

REVILING REGICIDES: THE KING KILLERS IN POPULAR CULTURE, 1649-62

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On 30 January 1661, the twelfth anniversary of Charles I's execution, Oliver Cromwell's body (or at least a body said to be his), was hung from the gallows at Tyburn before being decapitated and buried in a lime pit. Eight years earlier, an unknown author posted a set of verses at Cromwell's portrait which had been placed in the Exchange following his expulsion of the Rump Parliament. The poem addressed Cromwell directly, and foretold the fate of his flesh during the Restoration: 'Ascend three gibbets, other right thou hast none,/ Two in effigie, and in person one'. Cromwell deserved a triple hanging, it said, as a rebel against God, king and parliament, and the Antichrist's triple crown was his only inheritance, not the circlet of the martyred king. Although the poem had a serious message about the fate of the most prominent regicide, *An Horatian Ode* it was not. Rather it traded in the knockabout and the satirical. The poet conjured Hugh Peters, Cromwell's chaplain and enthusiastic regicide, as the man who 'shall ayde thy coronacon/ And in the pulpit thy damn'd acts rehearse/ Whilst all the people cry/ Goe kisse myne arse'.¹ The executions of Cromwell in 1661 and 1653 were both symbolic, but they were also both deeply political. These figurative retributions emerged from a strain in contemporary political discourse which thirsted for revenge against the regicides in general and Cromwell in particular. The two episodes were connected by an arc of disaffection and hostility against the republic which was militarily inept, but culturally potent, and it is with this strain of anti-regicide bitterness and resentment that this essay is concerned.

This article traces the presentation of the regicide in oppositional culture from 1649 down to the early Restoration, and examines how the regicides became lightning rods for broader discontentment with republican rule. It considers how ordinary men and women spoke about the regicides, sang about them in ballads, read about them in cheap newsbooks, watched them in plays and performance, and rendered them in pictures and images. In discussing the treatment of regicide in popular culture through the 1650s, the article also tries to throw some light on the regicide trials and executions of the early 1660s, and the ways in which Restoration culture both invoked the heinous acts of January 1649 as a means of securing monarchical legitimacy, but also the manner in which it sought to ridicule, diminish, and ultimately exorcise the memory of Charles I's execution and the nation's blood guilt.

REVILING REGICIDES: THE KING KILLERS IN POPULAR CULTURE, 1649-62

The regicides were often aggregated together in the popular imagination, becoming a clique of murderers who could stand for a broader collective of ambitious and hypocritical republicans. Apart from Cromwell, their individuality was often only invoked in attacks on scandalous or comic elements of their characters – Henry Marten’s sexual voraciousness, for example, or Colonel Hewson’s single eye and cobbler origins. The medium often influenced the message. Thus in anti-regicide speech and conversation we find a prominent strain of bloodthirsty fantasy and imagined violence; the scatological and the sexual often predominated in white letter ballads and scurrilous royalist newsbooks, while it was Machiavellian scheming and overweening ambition that came to the fore in plays, graphic satire and black letter ballads. This paper is structured around the different mediums in which the regicides were being discussed and dissected (sometimes literally) during the 1650s and early 1660s, and begins with perhaps the least studied of these – the spoken word.²

Prosecutions for seditious speech clustered particularly around the beginning of the Commonwealth, reflecting the widespread horror at the execution of God’s anointed. In December 1649, for example, Nicholas Wiltshire, a husbandman of North Petherton (Somerset), was accused of saying that ‘they that did put the king to death were all rogues, & he did hope to see the confounding of them & their throates cutt’.³ Many ordinary men and women who were deeply shocked at the regicide also expressed a definite, if unsophisticated, strain of ‘constitutionalist’ discourse in their hostile reflections on the fate of the king. One such conversation brought John Norris, a tailor, before the Middlesex bench in April 1650. He was indicted for having said that Charles was ‘illegally put to death’ and that he hoped his persecutors would ‘heereafter suffer for it, and that the power which they have is maintained only by the sword’.⁴ Such sentiments were also to be found in St Tudy, Cornwall, where one gentleman maintained that ‘the kinge had all the lawe of the nation on his side for what hee did against the Parliament, but the parliament had noe lawe for what they did against the king’.⁵ Some key elements of royalist discourse can be found here with the emphasis on the illegality of Charles’s trial and execution, and, by extension, the illegitimacy of the entire republican state.

In the surviving evidence of anti-governmental speech, the regicides are usually an undifferentiated group subsumed within the Rump – it is

REVILING REGICIDES: THE KING KILLERS IN POPULAR CULTURE, 1649-62

'parliament' which has gone beyond its proper bounds in killing the king rather than specific individuals. For example, Timothy Read of Thaxted, Essex, was accused of saying in May 1649 that 'the Parliament are a company of rogues, base rascalls and murdering rogues for murd[e]ring of an innocent king. A pox of God take them all they will hang for it'.⁶ There were exceptions, of course, particularly the singling out of Cromwell. The other individual who appeared in these conversations was the president of the High Court of Justice, John Bradshaw. In Middlesex in April 1650, Thomas Parsons was holding forth against Cromwell and the army. He also brought Bradshaw into the conversation, stating that 'for the President [Bradshaw] he hoped to see him hanged, drawne & quartered for his iudging & commandinge the kinge to dye, who deserveth no lesse'.⁷ Bradshaw hailed from Cheshire, and his brother, Henry, was a prominent figure in the local administration during the Interregnum. In 1651, a man was brought before the Cheshire magistrates for insulting Henry Bradshaw. He had remarked how Bradshaw's plain apparel did not befit his status as 'the King's elder brother'.⁸ This cast John Bradshaw in the role of the king, and clearly commented on his low-born and usurping status. In January 1659, meanwhile, another Cheshire man, Owen Goodman, was asked whether he would be supporting John Bradshaw's candidacy in the forthcoming county election. He replied that 'hee would never stand for Pontius Pilate'.⁹ This tapped into the martyrological elevation of the murdered Charles I into a Christ figure of devotion and reverence, something which would be consolidated during the Restoration with the 30 January Office of Remembrance and the many sermons invoking the regicide as a lesson in disobedience and tyranny.¹⁰

As lord president of the High Court, Bradshaw was clearly a prominent figure in the popular consciousness. This notoriety helps explain why his corpse joined that of Cromwell in the gruesome scene of January 1661. Yet Cromwell was the pre-eminent figure in anti-republican speech and print during the 1650s, and stood as exemplar of the crimes and misdemeanours of all members of the court. He was a murderer, a traitor, a tyrant and a devil. Widely seen as the driving force behind the king's execution, Cromwell became the lodestone for conservative resentment and discontent; the embodiment of usurpation, but also the focus for wild flights of retribution and fantasies of reprisal. This was a particularly prominent aspect of political conversation in this period, and suggests the vitality of this darker subspecies of anti-republican vitriol in everyday

REVILING REGICIDES: THE KING KILLERS IN POPULAR CULTURE, 1649-62

conversation. Many, of course, expressed their wish to see him (and often the Rump more broadly) hanged. One awful piece of doggerel sung in a Worcestershire alehouse in 1653 ran: 'The Bowebells of London shall ringe; And Cromwell shall be hanged at Tyborne in a stringe; For fightinge the kinge'.¹¹ Hanging, of course, was the fate of ordinary criminals rather than the beheading reserved for the nobility; this method of dispatch thus contained a social as well as political message.

The other types of imagined violence inflicted on Cromwell in these conversations are worthy of note. Some fantasised with relish his soul burning in hell for murdering Charles. In 1655 Hugh Humphries of Little Budworth in Cheshire was cooking and wished 'that Oliver's hearte were fryeing in the fire'.¹² In Somerset in 1650, Thomas Furze, a lime burner, was discussing the Engagement, when he wished Cromwell and Sir Thomas Fairfax 'were burning in his kiln'.¹³ He said he would keep them in the fire with an iron bar until they had both been reduced to ashes. Furze imagined an active role for himself in destroying Cromwell and Fairfax, which perhaps helps us understand how some took a vicarious pleasure in the lord protector's posthumous execution: this was to participate in some way in the meting out of the violent justice denied them in the 1650s.

Political speech was not alone, of course, in suggesting a violent undercurrent in society directed at the regicides, but it was rather less inventive and contained far less evidence of the comic, scatological and carnivalesque critique of the regicides found in the royalist newsbooks of 1649-50, and the white letter ballads of 1659-62. Our understanding of the royalist newsbooks has been much enhanced by the researches of Jason McElligott and the late David Underdown who began to take seriously the outrageous ribaldry produced by journalists such as Humphrey Crouch.¹⁴ By portraying a world turned upside down in its social and sexual relations, these newsbooks held up a mirror to the regicides and offered a political commentary on a society dissolving into chaos without its rightful king.

If we turn to these works for discussions of the regicides, we find a rich seam of mocking vituperation which is picked up again in Restoration ballads. In these newsbooks the regicides were rather more differentiated than in the reports of political conversations, although again they concentrated only on a few of the more prominent. Once more, of course, Cromwell was in the vanguard, and again Bradshaw was highly visible, but

REVILING REGICIDES: THE KING KILLERS IN POPULAR CULTURE, 1649-62

here copy was also given over to juicy targets like Hugh Peter, Henry Marten and Thomas Scott. All of these figures were subjected to abuse about their sexual activities which formed an important element of the media's political critique. Cromwell was portrayed as an adulterer but also a cuckold who could not control his wife. Marten's sexual exploits were notorious, and hardly an issue went by without his lying with another man's wife, or with another wife's husband. There was confusion over the number of times Thomas Scott had married and to whom, and this led to allegations in the press that he had slept with both his wife and his daughter, and had produced a child through the latter union. Hugh Peters was also said to have a voracious sexual appetite, only narrowly escaping on several occasions when the husband of his mistresses returned. He was once portrayed catching his fingers in a mousetrap searching for a key under the door of a woman he was trying to seduce. The newsheets offered a collective portrait of a saintly king judged and murdered by a bunch of dissolute and amoral tradesmen and chancers with little authority or idea of how society should be governed. Indeed, this was the central point. If these figures could not control their own appetites, if they could not control their own wives, how could they take the place of the nation's controlling father? These allegations were also part of a much longer anti-puritan tradition which alleged that the godly's professed abstemiousness and asceticism was merely a cover for licentiousness and a gross indulgence of the senses. The public transcript of the regicide, God's manifest design and the liberty of the subject, was transfigured in this literature into a hypocritical private script of ambition, greed and the satisfaction of base appetites.

Continuing the theme of men who could not control their animal instincts, these newsbooks also presented the regicides as bestial, ravening creatures of cautionary biblical tales and popular folklore. Thus they were compared to wolves, snakes, locusts, toads, jackdaws and lice. They were plagues which had been visited upon the nation for its sins, plagues which needed to be atoned for if England was to recover its peace and harmony. Again, the treatment of Cromwell is of particular interest. He was portrayed on several occasions as a fox, a creature of sly cunning that did indiscriminate damage to innocent livestock, and which needed to be hunted down. This image even found its way into the royalist Welsh language poetry of the period such as that of Huw Morys of Denbighshire, who described the faithful of Charles I's Church as '*Defaid*', 'Sheep', while Cromwell was '*Y Llwynog*' 'The Fox'.¹⁵

REVILING REGICIDES: THE KING KILLERS IN POPULAR CULTURE, 1649-62

There was also a scatological and deeply satirical element to the presentation of the regicides in these publications. As Laura Knoppers has shown, Cromwell's nose was a key focus of this material. He was 'Nose Almighty', or 'His Noseship'.¹⁶ His prominent nose was known through his widely-disseminated image, and was taken up in opposition circles as evidence of alcoholic indulgence and his family's background in brewing. Another man with a prominent nose was the regicide Miles Corbet. As with Cromwell, his physiognomy helped position him as a Jew, the killers of the King of Kings, and 'That Jew Corbet' was placed with the 'Rabbinical monkey faces' who had martyred the Christ-like Charles of the *Eikon Basilike's* frontispiece.¹⁷ This theme of anti-Semitism was also picked up in several of the 30 January sermons after the Restoration. For example, in 1670 in Salisbury Cathedral, Thomas Lambert stated that he intended to draw 'a parallel betwixt the Jew's murder of Christ, and the English murder of King Charles the First'.¹⁸

The newsbooks' scatological and sexualised satire on the regicides can also be found in the broadside ballads which emerged with remarkable vigour in 1659, and formed an important part of popular political culture during the early years of the Restoration. As Mark Jenner has splendidly described, many of these verses took the ready-made pun of 'The Rump' and turned it into all sorts of grotesque commentaries on the illegitimacy of republican rule.¹⁹ The stock in trade of the satirists was present here – Oliver's nose, his brewing background, the excesses of Henry Marten, and so on. Several ballads also turned their attention to the regicides, but again for the most part it was the poster boys of the Good Old Cause who received the treatment, including Scott, Hewson, Vane, and, of course, Cromwell himself.²⁰ One 1659 ballad focused on Bradshaw. Again describing him as Pilate, it was a mock arraignment of the devil for stealing Bradshaw away before justice could be done on him.²¹ Once more, such evidence suggests the kinds of popular sentiment which supported the hanging of Bradshaw's corpse at Tyburn in 1661.

One ballad produced in 1660 was entitled *Win at First, Lose at Last*. A black letter composition, it may have been more accessible and easier to read than some of its white letter counterparts. Its conceit was a fairly common one of a metaphorical game of cards in which the knave of clubs played for the prize of the Crown. It carried the subtitle that the game was one where the king recovered his crown, and traitors lost their heads. Cromwell was the

REVILING REGICIDES: THE KING KILLERS IN POPULAR CULTURE, 1649-62

knave of clubs, 'And dad of such as preach in tubs', while Bradshaw, Ireton and Pride were the other knaves in the pack, who threw out 'all cards but black'. Although it name-checked Haselrig, Vane and Hewson, even here the regicides were subsumed into an undifferentiated pack, reviled in their collective rather than their individual actions.

The regicides became more individuated in ballad literature when the legal proceedings began against them in 1660. One black letter composition commented on the trials of Harrison, Cooke, Peters, Jones, Scott and the rest in October 1660. Entitled *A Relation of the Ten Grand Infamous Traytors*, it gave these men some kind of individual treatment, but lacked the kind of gleeful indulgence in their sufferings which could be found in other types of anti-regicide speech and print. The cause of their revolt was natural rather than malicious – they 'wanted a phisicion/ For the great disease that bread/ Nature could not weane it/ From the foot unto the head/ Was putrefacted treason in it'. Another black letter ballad was printed after the posthumous executions of Cromwell, Ireton and Bradshaw: *The Last Farewel of Three Bould Traytors*. In some senses a fairly sober relation of the rise and fall of these regicides, the ballad acknowledged the power and authority Cromwell had once possessed, describing how he used his 'wit' to 'surmount the skies', and had once 'gained towns and towers'. This was a cautionary tale, however, with the triangle of the three 'bloody' traitors, this 'stinking crew', forming 'A mess under Tiburn for the devil of hell'. The image of the king killers in hell was a common one, of course, and it meshed with earlier associations between the regicides and the devil. Such associations had also been common in the cheap royalist newsbooks, which had presented the regicides as 'Hell-hatched infidels' and 'hell's garrison at Westminster'.²² Publications like *The Man in the Moon* also described some of the regicides, particularly Bradshaw, as having their consciences tormented by devils and demons.

Another kind of publication emerged in the early Restoration: cheap broadsides which detailed the identities of those involved in Charles's trial and execution.²³ The first, *The Great Memorial*, appeared in May 1660. It possessed a portrait of the martyred king with the legend 'O horrible murder' accompanying the scene of his execution. The context was clear, but the text itself was not the hysterical prose of the newsbooks, but rather a fairly neutral and detailed list of those involved in the proceedings. Here were the names of the 'pretended' judges, the witnesses, the counsellors

REVILING REGICIDES: THE KING KILLERS IN POPULAR CULTURE, 1649-62

who assisted the court, the subscribers of the death warrant and even the 'messengers, door keepers and cryers'. *The Black Remembrancer*, produced in a similar format but without the portrait, appeared in October 1660 to accompany the trials of the first batch of regicides. It listed the same individuals, but folded them into a wider narrative of usurpation, including the names of the Major Generals, Cromwell's Privy Council, and, crucially, those exempted from the recent pardon. The neutral listing of these names suggests a desire to inform the people about the key actors of the republic, but also to limit blame, to provide a blacklist beyond which retribution and revenge should not go.

In the same vein, but mixing the informative and the satirical, was another broadside, *Lucifers Lifeguard*, which appeared in May 1660. This described itself as a 'schedule, list, scrowle or catalogue of the first and following names of the antichristian, anabaptistical, atheistical, anarchical and infernal imps who have been actors, contrivers, abettors, murderers and destroyers of the best religion, the best government, and the best king that ever Great Britain knew'. There followed a list of sixty-two names, each of which had a satirical amendment or addition. Interestingly, top of the pile was Bradshaw rather than Cromwell, although he was not merely Bradshaw but 'John Pontius Pilate Ravilac Belial Bradshaw'. Cromwell ('Nimrod Herod Acelandama') was second on the list, and Ireton ('Caiphaz, son of Perdition') third – eight months later they would join one another again at Tyburn, and the conjunction of these as the top three public enemies, although dead, should be noted. Despite the spleen vented in every line of this publication, it was another attempt to identify, delineate and circumscribe the small constituency responsible for England's woes. High on the list were the regicides, including those who were dead, but these pieces seem to suggest that retribution should stop here.

We can also turn to drama and performance as another genre adopted by royalists and anti-republicans which sought to interpret, revile and ridicule the regicides.²⁴ There was some dramatic performance during the interregnum, and a small scattering of playlets and short works tackled the horrors of regicide. Despite its title, *The Famous Tragedie of King Charles I*, published in 1649, dealt exclusively with the king's enemies. Cromwell was a Machiavellian figure, with Hugh Peters by his side, plotting the seduction of Lambert's wife and the seizure of the crown. When Cromwell finally gets his prize, one character addresses him, 'So now 'tis sure,/ And makes you

REVILING REGICIDES: THE KING KILLERS IN POPULAR CULTURE, 1649-62

look more like a king than a brewer'. This short piece was directed at a popular audience, but there is little evidence for such material being performed publicly. This changed dramatically with the return of Charles II, of course. Sir John Denham's prologue to the first Restoration play staged at the emotionally-charged venue of the Cockpit-in-Court at Whitehall, set the scene in terms of recent dramaturgy as well as the performance at hand: 'They that would have no KING, would have no play;/ The laurel and the Crown together went,/ Had the same foes and the same banishment'.²⁵ Interestingly, this prologue circulated as a broadside, separate from the performance text, which suggests an attempt to broadcast the message to a wider audience.

These plays were not important or enduring works of art, but they served a purpose. In part they retold the past in order to scrutinise and exorcise it. There was a nagging sense of complicity and guilt among many that they had collaborated with the king killers – or at least had not acted decisively against them. This guilt could be expiated in part by retelling the central drama of the period – the regicide itself. These works generally operated through allegory – the regicides often did not appear under their own names. The plays were repetitive and fairly one-dimensional, but to a degree this reflected the expected narrative of the Restoration itself – with a mantra of obedience, the heinousness of rebellion and the potential avenues for retribution or mercy as its accompaniment *obligato*.

The theme of regicide was taken up in several productions. *The Tragical Actors* of March 1660 presented the regicide as a kangaroo court populated by the dregs of society wholly under the command of Cromwell. Fabulously prescient, after Cornet Joyce has seized Charles in 1648, Cromwell informs him 'I must have him rid out of my way, he must be degraded of his kingship, else how can I be a Protector?' He dismisses the problems of getting a jury together to try the king: 'Tush, cannot I hire fellows to swear ... for I have spoke to thirty cobblers, traitors, barbers and such mechanic fellows'. Cromwell's ghost appeared as a character in the 1661 play, *Hells Higher Court of Justice*. The judgement of this infernal court was that Cromwell's spirit should be bound to a red-hot throne with a burning crown on his head and robes of brimstone enclosing him. Thus would the symbols of monarchy – the focus of his impious ambition – continue to act as his eternal torments. Edward Howard wrote *The Usurper* in 1664, in which Cromwell was Damocles, an army general who purged the

REVILING REGICIDES: THE KING KILLERS IN POPULAR CULTURE, 1649-62

senate and took the crown offered by its rump of members. Hugh Peters was always good value in popular culture, and here he appears as the scheming sidekick, but the names had hardly been changed to protect the innocent: he was 'Hugo de Petra'. The material not only rehearsed the republican past as de Petra also invoked the gruesome spectacle of Tyburn in January 1661. Discussing public opinion with Damocles, he says, 'Say, you are but an Usurper, and though you have the luck to dye in your bed; nay, and may have the liberty to stinke in your grave, yet they [the people] hope before they die to make it a holiday, and see you hang'd after all this, to the great comfort of the nation. And moreover, the name of your quarters has been terrible; and therefore they wish, that every post that now carries a libel, had also a limb of you'.

As in so many forms of popular media, Cromwell was the central presence who stood as an easily-recognised figure through which the whole catastrophe of regicide and republic could be represented and critiqued, and its poisonous influence neutralised. This was the case in popular as well as elite culture, with Secretary Nicholas remarking in June 1659 how 'the monster [Cromwell] is now understood by every pamphletter',²⁶ while in his play *The Syracusan Tyrant* of 1661, Richard Perrinchief reflected, 'I suppose there will need no key to decipher him, since those men ... cannot but remember whom their rebellious practices, at last, advanced to the enslaving of the good people of England'. He was the lead player, the arch-villain, the symbol and vehicle of monstrous rebellion. In the marvellous hyperbole of one 1660 pamphlet, he was 'that hellish monster and damnable Machiavellian that first gave rise to our new-fangled models of government ... the devil of later times, who butcher-like made cruelty his profession & was never better than when he had his sword sheathed in his country-mens bowels'.²⁷ The stock of Charles II was weighed inversely against that of his father's murderer. In dramas Cromwell was usually represented through characters such as Damocles - the villain whose dominant trait was ambition. The Cromwell characters who occupied the early Restoration stage were one-dimensional figures but they encapsulated and simplified the lessons which needed to be learned from the Interregnum.

This article concludes by considering the representation of the regicide in the visual culture of the period. We find little here that is terribly novel in terms of the basic transcript regarding the wickedness of Cromwell and the regicides. However, the material does offer a different perspective on how

REVILING REGICIDES: THE KING KILLERS IN POPULAR CULTURE, 1649-62

some, including the unlettered, may have interpreted and consumed the image of their opponents. One notable image is a broadside entitled *Oleiver Cromwells Cabinet Councell Discovered* (c.1649). Arrayed around the table in close discussion were the most prominent and recognisable regicides, with the devil directing their discussions. The legend beneath identified the participants with Cromwell and Bradshaw the leading figures at the devil's side, and other regicides such as Thomas Harrison, Cornelius Holland and John Jones. Given the elastic definitions of who constituted the 'regicides', it is interesting to note here figures such as John Goodwin and Hugh Peters. Both were not involved formally in the court's proceedings, but both were exempted from the Bill of Indemnity, with Peters joining Scott, Harrison, Barkstead and Jones in the gory spectacle of Restoration restorative justice. Here were the most recognisable villains of the piece, and it is interesting to note that they seem to have been rendered individually, with Cromwell's face bearing a genuine likeness to surviving portraits. The broadside presented a cabal under diabolic direction, with female devils holding the legend underneath the arms of the Commonwealth, and the central figure of the devil adorned in Catholic vestments.

The diabolic Cromwell re-appeared in another broadside of 1657, *The True Emblem of Antichrist*. Here Cromwell's image appears in a small roundel atop a pseudo-genealogical tree as the 'chief head of the fanatticks and their vices'. In place of heraldic supporters he has devils, and his offspring are the 'horrid blasphemies and antichristian heresies and bloody and unnatural rebellions', including atheism, Socinianism and Brownism. These in turn generate further monstrous children such as envy which begets murder, and the union of rebellion and treason produce regicide. The text surrounding the image asks us to look at the hypocritical villain who 'with conscience could dye deep his factious soul in royal blood', and who with his 'Jewish pride/ Martyr'd his king, and heav'n and law defy'd'. We have already seen how the regicides were presented as Jews, and an arresting representation of Cromwell and Fairfax as Jewish king-killers can be found in a Dutch medal struck around 1650, 'The Devil Cromwell and the Fool Fairfax'.²⁸ Both are crudely rendered as Jews, but there was a further comic and satirical message in these pieces – when they are rotated through 180 degrees, Cromwell's head becomes that of a horned devil, while Fairfax acquires a fool's cap complete with bells. It is difficult to know how popular or serious such pieces were, but their very presence in England suggests some

REVILING REGICIDES: THE KING KILLERS IN POPULAR CULTURE, 1649-62

kind of a market for a piece of material culture which was dangerous to possess, but which testified to a brand of political loyalty.

The Dutch Republic was a source for many of the graphic satires of the 1650s which were produced mainly for home consumption, but some found their way into England. Cromwell was often the butt of these pieces, particularly during the Anglo-Dutch conflict, of course, with his hypocrisy and thirst for power often shown by his reaching for, or wearing, the crown.²⁹ The regicides also featured, with a particular grisly focus on their executions. Although there was a degree of home-grown graphic satire dealing with Cromwell and the regicides during the 1650s, it was really after the Restoration that this developed a greater presence in the popular media. The trials and executions of the regicides generated a swathe of publications which reflected upon their crimes, and several contained visual elements. Some were fairly simple rogues' galleries, such as the frontispiece to *Rebels No Saints* of 1661. One version contained a graphic triptych depicting the before, during and after of an execution. After the humiliation of being brought to the gallows on a hurdle, the hanging is accompanied by what seems to be the crowd calling 'dun upon the devill'. The final panel shows the traitor's reward as the naked and anonymous body is defiled, the heart taken out and cast into the flames. Cromwell's fate, of course, occupied a prominent position in all of this. One satirical print of 1661 took the Robert Walker portrait and gave it a distinctly post-Restoration spin.³⁰ The portrait of Oliver himself remains fairly intact, but the legend styles him 'King of the Independents' and 'Tyrant of England'. In the panels we see the fate of his hubris: a corpse dangling alone at the end of a rope wrapped in cerecloth, and his head atop Westminster Hall accompanying those of Bradshaw and Ireton.

These images were all bound up with a project of revenge and expiation that accompanied the king's return. The intimate connection between regality and the justice meted out on the regicides can be seen clearly in John Chantry's print of Charles II.³¹ This presented the king in the full panoply of monarchical authority, with divine light falling on him and key biblical texts of royalist non-resistance binding a border of royal oak leaves together – 'touch not my anointed' and 'Fear God and honour the king'. Charles's regality was framed not simply by oak leaves and the symbols of office, but also by his power over his father's murderers. The executions of the regicides go on in the background, indicating how Charles's authority rested

REVILING REGICIDES: THE KING KILLERS IN POPULAR CULTURE, 1649-62

in some measure on exemplary justice and purging the present of republican pollution. The Chantry image suggests the strange interdependence between Restoration authority and the memory of regicide.

Yet the genie could not be put back into the bottle, of course. Vengeance and purgation formed one strand of opposition to republican ideals, while mercy, co-existence and wiping the slate clean of past misdeeds comprised another. This essay has traced how the former strand was articulated in various forms of popular culture from 1649. But the retributive jostled with the comic, the satirical and the indulgent in various media: this was a complex mix of revenge fantasy, political project and knockabout humour. The regicides had been executed many times in the minds of their opponents before 1660, but the move from imagination to reality was jarring. Although considering the material under review here helps us understand the popular support for the trials and executions of the regicides, we need also acknowledge that it is one thing to wish a man dead, and quite another to witness it. The emptiness of revenge was soon evident, particularly for Presbyterians and moderate puritans for whom the Restoration was a deeply compromised inheritance. Yet for others the ongoing influence of the conservative strand in political culture discussed here was profound. Popular revulsion at the death of Charles I crystallized around the leading regicides, particularly Cromwell. In these figures the Toryism of the later seventeenth century had a ready-made set of villains and a cautionary narrative of the dangers of political and religious radicalism which found a receptive audience among many ordinary men and women. All sections of society received something of a political education in the 1640s and 1650s, but the lessons they took from their experiences were very different. England's political culture was fractured from top to bottom, and for every man who held Cromwell up as a better ruler than Charles II, there was another prepared to throw the lord protector's effigy on a bonfire and to raise a cup of ale to his soul roasting in the fires of hell.

¹ L.L. Knoppers, *Constructing Cromwell* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 67-8.

² For more on this, see L. Bowen, 'Seditious Speech and Popular Royalism, 1649-60', in J. McElligott and D.L. Smith, eds., *Royalists and Royalism during the Interregnum* (Manchester, 2010), pp. 67-87.

³ Somerset Archives, Q/SR/82/2/154.

⁴ London Metropolitan Archives, MJ/SR 1050 (352).

REVILING REGICIDES: THE KING KILLERS IN POPULAR
CULTURE, 1649-62

- ⁵ The National Archives, KB 9/8579/193.
- ⁶ The National Archives, ASSI 35/90/7/80.
- ⁷ London Metropolitan Archives, MJ/SR 1050 (353).
- ⁸ Cheshire and Chester Archives, QJF 79/1/78.
- ⁹ Cheshire and Chester Archives, QJF 86/4/21.
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- ¹¹ The National Archives, KB 9/863/359.
- ¹² The National Archives, CHES 24/131/1.
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- ¹⁴ J. McElligott, *Royalism, Print and Censorship in Revolutionary England* (Woodbridge, 2007); D. Underdown, *A Freeborn People* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 90-111.
- ¹⁵ L. Bowen, "'This Murmuring and Unthankful Peevish Land': Wales and the Protectorate", in P. Little, ed., *The Cromwellian Protectorate* (Woodbridge, 2007), p. 162.
- ¹⁶ Knoppers, *Constructing Cromwell*.
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- ²² *The Man in the Moon*, 48 (13-20 March 1650), p. 370; 51 (10-16 April 1650), p. 386.
- ²³ See J. Sawday, 'Re-writing a Revolution: History, Symbol and Text in the Restoration', *Seventeenth Century*, 7 (1992), pp. 171-99.
- ²⁴ N.K. Maguire, *Regicide and Restoration: English Tragicomedy, 1660-1671* (Cambridge, 1992); R. Howell, 'The Devil Cannot Match Him: The Image of Cromwell in Restoration Drama', *Cromwelliana* (1982/3), pp. 2-9.
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REVILING REGICIDES: THE KING KILLERS IN POPULAR
CULTURE, 1649-62

²⁷ *The English Devil: Or, Cromwell and his Monstrous Witch Discover'd at Whitehall* (London, 1660), p. 3.

²⁸ British Museum, Coins and Medals Department, cat. no. MB1p388.9.

²⁹ See, for example, British Museum, Satirical Prints, no. 741: Crispijn de Passe the younger, *Uytbeeldinge van de Hoogmoedige Republik van Englandt* (1652).

³⁰ British Museum, Satirical Prints, no. 1003.

³¹ John Chantry, *Charles ye 2nd* (London, c.1660-62).

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