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De-Authorizing in Marvell's *The Rehearsal Transpros'd*

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In recent years students of literature have become preoccupied with discursive power, raising questions concerning its sites, how it is used, and how it is distributed. We usually consider the wielding of such power to be tacit, that which goes without saying, although we also assume that successful writing increases an author's influence in a social milieu. But these helpful assumptions generally ignore the possible though paradoxical intention of those authors who seek, not to increase their own discursive power, but rather to reduce the sum of discursive authority in a particular society. This intention is paradoxical because such authors must strip authority from those who have it, while simultaneously pursuing strategies for not appropriating power to themselves. Marvell's *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* provides an excellent example of such a rhetorical balancing act. My hope is that, by examining the transproser's moves, we can observe the paradoxical process by which a skillful author wrests power from another without seeking to add to his own. To the extent that he is successful, Marvell should provide us with a model of how one can consciously set about freeing discourse within an oppressive discursive regime.

The conflict between Marvell and Samuel Parker, his tract opponent in the two parts of *The Rehearsal Transpros'd*, has all the marks of a paradigmatic case for studying the struggle for discursive power in a complex society.[1] On one side is Parker, Archdeacon of Canterbury, and therefore a bona fide member of the establishment. The archdeacon is not reticent about using the power vested in him by virtue of his position to push a program of silencing the Nonconformists. Parker has quickly received promotions within the established church, apparent marks of approval for his writings coming from within his power group.[2] Thus, his works have a ready-made authority that he can exploit to the fullest. Still, like most people in the years after the Restoration, Parker has a few skeletons in his closet. For example, in his youth he was a Presbyterian, and for a time at Oxford he belonged to a strict student sect called the Grewellers.[3] On the other side of this struggle is Marvell, Member of Parliament, and member too—though none of the most eager—of the established church.[4] Like Parker, he too has a questionable past, in his case due to his former ties with Cromwell. But like many another past in his times, Marvell's is usually left unquestioned, and he seems not to be paying

too dearly for his previous activities within Cromwell's government. In addition to his current governmental position, he has strong ties to the trading community, a group that he accuses Parker of believing to be Nonconformist.[5] Thus, there is reason to suspect, based on his past association with the Protectorate and on his links with the trading community, that Marvell has at least pro-Dissenter leanings. These, then, are the antagonists, both with a power base and both with some degree of authority arising from their positions in society.

The complex scene of their conflict may be briefly summarized as follows. In his writings against the Nonconformists Parker has been promoting a strong magistrate with power over matters of conscience.[6] If the Dissenters do not conform, he argues, the king should use physical punishment as necessary to force them back into the fold. Unfortunately for Parker, in 1672 the crown issued the Declaration of Indulgence, a document which neither the established church nor the Nonconformists liked, the established church because it threatened their establishment itself, and the Nonconformists because it would be a step toward toleration of Roman Catholicism.[7] But Marvell converts this threat into an opportunity to turn on Parker by arguing that the advice the archdeacon has been giving Charles goes against the grain of the king's own indulgent attitude toward the problem of indifferent ceremonies. In the first part of *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* Marvell uses the occasion Charles has afforded him to expose Parker's arrogance in advising the king on matters of royal policy. When Parker responds in his *Reproof* with his same old song accompanied by errant attempts to be witty, Marvell writes a second part to *The Rehearsal Transpros'd*, in which he so completely devastates Parker that the latter has no desire to continue the controversy.[8]

It bears directly on our concerns that Marvell appears to have been compromised in his writing of these two tracts, and that in two senses. First, in order to depict Charles as a moderate and wise king, thoroughly without the need for Parker's advice, he must obscure his own difficulties with Charles.[9] It is hard to believe that Marvell is sincere in all of his pronouncements either on the current king or on his father, Charles I. Like many, Marvell too fears that the reigning monarch would move the country in the direction of Rome and France if he could. Moreover, contrary to what he claims, Marvell probably does not believe that Charles actually lives a more righteous life than many of the clergy. The fact that Marvell paints a more positive image of the king than he holds is part of his strategy, as we shall see, but it is a difficult fact for readers to blink away. Second, Marvell's location of himself with respect to the clergy of the established church is hardly credible.[10] His professions of love and respect for the clergy in the second part of the work (for example, p. 165), while they may have moments of sincerity, are more often cases of protesting too much. Again, as we shall see, this position has its strategic value in the work, but it almost certainly also covers the sympathy that Marvell feels for the Dissenters, many of whom he clearly respects more deeply

than he does most of the clergy of the established church. Given these two forms of disguising his true beliefs, Marvell is far more co-opted than Parker and finds himself in the position of having to be extremely cautious in writing to silence the established clergyman.

To reduce Parker's authority and thereby to realign the relations of power within the dominant discourse of the established church, Marvell uses a number of strategies, all designed to call into question Parker's position. The first of these strategies is one that Marvell deploys early in both parts of *The Rehearsal Transpros'd*: he exposes Parker's personal weaknesses, largely invented,[11] while simultaneously criticizing a rhetorical style that has forgotten to tell the truth and prefers instead a hollow but presumably decorous modesty.[12] In the first pages of the first part, to take the most memorable example of this strategy, Marvell nails his man by quoting Parker's *Preface* to the effect that the archdeacon was hesitant to write, being concerned "*in matters of a closer and more comfortable importance to himself and his own Affairs*" (p. 5). Marvell's commentary, symptomatic of his best efforts at eroding Parker's authority through personal attack, is worth quoting at length:

> And yet who ever shall take the pains to read over his Preface, will find that it intermeddles with the King, the Succession, the Privy-Council, Popery, Atheism, Bishops, Ecclesiastical Government, and above all with Nonconformity, and *J. O.*[13] A man would wonder what this thing should be of a *closer importance*; But being *more comfortable* too, I conclude it must be one of these three things; either his Salvation, or a Benefice, or a Female. Now as to Salvation he could not be so much concern'd: for that care was over; there hath been a course taken to insure all that are on his bottom. And he is yet surer of a Benefice; or else his Patrons must be very ungrateful. . . . Why, then of necessity it must be a Female. (pp. 5-6)

Between Parker's work of composition and his work of propagation, Marvell goes on to say, the cleric has no time for revision: "Thus it must be, and no better, when a man's Phancy is up, and his Breeches are down" (p. 7).

Marvell obviously relishes the laughter that such a passage provokes, using laughter throughout to deflate the pomposity of his foe. But the humor involved in creating "his Comfortable Importance," from now on the name of Parker's imagined mistress, serves a larger function. Picturing the archdeacon as a man with his fancy up and breeches down reduces his actions to a corporeal base, and thereby denies him the spiritual authority that normally attends his position in the church. Not without cause does Marvell refer repeatedly throughout *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* to Parker's Comfortable Importance. Her spectral presence reminds us that the archdeacon's motives and priorities are all-too-human, and begin with

his own physical and emotional comfort. This emperor literally has no clothes, for as Marvell characterizes Parker's time pressures in writing, "Like *Archimedes*, into the Street he runs out naked with his Invention" (p. 7).

Having reduced Parker to an impatient lover and given him the name of Bayes because he reminds Marvell of the absurd hero of *The Rehearsal*,[14] Marvell is ready to see what his opponent says about Bishop Bramhall, the author for whose republished book Parker writes his preface, the immediate spark that ignites Marvell. Bramhall has been dead for some time, which permits the archdeacon to praise him: as Marvell puts it, "if you have a mind to die, or to be of his Party, (there are but these two Conditions) you may perhaps be rendred capable of his Charity" (p. 11). But the problem with Parker is that his egocentrism is so complete that he cannot praise a person even when he would. When Parker says that he is recommending Bramhall to the "*Genius* of the Age" (p. 11), Marvell responds by exposing the arrogance of the churchman:

> [Parker reflects] on the Bishop, and the whole Age he lived in; that *he was, as far as the prejudice of the Age would permit him, an acute Philosopher* (which is a sufficient taste of Mr. *Bayes* his Arrogance, that no Man, no Age can be so perfect but must abide his Censure, and of the officious virulence of his Humour, which infuses it self, by a malignant remark, that (but for this acuter Philosopher) no man else would have thought of, into the Praises of him whom he most intended to celebrate). (p. 11)

If Parker uses himself as the measure of all men and his times as the measure of all times, Marvell finds that habit just one of many testimonies to the supreme arrogance of his man. But a passage like this one does more than expose Parker's pride. It also attempts to isolate the archdeacon, not just from the established church, but from the run of humanity as well.[15] The phrase "no man else would have thought of" works toward this end—Parker must be seen as a monster among people, a man so cut off from normal human thoughts and ways by his virulent humor that he cannot speak for anyone nor push his doctrine on any authority but his own malignant egocentrism. For if no other person would think as he does, who is going to listen to him or grant him the ideological ground to pronounce his pretended authoritative judgments? Marvell is making the most out of a single clausal condition in Parker's text, but his tactic works perfectly—for the reader sees the quality of Parker's mind in its minutest workings, and comes to suspect that this person, cut off from humanity, cannot be of interest as anything other than a freak of nature.

But Marvell does not always work as finely as this example illustrates. On the contrary, when he wishes to go for the jugular, he sometimes abandons the stiletto for a broadsword, particularly in the second part of his work, in which his patience is tactically worn thin. In a crucial passage, Marvell goes to the core of his problem with Parker—namely, that the man's pretense of authority knows no bounds:

> he layes his Imposition now upon the Magistrate and leaves him not so much as the Power to will nor chuse; but he must govern by the Laws of *the Author of the Ecclesiastical Politie.* He *must scourge them* [i.e., the Nonconformists] *into order. He must Chastise them out of their peevishness, and Lash them into obedience, There is no remedy but the Rod and Correction. He must restrain them with more rigor than unsanctifyed Villains. He must expose them to the Correcton of the publick Rods and Axes.* Is this at last all the business why he 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 *must, must, must:* But what if the Supream Magistrate won't? Why, *must* again, eight times at least in litle more than one page, and thorow his whole book proportionably. (p. 190)

But Marvell is not yet done with his author's arrogance. The paragraph ends with Parker's presumed power over God Himself:

> Therefore that he might be true to his own principles, if the Supream Magistrate be disobedient, he hath provided against him too pretty severely.... That such a Prince *deserves to be King of the Night*, and to conclude, he affirms that *Princes unless they will be resolute*, that is to do what he would have them, *they must not Govern.* 'Tis come to *Noli igitur regnare*: They had need to take heed of him it seems, and how they behave themselves. But they may very well take all this kindly of him, and as an honour, for it is no less Authority than he exercises over God Almighty. For he will have it that God too *must of necessity have vested Princes in at least as much Power as was absolutely necessary to the Nature and Ends of Government.* (p. 191)

No wonder that Marvell later adds to Parker's literary surname of Bayes the Christian name of Necessity (p. 231). For the transproser here paints the archdeacon as necessity incarnate, a person whose use of the word "must" does not stop with his demands of magistrates but extends to God Himself. Anyone who can must God, Marvell implies, either has supreme power or a megalomania so complete that everything he says is distorted, dangerous, and incredible. The Parker that Marvell portrays tries to assume supreme power, but the transproser trusts his reader to discover an arrogance so grand that Parker's arguments must be discounted. If God does not have to listen to his archdeacon, then neither do princes, and neither do we.

Perhaps the most fascinating of the strategies for reducing Parker is Marvell's attempt to separate the archdeacon from the main line of the established church.

Nowhere is this strategy more completely worked out and more complexly embodied than in the passage near the beginning of the second part in which he explains why he attacks Parker for a second time. He admits that writers of invective run the risk of censure for their abusiveness and recognizes that "it is a praedatory course of life" (p. 162), so that, under normal circumstances, it is better not to write. He also knows that writing against a cleric is especially dangerous and potentially reprehensible, for it undermines the ability of the clergyman to execute his sacred function of the ministry. But despite these fears and worries, Marvell argues that to write against certain clergymen "may be not only excusable but necessary" (p. 163). Specifically, invective is needed when a clergyman "by evil arts" has "crept into the Church, thorow the Belfry or at the Windows" (p. 163) and uses his position to "illustrate so corrupt Doctrines with as ill a conversation, and adorn the lasciviousness of his life with an equal petulancy of stile and language" (p. 163). Even this case does not automatically necessitate invective. Ideally, the clergy should keep their own house in order, both through a thorough investigation of their prospective members before ordination and through a regular internal policing of their ranks. Unfortunately, however, such practices have not been in effect to treat the case of Parker. As a result, Marvell must write.

This argument, calm and rational as it is, leads Marvell onto dangerous ground. He has to come very close to condemning the established clergy of his day for failing to silence Parker, nowhere more so than in the following sentence:

> . . . it happens not seldome that this necessary duty [of driving bad clergy from the ranks]. . . is not only neglected, but that persons so dangerous are rather incouraged by their Superiors, and he that, upon their omission, shall but single out one of them, yet shall be exposed to the general outcry of the Faculty, and be pursued with Bell, Book, and Candle, as a declared and publick enemy of the Clergy. (p. 164)

It appears that Marvell wants it both ways: on the one hand, Parker is a blown deer within the herd of the clergy; but on the other hand, the rest of the clergy are also culpable for tolerating the arrogance of their colleague. This isolation of the bad apple that is not truly isolation bespeaks an anti-establishment attitude that pushed but an inch further could have had effects more palpable than those of bell, book, and candle. So Marvell backs off to give the Anglican clergy advice on the consequences of their not acting against Parker: "they ought to consider that by this way of proceeding, they themselves do render that universal which was but individual, and affix a personal crime upon their whole Order" (p. 164). This move both separates Parker from the clergy as a whole and yet simultaneously warns that, if the clergy fail to ratify this exclusion, his crime becomes theirs.

This strategy of separating Parker from the general authority of the clergy and yet implicating the clergy in his errors reveals Marvell's awareness of the problems

of attacking one in a position of authority. He wants to make it appear that his invective is directed against the person, not his position. Such a move indicates his belief that the clergy itself is not purely monologic. It has competing voices of its own even within its ranks. By distinguishing among those voices, he can condemn the arguments of one man without appearing to be anti-clerical. Yet the argument against Parker is more than the silencing of one person. It is also an attempt to move the clergy as a group from Parker's insistence on conformity to a more flexible position of tolerance, even if that tolerance is strictly limited—applying only to the puritans, and only then to matters of ceremony, not doctrine. It is only minimally, then, that Marvell hopes to muffle the most adversely authoritarian voice in the clergy; maximally, he seeks to convert the established church to his own view of dialogic openness. Paradoxically, he suggests, the church must no longer tolerate Parker in order to become more tolerant in general.

Given this attempt to picture the established clergy itself as a dialogized group, it is not surprising that on occasion, and particularly in the second part of *The Rehearsal Transpros'd*, Marvell cites other figures within the established church as opponents of Parker's position. To take only one clear case, that of Doctor Tomkins, Marvell argues as follows:

> The first is his fellow-Chaplain Doctor *Tomkins*, who in the last Act at *Oxford*, the Question being, *An summae Potestates Civiles gaudjant Potestate Clavium*: held it in the Negative, and being urged with all the testimonies and arguments to the contrary out of the *Ecclesiastical Politie*, the Professor was fain to help him out at a dead lift, disavowing his authority in the face of the whole Country and University in plain terms: *Non stamus hujus Authoritati.* Now where two persons so eminent and equal in Learning, the two Say-masters of Orthodoxy, and of whom all Theology must ask License, are of so contrary opinion in the very Fundamentals of Ecclesiastical Government, is it not time to have a general Vacation, and that all private Process should be respited till so dangerous a division betwixt the two *Pins of the Church of England*, be again cimented? (p. 205)

In such circumstances, the nature of authority that follows from one's position must be called into doubt, precisely the point that Marvell wants to make. For if any established power is sufficiently large and differentiated to have a multitude of voices with contrary opinions on key issues, the incisive commentator, like Marvell, can drive wedges into the establishment for the purposes of questioning credibility.

But Marvell's purpose in *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* is not completely characterized once we have examined his strategies for undermining the authority of Parker. For authority is a mobile energy that tends to flow from one holder to another. As a result, Marvell himself stands to gain discursive power in the very

process of stripping it from his rival. But for a number of reasons Marvell does not want that authority. First, within the context of his two tracts authority is largely reserved for the king. Any attempt on his part to appropriate Parker's authority might therefore be read as a crime identical to that of the archdeacon himself. Second, the arrogation of authority to himself would counter his desire for a less authoritarian society in general. After all, one purpose of his writing is to find a place within the existing power structure for the Nonconformists to live in comfort. His goal then, in part, is a general reduction of the oppressiveness of power, not its re-distribution in a zero-sum game. Third, and finally, Marvell does not want more authority as a result of his writing because he too wishes to stand in opposition at least to the extent that he can function more or less with freedom and the ability to form independent judgments within the dominant discourse.[16] Consequently, in *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* Marvell faces the difficult task of not acquiring additional power as a result of his successful attack on the archdeacon.

As the scene he creates for opening discourse within society and deflecting power from himself, Marvell depicts magistrates as tolerant. In the second part, when Marvell decides to tell his reader what he thinks of the power of magistrates, he begins with concessions to his opponent's position by asserting that royal authority issues from God and that subjects owe princes their obedience. If the prince asks them to disobey their conscience, they should leave the country, or they should refuse to obey and suffer the consequences patiently. But once these concessions are made, Marvell moves to the crucial point.

> But the modester Question (if men will needs be medling with matters above them) would be how far it is advisable for a Prince to exert and push the rigour of that Power which no man can deny him; For Princes, as they derive the Right of Succession from their Ancestors, so they inherit from that ancient and illustrious extraction, a Generosity that runs in the Blood above the allay of the rest of mankind. And being moreover at so much ease of Honour and Fortune, that they are free from the Gripes of Avarice and Twinges of Ambition, they are the more disposed to an universal Benignity toward their Subjects. (p. 233)

The passage continues at great length to expound upon this generosity as it issues in mercy and "softness of handling" (p. 234). Marvell argues that kings can get their way much more easily by treating their subjects with mercy rather than with force. Particularly in small matters, the prince ought not to force his pleasure—for a "Prince that goes to the Top of his Power is like him that shall go to the Bottom of his Treasure" (p. 235). He should instead act as a father, himself living under God's law and behaving gently with his subject children.

It is no accident that Marvell spends so much time in straightforward and serious comments on the prince's power. The society that he is seeking to bring

into being does not depend on complete conformity but on a judicious use of authority to keep only sufficient order so that the country may continue in prosperity and peace. Although no doubt Parker would deny it, this is a far cry from the archdeacon's view of government, which would meddle as much in the lives of citizens as Parker himself meddles in matters above his ken. If the prince were to insist on absolute conformity, as his archdeacon advises, oppositional discourse of any kind would be in danger of having to go completely underground to survive. But Marvell sees magistrates as more lenient precisely because he wants to re-enforce and encourage the king's toleration. If Marvell were to be successful, the result would be that all people not immediately threatening to the security of the regime would be allowed a voice, and multiple voices within the establishment itself could continue to speak and write their differing opinions.

Within this scene of magisterial tolerance, Marvell plays out his problems with his own authority. Assuming an environment in which people within the official power structure can speak more or less freely of things indifferent, he struggles to keep his own discourse from setting itself up as exclusive within the dominant discourse of his times. His most obvious strategy for doing so is to create a self-effacing persona. He poses as one committed to a retired life:

> neither could I ever discover before such an exuberance in mine own, either abilities, which I am sensible how mean, or yet in my inclination, that should tempt me from that modest retiredness to which I had all my life time hitherto been addicted. (p. 169)

This is at least partly false, for by this time Marvell has been in public service for fifteen years. But he is trying to indicate by means of this retiredness that he has no ambition to seize power after the demolition of Parker's authority.

Unfortunately, Marvell was recognized for his brilliance in the first part, so that in writing again he assumes the dangerous position of seeming to love the power that comes with success. But he counters that notion with a modest regard for his own work:

> And truly after I had written, I had so slender an opinion of mine own performance, that I can attribute the acceptance which it found only to his favour, who had so handled the matter, that nothing could have come out at that time against him but must be assured of welcom. (pp. 169-70)

Marvell attributes little to himself, all to the ready-made reception that a book against Parker stood to gain. Finally, as part of this modesty, Marvell frequently qualifies his serious comments with the caution that he is writing about things over his head with full awareness that he is not an authority on such matters. In the passage quoted above on his beliefs concerning the king's power, for example, he slips in a typical parenthetical disclaimer: "But the modester Question (if men will

needs be medling with matters above them) would be how far it is advisable for a Prince to exert and push the rigour of that Power which no man can deny him" (p. 233). The fact that he sees his own statements on royal authority as a form of meddling is symptomatic of his reticence throughout the two parts of *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* to arrogate authority to himself.

No doubt this reticent persona serves as a means for permitting Marvell to advise the prince with due recognition of the distance between sovereign authority and his own, a move as traditional as one could wish. But at the same time this self- effacing persona serves as a corrective to the kind of appropriation of power that characterizes Parker's own style and thus suggests how discourse should be structured so as not to claim authority beyond what one is due, even if a person is within the fold of the dominant group in society.[17] Ideas are spoken by people, of course, so that one can only with difficulty escape authorizing them if they are to go into public circulation.[18] But Marvell shows that this tie between ideas and people is itself amenable to various structurations. One can offer ideas, constantly qualifying them to indicate their tentativeness, rather than push them into the political arena. That notion of tentative offering is the key to keeping every debate from being predominantly a power struggle among people, rather than an open process by which the ideas are put into circulation for society to benefit from as it can. What drives Marvell to write, as we have seen, is Parker's much different view of the relation between writers and their ideas. Parker wants to use his position to force his views upon all, even the king, whereas Marvell is trying both to encourage and to model another way for ideas and opinions to flow. He implies that a tolerant society depends not only on a generous prince, but equally on an open circulation of ideas, without clotting that flow with aggressive power moves. Marvell is not utopian, to be sure. He does not suggest that the authority belonging to the king disappear. But he does suggest that those who possess discursive authority use it as the king uses his own, with generosity, so that unnecessary oppression does not result.

But often in *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* Marvell refrains from asserting his ideas in a serious way, tending instead to turn to laughter as a means of expressing his views. Laughter functions in two ways in the works to keep discourse open. First, it is used to debilitate Parker and his position, as we have seen above. But laughter also operates to keep Marvell's own discourse open. Bakhtin has shown how popular languages can maintain themselves against official languages by means of carnivalizing language, that is, by writing a language of the body in the acts of eating, drinking, sex, urination, defecation, vomiting and the like.[19] Marvell appeals to such language, for example, in his creation of Parker's mistress, his Comfortable Importance, and by referring to the possibility that Parker's hesitation in responding to the first part of *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* was due to his contracting venereal disease. Thus, in a sense Marvell aligns himself with carnivalized language in ways that Bakhtin has adequately described. But the

kinds of laughter in *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* are not limited to the language of the open body—on the contrary, instances of such language are relatively rare.[20] Marvell instead introduces humor most often in a more intellectualized form—he plays upon language, showing its incessant flow of ambiguity and polysemy. By exploiting the language of Parker's texts, he imaginatively misinterprets his foe's statements in such a way as to illustrate and insist that reading is free. In the process, he creates as his persona the reader as laugher, his most powerful and memorable strategy for keeping discourse open.

As an example of what I mean, in the second part of *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* Marvell takes up Parker's criticism of the first part to the effect that Marvell has perverted "*the whole Design of his Book*" (p. 206), meaning Parker's own book, *The Preface*. Marvell's response goes on for pages, but his tactic appears immediately: "What do I know the Designs that are managed betwixt him and his Book when they are together in Private?" (p. 206). On the strength of the ambiguity in the preposition "of," Marvell creates a character out of Parker's *Preface*. Once this character is created, Marvell uses it time after time to expose fictional cracks between Parker's intention and his statements, for example, in the following passages:

> But I hope at least, Mr. *Bayes*, that if I do convince you that the quotations are right on my part, you will be so ingenuous as to put me upon no further trouble, but confess your Book misunderstood you and was in an errour. (p. 207)

And again:

> But pray therefore Reprove your Book, Reprove even your *Reproof*, and if that will not serve, *take it under Correction*; but if it prove incorrigible, I know not what course I should advise you to take with such a Rascal. (pp. 208-09)

By converting Parker's book into a naughty boy in a fiction of textuality, Marvell establishes a comic distance for his persona that keeps the high argument between the archdeacon and himself at arm's length. Questions of actual authority do not disappear, but they are de-emphasized, placed into the background while the fiction works its way through Marvell's text. Because the fiction is clearly Marvell's own design, he places himself in the position of reader as laughing fictionalizer, and suggests that he be judged as much on his invention as on his ideological stance. Consequently, the whole issue of his own authority is muffled in the larger context of his comic posture.

This example, of course, spans only a few of the hundreds of pages of *The Rehearsal Transpros'd*, but it indicates a prevalent strategy of Marvell's de-authorizing himself. By dint of his imaginative play with the archdeacon's language, Marvell makes his attack appear to emerge from Parker's own words.

As in the case of Parker's Comfortable Importance examined earlier and here in the case of the design of Parker's book, Marvell discovers funny stories throughout his opponent's works, and makes the most of these inventions to frame his own voice as that of the laughing reader. It does not require authority to write against Parker in this way, only attention to the latent humor already within the texts of Parker's creation. Marvell often plays on these linguistic margins betwixt jest and earnest, in a kind of no man's land within the establishment. The result is that Marvell himself escapes direct statement and the presumption of authority that attends such serious controversy. It is not that he cannot make the telling assertion—he can when he feels the need. But the margins of seriousness are more comfortable for him, so that he can avoid the traps of presumption and arrogance, and still speak within the halls of power. On balance, his strategy of reading laughingly works well, for it continually undermines the utter seriousness that Parker pretends to but cannot maintain in the face of Marvell's reading.

In conclusion, Marvell inscribes his desire for a freer discourse within the texts he authors, not simply by finding and widening cracks within the dominant discursive regime, but also by locating his own writing on the margins of that discourse in such a way that he does not establish himself as the center of authority. No single strategy serves his purposes, and his success is hardly complete. He has to suffer the charge of currying favor with the king in order to accomplish his ends. But at the same time he images that king as a more tolerant and wiser authority than Charles in fact is, in the hopes of moving him in that direction. Meanwhile, he successfully discredits Parker, who does not have the nerve to respond to the second part of *The Rehearsal Transpros'd*. And he does not seem as if he either has or wants the power that he has stripped from his opponent.

But the final effect of these strategies remains paradoxical to the end. For despite Marvell's rhetorical intention to remain on the margins of discursive power, in fact *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* won him fame in his own time and helped to form his reputation as a champion of toleration in succeeding centuries. While the near future is not likely to see *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* displace Marvell's poetry in the forefront of his achievement, both because the prose work refers to largely forgotten people and events and because it closely attends to the unworthy texts of Parker, nevertheless it remains a model of de-authorizing discourse and a reminder that rhetorical intention and public reception need not match in the always fluid scene of discursive power.

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Notes

[1] For various fuller backgrounds to the controversy between Marvell and Parker, see D. I. B. Smith, "Introduction," to *The Rehearsal Transpros'd and The Rehearsal Transpros'd, The Second Part* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), pp. xi-xx; M. C. Bradbrook and M. G. Lloyd Thomas, *Andrew Marvell* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1961), pp. 90-117; Pierre Legouis, *Andrew Marvell: Poet, Puritan, Patriot* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), pp. 193-202; John M. Wallace, *Destiny His Choice: The Loyalism of Andrew Marvell* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1968), pp. 184-207; and Jennifer Chibnall, "Something to the Purpose: Marvell's Rhetorical Strategy in *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* (1672)," *Prose Studies* 9 (1986): 80-104.

[2] Raymond A. Anselment, "'Betwixt Jest and Earnest': Ironic Reversal in Andrew Marvell's 'The Rehearsal Transpros'd,'" *MLR* 66 (1971): 283, notes that some Anglicans considered Parker extremist. But that is not the picture that Marvell usually paints. He rather notes the obvious success of Parker's career to 1672.

[3] Marvell tells the story of Parker's experience with the Grewellers in his humorous biography of the archdeacon in the second part:

> [At Oxford] in a short time he enter'd himself into the Company of some young Students who were used to Fast and Pray weekly together, but for their refection fed sometimes on a Broth from whence they were commonly call'd *Grewellers*: only it was observed that he was wont still to put more *Graves* than all the rest in his Porrige. (181)

[4] Wallace, p. 203, correctly notes that Marvell does not assume the pose of a Member of Parliament when writing either part of *The Rehearsal Transpros'd*. But the reception of the works could not have been unaffected by the readers' knowledge of Marvell as author and his place in the social order. See Chibnall, p. 82, for helpful comments on this matter.

[5] On Marvell's ties to the trading community, see Legouis, pp. 9, 119-20. On Marvell's accusing Parker of condemning trade, see Marvell, pp. 56-57. Parker defends himself against this charge in *A Reproof to the Rehearsal Transprosed* (1673), pp. 78- 81, to the effect that he censures wealthy fanatics for their fanaticism, not their connection to trade.

[6] The three texts of Parker's to which Marvell takes most exception in the first part are *A Discourse of Ecclesiastical Politie* (1669), *A Defence and Continuation of the Ecclesiastical Politie* (1671), and *A Preface Shewing what grounds there are of Fears and Jealousies of Popery* (1672), which he wrote for a republication of Bishop Bramhall's *Vindication of himself and the Episcopal Clergy from the Presbyterian Charge of Popery*. Parker's response to the first part of Marvell's work is entitled *A Reproof to the Rehearsal Transprosed* (1673).

[7] See Smith, pp. xv-xvi. Smith also notes that Commons opposed the Declaration on the ground that it extended the royal prerogative. See also Wallace, pp. 188-90.

[8] By the time Marvell published the second part, the Declaration of Indulgence had been withdrawn. But the first part had won Charles' favor. See Smith, pp. xviii-xx.

[9] Speaking of the verse satires, Legouis finds Marvell's attitude toward Charles II variable. The king deserves, and sometimes receives, criticism for his morals. But Marvell often treats him well because of a "sympathy between two dispositions curiously similar at bottom" (p. 171). For other views of Marvell's attitude toward Charles, see Wallace, pp. 184-89, and Warren L. Chernaik, *The Poet's Time: Politics and Religion in the Work of Andrew Marvell* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1983), p. 81. Chernaik's idea that Marvell's varying treatments of Charles depend on the rhetorical purposes of differing works is most persuasive.

[10] On doctrinal differences between Marvell and the established church, see Chernaik's chapter on "Christian Liberty," especially pp. 129-33.

[11] On Marvell's transformation of Parker, see the three works of Raymond A. Anselment: "Satiric Strategy in Marvell's *The Rehearsal Transpros'd*," *MP* 68 (1970): 137-50; "'Betwixt Jest and Earnest': Ironic Reversal in Andrew Marvell's 'The Rehearsal Transpros'd,'" *MLR* 66 (1971): 282-93; and *'Betwixt Jest and Earnest': Marprelate, Milton, Marvell, Swift & the Decorum of Religious Ridicule*

(Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1979), pp. 94-125. Also on fictionality in the work, see Chernaik, pp. 182-94.

[12] On the issue of decorum in this controversy, besides the works listed in n. 11, see John S. Coolidge, "Martin Marprelate, Marvell, and *Decorum Personae* as a Satirical Theme," *PMLA* 74 (1959): 526-34; and Annabel M. Patterson, *Marvell and the Civic Crown* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1978), pp. 189-210.

[13] J. O. is John Owen, the Nonconformist who answered Parker's *A Discourse of Ecclesiastical Politie* in *Truth and Innocence Vindicated* (1669). Parker's zeal against Owen is rampant in the *Defence and Continuation* and in his *Preface*.

[14] The strategy of allusion to Buckingham's *The Rehearsal* is aptly characterized by Anselment in "Satiric Strategy," p. 139:" Marvell does not consistently sustain the equation between Parker's polemics and the popular farce, and he does little to superimpose on them the structure of *The Rehearsal*. The relationship, for the most part, functions as allusion rather than illusion."

[15] For a similar view of Parker's alienation from humanity, see Chernaik, p. 193.

[16] As a Member of Parliament, Marvell was jealous of his freedom, a point mythologized in the story of his refusal to take a bribe from Lord Treasurer Danby. See Legouis, p. 120, and Patterson, p. 42.

[17] Parker's *Reproof* is not in the same league of witty writings as Marvell's attacks upon him, but he frequently does lay a glove on Marvell. On the issue of the transproser's modesty, for example, he scores the following hits:

> But though you are always excusing your self from medling with State affairs by reason of your private breeding, your modesty, and your not having been bound Prentice to the Trade of Kings; and on the contrary accusing me for presuming to instruct and advise Princes, yet are you always too prescribing to them Rules of Wisdome and Discretion, teaching them when it is requisite to screw up, and when to let down their Prerogative, how to humour their Subjects, to condescend to their Infirmities, and bid them to be cover'd in their presence, and sometimes. . . to be content with having their Power without exercising it. (p. 440)

Yet for all his awareness of Marvell's strategy, Parker cannot keep pace.

[18] On the related issue of anonymity, it bears noting that the first part of *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* and Parker's works were anonymous. But few were fooled. Marvell felt secure enough to put his name on the second part.

[19] On carnivalized laughter, see Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helen Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1984), especially pp. 59-144.

[20] On Marvell's difficulties with laughter in *The Rehearsal Transpros'd*, see my "Refiguring the Distance 'Betwixt Jest and Earnest': Marvell's *Rehearsal Transpros'd* in the History of Laughter," *English Renaissance Prose* 3 (1989): 31-39. Today I would disagree with my final notion there, derived from Patterson, that Marvell does not resolve these difficulties in the work. If he worries about treating religious matters in jest, that worry does not stop him from producing two sizeable and witty treatises. Perhaps the key is that he is not completely committed to a classical rhetoric, but is willing to play with a centrifugal rhetorical style.