



NICHOLAS MCDOWELL

*Urquhart's Rabelais: Translation, Patronage,
and Cultural Politics*

Sir Thomas Urquhart's *Rabelais* has long been acknowledged as one of the great translations of the English Renaissance. In his rendering of the first three books of *Gargantua and Pantagruel* (five books, 1532–1564) Urquhart consistently outdoes his original in verbal exuberance and bawdiness—he is a more “Rabelaisian” writer than Rabelais. Consequently the translation has grown in favor as “Rabelaisian” has developed into a term of critical approbation. Alastair Fowler's judgement is representative of opinion over the last century: “Urquhart's outstanding achievement . . . captured for our literature a domain that Sterne and Joyce have since inhabited without noticeably exhausting its resources.”¹ Yet if Urquhart's *Rabelais* is testimony to “the greatest period of translation in English literature, one that had included Golding's Ovid, Harington's Ariosto, Chapman's Homer, Florio's Montaigne and the Authorized Version,” then it was forty years late.² Thomason records buying Urquhart's version of books one and two—issued separately but apparently simultaneously—on June 15, 1653, almost two months after Cromwell's dissolution of the “Rump” Parliament. By recovering the cultural-political context in which Urquhart's *Rabelais* was composed and published, this essay contributes to the ongoing critical rethinking of the 1649–1660 period.³

Critics are agreed that there was “a battle for cultural politics” in post-regicide England as the new regime sought to “supplant the image of

1. Alastair Fowler, *A History of English Literature: Forms and Kinds from the Middle Ages to the Present* (Oxford, 1987), p. 141.

2. *The Admirable Urquhart: Selected Writings*, ed. Richard Boston (London, 1975), p. 59.

3. For a summary of changing critical attitudes toward revolutionary and republican England, see Susan Wiseman, *Drama and Politics in the English Civil War* (Cambridge, Eng., 1998), pp. 1–16. The most significant book-length studies have been Nigel Smith, *Literature and Revolution in England, 1640–1660* (New Haven, 1994) and David Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric and Politics, 1627–1660* (Cambridge, Eng., 1999).

monarchy and construct effective representations of its authority.”⁴ They disagree over whether republicans lost that battle by failing to develop a cultural rhetoric that could express and establish the legitimacy of a non-monarchical state, or whether the existence of a distinctively republican culture in the period was effectively erased from the records of political and literary history and is only now beginning to be retrieved.⁵ Locating the position of Urquhart’s *Rabelais* on the propaganda battleground of 1649–1653 will provide some striking and unexpected insights into republican efforts to build cultural authority and undermine the tactics of royalist polemic, in particular the “royalist claim to wit and aesthetic pleasure.”⁶ A reconstruction of the personal and political circumstances in which the translation came to be composed and published—and in which it remained unfinished—will contribute to our increasing knowledge of the relationships between former royalist writers and the governments of the 1650s, which were more fluid and complex than the polarizing legacy of polemical myths and stereotypes would have us believe. This contextual reading of one of the great English translations not only provides a case-study in how “partisanship engulfed the literary and conditioned its creation and reception” during the English revolution, but raises the rarely-addressed issue of how literary patronage functioned in England after the dissolution of the Renaissance court network that had sustained generations of writers.⁷ The standard biographical account of Sir Thomas Urquhart as “a consistent supporter of the royalist cause” will be transformed as a result, while the involvement of the Commonwealth propagandist John Hall in the publication of Urquhart’s *Rabelais* will shed new light on what Blair Worden has described as “an underestimated force of the Puritan Revolution”—anti-Puritan republicanism.⁸

4. Norbrook, p. 177; Kevin Sharpe, “‘An Image Doting Rabble’: The Failure of Republican Culture in Seventeenth-Century England,” in *Refiguring Revolutions: Aesthetics and Politics from the English Revolution to the Romantic Revolution*, ed. K. Sharpe and S. N. Zwicker (Berkeley, 1998), p. 30.

5. See Sharpe and Norbrook. On efforts to promote a distinctive republican culture and aesthetics, see also Smith, pp. 177–200, and Wiseman, pp. 62–80.

6. Wiseman, p. 62.

7. Steven N. Zwicker, *Lines of Authority: Politics and Literary Culture, 1649–1689* (New York, 1993), p. 12.

8. Sir Thomas Urquhart, *The Jewel* (1652), ed. R. D. S. Jack and R. J. Lyall (Edinburgh, 1983), introduction, p. 1; cited hereafter as *The Jewel*. Blair Worden, “‘Wit in a Roundhead’: the dilemma of Marchamont Nedham,” in *Political Culture and Cultural Politics in Early Modern England*, ed. Susan D. Amussen and Mark A. Kishlansky (Manchester, 1995), p. 304.

II

Thomas Urquhart left the debt-ridden family estate in Cromarty for London in 1639, apparently with the intention of establishing himself at the Caroline court.⁹ He was knighted at Whitehall in 1641, the same year in which he issued an earnest and unremarkable volume of verse, *Epigrams: Divine and Moral*. However, the frontispiece of this collection depicts Urquhart as an archetypal Cavalier blade, flamboyantly attired and nonchalantly accepting a laurel “[f]or Armes and Arts.” More in line with this image is an unpublished collection of over 1,000 epigrams, entitled “Apollo and the Muses” and dated 1640. Comprised mostly of the bawdy doggerel which served as a display of wit in courtly clubs and drinking societies of the 1630s, the volume is divided into ten books and each is dedicated to a different courtier, indicating Urquhart’s concerted efforts to secure patronage. The opening epigram is a panegyric to Charles I, a monarch “whose deserts / Soare higher ‘bove the reach of other kings / Than the bright Sun transcends terrestrial things.” Urquhart had been involved in the first skirmishes between episcopalians and covenanters in Scotland in 1638–1639, and he voices his concerns in “Apollo and the Muses” about the consequences of allowing the “violent, and impetuous disposition of some of our Puritans in Scotland” to go unchecked:

By knocking down of Churches, Knox gave edge
 T’opinions fuller of blind zeal, then doubt:
 Which hardly can be curbed in our age,
 If some new Knocks come not out, and knock them out.¹⁰

9. For a concise account of the (hitherto) known details of Urquhart’s life, see the long entry in the *DNB* by Thomas Secombe and *The Jewel*, introduction, pp. 1–9. There are two critical biographies: John Wilcock, *Sir Thomas Urquhart of Cromartie* (Edinburgh, 1899) and R. J. Craik, *Sir Thomas Urquhart of Cromarty (1611–1660): Adventurer, Polymath and Translator of Rabelais* (Lewiston, 1993). See also the briefer sketches in Hugh MacDiarmid, *Scottish Eccentrics* (1936; rpt. New York, 1972), pp. 26–56, and David Stevenson, *King or Covenant? Voices from Civil War* (East Lothian, 1996), pp. 115–32. None of these adds any significant new biographical information to the *DNB* entry.

10. Both these epigrams have now been printed in *Poetry and Revolution: An Anthology of British and Irish Verse, 1625–1660*, ed. Peter Davidson (Oxford, 1998), pp. 356, 259. The manuscript of “Apollo and the Muses” is currently part of the Osborn Collection in the Beinecke Library at Yale University. For a discussion of the volume and examples of the bawdiness of its verse, see Craik, pp. 3–7. On the popularity of such verse among would-be courtiers in pre-war England, see Timothy Raylor, *Cavaliers, Clubs, and Literary Culture: Sir John Mennes, James Smith, and the Order of the Fancy* (Newark, Del., 1994), especially pp. 113–53.

Urquhart returned to Cromarty in the summer of 1642 after the death of his father. He states that he spent the next “few years” abroad; he had previously travelled around Europe after leaving King’s College, Aberdeen, in the late 1620s. However, the records show that he was living in London when he was assessed for a forced loan in May 1644, and he published an obscure treatise on trigonometry, *The Trissotetras*, in London the following year. In 1645 Urquhart returned once more to Scotland and, in concert with other royalist lairds, played an active role in organizing military support for the King, although he seems not to have joined the Engagers in their ill-fated attempt to rescue Charles in 1648, nor to have taken the field at Dunbar in 1650. However, Urquhart did fight alongside his former opponents in battle, the Scottish Presbyterians, under the banner of Charles II at Worcester in September 1651. He was arrested after what he himself describes as “the total rout of the regal party at Worcester.”¹¹

On October 28, 1651, the estate of royalist prisoners was declared forfeit unless their “merits and services . . . shall render them capable of being taken into a more favourable consideration by the Parliament.” Urquhart, who was moved from the Tower to Windsor Castle on September 16, seems to have anticipated this declaration: on September 25 the Committee for Examinations was sent to investigate his claim that he had something “to offer for the advantage of this nation.”¹² Critics have assumed that this something was the “the grammar and lexicon of an universal language” described by Urquhart in *Eksubalauron, Or The Discovery of a most Exquisite Jewel* (referred to hereafter as *The Jewel*) in 1652 and again the following year in *Logopandecteiſion, or an Introduction to the Universal Language* (pp. 1–2). Urquhart claimed that the full details of his scheme had been seized and destroyed by Commonwealth troops at Worcester, along with a large number of other manuscripts that he had intended to publish in London: only seven sheets out of thousands were preserved. By publishing this surviving “parcel of the Preface” to his lost work on a universal and philosophical language he sought to entreat, in his characteristically elaborate prose, “the state, whose prisoner he is, to allow him the enjoyment of his own, lest by his thralldom and distress (useful to no man) the publick should be deprived of those excellent

11. See *The Jewel*, introduction, pp. 3, 6–7; see also p. 59 for Urquhart’s account of his capture.

12. *Calendar of State Papers: Domestic* (1651), pp. 433, 446. See also *A Challenge from Sir Thomas Urquhart of Cromartie* (1658), ed. C. H. Wilkinson (Oxford, 1948), pp. v–vi.

inventions whose emission totally dependeth upon the grant of his enlargement and freedom in both estate and person" (pp. 61, 207).

Although the promised grammar and lexicon never appeared, historians of linguistics and ideas have tended to take Urquhart seriously and discuss *The Jewel* and *Logopandecteision* in terms of the universal language movement of the seventeenth century.¹³ There is not space here to explore the feasibility or sincerity of Urquhart's universal language scheme; suffice it to say that he was addressing an issue of current concern to the circle of educational and scientific reformers centered around Samuel Hartlib, then employed by the Council of State as an intelligencer and policy reviewer.¹⁴ There are hints that the Council was sufficiently interested by Urquhart's claims to give him the chance to produce further evidence of his "excellent inventions" and so prove his value to the Commonwealth. Urquhart dates *The Jewel* March 17, 1652. On May 14 a letter was sent by John Thurloe, Cromwell's chief intelligencer, to the Commissioners for Sequestrations in Scotland enclosing "information given by Sir Thos. Urquhart; concerning writings of his at his house at Cromarty." The letter stipulated that the Commissioners were "to keep all the papers that they find in his house, and not suffer any to be embezzled." On June 22, Urquhart's petition for his liberty was referred to Cromwell; three weeks later Urquhart was allowed to return to Scotland on parole for five months on condition that he did "not act to the prejudice of the Commonwealth."¹⁵ This parole was later extended by six weeks, but Urquhart was back in custody in London by early 1653: in the "Epilogue" to *Logopandecteision* he thanks Cromwell for personally recommending to the Council of State that he should be "enlarged to the extent of the lines of *Londons* communication."¹⁶ Urquhart repeated verbatim in *Logopandecteision* the sixty-three benefits of his universal language that he had listed in *The Jewel*, suggesting that he initially failed to convince the Council (and perhaps the Hartlib circle) that his universal language scheme was viable, or that it had ever really existed, or that his papers in Cromarty, like those that he claimed to have

13. See, e.g., James Knowlson, *Universal Language Schemes in England and France, 1600–1800* (Toronto, 1975), pp. 73–76, 80–81, 225–26.

14. Gerald F. Strasser, "Closed and Open Languages: Samuel Hartlib's Involvement with Cryptology and Universal Languages," in *Samuel Hartlib and Universal Reformation: Studies in Intellectual Communication*, ed. Mark Greengrass et al. (Cambridge, Eng., 1994), pp. 151–61.

15. *Calendar of State Papers: Domestic* (1651–1652), pp. 240, 299, 332.

16. *Calendar of State Papers: Domestic* (1652–1653), p. 33; *The Jewel*, introduction, p. 9; *Logopandecteision, or an Introduction to the Universal Language* (1653), "The Epilogue," sig. G2.

lost at Worcester, really did treat of “metaphysical, mathematical, moral, mythological, epigrammatical, dialectical and chronological matters in a way never hitherto trod upon by any” (*The Jewel*, p. 61). Certainly Urquhart was still supplicating for his “freedom in both estate and person” when his translation of the first two books of Rabelais’ *Gargantua and Pantagruel* appeared in June 1653.

In the address “To the Reader” which prefaces the second book, Urquhart supports the translation and what he characteristically describes as his “Translatitious” abilities. He refers to the “many prime spirits in most of the Nations of Europe” who “since the yeare 1573” have attempted to translate *Gargantua and Pantagruel* but given it up “as a thing impossible to be done.” Now, however, the impossible has been made a reality by “a Person of quality, who (though his lands be sequestered, his house garrisoned, his other goods sold, and himself detained a Prisoner of warre at London, for his having been at Worcester fight) hath, at the most earnest intreaty of some of his especial friends, well acquainted with his inclination to the performance of conducible singularities promised, besides his version of these two already published, very speedily to offer up unto this Isle of Britaine the virginity of the Translation of the other three most admirable books of the aforesaid Author.” The parenthetical list of adversities places an internal pressure on the triumphant declaration, which develops into a threat: “provided that by the plurality of judicious and understanding men it be not declared, he hath already proceeded too farre, or that the continuation of the rigour whereby he is disposest of all his both real and personal estate, by pressing too hard upon him, be not an impediment thereto and to other eminent undertakings of his.”¹⁷ Urquhart seems to have believed that his translation of the first two books of *Gargantua and Pantagruel* could demonstrate to the authorities his “merits and services” and so convince them that he was “capable of being taken into a more favourable consideration” than other imprisoned royalists. His pledge that the remaining three books would be “faithfully undertaken with the same hand to be rendered into English” is consequently conditional upon the restoration of his “real and personal estate.” What is far from obvious is why Urquhart should have believed that Cromwell or the Council of State would sanction

17. “To the Reader,” *Works of Mr. Francis Rabelais*, tr. Sir Thomas Urquhart and Pierre Motteux, 2 vols. (London, 1921), II, 170–71. All further references to *Gargantua and Pantagruel* are to this edition unless otherwise indicated.

such an exchange. The translation is certainly a considerable achievement and it seems likely that he spent much of his time while on parole in Scotland working on it. Yet his offer to the godly republic of a translation of the notoriously ungodly Rabelais—condemned by Calvin for his “filthie and ribauldly writings”—looks, on the face of it, either like a strange misjudgement or a gesture of patent irony.¹⁸

III

The great Elizabethan Calvinist William Perkins believed that uncontrollable laughter was a sign of madness and reprobation. Doubtless he would have considered the circumstances of Urquhart's demise, as related by an eighteenth-century editor of *The Jewel*, to be an illustration of providential justice: “he died suddenly in a fit of excessive laughter, on being informed by his servant that the king was restored.”¹⁹ As Perkins blamed the irreligious condition of the British upon their misguided notion that “merry ballads and bookes . . . are good to drive away the time,” it is unlikely that he would have been impressed by Urquhart's translation of *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. Rabelais' tales of the fantastic adventures of gluttonous, bibulous giants possessed the distinction of having been both “execrated in Geneva [and] put on the Index in Rome.”²⁰ Calvin maintained that Rabelais' “wicked malapertnesse of jestynge and scoffynge” at religious matters reduced the threat of damnation to “a bug to feare children with.”²¹ Following Calvin's judgment, the name “Rabelais” became a signifier of ungodly attitudes and behavior. Rabelais stood accused, along with Machiavelli, of threatening the foundations of Christian morality: “the first by joking about vice, the second by confusing it with virtue.” This libertine Rabelais became known less as the author of a specific body of writing than as “an exemplum, a signifying pig in a cautionary fable,” a reputation doubtless exacerbated by the lack of an English translation until Urquhart's

18. “To the Reader,” *Works of Mr. Francis Rabelais*, I, 170; Calvin, *Sermons Upon Deuteronomie*, tr. Arthur Golding (1583), sig. 223.

19. On Perkins and laughter, see John Stachniewski, *The Persecutory Imagination: English Puritanism and the Literature of Religious Despair* (Oxford, 1991), p. 232; *Tracts of the Learned and Celebrated Antiquarian Sir Thomas Urquhart of Cromarty*, ed. David Herd (Edinburgh, 1774), p. 37.

20. Perkins quoted in Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass., 1954), p. 86; M. A. Screech, *Rabelais* (London, 1979), p. 42.

21. Calvin, *A Little Booke Concernynge Offences*, tr. Arthur Golding (1567), sigs. G5–G8.

version.²² The eighteenth-century anecdote recounting Urquhart's supposed death by "excessive laughter" is in fact a parodic version of the various admonitory tales concerning Rabelais' fate which circulated in the early modern period. One of these is to be found in the section on "Epicures and Atheists" in *The Theatre of God's Judgements* (1597), the popular catalogue of providential punishments compiled by Thomas Beard, Puritan cleric and schoolmaster to none other than Oliver Cromwell: "Francis Rabelais, having suck't up also this poison [of atheism], used like a prophane villaine, to make all Religion a matter to laugh and mocke at: but God deprived him of all his sences, that he had led a brutish life, so that he might die a brutish death; for he died mocking all those that talked of God" (sig. L1).

For all his notoriety, Rabelais was read and admired within the confines of elite social and intellectual circles in Renaissance England. As Anne Lake Prescott has recently shown, among the "sophisticated," "especially those in the university, court and legal worlds," Rabelais was regarded as "a wellhead of wit" and prized for his "impatience with moralistic solemnity."²³ The appeal of Rabelaisian humor to the literati is indicated by the familiarity with *Gargantua and Pantagruel* displayed in the writings of, among others, John Harington, Francis Bacon, John Donne, Ben Jonson, Joseph Hall, John Selden and Thomas Browne. The celebrated series of mock panegyrics attached to *Coryats Crudities* (1611) by a collection of Jacobean poets and wits is full of references and allusions to *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, pointing to the vogue for Rabelaisian humor among the literary coteries who gathered for "Wit-Conventions" in the Mermaid, the Mitre, and the Apollo room of the Devil.²⁴ Allusions to Rabelais in plays and masques by Jonson (whose copy of Rabelais, with some marginal notes, survives in the British Library), Thomas Carew, James Shirley, and Jasper Mayne also suggest that *Gargantua and Pantagruel* was known to writers in and around the

22. Huntingdon Brown, *Rabelais in English Literature* (Cambridge, Mass., 1933), p. 33; Anne Lake Prescott, *Imagining Rabelais in Renaissance England* (New Haven, 1998), p. 79; see pp. 75–85 for examples of Rabelais' reputation in the Renaissance as an epicure, atheist, and libertine.

23. Prescott, pp. 60, 75. Prescott's fine study surveys the reception of Rabelais "before Thomas Urquhart's obstreperous translation made him part of English Literature" (p. vii).

24. On the network of writers and wits who met in the taverns of Stuart London, see W. David Kay, *Ben Jonson: A Literary Life* (London, 1995), pp. 99–104, 174–75. I borrow the term "Wit-Conventions" from Richard Brome's commendatory poem to the folio edition of the *Comedies and Tragedies* of Beaumont and Fletcher (1647), sig. G1. Brome makes much of Beaumont's relationship with Jonson and other Jacobean wits.

Jacobean and Caroline courts. These allusions tend to invoke the drink-soaked, scoffing libertine condemned by Calvin.²⁵ Yet while the Rabelais of Stuart court entertainment is identified with the fleshly and linguistic excesses of anti-masque, the tone is not one of Calvinistic censure but of a knowing awareness, shared by the cognoscenti, of a disreputable but witty author. As the preface to the 1664 reprint of Urquhart's translation puts it: "all men of wit formerly made [Rabelais] their companion, plac'd him in their Cabinet, read him in private: No man was a good companion who had not Rabelais at his fingers ends, and no feast did relish, if not seasoned with the witty sayings of the Author."²⁶ Imagery of the feast or banquet recurs throughout *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, of course, and the appropriate connection that the anonymous writer makes here between "witty sayings," companionship, and feasting was a central motif of classical and humanist discourse, from Plato's *Symposium* to Erasmus' writings on civility. By 1664, however, this humanist commonplace, as with every aspect of early modern English culture, had become polemized. Symposiac wit became associated during the 1650s with a Cavalier vision of society in which "the offices of culture, wit, sociability, and loyalty" were represented as interdependent. This vision was defined in opposition to its inverted image of a grim and fragmented England governed by the "politics and aesthetics of godly inspiration, sobriety, and moral triumphalism."²⁷ To identify *Gargantua and Pantagruel* with wit, fellowship, and high spirits in 1664 was to claim both Rabelais and Urquhart's translation for Cavalierism. An explicit identification of Rabelaisian comedy and royalist politics had been made four years earlier with the appearance of a translation of Rabelais' parodic almanac, *Pantagruel's Prognostication* (1532). The translation, which shows no stylistic signs of being the work of Urquhart, is satirically dedicated to William Lilly, whose astrological predictions had sold in large numbers during the 1640s and 1650s and had acted as propaganda for both Parliament and Cromwell. In the immediate aftermath of the Restoration, Lilly's anti-monarchical predictions could be safely ridiculed. The preface, signed "Democritus Pseudomantis," insists that the parody is appropriately addressed to Lilly, for although Lilly is "not altogether so good a Droll"

25. For references to Rabelais in court masques, see Prescott, pp. 85, 119–20, 147–61, 166–67; on Jonson's copy of Rabelais, see pp. 53–55, 59.

26. *The Works of the famous Mr. Francis Rabelais*, tr. Sir Thomas Urquhart (1664), "To the Reader," sig. A2.

27. Zwicker, *Lines of Authority*, pp. 30, 35.

as Rabelais, he "resemblest him in this that . . . every man when he read thee, has a kind of tentation to laughter."²⁸

The appearance in 1653 of an English version of Rabelais, condemned as a libertine by Calvin and associated in the Stuart court with the performance of carnivalesque excess, must have appealed to a Cavalier community which cultivated an anti-Puritan politics of wit. Emphasizing the Renaissance axiom that the *vir facetus* was by definition sophisticated and socially refined, it was the "first article of faith" of royalist writers of the 1640s that "the Cavalier possessed a sort of Divine Right" to wit, a term which in the first half of the seventeenth century could denote both "high, inventive talent" and "displays of verbal ingenuity, with the intonation of jesting."²⁹ "Wit in a Roundhead," proclaimed the royalist newsbooks, was a contradiction in terms.³⁰ The polemical conflation of wit and loyalty was continued in defeat by the spate of comic verse anthologies, or "drolleries" which appeared in the 1650s. By collecting and publishing scatological and burlesque verse that had previously circulated in manuscript among literary drinking clubs of the 1630s, the compilers of the drolleries sought not only to subvert godly ideals of moral rectitude but to "memorialize a lost golden age of Stuart culture." The publication of this drolling coterie verse (which Urquhart had himself tried in an effort to get on in the Caroline court) was designed to elicit nostalgia for an idealized pre-war world in which, as Herrick puts it in his ode for Jonson in *Hesperides* (1648), poets and wits gathered for "Lyrick Feasts, / Made at the Sun / The Dog, the triple Tunne" and "such clusters had, / As made us nobly wild."³¹ The appearance of a translation of Rabelais in republican England would similarly have invoked the Jonsonian golden age of Stuart literary culture, celebrated in such Cavalier enterprises as the collection of commendatory verses for the folio edition of the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher (1647). Rabelaisian comedy had been directly associated with the Jonsonian ethos through the verse that Jonson wrote to be placed "Over the Door at the Entrance into the

28. *Pantagruel's Prognostication. Certain, True, and Infallible, for the Year Everlasting. Newly Compos'd for the Benefit and Instruction of Hair-Brain'd and Idle Fellowes* (1660), rpt. with an introduction by F. P. Wilson (Oxford, 1947), p. 3.

29. Peter Thomas, *Sir John Berkenhead: A Royalist Career in Politics and Polemics* (Oxford, 1969), p. 120; Leo Salinger, "'Wit' in Jacobean Comedy," in *Dramatic Form in Shakespeare and the Jacobians* (Cambridge, Eng., 1986), p. 141.

30. Worden, p. 308.

31. Raylor, p. 204; *The Poetical Works of Robert Herrick*, ed. F. W. Moorman (Oxford, 1936), p. 282, ll. 4-8.

Apollo,” in which the Apollo room becomes identified with the oracle of classical myth by way of the Oracle of the Holy Bottle that Panurge and Pantagruel seek in the *Cinquième Livre*.

This crowning of “wicked Rabelais” as lord over the “mis-rule of our Tavernings” (the phrase is Joseph Hall’s) in the fashionable socio-literary circles that gave rise to Cavalier culture points to the formal analogy between Cavalier mirth as an inversion of godly values and the Rabelaisian carnivalesque as elaborated by Bakhtin—both involve a satirical reversal of the hierarchies of spirit and flesh, mind and body.³² Royalist odes to drunkenness, whether in the form of popular newsbook songs or the anacreontics of Robert Herrick, Richard Lovelace, Thomas Stanley, and Alexander Brome, provided an opportunity not only to offend godly moralism but to parody radical Puritan claims to divine inspiration. The tavern became a kind of alternative sacred space for defeated royalists in which the performance of drinking rituals provided “both a secular liturgy and a way of parodying the authority of a government they refused to recognize.”³³ If the punishable act of drinking a health to Charles II was “one of the most important gestures of royalist solidarity” during the 1650s, then the rousing Prologue to Urquhart’s *Gargantua*, which addresses a readership of “Noble and Illustrious Drinkers” and “Pockified blades,” must have had a powerful resonance for the community of defeated Cavaliers, some of whom doubtless recalled the use of Rabelaisian comedy to stage festive liberty in the Stuart masque: “Be frolic now, my lads, cheer up your hearts, and joyfully read the rest, with all the ease of your body and profit of your reins. But hearken, joltheads, you viedazes, or dickens take ye, remember to drink a health to me for the like favour again, and I will pledge you instantly, *Tout aresmetys*.”³⁴

Commenting on the recurring motifs of imprisonment and drunkenness in royalist literature, Lois Potter compares the tavern and the prison as “protective enclosures” in which “the Cavalier can carry on rituals of loyalty” (p. 138). In this light the imprisoned Urquhart’s translation of the first two books of Rabelais looks like a statement of Cavalier

32. Joseph Hall, *Virgidemiae* (1597), II.i.57–58, in Hall, *Collected Poems*, ed. A. Davenport (Liverpool, 1949); Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, tr. Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington, 1984), pp. 18–24.

33. Lois Potter, *Secret Rites and Secret Writing: Royalist Literature, 1641–1660* (Cambridge, Eng., 1989), p. 138.

34. Raylor, p. 192; *Works of Mr. Francis Rabelais*, I, 14. Compare, for instance, the exhortation in Herrick’s “The Hock-Cart, or Harvest Home”: “Drink frolick boyes, till all be blythe” (l. 43); *Poetical Works*, p. 101.

allegiance and anti-Puritan defiance, while his insistence that his freedom and estate should be exchanged for the remaining three books seems to be a transparent joke on his godly jailers. Urquhart had fought alongside the Scottish Presbyterians at Worcester, but his long-standing anti-Puritanism seems only to have been confirmed and strengthened by the experience. In *The Jewel*, Urquhart sought not only to convince the Council of State of his ability to make a stunning contribution to the advancement of learning through the invention of a universal language but to vindicate “the honour of Scotland, from that Infamy, whereunto the rigid *Presbyterian* party of that Nation, out of their Covetousness and ambition, most dissembledly hath involved it.” *The Jewel* is in fact written under the flimsy persona of “Christianus Presbyteromastix” (“Christian eater of Presbyterians”)—by referring to himself in the third person, Urquhart is able to maximize praise of his own abilities while skirting accusations of outrageous egotism. Convinced that the “ecclesiastical tyranny” erected in Scotland by the Presbyterians has stained the ancient honor and pan-European reputation of the Scottish race, Urquhart seeks to remind his readers of the “martial and literary endowments of some natives of that soyle, though much eclipsed by their coclimatory wasps of a Presbyterian crue” (pp. 50–51). Hence Urquhart provides a lengthy survey of the abilities and achievements of various Scots over the previous two centuries, the apotheosis of which is Urquhart’s most anthologized piece of original prose: a lengthy and rhetorically lush account, disconcertingly teetering on the verge of mock-heroic parody, of the amazing exploits of the sixteenth-century adventurer James Crichton—“the Admirable Crichton”—in the court of Mantua. Urquhart’s ostensible point is that Presbyterian domination is preventing Scotland from living up to its reputation for honor, valor, and learning. He represents his own condition as personifying that of his country, complaining that “rapacious varlets” masked with “the vizard of Presbyterian zeal” have sequestered his estate in Cromarty and so denied him the leisure and finance required to realize his various ideas, or “brain-itineraries,” for intellectual and scientific advancement (p. 91).

Urquhart actually has to extend the resources of the English language to find the words to express his contempt for the Presbyterians’ greed, equivocation, and hypocrisy: they are condemned as, among other things, “kirkomanetick philarchists,” “*quomodocunquizing* cluster-fists” and “gnatonick syncophantiz[ers]” (pp. 89, 91, 181). This creativity with vituperative idiom is characteristic of Urquhart’s version of Rabelais, in

which he repeatedly exaggerates even the most exaggerated of the lists that parody the epic catalogues in his original. Where Rabelais has the cakemakers of Lerné hurl twenty-eight different insults at the shepherds of Gargantua, for example, they are given forty-three “defamatory epithets” to express their disdain in Urquhart’s version. The shepherds are accused of being “slabberdegullion druggels,” “jobbernal goosecaps,” “slutch calf-lollies,” “ninnie lobcocks,” “scurvie sneaksbies,” “noddie meacocks,” “doddi-poljolt-heads” (I, 191). While a Rabelaisian language of abuse shapes Urquhart’s anti-Puritan expression in *The Jewel*, his rendering of the conclusion of *Pantagruel* is made to bear the pressure of contemporary polemical engagement:

if you read [these tales] to make yourselves merry, as in manner of pastime I wrote them, you and I are both farre more worthy of pardon, then a great rabble of squint-minded fellowes, dissembling and counterfeit Saints, demure lookers, hypocrites, pretended zealots, tough Fryars, buskin-Monks, and other such sects of men, who disguise themselves like Maskers to deceive the world, for, whilst they give the common people to understand, that they are busied about nothing but contemplation and devotion in fastings, and masceration of their sensuality; and that only to sustain and aliment the small frailty of their humanity: it is so far otherwise, that on the contrary (God knows) what cheer they make, *Et Curios simulant, sed bacchanalia vivunt*. You may read it in great letters, in the colouring of their red snowts, and gulching bellies as big as a tun, unlesse it be when they perfume themselves with sulphur; as for their study, it is wholly taken up in reading of Pantagruelin books, not so much to pass the time merrily, as to hurt some one or other mischievously, to wit, in articling, sole-articling, wry-neckifying, buttock-stirring, ballocking, and diablliculating, that is, calumniating. (I, 336)

This is an unusual moment in *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, when we feel Rabelais is addressing us directly and with deadly seriousness; condemned by Rome, he really was at risk of a “wry-neckifying” at the end of a rope for having published his “merry” tales. However the phrase “dissembling and counterfeit Saints” is a moment of creative translation and adaptation on Urquhart’s part.³⁵ It seems that Urquhart heard in Rabelais’ raw attack on clerical hypocrisy, persecution, and censorship an echo of his own hatred for the “pretended zealots” of Presbyterianism.

35. J. M. Cohen translates the phrase literally as “false cenobites”; *Gargantua and Pantagruel* (Harmondsworth, 1955), p. 278.

The terms of Rabelais' (partly disingenuous) protest against the clergy's malicious misreading of his harmless tales, as translated and updated to attack Puritan hypocrisy by Urquhart, recall Andrew Marvell's violent attack on Presbyterian censorship in "To his Noble Friend Mr. Richard Lovelace, upon his Poems," published in Lovelace's *Lucasta* in May 1649. Marvell warns Lovelace of the "reforming eye" that the "young presbytery" will cast upon his poems, apparently referring to the delay in publication of *Lucasta*, which was originally prepared for the press in February 1648. These "barbed censurers" will read satire, profanity, and politics in Lovelace's innocent verse: they are "Word-peckers, paper-rats, book-scorpions, / Of wit corrupted, the unfashioned sons." Lovelace was indeed imprisoned in October 1648, although the grounds of his arrest remain unclear.³⁶ The comparison is pertinent because recent work on the prefatory verses to *Lucasta* helps to explain why Urquhart's translation should not after all be regarded as an ironic gesture of cultural resistance to the new republic and its values. The political maneuvering which has been identified around the publication of Lovelace's collection sheds light on Urquhart's apparently unlikely belief that an English Rabelais could secure his freedom and the restoration of his estate in Cromarty.

IV

"To his Noble Friend, Mr. Richard Lovelace" has of course proved problematic to critics seeking consistency in Marvell's ideological allegiance. It seems difficult to reconcile the Marvell of the Lovelace poem with the Marvell of "An Horation Ode," possibly written less than eighteen months later. The poem's sympathetic portrayal of Lovelace, the flower of Cavalierism, coupled with its bitter anti-Presbyterianism and typically Cavalier opposition of wit and poetry to Puritan violence and philistinism have often been cited as evidence of Marvell's royalism at this time. David Norbrook has recently argued, however, that the poem should be read in the context of efforts by Parliamentary writers to offer "common ground with royalists" in the aftermath of the end of the First Civil War in 1646. According to this argument, the Lovelace poem belongs to "the world of post-war reconciliation" in which

36. Andrew Marvell: *A Critical Edition of the Major Works*, ed. Keith Walker (Oxford, 1992), pp. 4–5, ll. 19–24; *Poems of Richard Lovelace*, ed. C. H. Wilkinson (Oxford, 1953), p. 345.

Marvell followed the lead of his friend John Hall of Durham, who also supplied a dedicatory poem to *Lucasta*, in seeking to make “common cause between Independents and royalists against the Presbyterians.”³⁷ John Hall (1627–1656) was a poet of some distinction—his *Poems* (1646) were published by the university printer while he was still at Cambridge—and a drinking partner of eminent Cavalier writers such as Lovelace, Herrick, James Shirley, Edward Sherburne, and Thomas Stanley. He was also, however, a committed supporter of Parliament in the late 1640s and was employed as a government official under the republic, having been granted a pension of £100 per annum by Parliament in May 1649 to “make Answer to such pamphletts as shall come out to the prejudice of this Com[m]onwealth.” Hall continued in this post of official apologist under the Protectorate, retaining his pension until April 1655.³⁸

In his topical writings between the end of the first civil war and the execution of the King, Hall was “a significant figure in trying to put into practice an Independent cultural politics which would bring together former royalists and quasi-republicans.”³⁹ In a series of publications in 1647–1648 he addressed the Cavaliers and urged them to distinguish between the dogmatic and treacherous Presbyterians, who by then were massing into a counter-revolutionary force in reaction to Parliament’s failure to impose a Presbyterian church government, and those Independent, anti-clerical supporters of the Parliamentary cause who advocated liberty of conscience, valued the arts, and participated in literary culture. Inspired by Milton’s opposition in *Areopagitica* (1644) of the Presbyterians’ authoritarian certitude, epitomized in their support for licensing laws, to the sublime intellectual energy created by the free exchange of books and ideas, Hall responded to a central charge of Cavalier polemic by

37. Norbrook, pp. 173, 177; on the dating of the poem to Lovelace, see p. 172, n. 91.

38. *The Life Records of John Milton*, ed. J. M. French, 5 vols. (New Jersey, 1949–58), II, 250; IV, 23. See also Bodleian Library, MS Rawl A. 328, fol. 107. For a contemporary account of Hall’s life and his anti-monarchical beliefs, see John Davies of Kidwelly, “An Account of the Author of this Translation, and his Works,” prefixed to *Hierocles Upon the Golden Verses of Pythagoras*, tr. by John Hall (1657); cf. Anthony Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses*, ed. Philip Bliss, 4 vols. (1813–1820), II, 457–60. See also Joad Raymond, “John Hall’s *A Method of History*: A Book Lost and Found,” *English Literary Renaissance* 28 (1998), 267–69. On Hall’s friendship with the royalist poets and translators centered around Thomas Stanley, to whom Hall dedicated his 1647 *Poems*, see Stella P. Revard, “Thomas Stanley and ‘A Register of Friends,’” in *Literary Circles and Cultural Communities in Renaissance England*, ed. Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth (Columbia, 2000), pp. 148–72.

39. Norbrook, p. 169.

insisting that the Presbyterians, not the Roundheads *in toto*, were the enemies of civility, learning, and culture. He could consequently argue that the interests of his royalist literary friends would be better served by a Parliamentary government controlled by Independents and quasi-republicans than by a king who sought alliance with the Presbyterians. In his pamphlet *A True Account and Character of the Times* (1647) and his 1648 newsbook *Mercurius Britanicus Alive Again*, Hall appealed directly to a Cavalier audience: he condemned, for example, the sequestration of royalists' property and called for the theaters to be reopened. Because of his credentials as a poet, his friendship with prominent royalist writers, and his consequent familiarity with the culture of Cavalierism, Hall was able to adopt a conciliatory and reassuring tone. The respect that royalist polemicists in turn had for Hall is indicated by John Berkenhead's expression of regret that "*Jack Hall of Cambridge* (whom because I know him to bee a man of parts sufficient, I will not divulge him) should so farre lose himselfe, as to justifie the Rebels in a weekly *Gazet*."⁴⁰

Hall's dedicatory poem to *Lucasta*, which lauds "Colonel" Lovelace for his rare eminence as both soldier and poet, was placed alongside Marvell's at the head of the volume. Both poems can be read as a "gesture of solidarity across party lines." Norbrook speculates that the licensing of *Lucasta*, after it had been held back for over a year, was a move to reassure Cavaliers that the new republican state would provide a hospitable climate for poetry and the arts. Lovelace certainly remembered Hall with affection, composing an elegy on "the Genius of Mr. *John Hall*," although Herrick, Shirley, and Stanley also dedicated verses to Hall, praising his prodigious abilities as a wit, poet and translator.⁴¹ The esteem in which the Cavalier poets held Hall is an important reminder that personal friendships and literary admiration could transcend the ideological conflicts of the period. Hall's associations with Cavalier poets and his efforts to find common anti-clerical ground between royalists and Independents in 1647–1649 are also part of the story behind the publication of Urquhart's Rabelais in 1653. For the long dedicatory poem printed in the first book of Urquhart's translation,

40. Norbrook, pp. 169–80; *Mercurius Bellicus*, no. 19, May 30–June 6, 1648, p. 7.

41. See "To the Genius of Mr. *John Hall*," in Lovelace, *Poems*, p. 190; Robert Herrick, "To his worthy friend M. John Hall, Student of Grayes-Inne," in *Poetical Works*, p. 292; James Shirley, "To the deserving Author upon his Essays," in John Hall, *Horae Vacivae* (Cambridge, 1646), sig. Biv; Thomas Stanley, "On Mr. Halls Essayes," in Stanley, *Poems* (1651), p. 76; Revard, p. 171.

"To the Honoured, Noble Translatour of Rabelais," is signed "John De La Salle"—the occasional *nom de plume* of John Hall of Durham.⁴²

Hall's sixty-six-line poem opens by praising Rabelaisian wit, which "prodigiously was made / All men, professions, actions to invade" (ll. 1–2). Despite the universal scope of Rabelais' wit, his "deep sense" becomes apparent only to those who "[s]eriously strip him of his wilde disguise" and "unveil his hidden mirth" (ll. 12, 15). "[D]ull souls" condemn the "noble leaves" of Rabelais's text as "Antick and Gottish"; but while *Gargantua and Pantagruel* may appear on the surface to be merely a succession of coarse tales of "Monsters and Grotescoes," this "wilde disguise" is in fact the key to Rabelais' genius:

For he was wise and Sovereignly bred
To know what mankinde is, how't may be led:
He stoop'd unto them, like that wise man, who
Rod on a stick when's children would do so.
For we are easie sullen things, and must
Be laught aright, and cheated into trust,
Whil'st a black piece of Flegme, that laies about
Dull menaces, and terrifies the rout[,]
And Cajoles it, with all its peevish strength
Pitiously stretch'd and botch'd up into length,
Whil'st the tired rabble sleepily obey
Such opiate talk, and snore away the day.
By all his noise as much their mind releeves,
As catterwalling of wilde cats frights theeves. (ll. 23–36)

For Hall, *Gargantua and Pantagruel* exemplifies the affective and educative power of wit, by which men may be "laught aright, and cheated into trust." Acquainted with "all the Arts of life," Rabelais made the "wise choice" of "acting th' Philosopher" in "the foole's coat" (ll. 45–46). Hall contrasts the persuasive efficacy of laughter with the grim beratings of "a black piece of Flegme," vainly seeking to terrify "the rout" into virtuous behavior with "[d]ull menaces." Hall's language here echoes contemporary polemical sketches of the puritan preacher. The royalist divine Jasper Mayne, for example, contrasted the delightful preaching of John Donne,

42. Hall used the pen-name "De La Salle" for the second edition of his *Paradoxes* (1653), having published the first edition in 1650 under his real name, and for his translation of Michael Maier's alchemical animal fable *Lusus Serius* (1654). In his introduction to Hall's posthumously published translation of *Hierocles Upon the Golden Verses of Pythagoras*, John Davies includes a previously unpublished poem by Hall signed "J. De La Sall." (sig. A8).

which could “divide the heart, and conscience touch,” with the hell-fire sermons of

our Sons of Zeale, who to reforme
Their hearers, fiercely at the Pulpit storme,
And beate the cushion into worse estate,
Then if they did conclude it reprobate,
Who can out pray the glasse, then lay about
Till all Predestination be runne out.
And from the point such tedious uses draw,
Their repetitions would make Gospell, Law.

John Davies tells us that Hall “thought it indeed no great devotion to hear a sort of people whose Tenets are as different as the laces of their caps, or the colours of the cushions they beat.”⁴³ Hall’s claims for the rhetorical and ethical superiority of scandalous Rabelaisian wit over puritanical sermonizing are thus in line with the anti-clerical, anti-Presbyterian sentiments of his controversial writing. His first appearance in print on behalf of the republic was an attack on the veteran Presbyterian polemicist William Prynne, who is comically dismissed as one of nature’s “dullest Beasts” for his “most laborious” writing: “Verily had you been *Amphion*, and gone about to build the walls of *Thebes* with your Harpe, the stones out of meer rage would have rained and pelted you to death.”⁴⁴

In the final section of the poem Hall addresses Urquhart, praising him for at last making the notorious *Gargantua and Pantagruel* available to the English reader, so shedding “radiant brightnesse” on “dark Rabelais,” “[s]cattering his mists, cheering his Cynick frowns” (ll. 59–60). Urquhart’s achievement has also restored something of the tarnished reputation of the Scots for wit and learning:

So undeceiving us that now we see
All wit in Gascone and in Cromartie,
Besides that *Rabelais* is conveigh’d to us,
And that our Scotland is not barbarous. (ll. 63–66)

This sounds like a direct response to Urquhart’s pledge in *The Jewel* to “undeceive” those in England who would tar all Scots with the brush of

43. “On Dr. Donne’s Death,” prefixed to Donne’s 1633 *Poems*; quoted in Evelyn Simpson, *A Study of the Prose Works of John Donne* (Oxford, 1924), p. 240; “An Account of the Author,” *Hierocles*, sig. A1v.

44. [John Hall], *A Serious Epistle to Mr. William Prynne* (1649), pp. 4, 8.

the Presbyterians' uncivilized values and duplicitous behavior: "there being nothing in the mouthes almost of all this country more common than the words of the 'perfidious Scot,' the 'treacherous Scot,' the 'false brother,' the 'covetous Scot' and the 'knot of knaves' and other suchlike indignities fixed upon the whole nation for the baseness of some—I resolved on a sudden (for the undeceiving of honest men and the imbuing of their minds with a better opinion of Scottish spirits) to insert the martial and literary endowments of some natives of that soyle, though much eclipsed by their coclimatory wasps of a Presbyterian crue" (p. 51). Hall declares that Urquhart's own "literary endowment" will persuade English readers to have "a better opinion of Scottish spirits." Whether or not Hall had read *The Jewel*, he evidently knew something of Urquhart's background and personal concerns. Both Hall's taste for Rabelaisian wit and his access to the translation before publication are confirmed by his reference to *Gargantua and Pantagruel* in a pamphlet defending Cromwell's dissolution of the "Rump" Parliament: "What [the Parliament has] done as to *Establishment* and *Liberty* I am to confesse they have altered the Titles of *Writs*, they have told us we have a *Commonwealth* but, for any *essential* fruits thereof, a man may (*drolling*) say, they have cut off the head of a *King*, and set a *Commonwealth* upon his shoulders, which like *Epistemon* in *Rabelais* (who was beheaded in a fight) are so finely *sewed* together, that they may return out of *Hel* and tell things that they did there."⁴⁵ *A Letter to a Gentleman in the Country, touching the Dissolution of the late Parliament* is dated May 3, 1653, by Hall, and May 16 by Thomason, who did not receive Urquhart's *Rabelais* for another month. Hall, who was a "Master" of "many languages," may certainly have known *Rabelais* in the French; but the proximity of the dates suggests that he had recently been reading Urquhart and working on his commendatory poem.⁴⁶

Hall's reference is to *Pantagruel*, chapter 30: "How *Epistemon*, who had his head cut off, was finely healed by *Panurge*, and of the News which he brought from the Devils, and the damned people in Hell." After a battle *Panurge* reincarnates *Epistemon* by smearing excrement on his neck and sewing his head back on "veine against veine, sinew against sinew." In a version of Lucian's *Menippean* satire, *Epistemon* comes to

45. [John Hall], *A Letter to a Gentleman in the Country, touching the Dissolution of the late Parliament and the Reasons thereof* (1653), p. 5; Thomason ascribed this pamphlet, which is signed "N. LL.," to Milton.

46. *Hierocles*, sig. a8v.

life and tells of his experiences in hell, where the devils were “boone companions” and he saw the great kings, warriors and intellectuals of classical history engaged in comically inappropriate mechanic trades.⁴⁷ Perhaps recalling news reports of the King’s head being sewn back on immediately after his execution, Hall uses the analogy from Rabelais to suggest that, rather than pushing through comprehensive reform of the structures of the body politic, Parliament has merely indulged in a form of political necromancy and conjured a grotesque zombie-monarchy. In a mood of post-regicide excitement, Hall (echoing *Areopagitica*) had envisaged England under Parliamentary rule “like a wakened Gyant begin[n]g to rowze it selfe up, and looke where it may conquer . . . in her vast and stupendous symmetry.”⁴⁸ Now the Rump is pictured as one of Rabelais’ bibulous buffoons, and a half-dead one at that. In his 1654 apology for the dissolution of the Nominated Parliament and installation of Cromwell as Protector, Hall recalled his optimistic imagery of 1649: “But as it happens in all things humane, to be corruptible, so it fell out in this great *Body* (and all Governments may well be said to be artificiall men) that though it rose as a Gyant in the morning, and ran its race swiftly before noon, yet sitting long after, it grew *Catharrack* and lazy, nay diseased and troublesome.” Hall alludes here to the first page of Hobbes’s *Leviathan* (1651), from which he derives a good deal of his pamphlet’s arguments about the *salus populi*, the dangers of religious enthusiasm and the necessity of separating civil and religious government.⁴⁹ In contrast to the image of Parliament as a grotesque, diseased, and stitched-up giant, Hall’s Cromwell embodies the sinewy sovereignty of the Leviathan in his heroic act of dissolution: “it was [the people’s] action as well as *his*; and it was no more *his* action than it is the action of the *Head* moved by *Tendons* and *Muscles*, which are parts of the *Body*, and without which the *Head* it self could not possibly move.”⁵⁰ Parliament is first

47. *Works of Mr. Francis Rabelais*, I, 319–26.

48. For the reattachment of the King’s head, see *Making the News: An Anthology of the Newsbooks of Revolutionary England*, ed. Joad Raymond (Gloucestershire, 1993), p. 249; Hall, *The Advancement of Learning* (1649), ed. A. K. Croston (Liverpool, 1953), p. 19; cf. Milton, *Complete Prose Works*, ed. D. M. Wolfe, et al., 8 vols. (New Haven, 1953–1982), II, 558.

49. [John Hall], *Confusion Confounded. Or, A Firm Way of Settlement Settled and Confirmed* (1654), p. 2; Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge, Eng., 1991), p. 9: “For by Art is created that great LEVIATHAN called a COMMONWEALTH, or STATE, (in latine CIVITAS) which is but an Artificiall Man.”

50. *A Letter Written to a Gentleman*, p. 15; cf. *Leviathan*, pp. 9–10.

imagined as Milton's awesome English Samson, is then bathetically reduced to Rabelais' comic Epistemon, and is finally subsumed into Hobbes's vast personification of power in the frontispiece to *Leviathan*.

Hall's use of the grotesque Rabelaisian giant as an image of a shamed body politic explicitly appropriates for Cromwellian apologetic the sort of "drolling" wit that Cavalier writers claimed as their exclusive preserve and had long employed as a vehicle for anti-Roundhead polemic. However, "Jack Hall of Cambridge" had always been noted for his "prodigious Wit." In his dedicatory poem to Hall's *Poems*, Henry More greeted the nineteen-year-old student as a "Storm of wit / That fall'st on all thou meet'st"; a "Tyranick wit" who "Anon advancing thy Satyrick Flail / Sweep'st down the Wine glasses and cups of ale." According to his royalist friend John Davies, Hall revived the Parliamentary newsbook *Mercurius Britanicus* in response to the perceived Cavalier monopoly of polemical wit: "The wits of the ruined party had their secret *Clubs*, these hatched *Mercuries*, *Satyres*, and *Pasquinado's*, that travelled up and down the streets with so much impunity, that the poor weekly *Hackneyes*, durst hardly communicate the ordinary Intelligence. This was the true state of affairs when Mr. Hall made that appearance for the State, not dissonant to his former principles, even in the University, which were sufficiently anti-monarchicall, and subservient to the interests of a Common-wealth."⁵¹ Timothy Raylor has shown how these "secret Clubs" were derived from the courtly coteries that met for "*Lyrick Feasts*" in the taverns of pre-war London. During the 1650s such royalist "correspondence networks" were behind the production, circulation, and publication of the scurrilous comic verse collected in the drolleries; an activity which both the Commonwealth and Protectoral governments recognized as subversive and periodically sought to prohibit (p. 197). Hall chose to respond more positively, continuing the efforts he began in *Britanicus* to undermine the Cavalier identification of wit and loyalty. In his new capacity as official literary apologist for the republic, Hall extended his campaign, begun in the later 1640s, to win the battle for cultural politics. His involvement in the publication of Urquhart's Rabelais was one aspect of this campaign.

51. *Hierocles*, sigs. A8v, b3v; More, "To the Young Author upon his incomparable veine in Satyre and Love-Sonnets," in Hall, *Poems* (Cambridge, 1647), sigs. A4–A4v.

In 1650 Hall published a collection of prose *Paradoxes*; the second, expanded edition appeared three years later. The popular Renaissance genres of the paradox and the mock-encomium—one of the most celebrated examples of which is Panurge's speech in favor of debt in *Gargantua and Pantagruel*—were “exercises of wit designed to amuse an audience sufficiently sophisticated in the arts of language to understand them.” Consequently these genres flourished in Renaissance England in the milieu of university and Inns of Court-trained wits and scholars.⁵² John Donne's considerable debt to the parodic literary culture of the Inns of Court is most obvious in *Certaine Paradoxes, and Problemes* (1633; dating from 1598–1602) and Latin works such as “Catalogus aulicorum,” a mock book catalogue directly modelled on Rabelais' Library of St. Victor. Hall, who moved to Gray's Inn from Cambridge in 1647, follows Donne in his *joco-serio* questioning of conventional ideas about happiness and the relationship between the sexes. Yet his “anti-monarchical” politics are immediately laid on the table by the contention which opens both editions of the *Paradoxes*, “That an absolute Tyranny is the best Government.” Hall's defense of stock arguments for monarchical rule within the contradictory structure of the paradox has the ironic effect of presenting such arguments as inversions of the natural order, contrary to reason and morality, and only made persuasive through the writer's rhetorical and dialectical ingenuity. Hall displays his skill in exercises of facetious wit while affirming his ideological allegiance to the republic, thus undermining the favorite Cavalier charge that the notion of wit in a Roundhead was itself a paradox.

The publication of the *Paradoxes* can be seen not only as a response by Hall to the claims of royalist writers that they lived in “Times which made it Treason to be witty” (as Jasper Mayne put it in 1651) but also as a conciliatory gesture toward those same royalists, so continuing the policy that Hall had initiated in the newsbook *Britanicus* and his first controversial writings of 1647–1648. The 1653 *Paradoxes* was edited by John Davies; a friend of John Berkenhead, Katherine Philips, and Thomas Stanley, Davies had recently been a member of Henrietta Maria's court in Paris and was known for his translations of French

52. Rosalie L. Colie, *Paradoxia Epidemica: The Renaissance Tradition of Paradox* (New Jersey, 1966), p. 5.

courtly romances, several of which Humphrey Moseley published in the 1650s.⁵³ Davies' role in the publishing of the *Paradoxes* and fulsome recommendation of Hall's wit in the preface thus demonstrated to a royalist audience the possibility of post-regicide rapprochement between former Cavaliers and republicans in the cause of learning and letters. That possibility is emphasized by the first commendatory poem in the 1653 *Paradoxes*, entitled "*To his very honoured Friend, the Authour*" and signed "Tho. Urquhart." The eighteen-line poem continues the theme of Davies' preface by asserting the wit of a Roundhead:

*Reason of man being the most exquisit
And noble part, and of that reason, wit,
And amongst wits, that which doth prove of all
Most rationally Paradoxically;
Then you most eminent must needs possess
Amidst the most refined, a prime place. (sig. ★10v)*

The inclusion in the volume of a poem by Urquhart, a state prisoner for his part on the battlefield at Worcester, sends out clear conciliatory signals to royalist readers. The exchange of commendatory poems between Hall and Urquhart publicly displays mutual support in literary endeavor between a former royalist soldier and a republican official, just as the verses by Hall and Marvell before *Lucasta* promote the cause of poetry in the new Commonwealth without regard to past allegiance. Yet while Lovelace was released from prison the month before *Lucasta* was finally licensed—a gesture, perhaps, of the republic's goodwill toward poets as well as poetry—Urquhart's preface to the second book of his Rabelais is a complaint against his continued imprisonment. Urquhart and Hall, Cavalier and Roundhead, may have become friends, but it could hardly have been a friendship of equals while the laird of Cromarty remained a prisoner of war.

Hall's enthusiasm for the translation must have given Urquhart reason to believe that the republican authorities would consider exchanging his "real and personal estate" for the remaining three books. For Hall was not only looking to win the battle for cultural politics on the strength of his own literary efforts, like the witty *Paradoxes* or his powerful rendering of Longinus (1652), in which he associates the flourishing of sublime

53. See Mayne's poem in William Cartwright, *Comedies, Tragi-comedies, with Other Poems* (1651), sigs. B6–B6v. On Davies, see Thomas, pp. 141–42. The old *DNB* entry on Davies is unreliable.

eloquence with republican conditions of political liberty.⁵⁴ Hall had sought since the inception of the Commonwealth to develop a Parliamentary system of literary patronage which could surpass the supposed cultural golden age of the Stuart court in its achievements, so undermining the royalist accusation that (as Dryden was to put it later) “Never rebel was to arts a friend.”⁵⁵ In *The Advancement of Learning* (1649), a manifesto for educational reform written shortly after the regicide, Hall had urged Parliament to establish its legitimacy and authority by investing in the literary and cultural life of the nation: “What better means have you to confute all the scandalls and imputations of your deadly adversaries, who have not spared to speake you worse than *Goths* and *Vandalls*, and the utter destroyers of all Civility and Literature, then by seriously composing your selves to the designe of cherishing of either. What directer caus-way could you finde to the aggrandization of your owne glory, then entertaining the celebrated care of so many Kings, the onely splendour of so many Republicks, the life and lustre of so many Ages?” (pp. 13–14). As someone who had moved in their circles, Hall must have been particularly conscious of how Cavalier writers regarded and represented the republic. Hall was friends with some of the poets and wits who had shaped the cultural politics of Cavalierism. The Beaumont and Fletcher Folio of 1647, which was presented as “a reaffirmation of Cavalier ideals and a gesture of defiance against a society which had repudiated them,” had included commendatory verses by Stanley, Lovelace, and Herrick as well as a preface by Shirley. Hall recognized that repeated royalist assertions of “the philistinism of those in power, and the monopoly over learning and culture held by those excluded” worked to undermine the political legitimacy of the republic by invoking the Renaissance commonplace of “arts united with empire in properly constituted polity.”⁵⁶ In *The Advancement of Learning* Hall urged the republic to respond to Cavalier anxieties and accusations about the debasement of the arts in a world without king and court by promoting the patronage of literary and scholarly endeavor. “So vast is the Prerogative of letters,” he reminded Parliament, “that they can dispense not onely life, but estimation and glory unto whom they please, and command the reputation

54. *Peri Hypsous, or Dionysius Longinus of the Height of Eloquence*, tr. by J[ohn] H[all] (1652).

55. *Abalom and Achitophel* (1681), l. 873, in John Dryden, ed. Keith Walker (Oxford, 1978), p. 200.

56. Thomas, p. 177; Derek Hirst, “The Politics of Literature in the English Republic,” *The Seventeenth Century* 5 (1990), 148–49.

of past, and the beleefe of present and future ages” (p. 12). *The Advancement of Learning* secured Hall his annual pension and brief to respond to published criticism of the Commonwealth. As John Davies reflected in 1656, the regime had needed people like Hall at a time “when it had so few friends of the pen.”

Hall’s interest in the translation of Rabelais is explicable partly in terms of his own sophisticated cultural background and taste for anti-clerical satire; but the appearance of an English Rabelais under the patronage of the republic would also have advanced his campaign to meet Cavalier literary culture on its own terms and then surpass it. The fashion for translating European texts during the 1650s, particularly from the French, has been seen as one aspect of royalist claims for the cultural superiority of the defeated: European translation displayed the urbane, cosmopolitan mentality of the Cavaliers while emphasizing the blinkered provincialism of their Puritan rulers. Hall’s friends among the Cavaliers such as Davies, Stanley, and Sherburne were all involved in translation from the romance languages.⁵⁷ Despite his libertine reputation, Rabelais’ linguistic wit and humanist inventiveness were increasingly recognized by those interested in languages and philology. Sir Thomas Browne, for instance, advised that the study of French dialect was worth all the effort as “without some knowledge herein you cannot exactly understand the Works of Rabelais.”⁵⁸ By encouraging Urquhart’s impressive translation of a European text beloved of the Stuart literati and particularly admired by Ben Jonson, the father of Cavalier poetics, Hall could respond to the royalist appropriation of languages and translation by pointing to the continuing development of literary culture under the republic, just as his support for Lovelace had demonstrated to the “Sons of Ben” the continuing potential for poetic achievement in a kingless England.

We know that Hall’s decision to enter the public sphere of controversial exchange was prompted by the perceived lack of wit in Parliamentary writing. His sensitivity to the royalist appropriation of the Jonsonian values of wit, conviviality, and friendship—values associated by Jonson himself with Rabelaisian humor—is apparent in *Mercurius Britannicus*. Hall directly addressed those Cavaliers who sought to preserve the playful, mocking ethos of the literary clubs of pre-war London and

57. Thomas, pp. 141–42, 148, 184; Hirst, p. 145; Revard, p. 149.

58. “Of Languages,” in *The Works of Sir Thomas Browne*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes, 4 vols. (London, 1928–1931), III, 81.

to display their resistance to the values of Puritan England through a Rabelaisian worship of the bottle: "Were it not better for you to eschew all these inconveniencies and timely contain your selves at your Clubs, and there under the Rose vent all your set forms of execrations against the Parliament and Army . . . This were the fittest employment for your Degeneracies, and if you want any Rulers, sixe beer-glasses of Sacke brings the King and all his Progeny unto you; and the glasses inverted in a Grecian health represents you with those lovely Idaes of your Mistresses and Whores."⁵⁹ By engaging his skeptical Cavalier cronies in their own chosen register of bawdy satire, Hall was trying to laugh them into the Parliamentary fold. Like his own display of louche "drolling" in the *Paradoxes* (where one of the contentions is that "Women ought to go naked"), Hall's support for Urquhart's English Rabelais was a response to the repeated Cavalier charge that wit had fled England with the last breath of the king and been replaced by a tyranny of zealous moralizing and puritanical dullness, a charge that was to become a royalist mantra after the Restoration, chanted most loudly by those like Dryden who needed to distract attention from their own cordial relations with the governments of the 1650s.

VI

Hall and Urquhart seem to have formed a genuine friendship based on a shared appreciation of Rabelaisian wit, and consequently Hall may have been able to convince Urquhart intellectually that his own future as well as the future of Scotland would be better served by a British republic than by a king who had allied himself with the Presbyterians, those "dissembling and counterfeit Saints" on whom Urquhart blamed both the loss of his own estate and Scotland's "disreputation for covetousness and hypocrisie."⁶⁰ For Urquhart, almost certainly working in conjunction with Hall, published an anonymous defense of Cromwell's dissolution of Parliament in 1653. *Reasons Why the Supreme Authority of the Three Nations (for the time) is not in the Parliament, but in the new-established Council of State* is dated May 17, and advertises, praises, and quotes at length from Hall's *A Letter Written to a Gentleman in the Country touching the Dissolution of Parliament*, the tract in which Hall satirically likens the Rump

59. *Mercurius Britannicus*, no. 1 (May 16, 1648), sig. A3.

60. *The Jewel*, p. 88.

Parliament to Rabelais' Epistemon. *Reasons Why the Supreme Authority* also follows Hall's epistolary form, being presented as an "answer to a letter sent from a Gentleman in Scotland to a friend of his in London." David Norbrook has assigned this pamphlet to "one enthusiast" of the idea of Cromwell as another Caesar, quoting it as an illustration of how the dissolution of Parliament opened the way for "a renewed form of literary Augustanism." In fact Urquhart's authorship was tentatively proposed by Hugh Candy as long ago as 1934, as his own copy of the pamphlet was signed in Urquhart's hand. In 1948 C. H. Wilkinson confirmed Urquhart's involvement on the strength of internal stylistic evidence.⁶¹ Several of Urquhart's singular turns of phrase appear, as in the closing assurance that the Scottish author "hath ever from his years of discretion upward, studied the promoal of the honour of his native country" (p. 30). The attribution has been ignored by all subsequent criticism. Perhaps the notion that such a "wildly enthusiastic" and "verbally extravagant" rendering of Rabelais could be the work of a propagandist for the Cromwellian government, rather than the "staunch royalist" and "dashing and high-spirited Cavalier" preferred by critics, begs too many awkward questions about the construction of English literary and cultural history.⁶²

In *A Letter Written to a Gentleman in the Country* Hall justifies the dissolution of Parliament on the grounds of its inability to protect its citizens, and *Reasons Why the Supreme Authority* similarly makes the *salus populi* principle the centerpiece of its apology for the dissolution: "the Safety of the People is said to be the Supreme Law, yet are those that have the power in their hands the fittest judges of that safety" (p. 4). Urquhart's presence becomes more consistently visible as the focus of the pamphlet shifts to Scotland. Hall had argued in *A Letter* that without the dissolution of the Rump, "the Presbyterian party . . . may [have] all come in" (p. 11). Urquhart quotes Hall, noting his characterization of a Presbyterian as "a Jesuite in a Geneva cloak, but somewhat more insupportable" with particular approval. Urquhart then goes on to claim that Cromwell's

61. Norbrook, pp. 299, 302; Hugh H. C. Candy, in *The Library* 14 (1934), 470–76; Wilkinson (ed.), pp. xvii–xx.

62. Neil Rhodes, *The Power of Eloquence and English Literature* (London, 1992), pp. 124, 127; F. C. Roe, *Sir Thomas Urquhart and Rabelais: The Taylorian Lecture 1957* (Oxford, 1957), p. 6. Cf. *The Jewel*, introduction, p. 37: "Sir Thomas Urquhart of Cromarty, knight, soldier, scholar, gentleman and Royalist [was] a man whose imagination was certainly too great for the age in which he lived."

precipitate action against the Presbyterians in England can also help to free Scotland from its “Knoxian slavery” by paving the way for parliamentary union of the two countries. The pamphlet concludes by listing the legal, economic, and military benefits of such a union for the Scottish; the foremost benefit, however, is the opportunity to get rid of the Presbyterians, who have made the country “despicable to all the other Nations of the World” (pp. 19, 29). Urquhart in fact repeats many of the points that he had made in *The Jewel* in 1652, where he had called for a union which was “not heterogeneal (as timber and stone upon ice stick sometimes together, bound by the frost of a conquering sword) but homogenated by naturalization.” Such a union would “strengthen our selves and weaken our enemies and raise the Isle of Great Britain to that height of glory that it will become formidable to all the world besides” (pp. 191, 201).

Cromwell’s plans for the union of England and Scotland, which were not formalized as a Protectoral ordinance until April 1654, were welcomed by many of the Scottish gentry as a means of getting rid of Presbyterian domination. C. H. Firth describes *The Jewel* as the “most remarkable exposition of the views of this class.” Most remarkable is Urquhart’s support for the vision projected in the early 1650s by republican propagandists such as Hall and Marchamont Nedham of the imperial increase of the English republic.⁶³ In *Mercurius Politicus*, Nedham had argued for the “incorporation” of Scotland into England and the award of parliamentary representation to the Scots: “Nedham want[ed] England to become, in Machiavelli’s language, a commonwealth for expansion.” Urquhart uses precisely this Machiavellian language of “incorporation,” promising to deliver “many pregnant arguments inferred for the incorporating of both nations into one, with an indissolubility of union for the future in an identity of priviledges, laws and customs.”⁶⁴ Hall had in fact travelled to Scotland with the Parliamentary troops in 1650, charged with making observations “as might conduce to the setling of the Interests of the Commonwealth.” Subsequently he issued *The Grounds & Reasons of Monarchy Considered* (Edinburgh, 1650; London, 1651), in which he offers “a manifesto for transforming Scotland

63. C. H. Firth, *Scotland and the Commonwealth* (Edinburgh, 1895), pp. 29–30.

64. Blair Worden, “Milton and Marchamont Nedham,” in *Milton and Republicanism*, ed. David Armitage et al. (Cambridge, Eng., 1995), p. 173; *The Jewel*, p. 49.

into a polity very much like the English one.”⁶⁵ Having shaped the history of the Scottish monarchy into a gothic narrative of rape, murder, madness, and paganism, Hall argues that the Scottish can only be prevented from “enslaving and ruining themselves” under “a Tyrannizing Nobilitie and Clergie” by incorporation into a British republic (p. 127). This argument is echoed in *Reasons Why the Supreme Authority* where Urquhart insists that the rooting out of the Presbyterians through the extension of Cromwellian government to Scotland will involve the use of “no more violence then when one is hindered from prosecuting his owne ruine” (p. 19).

Hall ridiculed the Scots in 1651 for preferring to “be numbred as the herd and Inheritance of one to whose lust and madness they were absolutely subject” rather than following the English in establishing a republic, and his summary of chronicle accounts of the heroic exploits of Scottish kings and nobles was thick with irony: “But though we might in justice reject them as Fabulous and Monkish, yet since themselves acknowledge them . . . we shall run over them like veritable *History*” (pp. 3–4, 21). Hall’s praise of Urquhart for “undeceiving” him of Scottish barbarity by translating Rabelais thus carries personal resonance. *The Jewel* can be read as a direct response to Hall’s bathetic treatment of Scottish history. Urquhart’s long account of the actions of various Scottish heroes is designed to persuade “the reader to acknowledge the Scottish nation to have been an honourable nation, and that of late too, in their numerousness of able and gallant men” (p. 140). Yet Hall and Urquhart could agree on the cause of Scotland’s eclipsed virtue. *The Grounds and Reasons of Monarchy Considered* has been seen as an attempt by Hall to build up in Scotland the kind of anti-Presbyterian “alliance between Independents and royalists . . . for which [Hall and Milton] had campaigned in the late 1640s.” Urquhart’s support for this alliance was unequivocal: “Therefore, in my conceit, to use [the Presbyterians’] cavilling idiom, a malignant and an independent wil better sympathize with one another than either of them with the presbyter.” According to Norbrook, the “most prominent Scottish equivalent to the moderate royalists Hall was courting at home was William Drummond, the veteran poet who had died in 1649” and whose prose works Hall edited in

65. *Calendar of State Papers: Domestic* (1650), p. 325; Norbrook, pp. 219–20. References to Hall’s tract are to the second edition.

1655.⁶⁶ Sir Thomas Urquhart of Cromarty, however, was very much alive and reliant on the good will of the Council of State for his freedom.

Why did Urquhart, who had praised Charles I as the greatest of kings in 1641 and fought for Charles II at Worcester in 1651, write propaganda for Cromwell in 1653? Perhaps this proud Scottish patriot was convinced by John Hall that the only way to rid his country of Presbyterian “ecclesiastical tyranny” was through “incorporation” into a British republic; perhaps he wrote in support of Cromwell as Protector because he hoped, with former royalists such as Edmund Waller, that the dissolution of Parliament might signal a return to monarchy; perhaps after eighteen months as a prisoner of war he thought it the only way to obtain his liberty. Alternatively we might interpret Urquhart’s actions less as a political defection than as an example of the renewed operation in England of the “cultural economics of literary patronage” after the collapse during the civil wars of the traditional patronage network of the court.⁶⁷ By promising to complete his translation in exchange for favors from the government, Urquhart was behaving according to the conventions of the early modern patronage relationship: he offered those in power the opportunity to cement their authority and legitimacy through the accumulation of a symbolic capital that would attest to their cultural taste. Once engaged in the patronage relationship a more transparently valuable service the writer-client could provide was the ability to “write pamphlets or edit journals articulating a patron’s political views, attacking his enemies, or defending the patron.”⁶⁸ Hall had urged Parliament in the months after the regicide to develop a state system of literary patronage that would undermine the royalist identification of cultural achievement with monarchy and the court. The cultural reputation of the republic remained, as we have seen, a pressing issue for its literary defenders in 1653. *Reasons Why the Supreme Authority*, in a passage written in Urquhart’s inimical prose style, urges other “literate men” to overcome their suspicions and “affectionately submit their studious elucubrations to the resolute dispoire of those other worldly Patriots,” the Cromwellian Council of State (p. 13).

66. Norbrook, pp. 217, 221; *The Jewel*, p. 183.

67. I borrow the phrase from Dustin Griffin, *Literary Patronage in England, 1650–1800* (Cambridge, Eng., 1996), pp. 16–17, although Griffin has nothing to say about the effect on the patronage economy of the dissolution of the court.

68. Griffin, p. 33.

In the end it appears that Urquhart's literary services were sufficient to secure his release from prison, but not the restoration of his estate in Cromarty or even his freedom to remain in either England or Scotland. For although there survives a letter that Urquhart sent from London to an Edinburgh advocate in January 1654, in which he inquires after his estate and reports there to be "nothing heer but revolutions," the next we hear from him is in September 1655, in a letter sent from Middelburg, Holland. It was also from Holland that he challenged his (Presbyterian) cousin to a duel over the Cromarty estate in 1658.⁶⁹ Urquhart's eventual exile may have been a condition of his release. Or he may have lost his favor with the Protectoral government when John Hall fell ill and returned in July 1655 to his native Durham, where he died the following year. Certainly Urquhart carried out his threat to withhold the rest of his translation of *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. He seems never to have attempted Books IV and V while his version of the *Tiers Livre* was not published until 1693, under the heavy editorial hand of Dryden's friend Pierre Motteux.⁷⁰ If Sir Thomas Urquhart really did die of laughter on hearing of the Restoration—both a very Rabelaisian and a very Cavalier way to go—then the laughter must have been less joyful than bitterly ironic.

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

69. The 1654 and 1655 letters are printed in *The Jewel*, pp. 45–46; the letter of 1658 is printed in *A Challenge from Sir Thomas Urquhart*, ed. Wilkinson.

70. For Hall's illness and death, see *Hierocles*, sigs. A3–A3v. Motteux, who issued his own translation of Books IV and V in 1694, claims the manuscript was "much incorrect" but does not reveal how it came to be in his possession; *The Works of Mr. Francis Rabelais* (1694), pp. xlii–xliii.