ROMAN VOICES IN MARVELL'S *AN HORATIAN ODE*

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Marvell wrote *An Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland* in a political environment where Rome was a frequent and contested point of reference. Pervasively throughout his poem, he uses Roman literature to confront a new political regime—a nascent Republic, now overshadowed by Oliver Cromwell—that has to be acknowledged and interpreted.[1] He does not rely solely on Roman literature, for he makes use too of Roman social thought; and he alludes widely to more recent European writings as well. For all that, Roman literature forms his primary resource. He does not however seek to impose a unified vision of the Roman past on contemporary England.[2] Interpretation in this case brings together perspectives that are celebratory, pejorative, speculative, and skeptical. As we know, Marvell chooses to delineate both the ascendant Cromwell and the fallen Charles in terms mainly from two sequent and contrasting episodes in the story of Rome: the Civil War, as presented by Lucan; and the Principate, as presented by Horace. The title of his poem alludes, after all, to Horace himself and one of the poem's most famous similes alludes unmistakably to Lucan's epic (ll. 13-16). The scope and function of his engaging with the works of those Roman predecessors are nonetheless more ambitious than has been hitherto suggested. Their voices echo strongly but elusively in his poem; and they do so almost equally, despite its title. They form a finely calculated harmony of contrasts, not least in portraying Cromwell's return to England as epiphanic. Marvell brings their antithetic accounts of Roman political experience into dialogue so that he can explore the alternatives that seem to confront an unstable post-regicide England, the actual or potential positives and negatives confronting his homeland. He fashions a fluid mythos of national redefinition for indeterminate times.

The virtuosity with which Marvell summons voices from the Roman past is implicit in the very opening of the *Ode*:

> The forward youth that would appear
> Must now forsake his Muses dear,
> Nor in the shadows sing
> His numbers languishing:
>
> 'Tis time to leave the books in dust,
> And oil th'unusèd armour's rust;
> Removing from the wall
> The corslet of the hall.
> (ll. 1-8)

It has sometimes been conjectured that the "forward youth," the aspiring young man of the poem's initial line, must represent Marvell himself or Cromwell. By mid-1650 neither of those men was particularly young. It is more reasonable to see the "forward youth" as a generalized figure who, if now desiring "to appear," could well take Cromwell for his model. The ninth and tenth lines of the *Ode* introduce Cromwell as having been quite recently and indisputably "forward" and desirous of making his mark in active, public life. "So restless Cromwell could not cease / In the inglorious arts of peace," we are quickly told. Perhaps we are also told this wryly, in light of the earlier poem to Lovelace, with its play on *tam Marti quam Mercurio* [As much to Mars, as to Mercury]; and Marvell's speaker will indicate what a problematic exemplar Cromwell is. In any event, thereafter we will be offered scrutiny of Cromwell's no less indisputable successes; and we will hear of what triumphs may await him. But before Cromwell appears in the poem Marvell's speaker scrupulously positions the idea of aspiration. This he does through a confluence of Roman allusions.

The opening of the *Ode* considers reversals. It insists that the "forward youth" who "would appear" has "now" to abandon contemplation in favor of action, "[m]ust now" leave private life for involvement with public affairs. Marvell's speaker dramatizes his assertion by reference to a domestic culture that is immediately recognizable as English—"Removing from the wall / The corslet of the hall," for example (ll. 7-8). Nevertheless, his picture of personal choice enacted within a familiarly English and chivalric setting has an unmistakably Roman coloring. We see at once that Marvell's speaker urges rejection of *otium* and commitment to *negotium.* At the same time, we see that his admonition evokes while reversing lines 1-5 of Virgil's first eclogue. But we perceive too that the poem's beginning has other Roman resonances. It has a range of association that both enhances its depiction of reversals and complicates its positioning of aspiration. For a start, if Marvell's speaker advises repudiation of *otium* and the *vita umbratilis* he likewise advocates rejection of *inertia* and *ignavia*. Each of those terms for inactivity or idleness implies a slothful avoidance of public life and its duties, yet *ignavia* also connotes cowardice. The idea of *negotium* is here emphatic and strongly masculine. Moreover, Marvell's speaker urges that "the forward youth" seize the day (*carpe diem*). "'Tis time to leave the books in dust, / And oil th'unusèd armour's rust," he says (ll. 5-6). It is "time," in other words, to seize the day militarily: to lay hold of *Occasio* so that one might serve one's own interests in serving the common good.[3]

The poem's opening has a range of associations as well with Roman verse. While Marvell's opening stanzas evidently reverse the start of Virgil's first eclogue, they also reverse Horace's *Odes* 1:11.8, along with Propertius's *Elegies* 2:10 and 2:15.[4] (One could compare them with Plautus's *Trinummus*, 641-654, especially at 650.[5]) In addition, and more importantly, they both resemble and contrast with Lucan's *De bello civili* 2. 286-305 where Lucan's hero, Cato, declares that it is impossible to be indifferent or inactive amid Rome's civil war. At one point he exclaims: "I will follow to the grave the mere name and empty ghost of Freedom. So be it! Let Rome pay atonement in full to the pitiless gods, and let no man's life be denied to the claim of war!" (302-5).[6] In this phase of continuing civil war, Marvell's speaker suggests, it is likewise impossible for "the forward youth" not to join the Scottish campaign upon which Cromwell will soon embark. The initial words of Marvell's speaker harmonize to that extent with Cato's heroic declaration. Yet the dissonances between their voices are striking, as the lines quoted above intimate. Cato announces that he will fight in defense of a principle, "Freedom" (303). Sir Thomas Fairfax had refused, partly on the grounds of religious principle, to lead a military invasion of Scotland. Cromwell did not share that same reluctance and had succeeded to Fairfax's command of the army. Further, Cato is a selflessly unwilling participant in civil war, whereas Marvell's speaker assumes the willingness, even ambitious eagerness, of the "forward youth." Finally, if Cato fights against Caesar and what he stands for, the poem's initial subject of focus is encouraged to fight under the generalship of a man who will be likened repeatedly to Caesar. Marvell's weave of Roman allusions at his poem's beginning therefore involves both reversal and a more sophisticated contrariety. The opening stanzas of his *Ode* reverse some familiar celebrations of *otium* and *eros* in Roman lyric verse. Moreover, they accord and yet variously jar with a famous scene, in a poem to which Marvell will refer often throughout his *Ode*, where heroic choice of *negotium* is made in time of civil war. Marvell's speaker counsels that the Scottish campaign offers an immediate opportunity for "the forward youth that would appear." He implies too that relations between personal aspiration and the common good are now in one respect obvious but nonetheless far from uncomplicated or stable. The doubleness through which he positions personal aspiration at the start of *An Horatian Ode* anticipates his subsequent presentation of Cromwell's epiphanic return to England. And it anticipates as well his image of the regicide.

The inclusively Roman discourse that informs the beginning of *An Horatian Ode* both dominates the poem's representation of Cromwell and shapes it as a harmony of contrasts.[7] That is to say, although the *Ode* is a recruitment poem its exhortation to enlist actually provides the occasion for—in fact, centers upon—a mythopoeic evaluation of Cromwell, exploring alternative interpretations and possibilities of his role as *princeps* within the new Republic. Horace, in his odes, recurrently images Octavian as *princeps* and culture hero. Because Marvell explicitly identifies his poem as an ode glancing back to Horatian precedent, and because his poem marks the return of a victorious general who takes a leading role in his country's comprehensive political reconstruction, we expect Cromwell to have an affinity with Horace's Octavian. We expect him to figure in some ways as "first citizen" and culture hero. So he does—although, as we simultaneously expect, Marvell does not merely fashion his image of Cromwell according to Horace's image of Octavian. This anticipated and in effect inevitable divergence is impelled chiefly by a tactic through which, from the very outset, Marvell's speaker develops his narrative of Cromwell's *vita activa*. From the beginning, his account of the returning and triumphant general sets Horace in interplay with Lucan. He introduces Cromwell's presence by means of a motif that both Horace and Lucan deploy in their respective depictions of Octavian and of Caesar. But he uses it to establish an image of Cromwell that initially recalls Lucan's portrayal of Caesar rather than Horace's of Octavian.

Marvell's speaker proceeds directly from consideration of "the forward youth," as yet in private life, to study of Cromwell, who has spectacularly proven "forward" in his advance from private to public life. He says:

> So restless Cromwell could not cease
> In the inglorious arts of peace,
>   But through advent'rous war
>   Urgèd his active star:
>
> And like the three-forked lightning, first
> Breaking the clouds where it was nursed,
>   Did thorough his own side
>   His fiery way divide.
>   (ll. 9-16)

"Restless" evokes at once Horace's depiction of Octavian and Lucan's of Caesar. Horace emphasizes Octavian's incessant activity at home and abroad for the good of Rome (as, for example, in 1:3, especially at 41-52, 3:14.13-16, and 4:14, especially at 9-13 along with 33-4). Lucan, on the other hand, insists on Caesar's relentless haste in pursuing his own interests, whatever the cost to the welfare of Rome. Thus, his narrator relates: "And now Caesar had hastened across the frozen Alps and had conceived in his heart the great rebellion and the coming war" (1.183-5).[8] He adds, a little later, of Caesar's crossing the Rubicon: "Then he loosed war from its bonds and carried his standards in haste over the swollen stream" (204-5).[9] Thereafter he calls Caesar "headlong in all his designs" (or, more literally, "in all things"): "*in omnia* *praeceps*" (2.656). This image of Caesar as unrelentingly restless recurs throughout Lucan's epic.[10] It marks him as a parodic *princeps*, for he is *praeceps* beyond others in seeking to fulfill his ambition. As Lucan's narrator remarks: "burning with desire for a regal throne" ("*flagransque cupidini regni*," 7.240). His restlessness expresses his manic will to power—for *regnum* and *dominatio*, as that quoted phrase implies. Marvell's speaker, therefore, introduces Cromwell into *An Horatian Ode* by using a term that suggests Lucan no less than Horace, Caesar no less than Octavian.[11]

In fact, the image that he proceeds to delineate resembles Lucan's Caesar far more than it does Horace's Octavian. Like the former, "[r]estless Cromwell" has sought glory amid the risks and uncertainties of war ("advent'rous" recalling "*aventure*"); he has disdained—or been indifferent to—"the inglorious arts of peace" (l. 10). Yet he has exceeded even Lucan's Caesar insofar as he has shaped his own destiny. Caesar is, we are told, Fortune's favorite. Nonetheless, upon his claiming to be her master she promptly humbles him (5.577-677). Cromwell has "[u]rgèd his active star" (l. 12) and proved triumphant. This image of him as exceeding even Caesar, that incarnation of the will to power in excess, then leads immediately to characterization of Cromwell in terms at once dazzling and dehumanizing: extended comparison between the victorious general and a bolt of lightning. It is not unexpected that the simile corresponds to a moment in Lucan's epic, and that it does is well known. After saying of Caesar that "his energy could never rest" ("*sed nescia virtus / Stare loco*," 1.144-5), Lucan's narrator likens his headlong destructiveness to that of lightning (151-157). This is one moment of connection with Marvell's analogy; Lucan however associates Caesar with lightning at least twice more. When Caesar approaches Rome, "The lightning flashed incessantly in a sky of delusive clearness" (1.530). Later, when Caesar leaves Rome, his departure is "swifter than lightning" (5.405).[12] Marvell's use of the lightning comparison does not identify "[r]estless Cromwell" with restless Caesar merely by way of a single simile chosen from the *De bello civili.* Using that comparison, he elicits a connection made several times by Lucan in order to stress the preternatural power and stature of the Roman general, the preternatural *virtus* that he concentrates on his ambitions. The conclusion to that initial phase of the lightning simile, moreover, and the analogy's next phase harmonize as well with Lucan's portrayal of Caesar.

Marvell's speaker describes Cromwell's rise from the ranks of his confederates—his ascent towards the role of *princeps*—as actually a descent upon them. According to the speaker's grotesque representation of that process, a supranaturally human power exerted itself upon the merely human figures environing it, and the violence through which it manifested its ambition was indifferent to a violation of others that was at the same time a violation of self ("nursed" and "own side," in ll. 14-15, summoning notions of desecration and self-mutilation). In this, the description of Cromwell recalls that of Caesar, whose violence is variously a ruthless violation of Rome, the sacred, the familial, and thus ultimately of the self.[13] The likeness becomes most apparent when Marvell's speaker tells of the Caesar-like Cromwell striking down the Caesar of the composite British Empire. The climactic phase of the lightning simile plays out once more the event that confirmed (*praeceps*) Cromwell's advent as *princeps*:

> Then burning through the air he went,
> And palaces and temples rent;
> And Caesar's head at last
> Did through his laurels blast.
> (ll. 21-4)

At the poem's beginning, Marvell's speaker considers a personal reversing of values that he insists is now necessary in private life. Here, at the close of the lightning simile focused on Cromwell, he alludes to what has been by far the greatest of reversals in recent public life. If, according to Marvell's speaker, "[t]he forward youth that would appear / [m]ust now" become part of Cromwell's forthcoming Scottish campaign, he must also understand the "forward[ness]" of that campaign's charismatic leader—the scope of what "[r]estless Cromwell['s]" own "forward[ness]" has already effected. Marvell's imagery from the *De bello civili* captures the simultaneous destruction of a culture and its king. Cromwell's rise to the role of *princeps*—which is to say, his descent upon not only his confederates but also the Caroline *ancien régime*—has torn apart the structures of State and Church and the Head of both.[14]

Bearing in mind that Marvell calls his poem *An Horatian Ode*, we can hardly be unmindful that Horace laments civil destruction of just such a kind in *Odes* 1:2, which Marvell had long ago made the basis of his first poem, *Ad Regem Carolum Parodia.*[15] The persona of Horace's poem begins with complaint against natural disasters that have recently afflicted Rome. Prominent among them is the striking of a sacred site by lightning: "Enough fearsome snow and hail has the father now poured upon the earth; he has terrified the city by striking the sacred citadel with his fiery hand..." (ll. 1-4).[16] He then turns from complaint against recent natural disaster to grief at antecedent political catastrophe: "The young generation, diminished by their parents' crimes, will hear how citizens sharpened the sword which should rather have slain the deadly Parthians, and will hear the wars they fought" (ll. 21-4).[17] That is precisely where Lucan's epic begins. It is also what Marvell's lightning simile—which reworks images from Lucan, as we have seen—at first associates in particular with Cromwell. And what Horace laments in 1:2, Marvell does not praise here in his *Horatian Ode*. Rather, he offers due acknowledgment of supranatural energy, impressed but by no means acclamatory acknowledgment of the dazzling violence through which that energy has been expressed, and unsparing acknowledgment of a pre-eminence achieved through laceration of the *patria*, obliteration of its ruler. In 1:2, however, Horace's persona immediately proceeds to ask: "What divinity are the people to call upon to restore the fortunes of their crumbling power?" (ll. 25-6).[18] He will eventually and climactically answer his question at the poem's end, addressing that messianic "*pater atque princeps*" who is Octavian (l. 50) and concluding with the words, "*te duce, Caesar*" (l. 52). Marvell's speaker will not repeat Horace's question; but he will imagine a partly Horatian conclusion to the civil discord and ruin that his lightning simile pictures in microcosm. As the speaker would have it, the story of Cromwell's swiftly and irresistibly seizing the role of *princeps* has in effect been the story of the Civil War. Cromwell can be seen, in a political environment much concerned with Roman historical precedent and discourse of government, as Lucan's Caesar in a modern guise although not merely as Caesar's duplicate. Yet the speaker will likewise suggest almost at once that Cromwell is susceptible to another Roman interpretation, for he can be seen to resemble Horace's Octavian as distinctly and powerfully as he does Lucan's Caesar.

Marvell's speaker turns to portrayal of Cromwell as akin to Octavian when he remarks: "'Tis madness to resist or blame / The force of angry heaven's flame" (ll. 25-6). This transition is interesting because it presents, in contrast to what will follow, an indistinct transformation. The speaker's *acclamatio* on Cromwell's depiction through the lightning simile intimates that his supranatural *virtus* and hence his advent as *princeps* reveal him as the agent of Providence. But it refuses openly to affirm that he is. At the start of the simile, Cromwell is compared specifically to "the three-forked lightning" (l. 13). Commentary has frequently noted that "three-forked lightning" is an attribute of Jove, and by way of evidence one could cite Ovid's version of the Europa myth, where his narrator tells of "the father and ruler of the gods, who wields in his right hand the three-forked lightning"

(2.848-9).[19] Even so, the "angry heaven's flame" trope wavers between implying that Cromwell is supranatural insofar as he has the power of a natural force beyond that of human nature, and that he is the embodiment of a supernatural intervention in and shaping of human affairs. It does not express Cromwell's sense of himself as the chosen of Providence, though it can be read as congruent with that; nor does it, for all the preceding evocation of Lucan's Caesar, align with Edward Hyde's view on Cromwell in relation to Providence.[20] Moreover, this ambivalence or hesitancy in linking Providence with Cromwell harmonizes with Lucan's evasiveness, throughout his epic, on the interaction between gods and mortals. If Marvell's Cromwell in some respects resembles Lucan's Caesar, Marvell's poem resembles Lucan's in refusing to offer a clear or single account of the divine in relation to the human.

Recurrently in *De bello civili*, Lucan's narrator directly or indirectly blames Fortune for nurturing Caesar's ambitions and thus for the miseries of the Civil War. Fortune favors him, we are told, in one way or another, and in doing so strikes against Rome. According to Lucan's narrator, the citizens of Ariminum reflect, when besieged by Caesar and his army: "[*Q*]*uotiens Roman* [*F*]ortuna *lacessit, / Hac iter est bellis*" (1.256-7). And the narrator states soon after: "[*I*]*ustos Fortuna laborat / Esse ducis* [*Caesaris*] *motus et causas invenit armis*" (1.264-5).[21] Caesar is Fortune's favorite—until his victories are done. Yet the cosmology within which Lucan positions Fortune, and thus Caesar, decorously varies depending on his rendition of different events and circumstances. In Book I, for example, he has Figulus the astrologer indirectly affirm that Fate governs the universe (ll. 644-5). On the other hand, at the start of Book II Lucan's narrator asks Jove whether he governs the universe by "a fixed line of destiny" or through "Fortune" (ll. 10-13).[22] In Book V, the narrator offers an unresolved discussion of the gods and causality centered on Apollo's oracle at Delphi (ll. 86-197). Further, in Book VII he decries destiny (l. 411) but goes on to declaim: "In very truth there are no gods who govern mankind: though we say falsely that Jupiter reigns, blind chance sweeps the world along" (ll. 445-7).[23] He has earlier described, however, the gods punishing an instance of Caesar's hubris (5.617-26). Then, in Book VIII, the narrator asserts that destiny and its "eternal order" ("*Ordinis aeterni*") holds absolute power over human existence (ll. 568-70, quoted from 569). Now as Marvell's speaker would have it, Cromwell is more nearly connected to Fortune than is even Lucan's Caesar. Fortune gave him birth (l. 113). The universe in which Marvell positions his icon of Cromwell is nonetheless as ambiguous as that in which Lucan positions his characterization of Caesar. The "angry heaven's flame" trope indicates this; so too, we see thereafter, do the speaker's references to both Fate and Fortune. Marvell's poem is certainly Horatian. For all that, his *An Horatian Ode* profoundly resembles Lucan's epic in the indeterminacy of its connecting the divine with the human.

A clearer emphasis in the portrayal of Cromwell himself occurs subsequently when the speaker, in lines 27-40, narrates his rise to national prominence. This is not to say that the passage lacks qualification or recognition of divergences. The truth set before us there—"if we would speak true"—is layered. Marvell's speaker superimposes antithetic images of Cromwell. Insofar as the latter has risen through "industrious valour" and in order "[t]o ruin the great work of time" (ll. 33-4), that is, insofar as pre-eminently "due" to him and perhaps his personal ambition is devastation of the Caroline *ancien régime*, he unmistakably retains his already suggested resemblance to Lucan's Caesar. In addition, we see here that Marvell's Cromwell, like Caesar in *De bello civili*, signally advances the progression of "Fate." Here, in contradistinction to the ambiguity of the "angry heaven's flame" trope, it appears that Cromwell does act as the agent of a supernatural force shaping human experience. Marvell seems to echo Lucan's Stoic sense of that term as primarily the unfolding of an "eternal order" through human agency, but an "order" seemingly indifferent or sometimes in opposition to human concepts of "Justice." Moreover, because Marvell's speaker associates Cromwell with a Stoic notion of Fate, he thereby deliberately evades but does not necessarily deny identification of the victorious general with the workings of Divine Providence. That notion of Fate is of course not entirely negative in this moment of the *Ode*, for it is inseparable from the antithetic image of Cromwell now also set before the reader. Continuing the image of Cromwell as Lucan's Caesar, Marvell's speaker simultaneously introduces him in the likeness of Horace's Octavian. Thus, in *An Horatian Ode* Marvell does not supplant a Caesarean by an Augustan icon of Cromwell, as if to imply that Cromwell might initially be taken for the first but in fact more truly recalls the second. Nor, as I shall suggest in what follows, does Marvell indicate that Cromwell must be perceived as identical with Horace's Octavian: as Caesar Augustus reborn in a contemporary, English guise. His other image of Cromwell gestures towards similarity while at the same time tacitly intimating difference.

A preliminary glance at *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* will clarify how he does that. There, Augustus emphasizes his role as *privatus*, his having been given *imperium* by the Senate, his adherence to *mos maiorum* and restoration of ancestral customs, his possessing *auctoritas* rather than *potestas*.[24] Marvell emphasizes that Cromwell's career had its origins in private life and simplicity (maybe hinting that his denial of luxury reflects a traditionally English restraint—an observance of *mos maiorum*). By way of contrast with Augustus' self-portrayal, he stresses that Cromwell possesses both *potestas* and *auctoritas*. Furthermore, just as Augustus draws attention to his having been granted *imperium* by the Senate, Marvell pictures Cromwell as having been given *imperium* by Parliament and as exercising it—at least, presently—in obedience to the will of Parliament (ll. 81-8). One could add that if *recusatio* informs Augustus's self-representation it is virtually absent from Marvell's representation of Cromwell. There may be a gesture towards it when the speaker says of Cromwell, with reference to the House of Commons: "And, what he may, forbears / His fame, to make it theirs" (ll. 87-8). Finally, as *Res Gestae* and *An Horatian Ode* in turn underline, Augustus and Cromwell are both citizens, while Lucan's Caesar definitely is not a citizen. He has turned against civil society.[25] We shall find this close patterning of correspondences and contrasts writ large when we consider Horace's *Odes* (and one of the Satires) in relation to Marvell's *Ode*. That said, to have glanced at *Res Gestae* foreshadows as well the differences Marvell will identify between Lucan's Caesar and his own portrait of Cromwell.

Marvell's imaging Cromwell after the likeness of Horace's Octavian starts with evocation of Augustus' own words rather than with allusion to Horace. That is to say, Marvell's speaker initiates his Horatian imaging of the general by way of an emphasis that Augustus himself makes, as I have mentioned above, when memorializing his career: on the *princeps* as nonetheless a private citizen (ll. 29-30). Yet Marvell complicates his stress on Cromwell's origins as a private citizen by implying that even the latter's retired life as a country gentleman could be seen to have hinted at his later planning—or ambition to control—the lot of royalty (ll. 31-2). Equally important and no less problematic is the subsequent reference by Marvell's speaker to Cromwell's "industrious valour" (l. 33). Earlier, the speaker has mentioned Cromwell's "courage high": "(For 'tis all one to courage high, / The emulous or enemy)" (ll. 17-18). Cromwell's *virtus* as described there implies his affinity with Lucan's Caesar—which is appropriate, given the congruence of the simile with passages in *De bello civili* and the development of the simile itself. The reference to "industrious valour" affirms this representation of Cromwell, since his ascent through the exercise of his *virtus* has brought about the fall ("ruin" suggesting *ruina*) of the composite British Empire—"the kingdoms old" (l. 35). Nevertheless, in Augustan culture *virtus* was believed to unite *fortitudo*, *diligentia* and *industria*.[26] An "industrious valour" need not therefore be viewed in Marvell's poem as essentially deleterious; and here, indeed, the speaker succinctly observes that if Cromwell has broken the old political order he has also imposed a new one on the three kingdoms. Through his aspiring *virtus* he has compelled them "into another mould" (l. 36). If he, primarily, was responsible for the fall of the monarchy at the core of what had been the Empire, now he, pre-eminently, is responsible for its replacement by the Republic. Like Lucan's Caesar, he has broken inherited political structures. Like Horace's Octavian, on the other hand, he is a culture hero: supranatural—and, as we shall be told, more than that—in his rebuilding of the *patria*.[27] Thus, although he has "ruin[ed] the great work of time" he has, as *princeps* and like Horace's Octavian, come constructively into his own time: "*tua, Caesa*r, *aetas*" (*Odes* 4:15.4). Unlike the Octavian of the *Odes* and the *Res Gestae*, however, he is not re-founding but establishing anew.[28] That implicitly acknowledged yet unmistakable divergence creates the discursive space in Marvell's *Ode* for his canvassing issues concerned with *nuovi ordini*, conquest theory and engagement.

There are further similarities and differences between Marvell's Cromwell and Horace's Octavian, as one might expect. For a start, the victorious Cromwell seems to be presiding, like the triumphant Octavian, over defeated enemies at home.[29] The defeat of enemies further afield is predicted as well, yet in a different metamorphosis of Cromwell. He is not turned again into a type of Octavian. Instead, Marvell's speaker transforms him from the semblance of Lucan's Caesar into the likeness of the Julius Caesar who was the victorious general of the Roman Republic (and, additionally, into that of Hannibal). The new English Republic may well win its own new imperial status Marvell's speaker goes on to prognosticate (ll. 97-112). Cromwell is likened nonetheless to Horace's Octavian in another, important respect. Marvell's speaker sets Cromwell's breaking and reconstruction of political structures within an opposition between "Justice" and "Fate" (37). Not only do the two seem incompatible, it appears as well that Cromwell's *virtus* cannot be reconciled with what is just. Marvell's speaker goes on nevertheless to deflect that second implication. He does so by borrowing a tactic from Horace. In *Odes* 4:4.50-72 Horace presents a *sermocinatio* in which Hannibal attests to the *virtus* of his Roman enemies. Marvell reworks this maneuver by proposing that the conquered Irish "can affirm his [Cromwell's] praises best, / And have, though overcome, confessed / How good he is, how just, / And fit for highest trust" (ll. 77-80). That emphasis on Cromwell as a man of justice also recalls *Satires* 2:1.16-17, where Horace deploys *sermocinatio* once more, having Trebatius call Octavian "*et iustum* […] *et* […] *fortem*" (l. 16). Cromwell himself is, then, *iustus* even "[t]hough Justice against Fate complain" at his bringing down the monarchy.[30] As Marvell's speaker carefully indicates, if Fate has ended the *ancien régime* in despite of the ancient constitution, it has affected that process through a just man and has simultaneously used him to initiate the new system of government. Marvell's "Fate" and Lucan's are by no means identical.

There are, too, other telling likenesses between Marvell's Cromwell and Horace's Octavian. When, in 27 B.C.E, the Senate conferred on Octavian the title "Augustus" it likewise put up a golden shield, in the Curia Iulia, on which were inscribed four virtues. On the *clupeus virtutis* were listed *virtus*, *clementia*, *iustitia*, *pietas*.[31] All are ascribed to Octavian by Horace in the *Odes* and other poems.[32] All seem to be attributed by Marvell to Cromwell, as his Horatian rendering of the Irish and his stylized assertion of Cromwell's control by the House of Commons demonstrate. For example, inasmuch as the defeated Irish are purportedly "ashamed / To see themselves in one year tamed" (ll. 73-4), they attest to Cromwell's *virtus.* Insofar as they "have, though overcome, confessed" to his moral integrity and, thus, justice (ll. 78-9), they attest to his *clementia*—in the Roman sense—as well as *iustitia*. By declaring him "fit for highest trust" (l. 80), they testify to his *fidelitas* and at the same time his *pietas* (again, in the Roman sense).[33] Marvell elaborates on aspects of that idealizing *sermocinatio* in his account of Cromwell's relation to the House of

Commons (ll. 85-98). There his speaker announces that Cromwell "to the Commons' feet presents / A kingdom, for his first year's rents" (ll. 85-6), affirming the victorious general's *virtus* and *pietas*. After what appears to be a gesture towards *recusatio* (ll. 87-8), the speaker then goes on to develop an astutely designed antithesis to his earlier lightning simile. Now, he suggests, Cromwell no longer resembles the uncontrollable "force of angry heaven's flame." On the contrary, he enacts a directed and restrained violence—still irresistible, but in the service of the new political order that he has pre-eminently initiated:

> So when the falcon high
> Falls heavy from the sky;
>
> She, having killed, no more does search,
> But on the next green bough to perch;
> Where, when he first does lure,
> The falc'ner has her sure.
> (ll. 91-6)

Although, countering the earlier lightning simile, this analogy emphasizes Cromwell's *virtus* and *pietas* in combination it does not therefore erase his previously suggested affinities with Lucan's Caesar. It does not indicate that Marvell's speaker has metamorphosed Cromwell into an undifferentiated semblance of Horace's Octavian. It does indicate that the speaker wants to present, if not change in Cromwell, dimensions to his *potestas* and *auctoritas* that his rise to prominence in public life did not make evident.

The stanza between those episodes of the poem just now discussed captures in little the almost Janus-like doubleness with which Marvell's speaker depicts Cromwell. Transitioning from fictional testimony by the defeated Irish to the falcon simile, Marvell's speaker says this: "Nor yet grown stiffer with command, / But still in the Republic's hand: / How fit he is to sway / That can so well obey" (ll. 81-4). That stanza's first couplet seemingly precludes and yet allows for the possibility that Cromwell might not always exercise *virtus* in union with *pietas*. The speaker rephrases that smooth interplay of assertion and evasion in the final couplet of the stanza. There, he suggests that Cromwell has no desire for *dominatio* and *regnum*; simultaneously he indicates that, as *princeps*, Cromwell possesses beyond doubt the capacity for judicious sole rule. In between the speaker's intimation that *virtus*, c*lementia*, *iustitia* and *pietas* all characterize Cromwell, he obliquely reminds the reader that the triumphant general remains a figure of two potentialities—each powerful. The poem's final Roman image of Cromwell strongly indicates, as we shall see, that he does indeed blend the qualities of both.

At the poem's end, after envisioning Cromwell as possibly the future liberator of Europe (ll. 101-4), Marvell's speaker turns in address to the general himself:

> But thou the War's and Fortune's son
> March indefatigably on;
> And for the last effect
> Still keep thy sword erect:
>
> Besides the force it has to fright
> The spirits of the shady night;
> The same arts that did gain
> A pow'r must it maintain.
> (ll. 113-120)

This is the moment in *An Horatian Ode* when Marvell's speaker identifies the returned Cromwell as virtually a supernatural presence in the English Republic. At the poem's climax, Cromwell becomes more than supranatural. Marvell's speaker apotheosizes him as the offspring of a union between Mars and Fortuna. Yet while rendering his presence in Britain as numinous and epiphanic, Marvell's speaker nonetheless also registers it as indeterminate. If Cromwell is notionally the child of Mars, then he has an affinity with Horace's Octavian. In *Odes* 1:2.36 Horace refers to Mars as the founder ("*auctor*") of the Roman people and state—as *Pater Mavors*—subsequently calling Octavian "*pater atque princeps*" (l. 50). If Cromwell is, likewise, "Fortune's son," then he has a less straightforward affinity with the Octavian of the *Odes*. In 1:35.29-32 Horace's persona calls on Fortune to "[p]rotect Caesar" (l. 29), and in 4:14.34-40 he tells of "propitious Fortune" (l. 37) as having granted timely success to the arms of Octavian and his stepsons. But insofar as Marvell's speaker names Cromwell the son of Fortune, he links him more emphatically with Caesar in *De bello civili*. There, as we have seen, Lucan recurrently and particularly associates Caesar with that usually malign goddess. What we now see is therefore this: if, like Horace's Octavian, Cromwell seems to be as *praesens deus* within the Republic, he himself is an ambiguous divinity.[34]

While the falcon simile and the simile of lightning offer complementary perspectives on Cromwell's *virtus*, here the presentation of him as almost *praesens deus* forms an implicit antithesis to the commemorative image of Charles I in ll. 53-64. Throughout that icon and the immediately subsequent commentary on it (ll. 65-72), Marvell's speaker transforms the King virtually into *deus lapsus et absens*. Apotheosis of Charles I had been a commonplace of royalist propaganda. Marvell's speaker neither lends Charles a divine aura nor metamorphoses him into a Man of Sorrows—the gambit pursued in *Eikon Basilike*. Instead, he makes the King an actor, "the royal actor" on a "tragic scaffold" (ll. 53-4) and, at the same time, a figure whose confrontation of death displays a *stile manieroso e gratioso* (not least, at ll. 59-60, in the *sdegno* "with [which] his keener eye / The axe's edge did try"). The supremely aristocratic grace of the King's performance in the face of death suggested his *auctoritas*, implying that he achieved a limited albeit not trivial triumph in circumstances that laid utterly bare his lack of *potestas*. That attribute evidently lay and still lies in the hands of Cromwell. The regicide starkly attested to his power; but, as Marvell's climactic image of the general indicates, that power remains his. Marvell's speaker urges him to exercise it in the forthcoming Scottish campaign (105-112) and, beyond that, to maintain a vigilant military preparedness. Like another Odysseus—a type of *prudentia*—in the Underworld, or a second Aeneas—pious Aeneas, the founding father of his country—in Avernus, he must brandish the sword so as to keep threatening shadows at bay. As the Sybil warns Aeneas, when commanding that he unsheathe his sword in the world of the dead: "Now [...] is the hour for courage, now for a dauntless heart."[35]

The powerlessness of the fallen King highlights the power of Cromwell just as surely as his "indefatigabl[e]" energy (l. 114) emphasizes the graceful passivity of Charles. Underlying the latter's aristocratic performance is, however, not merely a courtly aesthetic. The trope of acting through which Marvell's speaker portrays the King juxtaposes Charles, perhaps by design, with Demetrius as described by Plutarch. In the *Life of Demetrius*, Plutarch frequently describes the king in terms of theatricality. At one point we read of Demetrius learning that his soldiers have rebelled against him, upon which: "withdrawing into his tent, and, like an actor rather than a real king, laying aside his stage-robes of royalty, he put on some common clothes and stole away."[36] Charles's final performance, by contrast, has *dignitas* and *gravitas*—qualities that Marvell's speaker attributes likewise to Cromwell. With regard to the firmness with which Charles faces execution, there may be an allusion as well to *De bello civili* 8.610-636.[37] But a more important and direct classical allusion linked to Charles occurs in the commentary after portrayal of the regicide. Marvell's speaker reflects: "This was that memorable hour, / Which first assured the forcèd pow'r" (ll. 65-6). Then he recalls Pliny's story that "[d]uring the digging of foundations for a shrine on the Tarpeian Hill there was discovered a human head" and that the discovery was interpreted as a "happy augury" for the Roman state (ll. 67-72).[38] This allusion is often noted. Pliny's remark about interpreting omens is not: "Let these instances suffice to show that the power of omens is really in our own control, and that their influence is conditional upon the way we receive each" (28.4.17).[39] Marvell confirms Pliny's observation. For a start, he reinvents Pliny's account of the event, which tells of neither blood nor fear.[40] He reinvents the ancient omen in terms of the regicide. Yet the commentary's epigrammatic conclusion, before he turns to further consideration of Cromwell's personal power, suggests his specific awareness of Pliny's demystifying words. With reference to the "fright" caused by discovery of the "bleeding head" he has his speaker observe: "And yet in that the State / Foresaw its happy fate" (ll. 71-2). How we read what we have taken as omens, Pliny announces and Marvell implies, depends on our present circumstances and needs.

The quasi-deification of Cromwell and the aestheticizing of Charles, which is sympathetic but points to Marvell's resolve not to sanctify or to accept deifying of the King, are elemental to Marvell's creation in *An Horatian Ode* of an unstable mythos of national destiny amid uncertain times. For a newly established and still challenged political order, Marvell creates a new, heroic, but also fluid mythos of national redefinition—one acknowledging the cost of the new Republic, and the unresolved contrarieties embodied within the person of its *princeps*. There can be no doubt that at the end of *An Horatian Ode* we hear, as we have elsewhere, Marvell's speaker engage with voices far more contemporary than, say, those of Horace and Lucan. Behind their voices, however, we hear those of the Roman world. As his poem's title indicates, Marvell invites his coevals to interpret the British present in light of the Roman past, that mirror in which they often sought to view themselves and their society. Nevertheless, in doing so he suggests that Roman precedent illuminates yet neither simplifies nor offers unproblematic unity of meaning to the fractured British present.

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[1] Reference to Marvell's poems is from *The Poems of Andrew Marvell*, ed. Nigel Smith, rev. ed. (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2007). Among recent discussions, see especially: Blair Worden, *Literature and Politics in Cromwellian England: John Milton, Andrew Marvell, Marchamont Nedham* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 58-75; *idem*, "The Royalism of Andrew Marvell," in Jason McElligot and David L. Smith, eds., *Royalists and Royalism during the English Civil Wars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 214-38; Takashi Yoshinaka, *Marvell's Ambivalence: Religion and the Politics of Imagination in Mid-Seventeenth Century England* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2011), 86-128; Derek Hirst and Steven N. Zwicker, *Andrew Marvell, Orphan of the Hurricane* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 57-8; Benjamin Woodford, *Perceptions of a Monarchy Without a King: Reactions to Oliver Cromwell's Power* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013), 94-9.

[2] In *Tom May's Death*, written a few months after the *Ode*, Marvell will have Jonson accuse May of disingenuously doing just that.

[3] Smith, at 273, suggests that the urgency of "now" in line 2 forms "the first instance of Machiavellian vocabulary in the poem, with the injunction of *occasione*."

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[4] Reference to Horace's odes and epodes is from *Odes and Epodes*, ed. and trans. Niall Rudd, *Loeb Classical Library* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004). Reference to Propertius is from *Elegies*, ed. and trans. G. P. Goold, *Loeb Classical Library*, rev. ed. (1990; rpt. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999). The "forward youth" should not, according to Marvell's speaker, now write about war instead of love: he should go to war (as regards *Elegies* 2:10). And he should see life as fulfilled by military endeavor, not erotic encounter with a mistress (with respect to *Elegies* 2:15).

[5] Reference here and hereafter is to Plautus, *Stichus, Three-Dollar Day, Truculentus, The Tale of a Travelling- Bag, Fragments*, ed. and trans. Wolfgang de Melo, *Loeb Classical Library* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013).

[6] Reference is to Lucan, *The Civil War*, trans. J. D. Duff, *Loeb Classical Library* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928). Subsequent reference is to this edition. In the slightly grimmer original: "*[T]uumque / Nomen, Libertas, et inanem prosequar umbram. / Sic eat: inmites Romana piacula divi / Plena ferant, nullo fraudemus sanquine bellum*." See also Thomas May, *Lucans Pharsalia: Or The Civil-Wars of Rome, Between Pompey the Great, and Julius Caesar. The Whole Ten Books Englished* (London, 1650), 31; accessed on EEBO.

[7] For a different account of classical allusion in the portrait of Cromwell, see A. J. N. Wilson, "*An Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland*: The Thread of the Poem and Its Use of Classical Allusion," *Critical Quarterly* 11 (1969): 325-41. See also, more generally, Edward Paleit, *War, Liberty, and Caesar: Responses to Lucan's* Bellum Ciuile, *ca. 1580-1650* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[8] "*Iam gelidas Caesar cursu superaverat Alpes / Ingentesque animo motus bellumque futurum / Ceperat*."

[9] "*Inde moras solvit belli tumidumque per amnem / Signa tulit propere*."

[10] Additionally, see for instance 3.50-2, 5.310-14, 6.8-14, 10.507-8. Cf. Plutarch, *Life of Caesar*, in *The Complete Works of Plutarch*, 6 vols. (New York: Thomas Crowell, 1909), 2:569. Reference to Plutarch is from this edition.

[11] Smith, at 268-9, suggests a parallel between May's translation and Marvell's use of "restless." He also cites some other possible parallels.

[12] The originals of the preceding quotation and of this severally are: "*Fulgura fallaci micuerunt crebra sereno*;" "*Ocior et caeli flammis*."

[13] See especially 3.399-452 and 6.303-5. Cf. May, l. 136. By "supranatural" I mean a force or power greater than the ordinarily natural yet still within the bounds of nature. In contrast, by "supernatural" I mean that which exceeds nature because belonging to the realm of the spiritual or divine.

[14] Marvell's reference to "temples" (l. 22) makes his imagery here similar to May's version of Lucan's lightning simile in *De bello civili* 1.151-7: "Not *Joves* own Temple spares it" (l. 6).

[15] Smith, at 7, dates the poem between late 1636 and early 1637.

[16] "*Iam satis terris nivis atque dirae / grandinis misit Pater et rubente / dextera sacras iaculatus arces / terruit urbem*."

[17] "*audiet civis acuisse ferrum / quo graves Persae melius perirent, / audiet pugnas vitio parentum / rara iuventus*." Cf. *Epode* 7.

[18] "*quem vocet divum populus ruentis / imperi rebus*?"

[19] "*ille pater rectorque deum, cui dextra trisulcis / ignibus armata est*."

[20] See: Cromwell's letter to Lord Wharton, 1 January 1649; his letter to Dorothy Cromwell, 13 August 1649; and his speech at the opening of the so-called Little Parliament, 14 July 1653. I have consulted those texts on the website of The Cromwell Association. See also Edward, Earl of Clarendon, *The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England*, ed. W. Dunn Macray, 6 vols. (1888; rpt. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), 1:1, 1-2, and 6:90 and 97.

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[21] Respectively: "[W]henever Fortune attacks Rome, the warriors take their way through us;" "[Fortune] was determined to justify Caesar's rebellion, and she found excuse for drawing the sword." Cf. 5.696-7 and 7.89-90.

[22] "[*E*]*t saecula iussa ferentem / Fatorum inmoto divisit limite mundum; / Sive nihil positum est sed fors incerta vagatur / Fertque refertque vices*."

[23] "*Sunt nobis nulla profecto / Numina: cum caeco rapiantur saecula casu*, / *Mentimur regnare Iovem*."

[24] *Res Gestae Divi Augusti,* in *Velleius Paterculus, Compendium of Roman History and Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, trans. Frederick W. Shipley, *Loeb Classical Library* (1924; rpt. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), severally at 1.1, 1.6, 2.8. With regard to *auctoritas* and *potestas*, I follow *Res Gestae Divi Augusti: The Achievements of the Divine Augustus*, ed. and trans. P. A. Brunt and J. M. Moore, rev. ed. (1970; rpt. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), at 34.2-3.

[25] For example, *De bello civili*, 2.446.

[26] See Karl Galinsky, *Augustan Culture: An Interpretive Introduction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 83. I prefer the reading of "kingdoms" to its variant, "kingdom."

[27] On Octavian as cultural hero, see, among various instances, *Odes* 1:2.41-52, 3:14.1-16, 4:14.44-52, and 4:15.4-24.

[28] As Wilson, cited in n. 7, likewise remarks at 341.

[29] Cf. *Odes* 3:14.13-16.

[30] Reference to Horace's satires and, subsequently, epistles is from *Satires, Epistles and Ars Poetica*, trans., H. Rushton Fairclough, *Loeb Classical Library* (1926; rpt. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978).

[31] Here I follow Galinsky, 80-3, chiefly at 80.

[32] I have already noted the ascription of *virtus* and *iustitia* to Octavian by Horace. On *clementia* and *pietas*, see respectively: *Odes* 4:15.17-32 and 2:7.9-12; *Carmen Saeculare*, 49-60.

[33] For discussion of how those virtues were interpreted in Roman, and especially Augustan, culture, see Galinsky, 83-90.

[34] See *Epistles* 2:1.15-16.

[35] *Aeneid* 6.260-1. Here, at 261: "*nunc animis opus*, *Aenea*,*nunc pectore firmo*." Reference is from Virgil, *Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid 1-6*, trans. H. R. Fairclough, rev. G. P. Gould, *Loeb Classical Library* (1999; rpt. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).

[36] *Life of Demetrius*, in *The Works of Plutarch*, vol. 3, 234-77, at 270.

[37] Smith notes, with doubt at 269, that Sir Edward Ridley remarked on a link between the death of Pompey and that of Charles I in *TLS*, 5 February (1920), 86. There are similarities, amid obvious differences.

[38] Pliny, *Natural History*, trans. W. H. S. Jones, *Loeb Classical Library*, 10 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), 8:28.4.15 and 17.

[39] "*haec satis sint exemplis ut appareat ostentorum vires et in nostra potestate esse ac prout quaeque accepta sint*."

[40] Both are lacking from Livy's glance at this episode, in *Ab urbe condita* 1.55.6. Reference is to *History of Rome*, trans. B. O. Foster, *Loeb Classical Library*, vol. 1 (1919; rpt. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).