful art works and human forms
revealed disgusting blemishes in microscopic close-up” (Mount 136). Opponents of
the experimental philosophy attacked the work of the virtuosi as “petty and
pointless,” with the figure of the amateur virtuoso such as Thomas Shadwell’s Sir
Nicholas Gimmercrack in *The Virtuoso*, used “to satirise any excessively detailed
investigation of nature or the past” (Mount 135). The microscope was also negatively
invoked as “a plaything of the virtuosi rather than an instrument at the cutting edge
of science,” and came to symbolise any approach which, due to “its myopic attention
to detail, failed to see the wider picture” (Mount 136). Dryden and Marvell deploy
carefully selected visual arts techniques in order to engage in debates about natural
philosophy, as well as to voice a particular political argument about the order of the
state. At no time were the methods for relating these disciples stable; they were
always a highly politicised way of engaging with contemporary debate or in the
service of broader philosophical claims a writer wished to make.
The fruitfulness of drawing a distinction between Royalist and Oppositional discourses and aesthetic representation would require a larger project to explore; however, in support of my claim that such a distinction is not particularly productive due to the various appropriations of the same culturally available material, I offer here a preliminary study of the conclusions of Dryden’s and Marvell’s poems.

Analogising of architectural space and the idea of a Royalist and Oppositional aesthetic

My method for studying the political effect of the perspectival metaphors of the theatre, the gallery, and the microscope in Dryden’s and Marvell’s poems can be used to explore the existence of strictly Royalist and Oppositional aesthetics based upon poetic references to literal and virtual architectural spaces. In *Annus Mirabilis*, the Royalist sense of order and decorum is conveyed to the reader through references to the theatre, the Royal Society, and the fictional utopian future. These represent contained, highly structured architectural spaces where potentially subversive ideas can be explored within a fictional frame. Dryden voices his unwavering support for Charles II and the English navy by constructing an account that is closed off from competing scientific, political and aesthetic theories that would destabilise the metaphorical architecture of the poem. In contrast, in *Last Instructions*, Marvell references architectural spaces that are not as clearly demarcated and controlled as they are in Dryden’s poem and which are open to subjective interpretation. The spaces of the gallery, the laboratory, the Houses of Parliament, and the artist’s studio are all sites of creativity. Rather than limiting his reader to a single perspective, like visitors to a gallery, we are invited to enact a peripatetic movement through the
Royal Portrait Gallery and to draw our own conclusions based on the cumulative effect of the images. By refusing to settle on a single perspective, Marvell’s *Last Instructions* analogises a potentially Oppositional architectural space that encourages readers to question accepted knowledge, and to probe beneath the surface of Royalist accounts, should they wish to see the widespread corruption behind the glossy exterior of England’s political ambitions. This open structure reflects his longstanding support for nonconformists, and his openness to the extensive political and scientific debates of the period.

New observations can be made about the Royalist politics informing the spatial design of *Annus Mirabilis* through examination of the concluding sections of poem, in particular, the metaphor of St Paul’s Cathedral and the accompanying image of Charles II as Amphion in lines 1097-1110:

Nor could thy fabric, Paul’s, defend thee long,

Though thou wert sacred to thy maker’s praise;

Though made immortal by a poet’s song,

And poets’ songs the Theban walls could raise.

When compared to Marvell’s treatment of St Paul’s, and the republican appropriation of the Amphion myth in *The First Anniversary of the Government under His Highness the Lord Protector* (1655), we can draw possible conclusions about his political intent in *Last Instructions*. In accordance with the *Second and Third Advices*, *Last Instructions* appears to offer a glance back to the Cromwellian era, but the true nature of Marvell’s sympathies in *Last Instructions* remains opaque. A comparison of these architectural references also demonstrates that rather than being mutually exclusive accounts of the Second Anglo-Dutch war, the different accounts are literally a matter of perspective.
In *Annum Mirabilis*, Dryden’s representation of the destruction of St Paul’s in the Fire of London is followed with an image of Charles II as Amphion, who, according to mythology, re-built the ancient city of Thebes with the magical music of his lyre. St Paul’s is burnt to the ground, but the reference to Amphion conveys Dryden’s optimism about the quick rebuilding of both the Church and the city of London with the stones leaping into place as Charles II (Amphion) plays the lyre: Like a phoenix rising from her ashes, “More great than human, now, and more August, / New deified she from her fires does rise: / Her widening streets on new foundations trust, / And opening, into larger parts she flies” (1177-1180). In reality however, the rebuilding of the city preceded slowly, with Christopher Wren, John Evelyn and Robert Hooke all producing plans for a new model city (Hammond and Hopkins 199).

The Amphion myth however, could also be appropriated to Marvell’s vision of a reformed Parliamentary Monarchy, as a return to his earlier poem on Cromwell will demonstrate. In the *The First Anniversary*, Marvell is interested in praising the achievements of Cromwell’s rule, “while also acknowledging the difficulties faced by the ruler and his government” (Smith *The Poems* 285). Here, the “Instrument” represents a written constitution in which power is shared between the “Protector and a Council of State, the latter [being] meant to exercise a check over the executive” (Smith *The Poems* 281). Like Dryden, Marvell represents the Commonwealth as united under their ruler, with Oliver Cromwell as Amphion; “Such was the wondrous order and consent, When Cromwell tuned the ruling Instrument” (67-8). Rather than

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188 Smith notes that, “one of the sources for the Amphion story was Seneca’s well-known *Hercules Furens*, II. 262-3. Milton had quoted from this play against monarchical [sic] tyranny, while Royalist men of letters continued to publish translations of classical tragedies as veiled accounts of the tyranny of Parliament” (*The Poems* 285).
magically rising into place, however, the harmony of Marvell’s Commonwealth is based on labour and hard work; the various tensions within the political institution of the Protectorate are productive and necessary forces (Smith *The Poems* 290):

Then our Amphion issues out and sings,
And once he struck, and twice, the pow’rful strings
The commonwealth then first together came,
And each one entered in the willing frame;
All other matter yields, and may be ruled;
But who the minds of stubborn men can build?
No quarry bears a stone so hardly wrought,
Nor with such labour from its centre brought;
None to be sunk in the foundation bends
Each in the house the highest place contends,
And each the hand that lays him will direct,
And some fall back upon the architect;
Yet all composed by his attractive song,
Into the animated city throng. (*First Anniversary* 86)

In Dryden’s *Annus Mirabilis* it is Charles II “magically” rebuilding St Paul’s, while in Marvell’s poem it is the written constitution that is “renovating” parliament to enable a shared distribution of power. For Dryden, it is the monarch who stabilises the structure by eliminating debate and effacing the agency of the “labourers” whether real or metaphoric. For Marvell, it is Parliamentary debate and dissention that produce a strong political structure, with the expression of opposing views being seen as brotherly contention over which Cromwell has a protecting influence: “While
the resistance of opposèd minds, / The fabric as with arches stronger binds, / Which on the basis of a senate free / Knit by the roof’s protecting weight agree” (95-8).  

Unlike the First Anniversary, in Last Instructions, Marvell’s aestheticisation of politics does not use the arch as an architectural ideal, and instead, consistent with his metaphor of the microscope, provides no unified image. Charles II is instructed to purge the parliament of the corrupt ministers whom Marvell accuses of undermining the realm, and to replace them with the few upright men remaining. If one were to look for a unifying metaphor it apparently remains beyond the scope of Marvell’s poem.

Marvell and Dryden have approached their representations of the Anglo-Dutch war from different perspectives. Dryden imagines an ideal future, as modelled on the architecture of St Paul’s, despite the crumbling reality of the present. The design of his poem is based upon visual cues that encourage the reader to view the poem as they would a Renaissance genre painting: a predetermined viewpoint from which Dryden hopes his version of events will be memorialised as the defining account of the war. Marvell reveals the structural problems affecting the relationship between King and Parliament, and proposes an alternative means for restoring Monarchical decorum to the realm — a reformation of the Parliament itself — in which he gestures back towards the Protectorate government under Cromwell whose tremendous success in the First Anglo-Dutch war is praised in his Cromwell poems of the 1650s.

189 For further discussion of the Amphion Myth in the context of Dryden’s and Marvell’s poems see: Wallace “Marvell and Cromwell’s Kingship”; Williamson “From Heavenly Harmony”; Connell “Marvell, Milton”; Wilcher “Quarles, Waller, Marvell.”
My method for studying these poems opens up a variety of areas for further research, whether this is the study of the ekphrastic tradition, the apparent references to Dutch visual culture or the use of politicised architectures of space. My method also lends itself to be applied to other poems by Dryden, Marvell and their contemporaries such as Dryden’s *Absalom and Achitophel*, John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and Marvell’s *Upon Appleton House*. I hope this work stimulates interest in Dutch cultural influences on English literature, as I see this as a future direction for Early Modern literary studies.
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