Wit, Conversation, and Literary Transmission in Mid-Seventeenth-Century France and England: How Andrew Marvell Heard His Rabelais

NICHOLAS MCDOWELL, *University of Exeter*

References to Rabelais in Andrew Marvell's prose satires against religious intolerance, The Rehearsal Transpros'd *(1672–73), offer insights into the Restoration reception of Rabelaisian satire in the universities and the coffeehouses as a specifically anticlerical form of wit. But these references are either misattributed or incorrect, suggesting that Marvell may never actually have read* Gargantua and Pantagruel, *but rather picked up Rabelaisian anecdotes when conversing in intellectual circles in France in the mid-1650s. Critical focus on the history of reading tends to neglect the inevitable role of such conversation in literary transmission, both within a national culture and across national borders.*

INTRODUCTION: RABELAISIAN SAYINGS

THE PROSPECTS FOR an article on Andrew Marvell (1621–78) and François Rabelais (ca. 1494–1553) may not look bright given the only direct references to Rabelais in Marvell's writings, found in his prose satires *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* (two parts, 1672–73), are either misattributed or incorrect. Consequently, it might be suspected that Marvell may not actually have read Rabelais, or at least not very closely. This would seem surprising, given Marvell's reasonably extensive connections with France and French culture. Marvell had traveled in Europe as a tutor to "Noblemens Sones," as John Worthington observed to Samuel Hartlib in 1655: he was probably in France in this capacity at some point in the mid-1640s, as civil war raged in England, and was certainly there in 1656, when he spent eight months at the Protestant academy at Saumur, in the Loire, with his pupil William Dutton, ward of Oliver Cromwell. He was skilled in French, among other European languages, as noted by such an accomplished linguist as John

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Milton.[1] Scholars have long seen similarities between his lyric poetry and that of the French *libertin* poets Théophile de Viau (1590–1626) and Marc-Antoine Girard de Saint-Amant (1594–1661), and they have been encouraged to perceive these similarities by the fact that both Thomas Stanley, the Royalist poet and literary patron with whom Marvell likely associated in the late 1640s, and Thomas Fairfax, Marvell's employer in 1650–52, were translating Théophile and Saint-Amant in the period from 1646 to 1652.[2]

Yet the sort of isolated, fragmentary, and even tenuous reference to Rabelais found in Marvell is typical of his presence in early modern English literary culture, as charted by Ann Lake Prescott in her wide-ranging and entertaining *Imagining Rabelais in Renaissance England*. Prescott shows both how the name Rabelais was apocryphally attached to a wide body of comic and satirical texts in this period and how even writers who seem to have known their *Gargantua and Pantagruel* (five books, 1532–64) reasonably well tend to be somewhat vague in their references and allusions. These writers included Ben Jonson, whose (sparsely) annotated copy survives in the British Library.[3] Prescott's account stops before the first English translation of *Gargantua and Pantagruel* by the Scottish laird Sir Thomas Urquhart (1611–60), who published his brilliant version of the first two books at the incongruous moment of 1653, on the cusp of the transition from Commonwealth to Cromwellian government and while a Royalist prisoner of the new republican regime.[4]

Thomas Shelton's *Don Quixote* appeared in 1612, within seven years of its original, but this first English translation of *Gargantua and Pantagruel* was published a full century after Rabelais's death. Despite the conventional pairing of Rabelais and Cervantes in eighteenth-century literary criticism as the great comic writers of the European Renaissance, their reception was distinguished by the repeated charge of indecency and profanity against Rabelais, whose tales of the fantastic adventures of gluttonous, bibulous giants possessed the distinction of having been, in the words of M. A. Screech,

[1]For Worthington's letter to Hartlib, see N. Smith, 133; on Marvell's travels in France, see ibid., 49–52, 128–33; for Milton's observation about Marvell's French, in a letter to John Bradshaw recommending Marvell be appointed assistant Latin secretary, dated 21 February 1652, see Donno, 99–100.

[2]On the translations of Fairfax and Stanley and the possible influence of the French *libertin* poets on Marvell's lyric verse, see Leishman, 261–67; Patterson, 103–05; Richmond, 352–71; N. Smith, 49–50, 52, 97; and, most recently and most fully, Pertile. On Anglo-French contexts for Marvell's verse, see also C. K. Smith.

[3]Prescott, 1998. On Jonson's Rabelais, see Prescott, 1997b; Roberts.

[4]On the complex political and personal circumstances that conditioned the appearance of Urquhart's translation, see McDowell, 2005.

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both "execrated in Geneva [and] put on the Index in Rome."[5] Calvin had maintained that Rabelais's "wicked malapertnesse of jestynge and scoffynge" at religious matters reduced the threat of damnation to "a bug to feare children with."[6] Following Calvin's judgment, the name Rabelais became a signifier of ungodly attitudes and behavior. Thomas Beard, Oliver Cromwell's schoolmaster, set the tone for the British Protestant position on Rabelais in the section "Epicures and Atheists" in his *Theatre of Gods iudgements* (1597): "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."[7] This atheistic reputation was doubtless exacerbated in Britain by the lack of an English translation until Urquhart's version. In 1622 Leonard Digges explained why an English Rabelais had not yet been attempted: "As few, French *Rablais* understand; and none / Dare in our Vulgar Tongue once make him knowne."[8]

If Cervantic comedy is the more visible presence in *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* due to Marvell's continual representation of his Episcopal opponent Samuel Parker (1640–88) as a type of Don Quixote, then Rabelais's notoriously scurrilous prose treatment of sacred and clerical matters offered a more daring but also more appropriate thematic and stylistic model. Rabelais was among the favored authors of the skeptical, cosmopolitan, urban audience that Marvell sought to address in *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* and to convince that religious toleration is moral and useful. The appeal to this sort of audience is evident in Marvell's fundamental conceit of incorporating the dramatic framework of the Duke of Buckingham's fashionable play *The Rehearsal* (first performed 1671), in which John Dryden appears as the buffoonish Mr. Bayes, into a satirical prose treatment of ecclesiastical politics, in which Parker assumes the role of Bayes. Such knowing, self-consciously sophisticated readers frequented the coffeehouses of Restoration London and Oxford and liked to think of themselves as connoisseurs of the kind of wit that pricked clerical pomposity.

Marvell's use of Rabelais in *The Rehearsal Transpros'd*, regardless of whether or not he actually knew *Gargantua and Pantagruel* very well, indicates how Rabelaisian comedy was increasingly received as a literary resource for satirical anticlericalism in England in the 1660s and 1670s. This perception of Rabelais as a scourge of clerical tyranny was a development that had already taken place among Huguenot and *libertin* circles in France earlier in the century. Marvell was as likely to have heard references and allusions to Rabelais amid the erudite conversation of the French

[5]Screech, 42.

[6]Calvin, 55–56.

[7]Beard, sig. L1^{r}.

[8]Digges, sig. A4^{r}. See further Brown; De Grève, 2009.

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literati who passed through the freethinking academy at Saumur as he was to have encountered Rabelaisian jokes among the frivolous and promiscuous "French youth" whom he witnessed on his European travels and to whom he refers in his satirical poem "Flecknoe, an English Priest at Rome" (ca. 1646). These irreligious youths, while at prayers after dinner, "compare their *chancres* and *poulaines*," or, in English, their syphilitic ulcers and swellings.[9] The uproarious scatology of *Gargantua and Pantagruel* appealed to various constituencies of the gaudy and the learned.

Marvell's references to Rabelais in *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* offer, then, an illustration of the evolving reception of Rabelaisian comedy and satire in England after the publication of Urquhart's translation and into the Restoration. The references may also be of more general significance precisely because of their inaccuracy, providing a reminder of how educated early moderns did not simply rely upon textual records when composing polemical or public works — upon their reading and notes from their reading, recorded in such *aides-memoire* as commonplace books — but also upon their memory of references and anecdotes picked up in conversation. Marvell's use of pseudo-Rabelaisian jokes exemplifies how the satirical style of public discourse developed in *The Rehearsal Transpros'd*, which became so popular in the Restoration coffeehouse, derives not just from his reading, but from his experiences of erudite conversation and the exchange of wit among more private intellectual, literary, and political circles. These were the various "conversable worlds," to borrow a term recently used to describe the culture of conversation in the eighteenth century,[10] that he had earlier encountered in France as well as England.

Studies that can be loosely encompassed within the category of "the history of reading" have understandably focused on textual records such as commonplace books and marginal notes when considering how books were encountered and used in the early modern period, as these records visibly demonstrate how writers marked and organized information and used that information in composing their own works. This approach has produced some of the most innovative and illuminating work in early modern studies over the last twenty-five years.[11]

[9]Marvell, 2007, 173 (lines 135, 137). All references to Marvell's poems are to this edition. "Poulain," defined in Randle Cotgrave's great French-English dictionary of 1611 as (among other things) "a botch in the groine," was one of the words underlined and annotated by Jonson in his copy of Rabelais; see Prescott, 1997b, 39; Cotgrave, s.v. "Poulain."

[10]The term "conversable worlds" is borrowed from Mee's stimulating study of conversation as providing a model in the eighteenth century for different structures of community and civic society.

[11]Among general studies, see the much-cited and foundational article by Grafton and Jardine on how educated early moderns used the notes of their reading to further their public careers. An excellent survey of the extensive scholarship on the history of reading in the early modern period over the last twenty-five years is provided by Snook. For an extended discussion of the possible roles of Milton's commonplace book in the composition of his polemical prose, see Fulton.

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Scholars naturally also look for evidence of the libraries and collections of books to which writers may have had access while composing their works. Indeed, the question of the provenance of Marvell's many references in *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* has been the subject of an extensive article by Martin Dzelzainis and Annabel Patterson, in which they persuasively argue for Marvell's use of the great library assembled by Arthur Annesley, First Earl of Anglesey (1614–86), at Drury Lane in Covent Garden, the 1686 sale catalogue of which comprises over 6,500 volumes. Dzelzainis and Patterson conclude that "almost every book or pamphlet that Marvell specifically cites, or that [has been] proposed as an allusion, is to be found somewhere in Anglesey's library."[12] The few that cannot be found in Anglesey's library are traceable to other private libraries to which Marvell is likely to have had access, such as those of John Locke and John Owen. But in introducing their findings as "a chapter in the history of reading," Dzelzainis and Patterson also observe that some of Marvell's sources were likely pulled "out of his memory without any longer having the reference. Some, evidently, he had merely heard second-hand, probably in the coffeehouses."[13]

The role of such remembered conversation or overheard dialogue in literary creativity does not leave a paper trail. Yet, according to the humanist educational system, the useful anecdotes and adages that early moderns were instructed to record in notebooks in preparation for future use in their own conversation and composition were derived from listening as well as reading. Frequently used in early modern English to encompass maxims, adages, and other discrete pieces of knowledge or wit, the term *sayings* has been adopted by Mary Thomas Crane in her influential study of the practice of commonplacing in order to stress the oral as well as literary origins of the various anecdotes and fragments of wisdom that were recorded in notebooks in readiness for future oral as well as literary contexts of use.[14] After all, early modern educational theorists often represented the collection of commonplaces as a supplement to the natural powers of memory, and the various techniques developed for improving the memorization of sayings, the *ars memoriae*, were designed to help with the problem of assimilating large quantities of information without writing it all down.[15] It is evidently difficult, perhaps finally impossible, to identify for certain when a writer is relying on the memory of conversation rather than on the reading of a text in making a literary reference; in the case of Marvell's sources for *The Rehearsal Transpros'd*, the sale catalogue of Anglesey's library does indeed include, among its list of almost 450 French-language

[12]Dzelzainis and Patterson, 704.

[13]Ibid., 713. The sale catalogue of the library is found in *Bibliotheca Angleseiana*.

[14]Crane, 7, 53–76. See also Moss.

[15]See Blair.

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books, a copy of *Gargantua and Pantagruel*.[16] This essay contends, however, that it is precisely the curious use of misattributed and incorrect references to Rabelais in Marvell that offers an insight into how witty conversation, in this case both in England and France, London and the Loire Valley, also played a part in transmitting the satirical resources of a printed polemical work — a work that in turn became the talk of the Restoration coffeehouse.

RABELAIS IN THE RESTORATION COFFEEHOUSE

In 1668 Anthony Wood, the great chronicler of seventeenth-century Oxford life, noted what appears to have been the beginning of a fashion for establishing libraries in coffeehouses: "A little before Xtmas, the XtCh.[Christ Church] men, yong men, set a library in Short's coffee house in the Study ther, viz. Rablais, poems, plaies etc. One scholar gave a booke of 1s. and chaine 10d."[17] Wood's note suggests that these undergraduates were unhappy with what was on offer in the Christ Church library in terms of recreational reading, and so they sought to set up their own alternative library where they could read the sort of vernacular and Continental material that was not incorporated into their studies. The choice of the Christ Church students to put this library in a coffeehouse is a reminder of the proliferation of these establishments in the Restoration and their reputation as places where educated and witty men about town would gather. When the first part of *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* appeared anonymously in 1672, the book and its author, whose identity seems to have been "an open secret," were immediately associated with the particular milieu of the coffeehouses.[18] Edmund Hickeringill, a cleric who attacked the first part of *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* by imitating its comic style (or "the fashion that now obtains," as Hickeringill put it), characterized the readers of Marvell's work as wits and young students who love to frequent the coffeehouses: "at the *Rainbow-Coffee House* the other day, taking my place at due distance, not far from me, at another Table sat a whole *Cabal* of wits; made up of Virtuoso's, Ingenioso's, young Students of the Law . . . all laughing heartily and gaping. . . . I was tickled to know the cause of all this mirth, and presently found, it was a Book made all this sport; the Title of it, *The Rehearsal transpros'd.*"[19] Here *The Rehearsal Transpros'd*, this "*marvellous Book*," as Hickeringill called it, with a heavy pun, has replaced Rabelais as the sort of reading with which, according to Anthony

[16] *Bibliotheca Angleseiana*, 88. The copy of *Gargantua and Pantagruel* is no. 419 in the list of 443 French books; no date of publication is given.

[17] Wood, 1891–1900, 2:147. Wood is quoted in Purcell, 124. On the history of the coffeehouse library more generally, see Ellis, 34, who also quotes Wood's note.

[18] Marvell, 2003, 1:4. On the rise of the Restoration coffeehouse, see Cowan.

[19] [Hickeringill], 5.

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Wood, the "young men" and wits of Oxford amused themselves in the coffeehouse. Hickeringill in turn dismissed Marvell's many references to literary, political, and religious works as reading not derived from any true scholarship but merely "Politick-scraps gathered up when he let fall at a Club in the Tavern or Coffee-house."[20]

Wood indeed grouped *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* with two works influenced by Rabelais, Samuel Butler's great comic poem *Hudibras* (three parts, 1662–78) and John Eachard's prose satire *The Grounds and Occasions of the Contempt of the Clergy* (1670), as the preeminent "buffooning and drolling books" of his age. Eachard signaled his witty credentials by invoking Rabelais, insisting that if clerics believe knowledge of Homer in Greek qualifies them to preach, then they should know *Gargantua and Pantagruel* equally well, given "*Rabelais* said his *Gargantua* contained all the *Ten Commandments.*"[21] Wood did not regard this preeminence in drolling as a compliment but as a sign of depraved times, when wits and scoffers mocked the clerical profession and thus (from Wood's perspective) the Christian religion itself.[22] It is unlikely then that Wood admired the Christ Church students' choice of Rabelais for their coffeehouse library. Given the association of coffeehouses with wits and students, however, the prominence of Rabelais in the coffeehouse library of the Christ Church men should not be greatly surprising. According to the preface to the 1664 reprint of Urquhart's translation of the first two books of *Gargantua and Pantagruel*: "all men of wit formerly made [Rabelais] their companion. . . . 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."[23] The setting invoked here is social and convivial, and the Rabelaisian sayings enjoyed by those present seem to be nuggets of wit exchanged in conversation, rather than contained in text. Sayings, in the sense of the sort of material that educated early moderns would be expected to gather in their memory or in a notebook, were commonly compared in humanist pedagogy to condiments that added spice to the nourishing food of knowledge: in Nicholas Udall's 1542 translation of Erasmus's *Apophthegmata* (1531), for instance, "saiynges of mirthe" are called "sauces of the feaste."[24]

If the availability of an English Rabelais was a relatively new event in the 1660s, the popularity of *Gargantua and Pantagruel* among "men of wit" in England was not an exclusively post-Restoration phenomenon. For all his notoriety, or perhaps because of it, Rabelais was read and admired within the

[20]Ibid., 182.

[21]Eachard, 11.

[22]Wood, 1891–1900, 2:240; see also the citation of Wood's comments in the context of satire against "priestcraft" in Spurr, 2003, 426.

[23]Rabelais, 1664, sig. A2^r.

[24]See Crane, 64.

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confines of elite social and intellectual circles in Renaissance England before Urquhart's translation. As Prescott has 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." To appeal to the notorious Rabelais was to imply certain personal qualities: "Not readily shocked, naively rustic, or 'Puritan' — indeed graced with a latitudinarian and urbane temper . . . one can catch jokes that require an erudition beyond that of most gentlemen."[25] The appeal of Rabelaisian humor to the English 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, and John Selden. 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 and St. Dunstan tavern.[26]

Jonson's Apollo Club and related fraternities and clubs developed an alternative literary culture in the town, one semidetached from the official site of patronage in the court, although members tended nonetheless to mimic the court's paternal hierarchy and familial structures (the Sons of Ben) and to be concerned with the channels of courtly patronage.[27] Rabelaisian satire held an obvious appeal for these literary tavern societies of early Stuart London, where drinking rites marked and facilitated the creation of "an extemporized space for exploring the dimensions of laughter and pleasure," from "fantastical linguistic play to satires on Church and State."[28] The dignified humanist ideal of the convivium, of elevated intellectual conversation conducted in the private space of the banquet, was translated into the more rowdy, aggressive, and satirical practices of the tavern societies. As scholars such as Michael Jeanneret have

[25]Prescott, 1998, 60, 75. See also Prescott, 1997a.

[26]On these "Wit-Conventions," as Jonson's acolyte Richard Brome called them, see McDowell, 2005, 280.

[27]See Raylor.

[28]O'Callaghan, 2007, 8. This milieu is well discussed by O'Callaghan, 2007, with occasional reference to the taste of "the wits" for Rabelais, to whom they turned "for linguistic play and fantastic humor, and because of his reputation as a tavern wit and libeller": 131; see also 76, 122, 135, 169. Other useful recent work on wit as a social and cultural force for conviviality and sociability in the seventeenth century, as well as a literary quality, includes Raylor; Scodel; Smyth; Withington, 2011; Richards. Apart from the isolated citations in O'Callaghan, Rabelais does not appear in any of this work, but the use of Rabelaisian wit across various literary and polemical modes in the seventeenth century offers a case study that lends support to some of its conclusions.

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shown, one of the structural principles of Rabelaisian comedy is the satirical inversion of the elevated values of the humanist convivium, in the form of the grotesque bodily appetites and linguistic incontinence of the giants of *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. Rabelaisian satire had been associated with tavern society in France from at least the later sixteenth century, if pejoratively, in works such as the anonymous *Satyre Ménippée* (1594), where Rabelais is named as the greatest of the modern Menippeans, if "one wants to immerse oneself in tavern jeers and the obscenities of the inn houses."[29] The exchange of witty Rabelaisian sayings was associated more positively in England in the 1660s with conviviality, and that association was anticipated by Ben Jonson's identification of the ethos of his Apollo Club with the symposiastic qualities of Rabelaisian wit in the verses that Jonson wrote to be placed, as the title of the poem states, "Over the Door at the Entrance into the Apollo." In these verses, the Apollo room becomes identified with the oracle of classical myth by the way of the Oracle of the Holy Bottle that the giants Panurge and Pantagruel seek in the *Cinquième Livre* of *Gargantua and Pantagruel*.[30]

Rabelais had thus long been an underground favorite of the "men of wit" in early Stuart England, but it was the appearance of Urquhart's translation in 1653 and its reprinting in 1664 with a prefatory life of Rabelais that properly made *Gargantua and Pantagruel* a part of English literature and introduced the language of Rabelaisian comedy into the vernacular. The appeal of Rabelais to late Restoration taste is indicated by the appearance in 1694 of Pierre Antoine Le Motteux's (1663–1718) revised edition, with extensive commentary, of Urquhart's version of books 1 and 2, along with Urquhart's previously unpublished rendering of the third book, the manuscript of which Motteux claimed had only been recently discovered (and which is likely to be, at least in part, Motteux's own work). Later that year, presumably in response to the commercial success of the earlier volume, Motteux issued his own translation of the two final books (the fifth book is now widely regarded as apocryphal but the attribution to Rabelais was not doubted in the seventeenth century); then in 1708 Motteux coupled his translation with Urquhart's version to create finally the first complete English rendering of *Gargantua and Pantagruel*.

A Huguenot refugee who arrived in London in 1685 after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, Motteux opens his dedicatory epistle by declaring that in *Gargantua and Pantagruel* the reader will find "Superstition, Tyranny and all the numerous Train of Vices and Extravagencies being ridicul'd." In his "Preface, Wherein is given an Account of the Design and Nature of this Work, and a Key to some of its most difficult Passages," Motteux claims to reveal through

[29]See Jeanneret; *Satyre Ménippée*, 161: "si on veut en retrancher les quolibets de taverne, et les saletez des cabarets." All translations are my own.

[30]See Prescott, 1997b, 50–51.

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allegorical and historical interpretation of the work how Rabelais, "in a jesting manner, exposed the *Roman* Clergy's persecuting Temper."[31] Although Motteux's translation has been habitually dismissed in literary history as a product of Grub Street, efficient but lacking the genius of Urquhart, Motteux made a serious attempt in his critical apparatus to represent Rabelais as an anticlerical satirist whose mockery of the persecutory Roman Catholic Church in France should make him naturally attractive to a Protestant English audience. In constructing this elaborate historical key, Motteux was reviving the interest in reading *Gargantua and Pantagruel* for its historical sense, which had developed among the French *libertins* of the earlier seventeenth century.[32]

The literary and drinking clubs of early Stuart London have recently been seen as part of the history of the development of public sociability, and to display characteristics that anticipate aspects of the political clubs and coffeehouse societies that began to emerge in the 1650s. The tavern societies retained elements of aristocratic coterie culture while shifting the sites of both literary and political association away from the court and aristocratic patronage — a movement that was continued and extended in the coffeehouse society of the Restoration.[33] This account would seem to lend credence to aspects of Jürgen Habermas's much-debated narrative of the "structural transformation of the public sphere" in English civil society of the late Restoration and early eighteenth century, in which the associational literary culture of the coffeehouse is central, even while the chronology and print-centered focus of Habermas's narrative are subjected to critique.[34] But another of the ways in which various new accounts that emphasize the place of sociability in the emerging public culture of seventeenth-century England are distinguished from the Habermasian reading is in their emphasis on the role, not of rational and polite debate, but of incivility — of drunkenness, crude humor, mocking

[31]Rabelais, 1694, sig. A2^{v}, xiii. The text of Urquhart's rendering of the *Tiers Livre* in fact first appeared as a discrete volume with the date 1693 on the title page, issued by the same publisher, Richard Baldwin, who would publish Motteux's volumes the following year. There is no introductory apparatus in this 1693 volume and no mention of Motteux's involvement.

[32]The most emphatic attack came from Mikhail Bakhtin, who blamed Motteux for the rise of the "historic-allegorical" interpretation of Rabelais, an interpretative method that supposedly held sway until Bakhtin himself restored to readers the true, Carnivalesque nature of the work. See Bakhtin, 112–16. On *libertin* interest in *Gargantua and Pantagruel* as historical allegory, see De Grève, 1964.

[33]See O'Callaghan, 2004; O'Callaghan, 2007; Cowan, 79–80.

[34]In his account of the rise of clubs and coffeehouses in England, Habermas refers to Marvell's involvement with the Rota Club, which had met in Miles's coffeehouse on the Thames Embankment in the chaotic moment of 1659–60 to discuss political issues: Habermas, 33. For discussion and critique of Habermas's arguments in relation to early modernity, see the excellent summary in Knights, 2006, 48–52; Lake and Pincus.

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laughter, and violent satirical language — in creating (semi)public contexts for political discussion. Witty incivility is seen in this scholarship not as an inversion of the conventions of civil conversation in the seventeenth century, as it would increasingly come to be regarded in the eighteenth century, but a constituent of them.[35]

The enthusiasm for Rabelaisian comedy and satire in both the tavern societies of early Stuart London and the coffeehouses of Restoration London points to continuities in terms of both literary taste and the sorts of languages preferred and adopted by these communities. It has been well said of Marvell that his "discursive slipperiness was testament to his conversational art"; just as he conversed with a wide range of social types, from merchants to MPs to patrons, he "always wrote in a way appropriate to form and context."[36] In his satirical prose attacks on the clerical imposition of conformity and the persecution of Dissenters in the two parts of *The Rehearsal Transpros'd*, Marvell carefully appealed to the same readership of young wits in the coffeehouses who read Rabelais. *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* brings the satirical, comic language that was prized as a sign of wit in both pre–Civil War literary circles and in the conversation of the Restoration coffeehouse into the medium of printed political controversy.[37] In the introduction to a set of essays that consider and modify theories of the nature and development of the early modern public sphere, Peter Lake and Steven Pincus cite the example of Charles II's apparent intervention to prevent censorship of the first part of *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* as evidence of the transformed public context after 1660. This surprising act on the king's part is taken to illustrate how those who might be expected "to be keenest to suppress the public sphere [had come to] recognize the importance of appeals to the public," and how "high politics" was now "integrally related to the production and circulation of satires, polemics and libels, in both manuscript and print."[38]

[35]See O'Callaghan, 2007, esp. 6–9; Withington, 2011. Knights, 2007, discusses the extent to which the Restoration public sphere can be adequately characterized as rational. For an influential argument for the crucial place of civility and politeness in the development of coffeehouse culture, see Klein.

[36]Withington, 2005, 154.

[37]As Lund, 159, observes, *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* provided a model for later writers, including Defoe, of "how one exploits wit in defense of nonconformity" in the Restoration "competition for public opinion."

[38]See Lake and Pincus, 12. On the king's insistence that the first part of *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* should not be suppressed, see Marvell, 2003, 1:23–32. Knights, 2006, 51–53, defends Habermas's claim that England underwent a distinctive change in its political culture in the late seventeenth century by focusing on the emergence of a "reading public."

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RABELAIS IN *THE REHEARSAL TRANSPROS'D* AND MARVELL IN SAUMUR

A key aspect of Marvell's satirical strategy in *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* is the appropriation and reversal of the comic representation of Puritans and Dissenters as deluded Don Quixotes, most effectively done in Samuel Butler's mock-heroic *Hudibras*. Marvell achieves this reversal by casting Samuel Parker and his fellow clerical opponents of toleration as Cervantic figures, with ludicrously exaggerated conceptions both of the threat of dissent and of their own heroic status as defenders of the true church. Parker is not only represented as a type of Don Quixote, but as someone who has spent too much time reading *Don Quixote* itself, and who prefers Cervantes over scripture as his guidebook to action.[39] Similarly, Parker is represented as taking the episodes of bodily comedy in *Gargantua and Pantagruel* absurdly literally, reading them as medical advice to be followed. Near the beginning of the second part of *The Rehearsal Transpros'd*, Marvell introduces an anecdote concerning purgation that he ascribes to Rabelais, describing the physiological effects suffered by Parker upon reading the first part of Marvell's prose satire. While in "most Men" the first part of *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* "discharg'd it self in an innocent fit of uncessant laughter," Parker, "for whose good it was principally intended," suffers an extreme bout of literary constipation that leaves him unable to deliver not only "the *common drudgeries* of Preaching and reading Prayers," but any kind of response. Consequently he seeks out various remedies: "But he had heard how his old acquaintance Doctor Rabelais, upon examination for his degree, answer'd, That if his Gargantua were sick, he would prescribe him *Pilulas Evangelicas, ex centum libris Aloes & Myrrhae*. He computed thence, that in his own case the Dose must be proportionable betwixt the Civil and the Ecclesiastical Giant."[40] The eventual digestion of *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* leads to a purgation of apocalyptic and gargantuan proportions, recalling Revelation 16:13, where "frogs come out the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet": "But it hath brought up such ulcerous stuff as never was seen; and whereas I intended it only for a *Diaphoretick* to cast him into a breathing sweat, it hath had upon him all the effects of a Vomit, Turnep-tops, Froggs, rotten Eggs, Brass-coppers, Grashoppers, Pins, Mushroomes, &c. wrapt up together in such balls of Slime and Choller, that they would have burst the Dragon, and in good earnest seem to have something supernatural." Parker is assisted in

[39]Marvell, 2003, 1:74.

[40]Ibid., 1:232–33. The Latin in this quotation translates as "evangelical pills, out of a hundred pounds of aloe and myrrh."

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facilitating this epic self-purgation by his literary defender Edmund Hickeringill, who is described, recalling Rabelais's own celebrated training as a physician, as Parker's "second Rabelais, Doctor Hicringhill."[41]

The episode comically enacts the purgative, medicinal qualities of satirical wit as described by Erasmus in the apology for the *Encomium Moriae* (1509) in his 1515 letter to Martin Dorp: "If you think that no one should ever speak freely or reveal the truth except when it offends no one, why do physicians heal with bitter medicines and place *aloe sacra* among their most highly recommended remedies?"[42] Marvell indulges in Cervantic and Rabelaisian comedy while associating his clerical opponents with an absurdly literal reading of such secular, comic literature. Parker and Hickeringill are depicted as grotesque Rabelaisian giants in the manner of *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, and the episode in Marvell's satire bears some similarity with the closing chapters of the second book of Rabelais, in which Pantagruel (in Urquhart's translation) "fell sick, and had such an obstruction in his stomack, that he could neither eate nor drink." His physicians decide that they must remove the obstruction from the giant's stomach themselves and so place men in "great balls of copper" that Pantagruel then "swallowed . . . down like a little pill." Falling down into the "most horrible gulph" of Pantragruel's stomach, "they found a *mountjoy* or heap of ordure and filth," which they then proceed to dig up and remove: "This done, Pantagruel enforcing himself to vomit, very easily brought them out, and they made no more shew in his mouth, than a fart in yours . . . by this meanes was he healed . . . and of these brazen pilles, or rather copper balls, you have one at Orleans, upon the steeple of the Holy Crosse Church."[43] But while the episodes are broadly comparable as mock-epic adventures inside grotesque bodies, the details are quite different and Pantragruel's purgation lacks the anticlerical edge of Marvell's anecdote. Moreover, Marvell's Rabelaisian reference is not to be found in Rabelais.

The reference derives, rather, from Gédéon Tallemant des Réaux's (1619–92) *Les Historiettes*, a large and miscellaneous collection of anecdotes, witty bon mots, and scandalous satirical portraits of courtiers and court life under Louis XIII and Louis XIV that was not published until the nineteenth century.[44] The anecdote in *Les Historiettes* consists of a single line: "They say that someone had asked [Rabelais] how he would purge Pantagruel. 'Give him,' he replied, 'evangelical pills out of a hundred pounds of aloe.'"[45] Tallemant, a Huguenot with links to the *libertin*

[41]Ibid., 1:234–35.

[42]Erasmus, 147.

[43]Rabelais, 1653, 216–18 (chapter 33).

[44]Legouis, 1953; Legouis, 1968, 107.

[45]Tallemant des Réaux, 1960–61, 2:765: "On dit que quelqu'un luy ayant demandé [Rabelais] comment il feroit pour purger Pantagruel. *Darem illi*, respondit-il, *pillulas evangelicas aloes centum libros, etc*."

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writers and philosophers, moved from Paris to Réaux, outside Saumur, in 1650. Scribal copies of *Les Historiettes*, which Tallemant began compiling during the 1650s, recorded the conversation of the intellectual and social circles of Parisian society in which Tallemant had moved, particularly the impressive literary salon that gathered around the patronage of Catherine de Vivonne, Marquise de Rambouillet (1588–1665), and that liked to think of itself as cultivating qualities of civility, embodied in erudite conversation and in opposition to courtly crassness and corruption.[46] Tallemant's manuscripts embody the collective wit of the salons by gathering together satirical anecdotes that had been circulating orally and in more fragmented textual forms among members and at meetings. His collection of a large number of satirical poems and prose anecdotes both by himself and by others, known as Manuscrit 673, has aptly been described as "a tissue made up of the talk from the salon and the texts that circulated there"; these manuscripts circulated among the same sort of witty, sophisticated, possibly clandestine circles as produced and exchanged in conversation the satirical anecdotes that they record.[47]

There would thus appear to be four possibilities as to how Marvell came to know this pseudo-Rabelaisian reference, more than one of which, or indeed all of which, could be the case: that Marvell saw a manuscript of Tallemant's work in progress when he was in Saumur in 1655–56; that Marvell became personally acquainted with Tallemant; that Marvell was present when Tallemant's work was discussed by others in Saumur; or that the anecdote, attributed to Rabelais, was circulating in and around Saumur in the mid-1650s, either scribally or orally, or both, before Tallemant recorded it. The probability that Marvell is recalling the anecdote from conversation or from a manuscript that he had seen almost twenty years earlier, rather than taking it from a scribal text of the *Historiettes* to which he had access when writing *The Rehearsal Transpros'd*, is increased by his mistaking of Gargantua for Pantagruel as the giant who needs to be purged.

A reference in a letter from John Milton to Henry Oldenburg, dated 1 August 1657, offers an insight into Marvell's involvement in intellectual discussion and the exchange of literary material while in Saumur. Milton wrote to Oldenburg when the latter was resident in Saumur with Richard Jones, the son of Milton's friend Katherine Jones, Viscountess Ranelagh; Milton had taken on Jones as his

[46]See further Revel, 192–96.

[47]Abiven, 10: "un tissu de discours rapportés, issus de ce salon and des textes qui y circulaient." See also Tallemant des Réaux, 2000; Ballin. In Habermas's account of the structural transformation of the public sphere, the Parisian salons in which manuscripts of the *Historiettes* circulated are the French equivalent to the English coffeehouses, but for Habermas the late seventeenth-century salon continued to be closer in its more exclusive composition to the aristocratic literary coterie, and is thus an illustration of how the public sphere developed more quickly in England. See Habermas, 33–34.

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pupil in 1653 and Oldenburg had succeeded Milton as the boy's tutor. Milton discloses in his letter that he had given Oldenburg copies of his *Pro Se Defensio* (1655) to distribute because a "learned man, a friend of mine, spent last summer at Saumur. He wrote to me that the book was in demand in those parts. I sent only one copy: he wrote back that some of the learned to whom he had leant it had been pleased with it hugely." As Elsie Duncan-Jones first pointed out, the "learned man" is surely Marvell.[48] In a letter addressed to Jones, written on the same day, Milton describes Saumur, which had become known for fostering skeptical attitudes toward orthodox Calvinist doctrine that bear some comparison with the mature Milton's own heterodox views, as "a place where you can enjoy cultured leisure and the society of learned men."[49] A letter from the Anglo-Irish Royalist James Scudamore, sent from Saumur on 15 August 1656, noted the presence of "one Mervill a notable English Italo-Machavillian": while discussion has usually centered on the implications of the label "Machavillian," "notable" indicates Marvell's prominence in "the society of learned men" in Saumur.[50]

The one poem by Marvell that has been ascribed to his stay in Saumur is a Latin rendering of two couplets from the French translation of Lucan's *De Bello Civili* by Georges de Brebeuf published in 1655. Marvell's three-line Latin version, given an English title in the 1681 *Poems* ("In the French Translation of Lucan, by Monsieur De Brebeuf are these Verses"), could plausibly have emerged from literary conversation about translation, written as a display of Marvell's abilities or as part of a literary contest among acquaintances in Saumur: the lines that Marvell chose to translate refer to the Horatian topos of *ut pictura poesis*, and this commonplace issue of the relationship between painting and poetry seems a likely subject for literary conversation in Saumur. Saumur offered Marvell access to such high learning through conversation, as well as a model of mutual religious toleration established through dialogue. The town at the time

[48]Milton, 7:502–03; Duncan-Jones.

[49]Milton, 7:503–04. For the similarities between the theological heterodoxies that Milton developed in the 1650s and the ideas coming out of Saumur, see Campbell, Corns, Hale, and Tweedie, 91–92. See N. Smith, 129–32, for an intriguing account of what Marvell would have found in Saumur of literary and theological interest.

[50]See N. Smith, 133. Legouis found another reference in *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* that he concluded could only have its source in conversation in Saumur, to the "the two learned brothers of St. Marthe, who being Twins, and living to a great age, were so like one another, that they were not to be distinguish'd, but that one wore a Plain-band, and the other a Ruff." Such precise personal information could only have come, Legouis concluded, from Marvell's conversations with the son of one of the St. Marthe twins, Abel-Louis St. Marthe, father superior of the Oratorian house that was located just outside Saumur, and who was much respected in both Protestant and Roman Catholic circles for his theological knowledge. See Marvell, 2003, 1:253; Legouis, 1959; N. Smith, 130–31.

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that Marvell stayed there was a haven in which scholars could pursue learning without anxiety of heresy hunting, and a place that, in its harmonious relations between Protestant and Catholic, had transcended the bitter confessional divisions of the French Wars of Religion. As Nigel Smith has observed in his biography: "What Marvell saw and heard in Saumur was to be of extreme importance to him."[51]

There are other indications that Marvell was familiar with Tallemant's pseudo-Rabelaisian material. In the first part of *The Rehearsal Transpros'd*, Marvell refers to an anagram also misattributed by Tallemant to Rabelais, according to which "Calvinus" is revealed as an anagram of "Lucianus." Marvell cites the anagram in advising Parker, that "having undertaken to make Calvin and Geneva ridicule," Parker should logically have gone further, to the point where the very name of "the beast Calvinus" would reveal Calvin's scurrility as a scoffer at religious belief in the manner of the Greek satirist Lucian, a classical writer with whom Rabelais was often compared.[52] It is probably not the case that Tallemant was deliberately misattributing this material to Rabelais; rather, Tallemant's misattributions to Rabelais, incorporated by Marvell, are examples of the process described by Marcel De Grève, in which various pieces of anti-Catholic and anticlerical satire that circulated orally as well as textually in France in the first half of the seventeenth century were frequently ascribed to Rabelais in *libertin* circles, as the *libertins* sought to claim Rabelais as a forebear of their own skeptical and anticlerical views. For instance, the satirical anecdote that immediately precedes the one about the purging of Gargantua in *Les Historiettes* has Rabelais crudely mock the ceremony of kissing the pope's toe: "They say that Rabelais refused to go before the pope, and said: 'Since he made my master kiss his feet, he should make me kiss his arse.'"[53] Jesuit polemicists had explicitly accused Huguenots of reviving Rabelaisian atheism and anticlericalism, as exemplified by *Le Rabelais Reformé* (1619), François Garasse's virulent attack on Pierre Du Moulin, the Huguenot cleric who became a guest at the court of James I; *libertin* authors, on the other hand, accepted and appropriated the charge as a badge of their wit.

Tallemant's own prose has been found to exhibit the influence of Rabelais, both in general tone and specific details of style. "This new Rabelais" described by De Grève, created in the first half of the seventeenth century in the image of the Huguenot anticlericals and *libertin* freethinkers, is the Rabelais invoked in

[51]N. Smith, 130. For recent work on the theological controversies at Saumur in the mid-seventeenth century, see Gootjes.

[52]Marvell, 2003, 1:70. See Tallemant des Réaux, 1960–61, 2:765.

[53]De Grève, 1980; Tallemant des Réaux, 1960–61, 2:765: "On dit aussy que Rabelais refusa d'approcher du Pape, et dit: 'Puisqu'il a fait baiser ses piez à mon maistre, il me feroit baiser son cul.'"

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The Rehearsal Transpros'd and in the critical apparatus of the Huguenot exile Motteux's 1694 editions of the English *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. Of the pseudo-Rabelaisian anecdote used by Marvell about taking "evangelical pills" for purgation, De Grève writes: "It is likely that this flash of wit passed through the merry gatherings of the *libertins* before ending up in the *Historiettes* of Tallemant."[54]

ANTICLERICALISM AND MARVELL'S RELIGIOUS IDENTITY

In recent studies of citizenship and urban culture in early modern England, Marvell is described as the "archetypal citizen" whose political and cultural values were animated by "a powerful sense of place," derived from his experiences of socializing and communicating with merchants and citizens in his hometown of Hull, where he was MP from 1658 until his death, and in the city of London.[55] Undoubtedly, ideas of citizenship and a sense of local and national place were of importance to Marvell, but neither should it be forgotten that his character and writing were also profoundly shaped by European travel and by encounters with European intellectuals and writers. Marvell apparently derived the knowledge of pseudo-Rabelaisian wit that he displays in his prose satires not from any association with literary and intellectual circles in London — he was too young to be part of the Jonsonian set, and the Civil Wars had disrupted the old literary networks when Marvell came to live in the city in the later 1640s — but from the witty conversation of jovial *libertin* gatherings in the Loire Valley.

In the second part of *The Rehearsal Transpros'd*, Marvell also refers to an authentically Rabelaisian episode, in a passage attacking what Marvell regarded as Samuel Parker's efforts to subordinate royal authority to the church by telling the king what he must do to control the nonconformists. The passage is often quoted as encapsulating Marvell's opposition in *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* to the Anglican episcopal imposition of religious conformity, which he viewed as a tyrannous usurpation of royal authority: "Is this at last all the business why he [Parker] hath been building up all this while that Necessary, Universal, Uncontroulable, Indispensable, Unlimited, Absolute Power of Governors; only to gratifie the humour and arrogance of an Unnecessary, Universal, Uncontroulable, Dispensable, Unlimited and Absolute, Arch-Deacon? Still

[54]De Grève, 1980, 133: "il est probable que cette boutade ait fait le tour des joyeuses réunions libertines avant d'échouer dans les *Historiettes* de Tallemant." See also the summaries of the seventeenth-century reception of Rabelais in Zegura, 205–06; Cooper, 143. On the Rabelaisian aspects of Tallemant's prose style, see also Wortley, 84–91.

[55]Withington, 2005, 212; Withington, 2010, 104.

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must, *must*, *must*: But what if the Supream Magistrate won't? Why, must again, eight times at least in little more than one page, and thorow his whole book proportionably. This is (and let him make a quibble on't if he please) like Doctor Rabelais his setting of Julius Caesar to beat *Mustard*: and just as worshipful an imployment, as if he should prefer his Majesty from his Kingdom and Whitehall to the Government of his Ancient Palace of Bridewell."[56] The reference is to chapter 30 of *Pantagruel*: "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 Epistemon is beheaded in a battle, Panurge reincarnates him 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 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.[57]

While Lucian's tale of Menippius's trips to the underworld had been popular with humanist satirists since Erasmus and Thomas More translated them into Latin, it was in the Restoration and early eighteenth century that Lucian, and in particular his *Dialogues of the Dead*, became properly part of English literature, with various English translations and numerous imitative applications to contemporary satirical topics.[58] Marvell's early interest in this comic motif is evident in his enigmatic satirical poem "Tom May's Death" (1650), where May descends to the underworld and meets the Rabelaisian-shaped shade of Rabelais's great English admirer, Ben Jonson. In the passage in the *Rehearsal* quoted above, Marvell charges Parker with usurping Charles II and turning him into the menial servant of the clergy, reducing Whitehall into the workhouse of Bridewell. But if Marvell invokes here an actual moment in *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, rather than a pseudo-Rabelaisian anecdote, he misremembers its details. In Epistemon's account of hell, it is Xerxes who is a "Cryer of Mustard," whereas Caesar is a "boat-wright."[59]

Perhaps the error is deliberate, motivated by the desire, if only half-conscious, to avoid the comparison of Charles II with a Persian tyrant. It depends on how well Marvell knew his Rabelais. If Marvell had read the whole of chapter 30, he would have appreciated Rabelais's depiction of the arbitrary power of clerical absolutism: Epistemon describes how "one of the trustees of the Inquisition, when he saw Pierce Forrest making water against a wall, in which was painted the fire of St. Anthonie, declared him heretick, and would have caused him to be

[56]Marvell, 2003, 1:272.

[57]Rabelais, 1653, 193, 195.

[58]See, e.g., Weinbrot.

[59]Rabelais, 1653, 196, 198.

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burnt alive."[60] Even in hell, the most innocuous act can be interpreted by a tyrannous clergy as heresy. Indeed, some relevance might even be read into this episode in relation to Marvell's concerns in *The Rehearsal Transpros'd*, for "Pierce Forrest" is a mythical king of Britain in a fourteenth-century French prose romance of Arthurian derivation, who establishes Christian unity and banishes pagan violence — an ideal type of the king that Marvell hoped that Charles II might prove by establishing religious toleration through the royal prerogative.[61] But it seems more likely that Marvell simply misremembers a Rabelaisian joke that he heard in conversation in London or Saumur: clearly he did not have the text of Rabelais, whether in French or in Urquhart's translation, open in front of him as he wrote.

It is of course possible that Marvell misremembers his earlier reading of Rabelais, perhaps when he perused the book in French in the Earl of Anglesey's library in Covent Garden, or in a coffeehouse library such as the one established by the Christ Church men in 1668. (It is unknown whether the students' text of Rabelais was in the French or Urquhart's translation.) Yet the combination in *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* of the incorrect account of Epistemon's hell with the repeating of Tallemant's misattributions to Rabelais suggests that Marvell was recollecting hazy memories of references heard in conversation. The references do not offer any firm basis to assume that Marvell ever read *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, in English or in French, in part or in whole. Rather they suggest that Marvell encountered and remembered Rabelaisian satire as sayings, both in the sense of anecdotes that circulated in an oral context and the sort of fragmentary material that educated early moderns were trained to gather and retain in their memory, or transfer to a commonplace book, for future use. As Adam Fox and Daniel Woolf observe in their introduction to a volume of essays on the persistence of oral culture in early modern Britain: "Even in the eighteenth century . . . print remained for most educated people a supplement to speech rather than something read exclusively in silence and for private pleasure only. [Printed texts] furnished topics of conversation and argument, and sources of learned anecdote, sometimes channelled from print to mouth by the intermediate step of collection in a manuscript miscellany, diary or commonplace book."[62] Woolf concludes, in his own contribution to the volume on how published histories were used in conversation in the Restoration and eighteenth century, that "much of what was lifted from the pages of histories and then floated in conversation was amusing rather than grave. . . . Anecdotes became social tools, used to make points not only in private correspondence, but civil

[60]Ibid., 202–03.

[61]Bryant.

[62]Fox and Woolf, 34.

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conversation."[63] The same process of lifting comic moments from Rabelais and from pseudo-Rabelaisian texts to float as amusing anecdotes in conversation may be glimpsed behind the composition process of Marvell's prose satires — except that Marvell has in turn pressed these anecdotes gleaned from private conversation into the service of public anticlerical satire and printed controversial prose.

The persistent perception of Marvell as a solitary figure is in part conditioned by identifying his character with his famous lyrics of retirement, but it has also long been influenced by John Aubrey's memorable description: "Though he loved wine he would never drinke hard in company, and he was wont to say that, he would not play the good fellow in any man's company in whose hands he would not trust his life."[64] Yet if Aubrey tells us that Marvell did not drink hard in company, he nonetheless still places him in the context of sociable drinking, and scholarship on Marvell is increasingly revealing links to various pre-Restoration literary communities and social networks. Such links make more sense of the post-1660 figure of the busy Parliamentarian and controversialist, connected to underground networks of writers and printers.[65] The culture of witty conversation embodied in the allusive satire of *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* is testament to Marvell's social life, both pre- and post-Restoration. It is also an appropriate medium for the pro-toleration message of these prose works. Marvell's religious identity both before and after the Restoration has never been adequately characterized, and arguments that his sympathy with the sufferings of persecuted Dissenters is an extension of his personal religious allegiance to moderate Presbyterianism remain unconvincing, particularly given the hostile depiction of the Presbyterian clergy in his poetry of the 1640s and 1650s.[66]

There is no reason not to take Marvell at face value when he reminds readers of *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* not "to impute any errors of mine to the Non-conformists, nor mistake me for one of them . . . for I write only what I think

[63]Woolf, 127. For more general reflections on civil discourse in early modern Europe, see Burke.

[64]Aubrey, 196.

[65]On the social contexts for Marvell's life and writing in the 1640s and 1650s, see especially McDowell, 2008; on Marvell and the Restoration underground of printers and publishers, see Bardle.

[66]The argument for Marvell's religious identity as that of a moderate Presbyterian has been carefully made by Lamont; see also Keeble in his edition of *Remarks Upon a Late Disingenuous Treatise* (1678), in Marvell, 2003, 2:379–482. This characterization of Marvell's Presbyterian religious identity as "relatively straightforward" is accepted by Withington, 2010, 103. For the anti-Presbyterianism of Marvell's early verse and of the literary circles in which he associated in the late 1640s and early 1650s, see McDowell, 2008; McDowell, 2012. For a careful but finally noncommittal discussion of Marvell's religious identity, which includes the possibility that it can look like "the last station on the road to deism or indifference," see Spurr, 2010, 172.

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befits all men in Humanity, Christianity and Prudence towards Dissenters."[67] More persuasive are Nicholas Von Maltzahn's suggestions that Marvell's cooperation with Presbyterians in the Restoration should be regarded as essentially strategic and "not designed to foster Presbyterian orthodoxy in a national church, but . . . directed toward emancipating Christian inquiry from institutional constraints."[68] Marvell's appeal to Charles II to establish toleration through royal prerogative stemmed from his conviction, the opposite of Samuel Parker's clerical brand of Erastianism, that the sovereign power should ensure liberty of conscience, understood by Marvell as "non-interference" in others' beliefs. Von Maltzahn connects this attitude with an Erasmian tradition of wit and freethinking, seeing Marvell as "an early and influential type of a significant early English Enlightenment figure," the satirical anatomist of "priestcraft."[69] This tradition of wit and freethinking can be called Rabelaisian as well as Erasmian.

CONCLUSION

Marvell found in Rabelais the same ridicule of clerical absolutism that the French men of letters in and around Saumur found in their discussion of *libertin* texts and ideas and that the intended audience of *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* found in their coffeehouse reading and discussion in the Restoration. In this respect, the use of Rabelais in *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* is one indication of how *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, long popular with the "men of wit" in prewar England, was increasingly read after its translation into English for its anticlerical qualities, as it had been in France for some time in Huguenot and *libertin* circles. This anticlerical interpretation would reach its apogee in England in Motteux's critical apparatus, which presented *Gargantua and Pantagruel* as an allegory of the religious persecution of French Protestants. Motteux even looked to Buckingham's *The Rehearsal* to find an analogy with Rabelaisian satire, indicating that he was targeting the same sort of coffeehouse audience that had so appreciated Marvell's prose satires: "I may say that [Rabelais] has satirized all sorts of Vice, and consequently all sorts of men; we find them all promiscuously on his Scene, as in *Bay's* grand dance in the Rehearsal."[70] But Marvell's use of Rabelaisian anecdotes also shows that he did not have to have actually read Rabelais, whether in the original or in translation, to invoke him in the cause of anticlericalism.

[67]Marvell, 2003, 1:267.

[68]Von Maltzhan, 2007, 93.

[69]Ibid., 96; see also Von Maltzhan, 2005; more generally on this tradition of satirical attacks on "priestcraft" in the eighteenth century, see Goldie.

[70]Rabelais, 1694, cxlvi.

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The modern novel began to develop in the last decades of the seventeenth century "through intersections and interactions among texts, readers, writers, and publishing and critical institutions that linked together Britain and France," and the reception and translation of *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, the greatest of French comic romances, is one (comparatively neglected) aspect of that development.[71] The misattributed and misremembered references to Rabelais in Marvell's controversial prose offer insights into the movement of people, texts, and ideas between France and England in the mid- and later seventeenth century, and are a reminder that literary transmission was a process accomplished not simply through material encounter with texts but also by passing through various "conversable worlds." Marvell's curious use of Rabelais can be explained as an example of a phenomenon that is perhaps impossible to categorize with assurance, but that nonetheless must have been central to much literary activity in the seventeenth century, as in other periods both before and after. This is the role played not only by books and reading, but by conversation — in this case, essentially private conversation among self-consciously witty, cosmopolitan, and freethinking men both in England and France — in furnishing writers with literary references and witty sayings that they could later deploy in public life.

[71]Cohen and Denver, 2.

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