UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES, ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

School of Humanities

The Politics of Honour in Restoration Drama: Moments of Crisis, 1660-1681

by

Marjorie Ford Huntley

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

October 2006

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES, ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCES
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES

Doctor of Philosophy

THE POLITICS OF HONOUR IN RESTORATION DRAMA: MOMENTS OF CRISIS 1660-1681

by Marjorie Ford Huntley

This thesis examines how the concept of honour functioned as a part of political discourse during the reign of Charles II and in particular how this discourse of honour shifted in response to political crisis. I have chosen to examine dramatic texts, both performed and published, because they were essential building blocks in reconstituting the honour community that had been riven by the Great Civil War of 1642-46. During the Restoration, these plays provided a public forum for exploring the impact of the recent political upheaval on the body politic. My thesis examines how dramatic texts sought to re-inscribe the relationship of the elite to the crown by attempting to reforge broken links of loyalty and by reviving cultural memories.

My work casts a valuable light on the nature of 'honour' as a political language during the Restoration period and will enable historians to see the crucial links between the performance of plays, the publication of literary texts and the exercise of politics throughout this period. Dramatic texts were not only a reflection of the times, they also acted as active political agents in their own right and I will show how these texts operated at various moments of political crisis during the reign of Charles II.

The thesis follows a chronological approach, rather than a thematic one, because the chronology of events – for the most part – determines the themes. In the introduction, I discuss the definitions of honour, the historiography of the Restoration drama and the links between representations of honour in the Interregnum and the Restoration periods. Chapter I deals with the events of the immediate post-Restoration era and highlights how the issue of loyalty was interrogated and hammered home on the stage. Chapter II explores the failure of the government to address political problems in the first few years of the Restoration period and the extent to which the memories of Civil War continued to permeate dramatic texts in the early years of the reign of Charles II. Chapter III shows how the discourse of honour on the stage engaged with the disasters of fire, plague and war in the late 1660s. Chapter IV highlights the way in which the growth of faction posed a threat to the language of honour and how emerging concerns over a Catholic succession began to revive the notion of honour as loyalty in the latter half of the 1670s. The closing chapter examines the dramatic response to the Popish Plot and the Exclusion Crisis of 1679-81 and shows the importance of the dramatic discourse of honour in rebuilding support for the crown at this time of extreme danger for the future of the Stuart monarchy. In the conclusion, I bring my findings together and argue that the discourse of honour, as studied through the drama, played a pivotal role in the exercise of politics during the reign of Charles II.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEGEMENTS

I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my daughter, Virginia Booth Huntley.

I wish to thank Dr Mark Stoyle and Professor Kevin Sharpe for all their encouragement and inspiration over the last few years. Their enthusiasm and stimulating questions have greatly widened the field of enquiry. I would, especially, like to thank Professor Sharpe for his role in setting me on this path and Dr Stoyle for keeping me on it. I would also like to thank friends and colleagues, in particular, Daniel Bedingfield, Alistair Dougall and Alexandra Lumbers. I owe a huge debt to my family for their sustained interest and support over a long period and to Richard Davis and Richard Taylor for their technical assistance. I would also like to thank the staff at Southampton University library, especially Nick Graffy, and all of those who helped me at the London Library and the British Library.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EHR	English History Review
HJ	Historical Journal
HLB	Harvard Literary Bulletin
JEGP	Journal of English and Germanic Philology
JBS	Journal of British Studies
L&H	Literature and History
MP	Modern Philology
MLR	Modern Language Review
PQ	Philological Quarterly
RECTR	Restoration and Eighteenth Century Theatre Research
SC	Seventeenth Century
SQ	Shakespeare Quarterly
RES	Review of English Studies
TRHS	Transactions of the Royal Historical Society

INTRODUCTION

This thesis, which is an examination of the politics of honour, has been partly inspired by Mervyn James's thought-provoking article 'English Politics and the Concept of Honour, 1485-1642': a study that explores shifts in the concept of honour during the Tudor and early Stuart periods and argues that the assertive honour code of the elite was abandoned in favour of a modified honour code which was linked to the authority of the crown.[1] James's subtle exploration of a political culture in transition prior to 1642 has not yet been matched by a study of the relationship between the honour culture and political culture in the period after the Civil War, when the English elite had to redefine themselves in relation to the re-established monarchy. The concept of honour that underpinned English society in the seventeenth century was an integral part of political culture and a blueprint for political allegiance. Because the relationship between the monarchy and the governing elite was understood and expressed through a discourse of honour, that language held a privileged place in the resolution of political conflict. In the present thesis, I will argue that the aftermath of Civil War and the restoration of the monarchy created a political climate in which the concept of honour needed to be reaffirmed and redefined.

The political crises that occurred throughout the reign of Charles II were articulated in a discourse in which honour was of prime importance. In time, definitions of honour and relationships between the governing elite gradually shifted and were redefined in response to political crisis. The shifts in the concept of honour during the Restoration were expressed through numerous cultural forms, such as paintings, funerary monuments and literary texts. I will argue that the most valuable means of analysing shifts in a value system and its effects on a political culture is through the examination of literary sources, and specifically through the examination of dramatic texts. By dissecting these texts it is possible to explore the rhetoric of honour that reaffirmed a common value system and attempted to reconcile political differences within the governing elite

---

[1] Mervyn James, 'English Politics and The Concept of Honour, 1485-1642', *P&P*, Supplement No. 3 (1978), pp. 1-92.

after the Restoration. The way in which this discourse operated within dramatic texts after 1660 exposed the strains on the honour culture following the Restoration of the King and the creation of the altered political landscape of the post- Civil War world.

In the aftermath of the national trauma of civil war there was an imperative to construct a consensual political language and I will contend that this language was based on the concept of honour that allowed for ambiguity and an integration of differences of opinion. The idiom of 'honour' was a thematic thread which linked almost all of the dramatic texts of the reign of Charles II, and I will suggest that these plays were of prime importance in the renegotiation of political relationships. Because drama engages closely with its own times and because the playwrights of Charles II's reign lived within a post-war world, the political discourse of the Restoration had to be acceptable to those who had fought on opposing sides during the 1640s: to those who had conflicting loyalties and to those who had had to restructure their lives and allegiances within the context of a restored monarchy. Not only were former parliamentarians nervous about their futures but former cavaliers were anxious to recover their forfeited positions and lands. It was the discourse of honour that formed a platform for reconciliation and reopened a dialogue between conflicting interests, taking on a renewed importance as a political language: a language that was both an instrument for change and a living and dynamic force.[2] Political discourse exercised several important functions within dramatic texts. Throughout the reign of Charles II this discourse underpinned the importance of loyalty to the crown, yet it also obliquely criticised the way in which the crown exercised power.

As well as identifying the political vocabulary that was used in dramatic discourse after the Restoration, I have explored how this vocabulary responded to political crises. Quintin Skinner and J.G.A. Pocock have 'attempted to reconstruct vocabularies and rules of usage that determine how

---

[2] J.G.A. Pocock, 'Texts as Events: Reflections on the History of Political Thought', in *Politics of Discourse*, Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker (eds.), (California, 1987), pp. 21-51.

political problems are discussed within particular historical contexts'.[3] Pocock has argued that it is the historian's first job to identify the 'language' in which an author operates and then to show how it operates.[4] In particular, this thesis will develop Pocock's idea that social groups articulate political obligations and that there are tensions inherent in these obligations. He has noted that, because 'political speech is intended to reconcile and coordinate different values, its inherent ambiguity and its cryptic content are invariably high'.[5] In the case of the drama of the Restoration period, playwrights coordinated different sets of values and attempted to reconstruct and reaffirm them into a consensual discourse. Drama operated in an intensely public domain, both in the form of published texts and on the open stage: a domain in which the idiom of honour expressed a multiplicity of meanings. Drama was therefore able to revive memories of the Civil War, while operating as a safety valve for discontent and as a public forum for the reconciliation of the political tensions that affected the body politic. The multivalent nature of the definitions of honour and the changes in emphasis of various aspects of the honour code over time meant that the code of honour, as expressed in the plays, was flexible enough both to accommodate political reality and to facilitate change.

Definitions of Honour

How was honour defined within the context of the late seventeenth century? Although the precepts of the honour culture permeated to all levels of society, the virtues that defined a gentleman were the virtues associated with those who were born to rule. The texts concerning honour that had been in circulation throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries concurred that lineage was the prime determinant of an honourable status. These qualities were considered to be inherited traits, yet by the Elizabethan period humanist writers on honour began to stress the importance of both education and merit. The essence of honour was an internal and external expression of virtue that was the mainstay of the honour code. The attributes of honour were

---

[3] Malcolm Smuts, *Culture and Power in England 1581-1685* (Basingstoke, 1999), p. 5.

[4] Pocock, *Politics, Language and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History* (London, 1972), p. 17.

[5] Ibid, p. 25.

demonstrable and visible to others. As Francis Bacon commented in 1609, 'the winning of honour is but the revealing of a man's virtue and worth without disadvantage'.[6]

Although the concept of honour was indebted to the chivalric code of the Middle Ages, most sixteenth and seventeenth century treatises on honour, both in England and on the Continent extensively quoted both Cicero's *De Officiis* and Aristotle's *Ethics.* Eugene Waith and Arthur Ferguson[7] have emphasised that the chivalric ideal of the medieval knight was that of a man who possessed inner qualities of bravery or courage, military prowess, courtesy, largesse and loyalty. There were, however, many public and private aspects of the honour code that intersected and this conjunction can be seen most clearly in the exercise of political power. During the Middle Ages, the political aspects of the honour code imposed a corporate idea that stressed bonds of duty and obligation that tied the participants in bonds of reciprocal duty. The king was at the summit of this system and was able to convey titles of honour for loyal service. It was this loyalty that was harnessed by the English monarchs and became one of the defining features of the honourable man. James Cleland, writing early in the reign of James I, stated that 'a young nobleman is not only borne to serve his prince and Countrey in time of wars but also in times of peace'.[8] By the sixteenth century, however, the courtesy texts began to emphasise courtly manners and civility and this trend marked the beginning of the civilising of the honour code.

Thus the assertive aspects of the honour code were not suppressed during the late medieval and Tudor periods, but instead were re-channelled in order to support the crown. Malcolm Smuts has noted that there was 'a gradual shift in the sixteenth century when the violent ethos of the chivalric code was supplanted by humanist and Protestant values'.[9] Mervyn James, for his part, has argued persuasively that during the Tudor period the crown was able to establish itself

---

[6] James Spedding (ed.), *The Works of Francis Bacon* (22 vols., London, 1958), VI, p. 53.

[7] See Eugene Waith, *Ideas of Greatness: Heroic Drama in England, 1660-1671* (London, 1971); and Arthur Ferguson, *The Indian Summer of English Chivalry* (Durham N.C., 1960).

[8] James Cleland, *The Scottish Academie, or the Institution of a Young Nobleman* (London, 1612), p. 95.

[9] R. Malcolm Smuts, *Culture and Power in England, 1585-1685* (Basingstoke, 1999), p. 11.

conclusively as the 'fount of honour'.[10] He has explored how the concept of honour changed during this period and how the assertive nature of this code was gradually abandoned by the elite in favour of one which was linked to the authority of the crown. James has emphasized that the virtues of the honourable man prior to the fifteenth century were those that were related to his conduct in war and that there were no references in contemporary texts to honour attained through wisdom or learning. This meant that the medieval code of honour depended on warlike qualities that stressed the violent and assertive aspect of the code of honour. James has maintained, nevertheless, that this competitive spirit was tempered by the Christian aspects of the chivalric code which were subject to divine law. In his view, the growth of humanist learning and the spread of the Protestant religion undermined the assertive nature of honour and shifted the emphasis from the culture of chivalry to a culture which involved scholarship. James has claimed that it was during the reign of Henry VIII that honour became 'nationalised' and the Tudor monarchy established that honour was the gift of the crown which could only be 'authenticated by the heraldic visitations'.[11] Before the 1530s many heralds had been attached to the households of great magnates but their numbers were in steep decline by the middle of the sixteenth century. Instead, the cult of honour became an integral part of court culture. James has defined honour as 'that of the court and city, its service that of the state, and its mark the nobility of virtue'. [12]

By the mid-seventeenth century, the self-same forces that had strengthened the links between the honour community and the crown in the sixteenth century were now beginning to undermine it. The Caroline court had integrated humanist education and religion as part of a culture of honour that was an important component of royalist ideology. The Civil War imposed huge strains on the honour community and saw a return to the assertive and violent ethos of the medieval code of honour. Charles I as 'the fount of honour' was no longer able to call on the loyalty of all of

---

[10] Mervyn James, 'English Politics and the Concept of Honour, 1485-1642', pp. 1-92.

[11] Ibid, p 19.

[12] Ibid, p. 63.

the aristocracy. Nevertheless, those who took up arms against the King considered themselves to be honourable men, for they regarded honour as personal and as reconcilable with belonging to a factional interest. It might seem that loyalty - a key attribute of honour - belonged solely to the Royalists. Certainly this was the view of Edward Symonns, a royalist military chaplain, who stated in 1644 that 'A complete cavalier is a childe of honour'.[13] Parliamentarians, however, were able to assert they had kept their trust with Parliament - and the word 'trust', used in the sense of keeping faith, was an integral part of the honour code. Barbara Donagan has argued convincingly that military honour was a 'force for conservatism in the English Revolution and an aid to ultimate reconciliation'.[14] A communal system of values ensured social continuity, because these shared standards of honour operated amongst enemies who used the same rhetoric and judged one another by the same standards. Donagan has noted that even in the particularly brutal fighting of 1648 Royalists were able to recognise their enemies as 'honourable' and commented of them merely that their honour was 'tainted.... from the wrong spring'.[15] Restoration drama attempted to resolve the differences which had been opened up the Civil War: to reopen dialogue and to restructure the honour community as one body loyal to the King.

If the honour community was split by the Civil War to what extent was the code of honour relevant to the whole of society? How far down the social scale did it reach? The literary evidence would appear to suggest that the honour code remained the exclusive preserve of the aristocracy and the gentry. Nevertheless, amidst the greater fluidity of Tudor and Stuart society, an enlarged merchant class had created greater social mobility. The basis for gentility expanded to include those who had acquired land and status or those with an education. The crown, too, was complicit in the process by creating 'new men' and the numerous tracts on arms and heraldry published in the 1670s were surely a product of this expansion. In the aftermath of Civil War, the numbers of those who

---

[13] Edward Symmons, *A Military Sermon* (Oxford, 1644).

[14] Barbara Donagan , 'The Web of Honour: Soldiers, Christians, and the Gentlemen in the English Civil War', *HJ,* 44, 2 (2001), pp. 365-389, p. 389.

[15] Ibid, p. 388.

claimed honourable status had certainly increased, but this increase, in itself, produced latent tensions within the existing honour community. The propensity to violence that was an integral part of the honour culture of the elite continued to pose a latent threat to political stability. The violence inherent in the medieval codes of honour was juxtaposed with new ideas that could further weaken the bonds of honour that tied men to one another in trust.

This was the background to the political thought of Thomas Hobbes, for it was he who stressed the forces of power and interest that had undermined the Caroline concepts of honour. Hobbes's importance during the Restoration period is that of an 'eminence grise' whose analysis of human nature is based on the notion of a competitive search for power. He was essentially concerned with defining man's role in the state, believing that when the political structure of a state was destabilised then a lawless state of nature followed. According to Hobbes, obligation was determined not only by the possession of virtue but by power. In *Leviathan* (1651) he wrote that 'Honourable is whatsoever, possession, action, or quality, is an argument and signe of Power'.[16] Although Hobbesian political thought may not have been widely disseminated within the educated class, it certainly had an influence on Restoration literature and many in the audience would have understood those references that alluded to Hobbesian ideas of free will and fate. Honour that had been the concomitant of virtue as defined by Cicero and Aristotle had, according to Hobbes, come to be equated with the expression of power. His definition separated honour from virtue and made the practice of politics one of political expediency. The publication of *Leviathan* revealed the political and psychological shifts that the Civil War had imposed on the English body politic. The reading audience had changed fundamentally as a result of the Civil War and the perceptions of that audience had been radically altered. Certainly the reading public of the late seventeenth century were interested in political philosophy and engaged in an interchange of political ideas. It is highly likely that many of those who attended Restoration theatres would have understood dramatic

---

[16] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, C. B Macpherson (ed.) (London 1951), p. 155.

allusions that referred to the political theories of Thomas Hobbes.

Literary Sources

The relationship of literature to politics had always been close but in the wake of the Restoration that relationship assumed a heightened importance. Kevin Sharpe has shown that literature is a rich source for the study of the political and intellectual history of the Caroline period.[17] I will argue that this was also certainly the case in the period of the Restoration when texts were authoritative agents in the public sphere in which debates and conversations were articulated against the background of the memory the Civil War. As J.G.A. Pocock has observed, literary texts 'can and must be seen as actions and events' through the use of language.[18] These texts in turn effect change and are dynamic agents because they act on the language in which they are performed. They become instruments for change in that they modify language and perceptions. Literary texts thus enable the historian, as well as the literary scholar, to analyse the nature of politics because the performance of plays and the exercise of politics were closely intermeshed during the early modern period.

Kevin Sharpe has argued that culture cannot be divorced from politics in any age.[19] This was certainly the case in Tudor and early Stuart England where perceptions of power and authority were inseparable from the use of cultural forms. It was again the case during the Civil War and the Interregnum. Although the London theatres were closed by Parliamentary edicts during 1642-1660, there is evidence that there were repeated attempts to perform plays publicly in London. The government intervened intermittently with the intention of stopping theatrical productions and in 1649 finally ordered the physical destruction of the stages. The edicts against the playhouses that were issued at various points during the Civil War and Commonwealth, point to the fact that drama was an active participant in politics. Susan Wiseman has noted that 'the way issues and values were

---

[17] Kevin Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 1.
[18] Pocock, 'Texts as Events' in *Politics of Discourse*, p.23.
[19] Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment*, p. 1.

disputed in the drama registered and therefore influenced political events'.[20] She has argued further in her excellent study, *Drama and Politics during the English Civil War* that the edict of September 1642 closing the public playhouses only served further to politicise dramatic discourse and that these dramatic texts participated in both sides of the political debate. In the 1650s, Oliver Cromwell appropriated courtly cultural forms in order to establish his authority. The relative stability of Protectorate government and the quasi-monarchical position of Cromwell heralded a return to familiar dramatic forms and discourse. During the Interregnum dramatic texts began to use paradigms of honour in order to discuss the dynamics of politics. It became an even greater imperative in the Restoration that the political authority of the monarchy should be rebuilt and the theatre became a primary building block of that reconstruction. Playwrights had, nevertheless, to take into account the huge ideological splits that had occurred as a result of Civil War and to find a common language that could be understood both by those within the governing elite and by those who were governed. Within this post-Restoration political context old wounds had be healed and new issues of conflict had to be debated. The lack of a common and consensual language in the wake of the Civil War meant that a shared vocabulary had to be found quickly and the idiom of honour filled this gap. As Kevin Sharpe has observed, 'theatre was politics and was seen to be political'.[21] At the Restoration the theatre became a site for the resolution of political conflict – an alternative to the battlefield.

Apart from dramatic texts, there are many other literary sources which shed light on how the discourse of honour had shifted - sources such as memoirs, letters and conduct books. The latter are, perhaps, particularly interesting because, prior to 1642, widely available texts frequently contained detailed discussions of honour. In the period leading up to the Civil War, courtesy texts have proved to be excellent sources for the analysis of shifts in the concept of honour. Texts such as James Cleland's *Institution of a Young Nobleman* (1612), Henry Peacham's *The Compleat*

---

[20] Susan Wiseman, *Drama and Politics in the English Civil War* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 1-16.

[21] Ibid, p. 296.

Gentleman (1622, 1627, 1634), Richard Brathwait's *The English Gentleman* (1630) and Anthony Stafford's *Guide to Honour* (1634) all show how the pursuit of the political ideal of gentility and personal perfection in the service of the crown began to unravel during the reigns of James I and Charles I.[22] As I have shown elsewhere, an analysis of these texts shows that, by 1640, some elements of the honour community no longer felt strong bonds of obligation to the crown.[23]

However, the study of courtesy books published after 1660 casts little light on how the concept of honour operated, because few courtesy texts were published in the decade immediately following the Restoration of Charles II. The decline of the conduct may partly have reflected the fact that texts of this kind could not engage with the historical memory of civil war or integrate the multivalent voices in which conflicting ideological viewpoints continued to be expressed. Nor were courtesy books an effective means of communicating criticism of contemporary political relationships. Rather, they performed as ethical and didactic texts that presented templates of idealised conduct. A new edition of Peacham's *The Complete Gentleman*, which appeared in 1660, included an added chapter on heraldry, published, no doubt, because of the reinstatement of the House of Lords.[24] Yet no other important conduct manual was issued until a translation of Antoine de Courtin's *The Rules of Civility* was published, in 1667.[25] This French tract, which details rules of refinement, was published five times between 1667 until 1685 and there was no English equivalent. The few English texts relating specifically to honour which were published in the immediate aftermath of the Restoration were principally concerned with 'arms and blazons' or heraldry. Sylvanus Morgan's *The Sphere of Gentry* (1661), which was dedicated to Charles II, reinstated him as 'the fount of honour' and defined the nobility in the context of service, while Edward Chamberlayne's *Anglia Notitia; or The Present State of England* (1669), was written in a similar

---

[22] See Cleland, *the Institution of a Young Noble Man*), Henry Peacham; *The Compleat Gentleman* (London, 1630); Richard Brathwait, *The English Gentleman* (London, 1630); and Antony Stafford, *The Guide to Honour* (London, 1634).

[23] Huntley, M, 'The Concept of Honour in Early Stuart England', unpublished MA thesis (Southampton, 1999).

[24] Henry Peacham, *The Compleat Gentleman* (London, 1660).

[25] Antoine de Courtin, *The Rules of Civility* (London, 1667).

vein, defining the rights and prerogatives of the crown and the duties of the nobility.[26] A close examination of these texts, however, sheds little light on the relationship between the honour culture and the exercise of political power.

Without doubt, the most valuable discursive source for the historian of politics during the post-Restoration period is drama. Drama holds a unique position in the exercise of political debate because dramatic texts enable the historian to analyse shifts within a specific political language. Dramatic texts accommodated simultaneously injunctions to loyalty, criticism of the crown and admonitions against upsetting the status quo whilst at the same time defining honour. The fact that dramatic language was oblique and sometimes contradictory meant that it could be interpreted in different ways by audiences who held divergent ideological viewpoints. Annabel Patterson has rightly termed drama, 'a privileged domain with laws of its own'[27] for it was dialogic and encompassed varying political opinions. And because drama was not fixed ideologically, it was able to mitigate the tensions inherent in the post-Restoration settlement. In the early years of the Restoration era, public affirmations of individual loyalty to the crown, and indeed public expiations of Civil War guilt, were frequently written into plays. Political debate within dramatic texts was both oblique and overt. By the end of the 1660s, however, criticism of the King and of the conduct of governance had become more prevalent within dramatic discourse. By the time of the Exclusion Crisis, dramatic texts were fully engaged with the factional strife that had been unresolved since the unsatisfactory Restoration settlement.

The Restoration Audience

Who made up the audience of the post-Restoration theatre? During the Interregnum dramatic production had mostly remained within the private domain. But the Restoration of Charles II in

---

[26] Sylvanus Morgan, *The Sphere of Gentry* (London, 1661); and Edward Chamberlayne, *Anglia Notitia, or the Present State of England* (London, 1669).

[27] Annabel Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation: The Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England* (Berkeley, 1987) p. 45.

1660 also brought about a revival of the public theatre – attended by the court, as well as the governing elite. Although there were private performances at court, these were infrequent and the political elite, who might have held diverse political opinions, were able to read or watch the same plays. Two patent companies were created, the Duke's and the King's, under the management of William Davenant and Thomas Killigrew.[28] Because the theatre was a public domain in which there was constant open debate, determining the social composition of the audience is an important way of ascertaining the extent to which the plays operated as political agents. Such a task is not easily achieved. As Emmet L. Avery has noted, 'theatres do not keep lists of their patrons or indices of their tastes'.[29] However, using letters and other documents, Avery has identified at least 600 performances which took place at public theatres and 50 which took place at court from 1659-60 and 1665-69. Avery has also traced some 175 spectators who attended theatrical performances at public theatres and at court during this same period. As Avery shows, it is certain that members of the court frequently attended the public theatre, including Charles II, the Duke and Duchess of York and their various attendants.[30] References in prologues and epilogues have reinforced the idea that the audience was primarily aristocratic though there is also evidence to show that members of the professional classes attended as well as members of Parliament.[31] For example Samuel Pepys often recorded the presence of 'citizens' and apprentices at theatrical performances. (A citizen was a free man of the city of London, a member of one of the companies, and was entitled to a voice in the city government.) Although Avery's study is valuable then, it almost certainly does not constitute a representative sample of the audience as a whole.

While discussing the composition of the Restoration audience, Harold Love has rightly pointed out that, in the past, much of our knowledge about that audience has come from the eighteenth and nineteenth century enemies of the stage who wished to accuse the theatre of moral

---

[28] William Van Lennep (ed.), *The London Stage* (11 vols., Carbondale, 1965), I, pp. xii-xiv.

[29] Emmet L. Avery, 'The Restoration Audience', *PQ*, 45 (1966), pp. 54-61, p. 54.

[30] Ibid, p. 55.

[31] Samuel Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys* Robert Latham and William Matthews eds. (11 vols., London, 1970-1983), IX, p. 2.

corruption and licentiousness.[32] Love notes that these moralists had little to say about the actual composition of the audience: they simply assumed that it was an aristocratic coterie. These writers' assumptions have coloured the way in which our own evidence about the Restoration audience has been gathered. Although there is no doubt that the audience of the theatre included a strong aristocratic element, the dispute has ranged primarily around the question of how numerous the middle-class theatre-goers were. Love has argued that, although it will never be possible to determine the exact social composition of the audience, it most probably included both upper-class and middle-class elements. In support of his argument, Love has examined the design of the theatres themselves and has stressed that various areas were designated for different social classes, thereby linking physical location with social status. He has also challenged the assertion that higher admission fees limited the social composition of the audience. Although admission prices were much higher that those of Elizabethan theatres, they were certainly affordable to a wide cross section of society.[33]

In the immediate post-Restoration years, the audience would certainly have included many who had fought in the Civil War or who had personal memories of the conflict. Those attending the plays would have had divided loyalties, and the plays would have engaged with these divisions. Looking back at the events of the 1640s, dramatic texts were forced to address contemporary political realities. Despite the fact that the upper classes controlled the repertoire, the issues of the drama had to appeal to those with different political perspectives and historical memories. Neither within the circles of government nor without was there any unanimity of political opinion. Theatre was a safety valve, crucial in helping to maintain political stability. The content of Restoration drama was often concerned with essential questions of 'power and authority' and 'honour and loyalty' – both basic issues of governance. The language of honour was a verbal currency, a means of exchange, and one which was a part of the social and political fabric of society.

---

[32] Harold Love, 'Who were the Restoration Audience?', *Yearbook of English Studies,* 10 (1980), pp. 21-45.
[33] Ibid, p. 31.

The repertoire which was performed on the post-Restoration stage reflected the high degree of politicisation of the audience. Throughout the period studied in this thesis questions relating to issues of governance continued to predominate on the stage. As loyalty became less of an issue by the second decade of Charles's reign, dramatic discourse became a vehicle which accommodated criticism of the crown itself. The tensions inherent in the political problems of the 1670s - which included the unsuccessful Dutch wars, the growth of religious intolerance and concerns over the succession - were all articulated using the language of honour. The audience was able to engage with the drama safely, for dramatic debate posed no direct challenge to political stability.

The Politics of Honour in a Literary Context

Some historians have shied away from exploring the notion of honour in these texts because of the many possible definitions of honour in relation to gender, class, religion or occupation. I wish to argue, however, that because honour belonged primarily to those who made up the governing elite, it forms an invaluable basis for the exploration of how political crisis impacted on the ruling class and issues of governance in the period 1660-1681. There has been much valuable work done on the close relationship of drama to politics in the seventeenth century. These scholarly studies have provided a framework for my own analysis of the concept of honour. For example, literary historians, like Alfred Harbage, have mapped out an alleged continuity between pre and post Civil War drama:[34] a continuity that has been challenged. Harbage contends that the drama of the Restoration period was not affected by political change; instead he argues that it was a continuation of the Caroline theatre and was simply shaped by the tastes of the court. This is certainly not the case. Politics and drama were closely intertwined in early modern England and these links became stronger still after the Restoration. Kevin Sharpe has examined the relationship of the exercise of power and the culture of the Caroline court and has challenged the idea that there were two separate

---

[34] Alfred Harbage, *Cavalier Drama, an Historical and Critical Supplement of the Study of the Elizabethan and Restoration Stage* (New York, 1964).

cultures in Caroline England, that of court and country. Instead, he has shown that Caroline culture shared a common set of values.[35] Martin Butler, too, in his *Theatre and Crisis 1632-1642*, has contended that drama 'did persistently engage in debating the political issues of the day' and that the study of the drama could not be read merely as a mouthpiece of the court.[36] The politics of the post-Restoration drama has been analysed by literary critics such as Douglas Canfield who argues that the drama of the Restoration was essentially Royalist, while Susan Staves has come to similar conclusions about the underlying ideology of many of the dramatic texts of the Restoration.[37] Douglas Canfield in *The Word as Bond in English Literature* has examined how the trope of the oath - as a pledge of loyalty - underpinned patriarchal society.[38]Canfield, however, has not examined the way in which the concept of honour, as loyalty, shifted and responded to political pressures. John Loftis, too, has stressed the importance of politics in the analysis of Restoration plays by examining the roots of Augustan political drama. He has, however, only examined plays written after 1680.[39] There has been no study of the relationship between dramatic discourse and politics over the whole of Charles's reign: my thesis will remedy this.

Much of the literary criticism of the dramatic works of the post-Restoration period has concentrated on the function and purpose of comedy, tragedy and tragicomedy. There has also been extensive work done on the historical development of the genre. Eric Rothstein's *Restoration Tragedy,* for example, focuses on the evolution of Restoration tragedy and examines its links to earlier traditions. Although Rothstein acknowledges that Restoration tragedies are political he does not ask how or why the language of the plays has shifted. Instead his study is an examination of the ethos of the tragedies published between 1675 and 1685.[40] An excellent study of generic shifts in relation to ideological shifts during the Restoration is Laura Brown's *English Dramatic Form 1660-*

---

[35] Kevin Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment* (Cambridge, 1987).
[36] Martin Butler, *Theatre and Crisis,1632-1642* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 1.
[37] See Douglas Canfield, 'The Ideology of Restoration Tragicomedy', *ELH,* 51 (1984) pp. 447-64; and Susan Staves, *Players' Sceptres (*Nebraska, 1679).
[38] Douglas Canfield, *The Word as Bond in English Literature from the Middle Ages to the Restoration* (Philadelphia, 1989).
[39] John Loftis, *The Politics of Drama in Augustan England* (Oxford, 1963).
[40] Eric Rothstein, *Restoration Tragedy: Form and Process of Change* (Madison Wisconsin, 1967).

1670.[41] Understandably, this work cannot examine shifts in specific value systems over a longer time period and does not analyse the political language of the plays. Other types of literary examinations have tended to document the various debts of outside influence on drama. This approach is evident in the work of Anne Barbeau who connects the plays of the Restoration with political philosophy, seeing them as a working out of man's relationship with the state.[42] These valuable studies have not attempted to look at Restoration drama over a long chronological period or analyse similarities in the language used by many different dramatists. They have not focused on the politics of the period but have examined instead the various intellectual currents that influenced Restoration playwrights. Generic studies which have focused on comedy or the tragicomedy that was so popular after the 1660s cannot explain the use of a political language within the wider dramatic context or map the changes in the way that language was used. In other words, these studies have illuminated the historical and intellectual evolution of genres of drama without exploring how drama actively engaged with contemporary political discourse. The analysis of a thematic connection,that of the idiom of honour, enables the historian to understand post-Restoration politics within a continuum.

Several extremely valuable critical histories of Restoration drama have combined both survey and textual interpretation, but have not attempted any very close analysis of the politics. Robert Hume's *The Development of English Drama in the Late Seventeenth Century* and Derek Hughes's *English Drama, 1660-1700* inevitably apply a broad brush leaving room for a more detailed textual analysis.[43] There have also been several other excellent studies published recently that have linked the drama to politics but these have concentrated on a particular genre or expanded on various themes and tropes that were found within specific plays. Thus, Nancy Maguire's *Regicide and Restoration* - a study of the political role of tragi-comedy after the Restoration - analyses the

---

[41] Laura Brown, *English Dramatic Form 1660-1670: An Essay in Generic History* (New Haven and London, 1981).

[42] Anne Barbeau, *The Intellectual Design of John Dryden's Heroic Plays* (New Haven and London, 1970).

[43] Robert Hume, *The Development of English Drama in the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 1676); and Derek Hughes, *English Drama, 1660, 1700* (Oxford, 1996).

relationship of politics and genre.[44] However, her study stops in the late 1660s and she does not analyse the plays of the second decade Charles II's reign. Susan Owen's *Restoration Theatre and Crisis* is an analysis of the drama of the Exclusion Crisis that links the language of the dramatic texts with the crisis over the succession. Owen has rightly observed that during the Exclusion Crisis drama was neither 'conservative nor forward looking but a little of both'.[45] Her close examination of various themes and tropes in the language of these plays is necessarily restricted to a relatively short time scale and she has ascribed the various thematic differences in the plays to the growing polarisation of party allegiance. Although this approach is valid in the case of some plays, there is a case to be made for looking at a specific theme - honour – that not only links all of the plays of the Exclusion Crisis but also connects them with the earlier plays of the Restoration.

****

It has therefore been necessary to examine the entire spectrum of genres and to analyse as many plays as possible. Rather than restrict my study to one genre or to a shorter time scale, I have chosen to analyse the plays within a long chronological sequence in order to trace shifts in the political language of honour over a period of some twenty years. The study adopts a chronological format, because it was the sequential unfolding of political events which chiefly determined shifts in the vocabulary of honour on the post-Restoration stage. Although the primary aspect of the honour code - loyalty and allegiance to the crown - was a constant and integral theme in a large number of dramatic texts between 1660 and 1681, the various tensions which emerged during the reign of Charles II subtly shifted the way in which the idiom of honour was used. Initially, it was imperative to build a consensus based on the honour code and Chapter I will examine how the drama of the immediate post-Restoration drama period accommodated painful memories of the Civil War and the Interregnum. The theatre became a shared forum for the articulation of post-war tensions and, during the early 1660s, the 'happy restoration' of the King was celebrated in tragicomedies in which the theme of loyalty to the crown was integral to both the new and revived

---

[44] Nancy Maguire, *Regicide and Restoration* (Cambridge, 1992).
[45] Susan Owen, *Restoration Theatre and Crisis* (Oxford, 1996), p. 23.

drama. Chapter II will examine how this theme continued to be re-inscribed by a network of ex-Cavaliers and a few ex-Parliamentarians during a period of heightened political tension in the early 1660s. In these early years following the Restoration the stage was a public space for personal stories that retold Civil War experiences, including the voices of those, like the Earl of Orrery, who had supported Cromwell. Their personal experiences were re-enacted on the stage in order to rebuild the links between the governing elite and the crown. By the mid 1660s, however, the personal conduct of the King was under attack and there was a growing sense that the disasters of fire, plague and the unsuccessful outcomes of the Dutch Wars were punishments for the failures of the monarchy and of the Restoration settlement. During this period, the theatre incorporated the growing criticism of the Crown. Chapter III will therefore consider the ways in which the language of honour accommodated this criticism whilst underscoring the importance of loyalty. Criticism of the private life of the King continued unabated into the late 1670s yet new issues came to the fore that had a profound effect on the discourse of honour in relation to politics. Chapter IV will show how the expansion of commerce and the growing wealth of the mercantile class heightened fears that the community of honour was being debased. At the same time a language of 'interest' appeared in dramatic texts that challenged that of honour. This challenge coincided with the presence of factional politics within Parliament. At this stage honour expressed as loyalty had all but disappeared from the stage and the personal competitiveness of the honour code had re-emerged. It took a direct threat to the crown in 1678, when the Popish Plot exploded, to resurrect the idiom of honour in dramatic texts. Chapter V will examine how during the Exclusion Crisis the threat of 'interest' to the honour code receded and the language of honour was used in order to revitalise the bond of loyalty to the crown. At first, when the outcome of the succession crisis was uncertain, playwrights hedged their bets but when the succession of James was finally assured the whole tenor of the plays changed. Although James had inherited a stable kingdom, there was no guarantee that he could sustain loyalty. Honour, that had increasingly come to be defined as private virtue during the reign of Charles II, began to lose its influence on political discourse. It must be left other researchers to explore how political discourse was articulated in the crisis that was generated by first James II and then the accession of William and Mary.

The language of honour played a crucial role in stabilising the rule of Charles II. For twenty-one years the authority of the crown was continually threatened by a series of grave crises in which the discourse of honour played an important role in defining political relationships. Honour was, however, also a dynamic force in the exercise of politics. It played a pivotal role in reshaping debates about the nature of authority, about loyalty to the crown, about expiation of political guilt, about fears centring on the maintenance of political stability and about religious and social tensions. All of these issues could be expressed within the context of dramatic texts - and these texts played a vital part in reshaping the political dynamics of later Stuart rule.

CHAPTER I: THE RESTORATION AND ITS AFTERMATH, 1660 -1662

The single most important issue to confront the restored monarch, Charles II, in May 1660 was that of loyalty. Twenty years of civil war had left its mark on the country and Charles, although imbued with belief in his divine right to rule, was a pragmatist whose character had been moulded by his experiences of flight and exile. He was both willing and able to confront the difficult issues that faced him on his return. The settlement that emerged in 1660 was in part a reflection of his flexibility and political acumen, formulated within the context of political imperatives. As Mark Kishlansky has shown, there was a dichotomy between his conciliatory stance and that of the country which was bitter and divided even though most English people shared a desire for stability and for the cessation of civil strife.[1] In many ways, the years immediately following the Restoration were years of uncertainty and crisis. In order for the settlement to work within the restored framework of government, it was necessary to re-establish a common language which would revive allegiance and loyalty to the crown. This language was that of the code of honour which was interpreted and understood by the elite who had been instrumental in restoring the King in 1660. It was crucial that it not only revived memories of loyalty but also effected the reconciliation of differences.

The political imperatives of the Restoration encouraged the re-emergence of a discourse of honour. I will suggest that this discourse was both able to accommodate painful memories of the past and to deal with the political realities of the early 1660s. The issues which tested loyalty in 1660 were quite specific: land settlement, immunity from prosecution for those who had supported the Commonwealth, the acknowledgement of - and repayment for - past loyal service to the crown and the importance of ensuring a degree of religious toleration. All of these difficulties had to be confronted and resolved

---

[1] Mark Kishlansky, *A Monarchy Transformed, Britain 1603-1714* (Harmondsworth, 1996), p. 216.

whilst securing continued loyalty to the crown. The language of honour became the language of politics: a language that had to operate within the bounds of both divine right rhetoric and latent republicanism. Because 'public rhetoric was the domain of drama'[2] the public stage operated as a special privileged place for the articulation and resolution of political crisis. Given that the concept of honour formed part of the common intellectual currency of the elite, its use in drama became a crucial instrument in the restructuring of elite identity. The shifting and ambiguous nature of the discourse of honour gave it the flexibility to respond to political tension. Non-confrontational and consensual, this discourse re-inscribed the past and formed a paradigm for the future. Therefore in 1660, those who were disaffected and feared that they had no stake in the emerging political framework could engage in a public rhetoric that revived memories of a common chivalric ethos. Drama served as an invaluable barometer of these tensions as they emerged in the Restoration and its aftermath. In support of Allardyce Nicoll's[3] claim that the drama of the age of Charles II was predominantly aristocratic, I will argue that it became the voice of a class who had to redefine themselves and rewrite themselves into a new political script. Drama was the vehicle for the public articulation of these internal conflicts that for so long had been the concern of both gentry and aristocracy. Not only was it a means for catharsis: at the Restoration it became an essential building block in the reconstruction of loyalty to the crown.

What were the specific issues that strained the consensus between the king and the country in the aftermath of the Restoration? The most immediate issue was that of pardon or indemnity. Although Charles was able to accommodate former Cromwellians in his Privy Council, men like General George Monck and Edward Montague, there were many former Cavaliers who wanted revenge on those who had been responsible for their

---

[2] Eric Rothstein, *Restoration Tragedy* (Wisconsin, 1967), p. viii.

[3] Allardyce Nicholl, *A History of English Drama 1660-1900* (6 vols., Cambridge, 1952-59), I , p. 1.

suffering during the Interregnum.[4] Both Puritans and Catholics, indeed all those who were not adherents of the restored Church of England, were anxious about the degree of toleration which would be extended to them. Coupled with these religious concerns was a prevalent anxiety about the legitimacy of landholdings which had been purchased during the Interregnum. Charles had addressed some of these concerns even before his return. In his letter read to the House of Commons in 1660, he offered to balance the members' respect for their liberty and property with the need to uphold the 'royal honour and authority'. The Declaration of Breda issued at the same time made concessions to the King's former enemies. Charles declared a general pardon to all (with some exceptions) and promised a 'liberty to tender consciences' while acknowledging the problems of grants of land and purchases made during the Civil War.[5] These vexing issues were referred to the first Cavalier Parliament. Since one of the most urgent concerns was that of immunity from revenge, the Bill of General Pardon, Indemnity, and Oblivion received royal assent on 29 August 1660. It gave a general pardon for all treason and felonies committed from 1 January 1637 onwards by members of the army or by those whose authority had derived from Parliament. It sought to consign to oblivion the 'memories' of hostility and instituted a fine for those who sought to reawaken the 'reproachful memories of the late differences'.[6] It endeavoured, as we shall see, to reconcile a bifurcation of aims. On the one hand it rekindled the memory of Charles I as 'royal martyr' whilst attempting to draw a line under the memory of hostilities.

There was also an immediate need to settle the arrears of pay for the army and navy. This crucial issue did not really begin to be addressed until February 1661 when a large sum was raised to pay off the disbanded forces. Arrears of pay were guaranteed to

---

[4] There had been three unsuccessful Royalist uprisings in 1651, 1655 and 1659 which indicated the continued resistance of Royalists during the Interregnum.

[5] David Ogg, *England in the Reign of Charles II* (2 vols. , Oxford, 1934), I, p. 152.

[6] Ibid, p. 155.

officers who had taken the Oath of Allegiance to Charles II. However, the effect of these measures proved to be unsatisfactory. The reality was that regiments which felt no particular loyalty to the restored King were dispersed throughout the country. Many soldiers 'chose for political and social reasons to forfeit their pay' and declined to take the Oath of Allegiance.[7]

Another point of contention to impose a strain on the Restoration settlement was the issue of land settlement. During the Civil War many loyalists had paid for their loyalty to the crown with their estates. The Committee for Compounding had imposed substantial fines on those of 'royalist leanings', even if they had not fought for the king. When those fines had not been paid, estates had been in danger of sequestration. Huge tracts of private land, crown land and church land had come on to the market at reduced rates. The purchasers of these lands - Roundhead soldiers, former tenants of Royalist landowners, London merchants and gentry - had constituted a formidable enough interest to have made land settlement an obstacle to the Restoration in the negotiations initiated by General Monck which had led up the Declaration of Breda.[8] Although principles of repossession of crown and church land were agreed by Parliament, measures were also taken to compensate purchasers adequately. For private individuals there was often no easy redress and they had to resort to lawsuits. It proved to be impossible to compensate all of those who had paid for their loyalty with their land. Perhaps inevitably, despite straitened circumstances, many Royalist gentry were left 'both powerful and with reason for resentment'.[9]

---

[7] Ronald Hutton, *The Restoration: A Political and Religious History of England, 1658-1667* (Oxford, 1985), p. 139.

[8] Ibid, see especially Part 2, Chapter 4, 'The Road to Restoration'.

[9] Ibid, p. 142 and Joan Thirsk, 'The Restoration Land Settlement', *JMH*, 26 (1954), pp. 315-26.

Initially, questions of religious settlement were left open. A bill for protecting beneficed clergy was passed and differences of opinion in regard to ceremonies were left to a national synod to be convened at a later date. At first, loyalty to the crown was not tested on this issue but ideological divisions were already beginning to appear. Ronald Hutton has observed that the religious settlement produced divisions and created ideological factions.[10] Some supported a settlement close to that proposed by the Presbyterians while others wanted to return to the Episcopalian pre-war church. Charles II wanted both toleration and protection for religious dissenters. The Act of Uniformity, passed by Parliament in 1662, imposed orthodoxy on the church which only exacerbated the problems of religious dissent.[11] Charles's instincts were proved right, for it was Parliament's imposition of religious orthodoxy which precipitated political crisis in the aftermath of the Restoration.

Underlying all the practical problems of pardon, land settlement and religious conformity was a small but important shift in the relationship of the aristocracy to the crown which had underpinned the monarchy since the Middle Ages. The most significant change, as we have seen, was the change in knighthood tenure, instituted in 1641, which essentially redefined the feudal relationship of the aristocracy to the crown.[12] The act which prohibited the exacting of knighthood fines effectively stopped this source of revenue for the crown but, more importantly, it curtailed the power of the crown to bestow knighthoods in order to augment income. Another illustration of change in feudal relationships was the fate of the Court of Wards that had been abolished by Ordinance of the Commonwealth. The Court of Wards had upheld a concept of service that was linked with lands held by military tenure. Established by Henry VIII at the dissolution of the

---

[10] Ronald Hutton, *The Restoration*, p. 145.

[11] I.M. Green, *The Re-establishment of the Church of England 1660-1663* (Oxford, 1976), p. 38.

[12] Samuel Gardiner (ed.), *The Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution* (Oxford, 1889), pp. 121-2.

monasteries, the court's functions were both social and fiscal. Because it was open to financial abuse and corruption, Joel Hurstfield has argued that the court's retention could not have been upheld on fiscal grounds, yet it could have been defended on social grounds.[13] Francis Bacon had defended the court successfully in 1606 when it came under attack in Parliament, arguing that although knight service no longer existed on the basis of land tenure, the retention of feudal service was important. It underpinned the concept of loyalty and service to the crown which was a principal tenet of feudalism. When the abolition of the Court of Wards was confirmed by parliament in 1660 it placed Charles II in a more vulnerable position in relation to the gentry. The important psychological link in the chain of feudal hierarchy that had been broken in 1641 was further undermined in 1660 and needed to be redefined and rebuilt within the bounds of a new status quo.

Charles II, nevertheless, had a hard core of support from those who had remained loyal throughout the Interregnum, particularly from those who had fought for the crown and who felt a sense of personal obligation both to the king's person and the institution of monarchy.[14] Charles I had indeed drawn on the feudal obligations between monarch and subject. In 1642 he had conferred knighthoods before hostilities as an inducement to future service or as a reward for past service. When the House of Lords was reinstated at the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 there was a move in the Convention Parliament to annul all titles and honours conferred since May 1642 but this was never passed. It was finally agreed that the conferment of external honours was dependent on duty and service owed to the crown. P.R. Newman cites Henry Ferne *(Reply To Several Treatises, 1643*) who defined the impetus which motivated service: asking, 'has not God put King,

---

[13] Joel Hurstfield, *The Queen's Wards* (London, 1959), p. 333.
[14] P.R. Newman,*The Old Service: Royalist Regimental Colonels and the Civil War* (Manchester, 1993), p.13.

father and masters all in one Commandment and enjoined this duty and reverence to them under one word, Honour?'[15]

The plays which were published and produced on the London stage in the first season following the Restoration of Charles II mirrored Ferne's idea of honour and reinforced the connections between honour and loyalty. The concept of honour which was acted out on the stage had to be reinterpreted and reread within the context of a new political reality. The majority of the plays produced in the aftermath of the Restoration were revivals of the Jacobean and Caroline court plays and worked on two main levels. They were both nostalgic and familiar to most of the Restoration audience and they strengthened the links between loyalty and honour. While celebrating a traditional ethical framework, they re-established a familiar paradigm. By contrast, the new plays of the dramatic season of 1660-1661 only made tentative forays into the political arena. They read as if the playwrights were testing the political temperature. Their plots of love and reconciliation did not directly confront the pressing issues of the day. They were reworkings of the drama of the Caroline court, looking back at the genres which had appealed to the coterie of Charles I and Henrietta Maria. The characters of these plays were inhabitants of Arcadian paradises who conversed in the language of 'Platonic' love and concentrated on the purifying aspects of love and honour. They dealt obliquely with the political issues of 1660 by focusing on the theme of threatened patriarchal authority and by reworking the idea of loyalty and honour in a familial context. The second part of this chapter examines three 'new' plays which were generically linked to the dramatic traditions of the Caroline court where Platonic love ideals were celebrated. Significantly, they could have been read in the aftermath of the Restoration as discussions of how loyalty and honour might be redefined after the trauma of civil war.

---

[15] Ibid, p. 21.

Love, Loyalty and Honour in 1660

Three of the 'new' plays of 1660-1661 tackled the issues of loyalty through the tests of love. These were Thomas Forde's, *Loves' Labyrinth* (1660), John Fountain's, *The Rewards of Virtue* (1661) and Richard Flecknoe's *Erminia* (1661). All three works pivoted thematically on conflicts of love and duty, but Forde's and Flecknoe's plays emphasised the importance of obedience to the father as head of the family, making the connection between filial obedience and obedience to the crown.[16] In the seventeenth century direct analogies were drawn between the relationship of the subject and the sovereign and domestic relations. Henry Ferne in his *Reply to Several Treatises* (1643) asserted that 'as unto the first rule of fathers, the government of kings did succeed, so unto kings is honour commanded under the name of fathers'.[17] Indeed, in early modern England, the family was the mirror image of the body politic and filial obedience was required by the honour code.[18]

Forde's *Love's Labyrinth*, set in Arcadia, is the story of a princess who has disobeyed the wishes of the king, her father, and married her lover. When her father banishes her in fury, her brother defends her breach of loyalty and begs for forgiveness on her behalf:

> To you yet is she still your child, and may
> Be easily reclaimed.
> Shall one misdeed forfeit all former loyalty?[19]

---

[16] Susan Staves, *Players' Sceptres* (Nebraska, 1979). See Chapter 3, 'Sovereignty in the Family', pp.111-189. Because the traditional analogies between sovereign and subject relations and domestic relations were important in the seventeenth century, the models of these relations affected controversy about the nature of authority and obligation.

[17] Cited in Newman, *The Old Service*, p. 26.

[18] For a full discussion of filial obedience see Jerrilyn Marston 'Gentry Honour and Royalism in Early Stuart England', *JBS*, 13 (1973), pp. 21-43.

[19] Thomas Forde, *Love's Labyrinth* (London, 1660), Act I, p. 3.

The playwright confronts the concerns in the Restoration audience about 'pardon' for acts of disloyalty. In this play, however, the prince does not convince his father and the lovers are banished to an island where they are shipwrecked and assume different identities. Unable to recognise one another, they fall in love all over again, thinking that their first love is dead. By this device the playwright circumvents the issue of loyalty. The lovers believe that they have remained loyal to their first love. The play operates in a setting where the future is uncertain and even identity is unsure. The only constant value is honour which demands noble actions from a 'noble' class and 'loyalty' which is a component of that value. In the concluding act of this tragicomedy, the past and the future are reconciled in the present. The father acknowledges his faults, repents of his weakness and censoriousness, forgives his daughter's transgression, and accepts her husband and his grandson as his future. Damocles pardons his children and subjects in *Love's Labyrinth* and the concluding line of the play express hope for the future: 'A sea of woes has sent us happiness' (Act V, p. 73). Images of shipwreck, disguise, and atonement and repentance operate as oblique references to the traumas of civil war. For the audience these images served to evoke memories of the Interregnum but the final act pointed to a peaceful resolution of conflict.

John Fountain's *The Rewards of Virtue* (1661) which never appears to have been acted on the stage, shared the same theme with Forde's *Love's Labyrinth.*[20] It is set in a fictitious court where young noblemen fall in love with shepherdesses. Extolling virtue, Evadne, a shepherdess, says that it is found most often in those of low birth. These 'levelling' sentiments are reversed when the concluding revelation of true identities connect all the protagonists to noble birth. As in *Love's Labyrint*h, the king is disobeyed and dispenses dire punishments when his children transgress his rules. Despite his harsh

---

[20] Pierre Danchin (ed.), *The Prologues and Epilogues of the Restoration, 1660-1700: a Complete Edition* (Nancy, 1985-88) Danchin points out the amount of evidence relating to perfromance is small. Many editions of plays were never linked with stage performance.

behaviour, the King commands loyalty from his subjects. A lord of the court, Endymion, emphasising the importance of the loyalty and obedience to the ruler, becomes the personification of honour as the plot evolves. The king is driven to punish his own son by ordering the beheading of his son's mistress. She is ultimately saved when her lineage is revealed and three marriages are celebrated in the concluding act. The tangled plots of *Love's Labyrinth* and *The Rewards of Virtue* served to remind contemporary readers of the chaos which could ensue when loyalty to patriarchal authority in the person of the king was undermined.[21] *The Rewards of Virtue* contains oblique references to the Civil War in which a king had 'Rebel subjects rais'd against him through/ His too great goodness'.[22] This line might have reminded the audience of the 'royal martyr', Charles I, whose 'goodness' did not protect him from rebellion. The concluding act sees the restoration of order, ending with a general pardon of those condemned to death by execution. The concern with issue of forgiveness in the concluding act underlines the topical importance of pardon in the Restoration political context.

Neither of these plays was produced on the stage (although they had a reading audience). The licensing of plays for production on the stage was determined by the Master of the Revels, Sir Henry Herbert, newly appointed by Charles II in 1660. As few records exist concerning individual plays in this period, it is not possible to determine why these two particular plays were never staged. Certainly, they did not contain references to contentious issues. Perhaps the managers of the two theatres, who held the dramatic monopoly after the Restoration, were circumscribed by the imperative of producing plays for a commercial theatre. They might have thought it politically risky to produce 'new' plays but chose instead to rely on a tried and tested repertoire.

---

[21] Lynn Hunt, *Family Romance of the French Revolution* (California, 1992). Her thesis is that unconscious images of disrupted familial relation underlie revolutionary politics. The breakdown of patriarchal authority was crucial in leading to rebellion, thus linking disrupted family dynamics to politics.

[22] John Fountain, *The Rewards of Virtue* (London, 1661), Act V, p. 80.

Richard Flecknoe's *Erminia; or, The Fair and Vertuous Lady* (1661) appears to have come closer to production, for its published edition gives an intended cast.[23] Its setting was military, and the costumes were described as 'Habits of Ancient Military Attire for the Heroick part'. Its epistle dedicatory was to Lady Southcot, the wife of George Southcot, a newly created baronet in 1661. The play was concerned with sexual fidelity and loyalty, but unlike *Love's Labyrinth* and *The Rewards of Virtue*, it did not revolve around the transgression of parental dictums but instead pivoted on tests of loyalty and definitions of honour. Honour is defined by Erminia's servant who remarks at one point, 'I grant you a man's honour chiefly consists in fighting, and a woman's in defending her chastity'.[24] Her mistress, Erminia, defines honour by looking to the ruling class to set an example, noting:

> Princes are publick fountains,
> From whose maners all others are deriv'd,
> And if they be infected once, general infection necessarily follows (Act I, p.18).

Cleander, the husband of Erminia, suspects her of infidelity and spies on her. Disguised as a Moor,[25] he returns to court and finds that all are ready to defend Erminia as the symbol of female chastity. Sexual chastity becomes synonymous with loyalty and Erminia has become the personification of female honour. Indeed, it is asserted that, '*Erminia* is honour and honour *Erminia*' (Act IV, p. 79). She holds the play together and finally convinces her husband of her fidelity. This play confronts the most crucial issue for the returning monarch, that of ensuring that loyalty to crown continues to be a potent force. The uncertainty of conjugal loyalty after an enforced absence has become a metaphor for the relationship between the 'restored' King and his subjects. Since none of

---

[23] Danchin, Part I, p.44.

[24] Richard Flecknoe, *Erminia* (London, 1661), Act I, p. 10.

[25] Charles II was known for the swarthiness of this complexion and this perhaps explains why this image was popular on the Restoration stage.

these plays were produced, however, it is also necessary to look at post-Restoration revivals of plays dating back to the years before the Interregnum. The historian who confronts the politically sensitive issues of the years immediately following the Restoration is forced to re-examine the Jacobean and Caroline repertoire which was performed on the Restoration stage. Because these plays were an accepted part of the theatrical canon, topical political concerns could be encrypted within them. Indeed the choice of plays gives the historian a very good pointer as to how the concept of honour came to be revived and revitalised on the public stage.

Revivals: Reviving Honour

Restoration plays were performed in a radically altered theatrical milieu. The numerous public theatres of pre-Civil War London had been replaced in 1660 by a monopoly which confined the number of legitimate theatres to just two. These theatres were given the joint grant of monopoly on 21 August 1660 and were under the control of Thomas Killigrew, who headed the King's Company, and Sir William Davenant, who led the Duke's Company. Although these two companies were dependent on court patronage they also had to operate in a commercial world. Their repertoire reflected the need to adapt their stock of plays to the tastes of Restoration audiences as well as to the court.[26] This in part explained their reliance on the familiar tried and tested plays of the Caroline era. Lacking reliable stables of playwrights, it was safer for the companies to produce plays whose popularity was assured. Even so, they had to have a relevance in the new political climate. The works of Beaumont and Fletcher were much the most popular because they had been widely read while the theatres were closed during the Interregnum.[27] The royalist publishers Humphrey and Moseley had issued a collected

---

[26] Nancy Klein Maguire, *Regicide and Restoration* (Cambridge, 1992). Chapter 3 of this excellent work affords a full discussion of the relationship of repertoire to commercial imperatives.

[27] See William Van Lennep (ed.),*The London Stage 1660-1880* (11 vols., Illinois, 1965), Part I, pp cxxii.

edition of Beaumont and Fletcher in 1647.[28] Indeed, a performance in London of *A King and No King*, attended by a large audience in early October 1647, was raided and dispersed by the sheriffs. Almost half the works of Beaumont and Fletcher's canon appeared on the stage in the first decade of the Restoration; by contrast the season of 1660-1661 records only four Shakespearian revivals, *Hamlet*, *I Henry IV, Othello* and the *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.[29]

The common thematic link to be found in many of the Restoration revivals of both tragicomedies and tragedies was a preoccupation with issues of honour. Since the relationship of loyalty to honour was of crucial importance during the early 1660s, the repertoire of the stage reflected this absorption. Although some of these plays were not acted, the published drama was interpreted and decoded by a class which had shared the same experiences of Civil War and had the same values and education. They were able to interpret and decipher the intentions of the plays within an altered political context.[30] The majority of the plays performed were plays written before the Interregnum.[31] The next section of this chapter will examine a series of revivals performed during this period, including John Fletcher's *The Loyall Subject*, Thomas Heywood's, *The Royall King and Loyall Subject,* John Suckling's *Brennoralt,* James Shirley's *The Traitor,* John Fletcher's, *The Bloody Brother; or Rollo, The Duke of Normandy,* and William Shakespeare's *Othello* and *I Henry IV.*

---

[28] Martin Butler, *Theatre in Crisis* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 9. This Beaumont and Fletcher edition contained thirty-seven commendatory verses solicited from prominent Cavaliers.

[29] Van Lennep (ed.), *The London Stage* , Part I, p. cxxix.

[30] Stanley Fish, *Is there a Text in This Class*? (Cambridge, 1980). See Chapter 6 'Interpreting the Varorioum'.

[31] Michael Dobson, *The Making of the National Poet: Shakespeare, Adaptation, and Authorship, 1660-1679* (Oxford, 1995) Michale Dobson records that 54 plays written before the Interregnum were performed during the season 1660-1661. See p.

Fletcher's, *The Loyall Subject*, written in 1618, had been performed for Charles I in 1633 and was first staged during the Restoration at the Cockpit Theatre at Court on 18 August 1660 and once more in the season of 1661. It was not performed again until the Exclusion Crisis,[32] pointing to its importance as a litmus test for tension in the political climate. Set against a military backdrop, *The Loyall Subject* was imbued with a chivalric ethos and stressed the importance of loyalty to monarchy. In this play, the services of the general, Archas are urgently needed by the Duke of Moscow to protect his kingdom. Archas has made a vow to lay down his arms but he is persuaded to support the Duke by an appeal to his honour. Emerging from his seclusion, Archas asks for remuneration for his soldiers, thus making a direct allusion to one of the most critical issues of the Restoration settlement. Archas praises his soldiers, asking rhetorically:

> What Labour would these men neglect, what danger
> Where honour is, thus seal'd in a Billow,
> Rising as high as Heaven, would not these Souldiers,
> Like so many Sea-Gods charge up to it?[33] (Act II, p. 102)

The soldiers reject their arrears of pay and avow that they only fought for glory or honour. The Duke imposes severe tests on the loyalty of Archas. Despite being racked and tortured by the suspicious Duke, Archas supports him in suppressing a rebellion. Archas expresses trust in the integrity of his soldiers, declaring:

> I know the general goodness of my people,
> The duty and the truth, the stedfast honestie,
> And am assurr'd they would as soon turn Devils,
> As rebels to allegiance, for mine honour (Act V, p. 164).

Archas is even prepared to sacrifice the life of his son, Theodore, because he had been instrumental in fomenting the rebellion, but the Duke softens and pardons Theodore and all who have taken part in the revolt. By confronting the issues of insurrection and the breakdown of paternal authority that had resulted in a civil war, this play directly engages

---

[32] Ibid, p. 332.

[33] J. Glover and A.R. Walker (eds.), *The Works of Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher* (10 vols., Cambridge, 1906), III, pp. 76-169.

the audience with the aftermath of civil unrest, and highlights the issues of loyalty and pardon that were of such pressing political importance in the aftermath of the Restoration.

Another play reprinted in this season closely examines the relationship between ruler and subject. Thomas Heywood's, *The Royall King and Loyall Subject* was registered with the Stationers Office in 1637. There is some confusion as to whether it was acted in the season 1661-1662, although the manuscript of 1661 includes a cast list which has named parts for women. The play had a topical relevance because it opened against a background of rumours of rebellion and conspiracy. In December 1660 a Cromwellian ex-soldier - who had been arrested in London - related tales of a conspiracy to march on Whitehall which resulted in numerous proclamations ordering disbanded troops to leave the capital. A month later, in January 1661, a cooper called Thomas Venner, a Fifth Monarchist, led an armed rebellion in London. Although the numbers involved were few, the rebellion had wider repercussions, resulting in a flurry of orders to arrest suspicious people and to search houses in the city. Against the backdrop of such dramatic events, it is hardly surprising that contemporary dramatic works should have stressed the concept of honour as loyalty.

Heywood's play, set in an English court, opens with the king establishing a reciprocity of obligation with his subject, a soldier. He acknowledges that he owes his subject his life. The soldier, 'Martiall', responds in the feudal language of fealty, observing:

> You give my Lord, to Duty attributes
> Too high for her submissive humility.
> I am your vassal. [34]

---

[34] Thomas Heywood, *The Royal King and Loyall Subject* (London, 1637), Act I, p. 1.

Martiall falls under suspicion due to evil insinuation in court and he is demoted and banished to the country. He is further tested by the king who asks for one of his daughters as a bride. Martiall obeys and sends a large dowry with her. The king eventually rejects his first choice and asks instead for his second daughter. Humiliated and bankrupt, Martiall never criticises the king. Finally in the concluding act, the king realises the error of his ways and Martiall is praised for his honourable behaviour and is rewarded with a royal bride. The play might well have been seen in the context of the 1660s as a paradigm of the dilemma of loyal royalists who had suffered privation and family division in the service to the king during the Civil War. Nevertheless, the denouement stresses that if allegiance and loyalty to royal authority is steadfastly maintained then loyalty will finally be acknowledged and rewarded. Martiall personifies those supporters of the Stuarts who had endured tribulation for their king and who trustingly anticipated some form of reward for their fidelity.

In the same season that Heywood's play was reprinted John Fletcher's *The Bloody Brother; or Rollo, the Duke of Normandy,* a tragedy, was performed by the King's Company in December 1660 and then once again by the Duke's Company in March 1661. *Rollo* was a tale of civil war, in Normandy, where two brothers were competing for supremacy in the dukedom. Their mother, Sophia (wisdom) admonishes her sons to follow the way of honour. She equates it with reason and says that only honour 'can lead you up to Heaven, and there fix you/ The fairest Stars in the bright Sphere of Honour'. [35] Her counsels are to no avail and civil war erupts. Rollo, the tyrant, gains supremacy by killing his brother and embarks on a spree of murder and revenge aided by 'evil' counsel. Aubrey, a knight and kinsman of the two dukes, becomes the mouthpiece of conscience, holding the play together with his good advice offered to the errant duke. Aubrey warns Rollo to be merciful to his nobles and to act within the chivalric code. Rollo is

---

[35] *The Works of Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher*, IV, Act I, p. 257.

unrepentant, yet he never loses Aubrey's loyalty. Aubrey says to Rollo that 'I was born in all good ends to serve you/ And not to check at what concerns me not' (Act V, p. 303). In the concluding act Rollo is killed and Aubrey mourns his loss. Rollo is forgiven, posthumously, by his family and the play affects a reconciliation between the two warring factions. *The Royall King and Loyall Subject*, *The Bloody Brother*, and *The Loyall Subject* all functioned didactically by representing examples of honourable behaviour which could heal rifts in a divided body politic and reconcile opposing interests. The Restoration audience who either heard or read the language of honour in these revivals were no doubt able to recognise the message that only loyalty to the crown could affect the reconciliation of opposing interests in the aftermath of the Restoration.

Because of constant threats of conspiracy and rebellion during the early 1660s it became necessary for playwrights to address the anxieties surrounding the possibility of renewed treachery or disloyalty in the body politic. Through the analysis of the role of the traitor, drama acted as a warning against treacherous conduct in the future. This imperative no doubt explains why Shirley's *The Traitor* was performed so frequently in the decade following the Restoration. The traitor, Lorenzo, a noble of Florence, of Machiavellian character, defends himself in the language of honour saying, 'Call to my brow someone that dare accuse me, let him have honour, great as mine to forfeit'.[36] Lorenzo indeed forfeits both his 'false honour' and his life. His machinations include using the honourable instincts of the characters to achieve his ends. His evil plot results in the death of the lovers yet redemption is found in the person of Cosmo, an honourable man who overturns the evil machinations of Lorenzo and becomes the ruler of Florence. Didactic in purpose, *The Traitor* hammers home the hidden dangers of subverting the language of honour to undermine the authority of the crown and was a paradigm for a government which was frightened of civil unrest. The staging of a play in which evil

---

[36] John Steward Carter (ed.), James Shirley, *The Traitor* (Nebraska, 1965), Act I, p. 15.

manipulation was closely examined and evil was overcome, might well have had a cathartic effect on those who had felt powerless during the Interregnum. Those in the audience who had remained loyal to the crown, might well have considered that although the language of honour had been subverted during the Interregnum, it had now regained its rightful place.

Another dramatist who remained popular long after his death was John Suckling, a romantic playwright of the Caroline court. His plays were frequently performed in the aftermath of the Restoration. In particular, the play *Brennoralt*; *or The Discontented Colonel,*[37] was produced several times in 1661. Although as Kathleen Lynch has pointed out, Brennoralt is distinguished - like Suckling's other plays - by the tackling of ingenious arguments centred on the Platonic love theory, its central theme is that of the choice between loyalty and service to the crown and detachment from politics.[38] The play, set in Poland, begins with the suppression of a rebellion. Brennoralt who is a 'noble discontent', proclaims himself as 'a man of honour'. When the rebel Almerin in taken prisoner by the king, an officer discusses the thin line dividing rebellion and loyalty: 'Faith, 'tis now upon the turning of the ballance?/ A most equall business, betwixt Rebellion and Loyaltie'.[39] Almerin, the prisoner is honourable and bemoans his loss of honour by his capture. Brennoralt, although reluctant to fight for the king, pledges his loyalty to the crown when he is asked to support a rebellion. He asserts:

> D'ost thinke cause I am angry
> With the King and State sometimes
> I am fallen out with vertue and my Self? (Act III, p. 26)

Brennoralt's words are crucial because he makes the distinction between the ability to criticise his sovereign without resorting to rebellion. This play was first written before the

---

[37] Suckling's play probably belongs to the summer of 1640 according to Martin Butler, *Theatre and Crisis*, p. 76. I looked at an edition of 1646.
[38] K.M. Lynch, *Social Mode of Restoration Comedy* (New York, 1926), pp. 70-73
[39] John Suckling, *Brennoralt* (London, 1646), Act I, p. 7.

outbreak of civil war, in the context of growing criticism of Charles I. The distinction between criticism and rebellion must have had a strong resonance with the post-Restoration audience. For, after 1660, Charles could not possibly hope to satisfy the demands and desires of all of his subjects and he, too was open to criticism.

This tragedy is propelled by a love plot which drives all the protagonists to feats of great honour. Nevertheless, the complicated chain of events proves too much for them to solve and the play concludes with the death of all the lovers. Brennoralt, a survivor, fights for the king and distinguishes himself in battle. The king admits that victory was at a huge cost, accepting the futility of war. The king sums things up, by declaring:

> Triumphs and Funerals must walk together,
> Cipresse and laurell twin'd make up one chaplet
> For we have got the day but bought it so deare a rate(Act V, p. 52).

Brennoralt may be regarded as an exemplar of the personal loyalty which Royalists showed to the crown. Whilst exalting the virtues of the honourable man, Brennoralt was careful to ascribe honour to the enemy in the person of Almerin. In the concluding act, despite his staunch loyalty to the crown, he withdrew to lead a life of seclusion mirroring the lives of some Royalists after the Civil War. Brennoralt, because he was initially reluctant to fight, personified the experiences of many Royalists. Although they might have held different convictions from the king or differed on religious principles, they had sought honour in service to the person of their king during the Civil War. In the immediate aftermath of the Restoration, this message was pertinent and drew on the memories of those Royalists who had initially taken a neutralist stance. As Gerald Aylmer has suggested, although there were varied and complex reasons for a reluctance to be drawn into the conflict during the Civil War, there were nevertheless great pressures on those men who were higher up the social scale to take sides.[40] Those who had

---

[40] Gerald Alymer, 'Collective Mentalities in the Mid-Seventeenth Century: IV Cross Currents: Neutrals, Trimmers and Others' *TRHS*, 5th Series, 37 (1989), pp. 1-25.

switched sides from supporting Parliament to supporting the King may have been motivated not only by self-interest but, more importantly, in the final instance, by a sense of honour and loyalty to the crown.

In the same season that Brennoralt was produced, two of Shakespeare's plays, *Othello* and *I Henry IV* were also performed. In both of these plays, as Norman Council has shown, Shakespeare had built an ethical structure on the foundations of honour and examined the pragmatism of the individual in relation to honour.[41] The honour code which Shakespeare evoked was the medieval chivalric code, untainted by religious morality. The first Shakespeare play to be performed after the Restoration, *Othello* - like Flecknoe's unacted *Erminia* - dealt with the issue of honour and loyalty in the paradigm of sexual relations. Othello, the Moor, was a man of honour who was consumed with distrust and questioned the loyalty of his wife. Like the central character of *Erminia*, Othello's wife Desdemona was forced to prove that her personal honour was unsullied. Manipulated by the evil Iago, Othello suspected her fidelity. Desdemona failed to prove her loyalty and was murdered by her 'Moor'. In the final instance, Othello retained his honour yet death was the price that they both paid. The years following the Restoration must have been permeated with innuendo and mistrust. If loyalty to the crown was a crucial issue there were many who might have come under suspicion and who feared that their disloyalty might ultimately be punished.

In essence these first plays of the Restoration season, were – both in their published and performed states - important tools in the psychological reworking of guilt and mistrust in times of political crisis. The disloyal wife became the metaphor for the disloyal subject and the slanderous implications which propelled the plot of *Othello* were

---

[41] Norman Council, *When Honour's at the Stake* (London, 1973). See especially Chapter I, 'Ideas of Honour in Shakespeare's England'.

acted out in the context of rumours of sedition and fears of open rebellion. The army of 1660 was in a volatile state and there were repeated orders for disbanded soldiers to leave the capital before Thomas Venner and the Fifth Monarchists were eventually overwhelmed in January 1661. Against this background of constant rumours of sedition and rebellion in the country, the issue of loyalty to the crown was a crucial theme to be reasserted.

The second of Shakespeare's plays to be performed at this time was *Henry IV, Part I.* This play dealt directly with the theme of loyalty in the context of political unrest. It was performed in the two first seasons after the opening of the theatres and then was not performed again until the middle of the Dutch Wars. The decision to perform *I Henry IV* by the Duke's Company underlines the importance of redefining honour within a new political context. In this play - which is set in feudal England after the deposition of Richard II - Shakespeare had been principally concerned with how individuals responded to the demands of a code of honour on the field of battle and under conflicting demands of loyalty.[42] Hotspur was depicted by Shakespeare as a mirror of honour whose actions redefined the chivalric code. He was termed the 'king of honour', who justified his defiance to Henry by questioning the legitimacy of Henry's right to the crown. He wished to restore the honour of his kinsmen, the Percies. In death he gained honour, in combat with Prince Hal. It could almost be said that an honourable death was his ultimate goal, just as it was for the 'royal martyr' Charles I.

In contrast, Hal, the pragmatist, exploited honour in self-interest.[43] The character of Hal might have touched a cord in a Restoration audience because he personified the bridge between chivalric values and the emerging political values which had been

---

[42] Norman Council, *When Honour's at the Stake.* See chapter 2 for a full discussion of the part that honour plays in *Part I Henry IV.*

[43] Ibid, p. 50.

outlined in Hobbes's *Leviathan.* Hal used honour as a personal attribute to enhance his reputation, not as a goal in itself, and remarked at one point:

> So when this loose behaviour I throw off,
> And pay the debt I never promised,
> By how better than my work I am,
> By so much shall if falsify men's hopes.
> And like bright metal on a sullen ground,
> My reformation, glitt'ring o'er my fault,
> Shall show more goodly and attract more eyes
> Than that which hath not fail to set it off. [44]

This speech might well have had a special resonance with those who had switched allegiance and had to contend with the altered political realities of the Restoration. Perhaps many of the audience were able to identify with Prince Hal who was able to manipulate honour and use it as a tool in order to survive political uncertainties. Although the tone of his speeches was cynically Machiavellian, he redeemed himself by supporting the royal claims of his father. It was the pragmatist, Hal, who won the challenge against Hotspur and ultimately gained the crown. Hal proved - on the stage – that honour was politically flexible, yet he reaffirmed that loyalty to authority underpinned political stability.

By contrast, *Henry IV II* (which Shakespeare had intended to be shown concurrently with *Henry IV I*) was never produced in the Restoration period. Unlike *Part I*, it was devoid of examples of honour and its plot revolved around a rebellion against the crown sanctioned by a militaristic archbishop. This scenario was not one that could have been acceptable to Restoration dramatists. Indeed, in the tense religious climate which prevailed throughout most of the reign of Charles II, a play which justified rebellion in the name of religion was not one which would have passed the censors. At a time when loyalty to the restored monarch was crucial, the two managers of the theatre companies

---

[44] P.H. Davison (ed.),*The First part of King Henry the Fourth* in New Penguin Shakespeare (London, 1968), Act I, p. 56.

needed to encourage new playwrights. Faced with a dearth of current material for their repertoire, they were sometimes forced to adapt earlier plays which could fill this gap. For this purpose, it was expedient to turn to playwrights whose credentials suited them for the task of restoring the links between the reign of Charles I and the new political order. Perhaps the most important of these playwrights was Sir William Davenant.

William Davenant- Bridging the Gap

Davenant's Royalist connections and literary achievements ensured that he became a prominent figure at the Restoration of Charles II. As the licence holder for the Duke's Company, he decided the repertoire for each theatrical season. He was himself a playwright who had managed to survive the turbulent years of the Interregnum. His career spanned the reign of Charles I, as we have seen, and his political astuteness had also enabled him to provide entertainments for Cromwell during the Protectorate. He had been created Poet Laureate by Charles I in 1639, a post which he held until his death thirty years later. The creator of a number of Caroline court masques, including *Britannia Triumphans*, *Luminalia* and *Salmacida Spoila*, he had worked in close association with Inigo Jones. His interests were as much political as literary and as a consequence, in 1641, he had been implicated in an unsuccessful plot, together with John Suckling, Henry Jermyn and Henry Percy to free Lord Strafford from the Tower. Forced to flee to the Hague, he had become a paymaster of ordnance for the royalist forces and – eventually - Queen Henrietta Maria's chief agent in the Low Countries. He had appeared on the Duke of Newcastle's list as a Lieutenant–General of the ordnance, serving under the Earl's own son. Knighted by Charles I at Oxford, he had finally settled in Paris along with the exiled court. In February 1649, Charles II had appointed Davenant to go to Maryland as lieutenant-governor with the express mission to ensure that the 'plantations' of Maryland and Virginia remained loyal to the crown. However, his ship was captured by a privateer commissioned by Parliament and he spent the next two years immured in the Tower of London. The publication of *Gondibert*, his unfinished heroic epic, in 1650 ensured that he remained in the public eye. His past close association with the Caroline court and his subsequent involvement in the production of plays for Cromwell, would have made him extremely sensitive to shifts in the political currents. He was a born survivor in a world where it was imperative to adapt quickly to changing circumstances. Close examination of several of his plays reveals his reactions to the vicissitudes of the political climate and the need to find a common vocabulary to accommodate new political imperatives. Although Davenant's company performed many revivals, he also personally adapted earlier plays for the Restoration stage. One of the most important of these adaptations was his adaptation of John Fletcher's *The Two Noble Kinsman*, which he renamed *The Rivals.* A comparison of the changes Davenant made to Fletcher's play reveals some of the political preoccupations of the Restoration polity.[45]

In contrast to the Fletcher original, Davenant's production excised the mythological allusions and placed the action not in Athens but in Arcadia. Davenant's play was marked by the need to justify and excuse acts of disloyalty. The two prisoners, Theocles and Philander, the 'kinsmen', as supporters of a conquered tyrant had their actions justified by Arcon, the prince. Davenant thereby inscribed on the public stage a rationale for those who had supported Cromwell. Arcon explains the ambivalent loyalties of these two prisoners, observing:

> Who never own'd the Tyranny that Caused it,
> Their Valour seem'd distracted in the fight,
> As if they did desire to save the person
> Of *Harpacus*, and yet disgust his Cause,
> Their Courage was inflamed with Loyalty
> To him, but quench'd with pity towards us.[46]

Arcon's general, Polynices, personifies loyalty. He pledges his complete support for his prince:

---

[45] The play's premier, it should be said, was apparently rather earlier than the generally accepted date in September 1664. This possibility has been suggested by the editor of *The London Stage*, Part I, p. 83.

[46] William D'avenant, *The Rivals* (London, 1668) p. 3.

> I might do things perhaps, beyond my age,
> But ne'er out-doe my duty,
> I owe more to this my country and your Sacred Person,
> Than my exhausted blood or life can pay (Act I, p. 3).

The ethos of the Fletcher play was the world of chivalry and Davenant retained this ethos. Polynices - in Davenant's play - intercedes for Theocles to be released since he has saved his life. The two cousins, just as in *Two Noble Kinsman*, reaffirm their friendship to each other thus reinforcing the idea of a communality of class. Although the two kinsmen are rivals for love, the enmity between them is never developed fully. They are tried by tests of courage implicated in the honour code by engaging in trials of combat. Polynices attests to their equal status in the field of honour observing, 'How Equally these Miracles of men/do share in Honour' (Act V p. 54). As a result they are both successful in love, the play ending with a double wedding and the reconciliation of the two noblemen. The tragicomic conclusion is in marked contrast to Fletcher's tragic ending that resulted in the violent death of Arcite. Tragicomedy, as Nancy Maguire has demonstrated, was a political device whereby the Stuart apologists turned the tragedy of Charles I into the happy restoration of Charles II.[47] The playwrights found it necessary 'to move from a threatened environment to a stable one'. After the Restoration Davenant rewrote *The Two Noble Kinsmen,* primarily in order to achieve dramatic order and stability.

Davenant was anxious to reconstruct examples of honourable behaviour and simultaneously both to incorporate the memory of the past and to prognosticate the future by using love and honour codes that acted as civilising forces on society. He was prepared to sacrifice poetry for moral intent[48] and his aim was to convey his ideas in a language which was not only lucid but accessible. Addressed to the elite, Davenant's plays dealt with the themes of love and honour which played like a fugue through his

---

[47] Maguire, *Regicide and Restoration*, p. 39.

[48] Mongi Raddadi, *Davenant's Adaptations of Shakespeare* (Upsala, 1979), p. 52.

texts. He wrote in his *Preface to Gondibert* (1650) which was dedicated to Thomas Hobbes, 'Princes and Nobles being reform'd and Angellical by the Heroick, will be predominant lights, which the people cannot chuse but use for direction'.[49] He added later, 'The conquests of Vertue be never easy but where her forces are commanded by poets'.[50] During Davenant's sojourn in Paris, it had been Hobbes who, whilst writing the *Leviathan*, had encouraged the production of his friend's epic poem *Gondibert.* The close literary association between the two men no doubt influenced the playwright's thoughts on the nature of politics. Davenant believed that religion was not a sufficient guide for moral example but that moral precepts could best be conveyed instead by examples set in poetry. The theme of love and honour was most succinctly expressed in his plays *Love and Honour* (1649) and *The Siege of Rhodes* (1656) which were revived and staged at the Restoration. Significantly, *The Siege of Rhodes* had been staged during the Protectorate and was expanded for its production in 1661. These plays formed an important link between the Interregnum and the Restoration and served to illustrate that the 'language of honour' which had been encoded in the earlier productions took on new meanings under conditions of political crisis. The political allegiance of the audience in 1661 had changed, yet nevertheless the discourse of honour was able to bridge the gap between the two worlds.

Love and Honour; or the Courage of Love (1634), was performed several times in the season of 1661 at Dorset Gardens before the court. It received high praise from the diarist, Samuel Pepys, on the 26th of October. He wrote 'My wife and I went to opera[51] and there saw *Love and Honour,* a play so good that it hath been acted but three times,

---

[49] J. Springarn (ed.), *Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century* (3 vols., London, 1908), II, p. 5

[50] Ibid , p. 46.

[51] Davenant is credited with having staged the first opera in England. The Interregnum ban on stage plays meant that *The Siege of Rhodes* was unlikely to have been registered as a play.

and I have seen them all, and all in this week'.[52] *Love and Honour* had elicited a direct royal commendation and support. Mr. Betterton who played 'Prince Alvaro' wore the King's coronation robes and the Duke of York's coronation robes were worn by 'Prince Prospero'.[53] As in the Caroline court masques – in which the actors had worn Charles I's robes – the decision to provide royal robes directly involved Charles II in the play and showed that the King regarded the production with high favour. It is easy to see why, for the reworking of the code of honour formed the basis of its plot and although written in late 1640s, it remained highly relevant to Restoration audiences.

The plot centred on a royal return and restoration. Set in Savoy, it was essentially a love story. It touched on all the tropes that evoked the memories of the Civil War. The plot involved imprisonment, disobedience of parental authority, disguise and the fulfilment of vows. The Duke of Savoy had made a vow to imprison the daughter of his rival and thus incurred the anger of his son, the Prince Alvaro. The Duke berated his son for disobedience yet Alvaro justified disobedience to parental demands by questioning the 'virtue' of his father. The breakdown of filial loyalty or honour was an important metaphor for the political situation of the 1640s that had led directly to the execution of Charles I and the overturning of the political order.

In Davenant's play, the Duke would not be turned from his designs. Evandra, the Duke of Millain's daughter, was the impetus for honourable action whose virtue propelled the plot. In the denouement she was only saved from death by the appearance of two ambassadors, noblemen in disguise, who had been living in seclusion. The common Royalist experiences of exile and disguise during the Interregnum were thus

---

[52] Robert Latham and William Matthews (eds.), *The Diary of Samuel Pepys* (11 vols., London, 1970-1983), II, p. 201.

[53] Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume (eds.), John Downes, *Roscius Anglicanus* (London, 1987), p. 52.

evoked.[54] Surprisingly, however, Evandra did not marry Prospero because he was honour-bound to marry another. Thus the play reinforced the strict code of honour in relation to oaths or vows. It emphasised the significance of the oath to contemporaries, particularly in relation to political obligation,[55] and it had a direct resonance with a Restoration audience since the Cavalier Parliament was widening the net of those who were obliged to swear oaths of loyalty to the government.

Davenant continued to expand on his theme of love and honour in the production of his two-part opera set to recitative music, *The Siege of Rhodes*. The opera was based on a historical event which took place in 1522 – the siege and conquest of the Knights of St. John by the Ottomans.[56] His use of recitative music had enabled him to provide drama in the Protectorate, even though that regime found public theatre normally unacceptable. These two plays written in the 1650s were in fact written for the 'court of Oliver', the Lord Protector. Here, Davenant produced a defence for drama focusing on its ability to divert the people and to educate them in the interests of the state. Part I was both published and performed in 1656 and Part II was possibly performed in 1659. In 1661 both parts of *The Siege of Rhodes* were staged alternately in London and a revised version of Part I and Part II was published in 1663. Charles II himself witnessed the performances in 1661 and John Downes – a prompter to the Duke's Company in the 1660s and the author of *Roscius Anglicanus*, a historical narrative of the production of Restoration plays – recorded that 'it was the first time the King was in a Publick Theatre'.[57] It had a long run of 12 days and a group of actors, called the Red Bull Company, took it to Oxford. Davenant dedicated his 1663 quarto to Lord Hyde, the

---

[54] Lois Potter, *Secret Rites and Secret Writing* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 103-10. Potter argues that during the Civil War, the disguised aristocrat, figured in literature, was a symbol of honour.

[55] See Staves, *Players' Sceptres*, Chapter 4. See also Keith Thomas, 'Cases of Conscience in Seventeenth Century England', in John Morill et.al (eds.) *Public Duty and Private Conscience* (Oxford, 1993), p. 33.

[56] Curtis Price, 'Political Allegory in Late Seventeenth Cenury Opera in *Music and Theatre: Essays in Honour of Winton Dean,* Nigel Fortune ed., (Cambridge, 1987) p.4.

[57] Downes, *Roscius Anglicanus,* p. 34.

Chancellor, saying that he wished to make the 'ideas of Greatness and Virtue pleasing and familiar' and defining his objective as the 'heightening of the characters of Valour, Temperance, Natural Justice, and complacency to Government'.[58]

The Siege of Rhodes, *The First Part* introduces two opposing forces: that of the Turks under the leadership of Solyman and that of the Christians of Rhodes aided by Duke Alphonso of Sicily. Alphonso's wife, Ianthe, was the impetus for honour and was herself a personification of honour. Through the familiar conflict between love and honour, this 'opera' would have appealed to those in the audience who had been familiar with the Caroline court theatre. Davenant subtly introduces the relationship of politics to honour. The distinguishing feature of this play is the fact that the enemy outsider, the Turk, is posited with honour. Honour, which for Royalists had been seen as loyalty to king, was also a force for consensus since the language of honour belonged to the military code of honour of both sides during the Civil War.[59] Both the Turks and the Christians in *The Siege of Rhodes* adopted the language of honour. The former court dramatist, in his new role, used the familiar love and honour conflicts to equate honour with power. This idea mirrored that of his friend, Thomas Hobbes, who, as we have seen, wrote in *Leviathan* (1650), that 'Honourable is whatsoever possession, action or quality is an argument and signe of power'.[60] Hobbes had separated honour from virtue but Davenant did not seem, in the last instance, wholly comfortable with this definition. At times he equated honour with power, yet he also extolled the chivalric code of honour of reciprocal obligation. Alphonso defined his personal concept of honour early on in the play by remarking, 'Honour is colder Virtue set on fire/My Honour lost, her Love would soon decay'.[61] Ianthe's honour became masculine through her display of courage.

---

[58] William Davenent, *The Siege of Rhodes* (London, 1663) Part I, p. Dedication

[59] Barbara Donagan, 'The Web of Honour: Soldiers, Christians and Gentlemen in the English Civil War', *HJ*, 44 (2001), pp. 365-389.

[60] V. B Macpherson (ed.),Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Harmondsworth, 1968), p. 155.

[61] Davenent, *The Siege of Rhodes*, I , p. 6.

The whole tone of *The Siege of Rhodes, The First Part* was highly militaristic. Originally, having no acts, the action was divided by 'entries' introduced by musical choruses. In the expanded text of 1663, the character of Ianthe was more fully developed. Davenant included a dialogue in which she justified the purloining of her jewels in order to help the besieged Alphonso in Rhodes. Here, Davenant hints at the efforts of Queen Henrietta Maria on behalf on Charles I.[62] In Part I Solyman praises Ianthe's 'masculine' courage and out of respect for her bravery lifts his siege of Rhodes. Both sides acknowledge the valour of their enemies: an important idea in the Restoration context of catharsis and reconciliation. Solyman, praising the honour of his enemies, says of his opponent: 'That flame of valour in *Alphonso's* eyes/Outshines the light of all my Victories' (Part I, p.37). He later extols honour adding: 'Those *Rhodians* who of honour boast/ a loss excuse, when bravely lost' (Part I, p. 17). Alphonso's honour proves steadfast and he is not tempted by Solyman's safe passage from Rhodes and instead he relieves the siege. The shared sense of military honour between the two opposing sides is an important component of the opera and this common ground underlines the importance of honour in the reconciliation of divergent interests in this crucial post-Restoration period.

Although *The Siege of Rhodes, The Second Part* was also centred on love and honour conflicts, the emphasis in this play has shifted. Davenant stresses loyalty: the loyalty of Ianthe to Duke Alphonso and the loyalty of the Duke to the island of Rhodes. Davenant, nevertheless, confronts political realities. Villerius, the master of Rhodes, acknowledges that his rule is dependent on the voice of the people. Rhodes is under siege

---

[62] It was Henrietta Maria whom Davenant had served so faithfully in the opening stages of the Civil War.

and, as famine rages, Villerius asserts that Alphonso cannot rush into battle without securing a mandate from the *vox populi:*

> The Rhodian knights shall all in Council sit;
> And with persuasions, by the public Voice,
> Your lord shall woo till you to that submit
> Which is the People's will and not your Choice.[63]

Solyman too, is subject to the will of his subjects. He notes that it is troublesome to him:

> That I was born to govern swarms
> Of Vassals boldly bred to arms:
> For whose accurs'd diversion, I must still
> Provide new Towns to sack, new Foes to Kill (Part II, II, p. 20).

Davenant may have been hinting at Cromwell's troubled relationship with the army and the play could still have been interpreted in this vein by those watching it in the early 1660s. Susan Wiseman has argued convincingly that Davenant was concerned in *The Siege of Rhodes, The Second Part* with closely examining the relationship of a ruler to his subjects.[64] Part II stresses that the power of the Sultan and the power of the rulers of Rhodes were determined by their respective relationships with their subjects. For a post Restoration audience, the play must indeed have served as a stark reminder of Interregnum government.

The introduction of the role of Roxolana in Part II, as the jealous wife of Solyman, marks a shift in Davenant's political concerns in the 1660s. By exploring the theme of honour 'in the relationships between the central figures', [65] he assured his audience that honour could ultimately achieve reconciliation and consensus between the warring parties. Roxolana is portrayed as a 'dark' force, a metaphor for unfettered

---

[63] William Davenent, *The Siege of Rhodes, The First and Second Part* (London, 1663) II, II, p.8.
[64] Susan Wiseman, *Drama and Politics in the English Civil War* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 151-164.
[65] Ibid, p. 157.

passion who acts as foil to the virtuous Ianthe. Roxolana exemplifies the prevailing contemporary cynicism surrounding political reality. When she is admonished to keep a promise, she responds, 'Religion is but publique fashion here/ And Justice is but private interest' (Part II, V, p. 57). Significantly, Davenant apportions Solyman equal honour with the Christians when the siege is lifted and no side is the loser. The love and loyalty of the lovers ensures a favourable dramatic outcome. There is, however, no grand finale which reflects the unstable political atmosphere of the 1650s. Part II is peppered with allusions which might have keyed into the post-Restoration obsessions of guilt for disloyalty and the fear of punishment but they are merely fleeting asides. In the final act Davenant reinforced the idea that it was only honour that could act as a cohesive force that could knit society together.[66] Solyman's words sum up honour's value:

> Honour, the cautious Guide and sure reward:
> Honour, adorn'd in such a Poets Song
> As may prescribe to Fame
> With loyal Lovers name
> Shall far be spread and shall continue long (Part II, V, p. 61).

The last post Restoration performance of *The Siege of Rhodes, The First Part* was in the martial atmosphere of 1667, in the aftermath of a decisive naval victory against the Dutch. Ironically, the play was performed in May on the eve of the disastrous Dutch strike on the English fleet in the Medway. On the other hand, *The Siege of Rhodes, The Second Part* continued in the dramatic repertory up until 1676. By the early 1670s, relations between Charles II and parliament had become strained. Part II could therefore have reminded Restoration audiences of the difficulties of negotiating a consensus between the king and parliament.[67]

---

[66] See Donagan, 'Web of Honour', pp. 365-389.

[67] Wiseman, *Drama and Politics in the English Civil War*, p. 158.

Davenant had successfully ascribed to the government of the Protectorate the same language that had been in vogue at the Caroline court. The enduring popularity of his dramatic achievements in the Restoration highlights the importance of the vocabulary of honour as a common discourse for the ruling class. The next section of this chapter will examine how two other dramatists used this vocabulary when confronting current political concerns. Perhaps owing to the volatility of the political situation in the first two years following the Restoration, few new plays were performed in London which engaged directly with politically sensitive issues. Two topical new plays were produced, far from the capital, however: one in Dublin and one in Edinburgh.

Performances in Dublin and Edinburgh

These two new plays both amplified the theme of honour. The playwrights concerned sought to underscore the relationship of honour to loyalty, but the two plays differed markedly in their tone. The first was *Marciano; or the Discovery* which was produced in Edinburgh in 1662. The authorship of *Marciano* has been contested by scholars. It has been suggested that the author, William Clarke, could well have been the same William Clarke who had been secretary to General Monck in Scotland and had been present at the execution of Charles I in 1649, but this connection cannot be conclusively proved.[68] The second play was *Altemera,* produced in Dublin in 1662 and later to be produced in London under the name of *The Generall* in 1664. *The Generall* was the first production of Roger Boyle, the Earl of Orrery, who became a prolific playwright in the first decade of the Restoration and whose rhymed heroic plays greatly influenced the development of Carolean theatre.[69]

---

[68] Maguire, *Regicide and Restoration*, p. 72.

[69] William Smith Clark II (ed.), *The Dramatic Works of Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery* (2 vols., Cambridge, 1937), I, pp. 70-71.

Performed for an aristocratic audience at Holyrood House, *Marciano* not only reaffirmed the importance of loyalty to monarchy, but also stressed the role of the nobility in the return to the old political order. The prologue states that 'Plays incite the youth to imitate the virtuous actions of their Predecessors, as Alexander was stirr'd up by representation of Achilles' actions'.[70] Clarke thus paraphrased Davenant's *Preface to Gondibert* which claimed that the nobility should set examples of virtuous action. The play is set in Florence, a city associated with the political theories of Machiavelli, at a time when it was torn apart with internal faction and civil unrest. Marciano, whose name denotes a warlike man, is wounded in the service of his prince and warns against the dangers of competition for honour stating, 'when private Subjects covet honour and power, their lawfull prince must quit his Throne' (Act I, p. 4). Marciano's words reinforce that the idea that the monarch is the 'fount' of honour.[71] Marciano is urged to escape from captivity but refuses to behave dishonourably and affirms his loyalty to his monarch, averring:

> I have considered, that love to my Prince,
> Should over-sway all others; have chosen
> Rather t'endure one stroke and dye then live
> And undergo the censure (of all crymes.
> The most detestable) *Disloyalty* (Act III, p. 42).

The play concludes with the restoration of the rightful prince and an affirmation of the divine right of kings: One courtier states, 'prince's view is good divinity' (Act V, p. 67). Cleon rewards Marciano's loyalty declaring, 'We've found you loyall, without spot or blemish/Valiant at all adventures and ever faithfull' (Act V, p. 70). In the closing scene, Marciano addresses Cleon as a prince who 'revives all loyal souls: disperses all Rebellion's foggy mists' (Act V, p. 70). Although the play engages with the political

---

[70] William Clarke, *Marciano* (Edinburgh, 1663), Prologue.

[71] William Clarke echoes the words of Hobbes in the *Leviathan*, 'Competition of riches, Honour command of other Power inclineth of contention, enmity and War'. See *Leviathan*, p. 161.

ideas of Hobbes and Machiavelli, the playwright stresses that political order can only be restored by the most important component of the honour code, loyalty. *Marciano*, celebrating a restoration, concludes with the reward of Marciano for his loyalty. The play's emphasis on reward for service to the crown placed on public record the current expectations and hopes that those men who had served Charles I so faithfully would be recompensed by his son. The issue of reward was one which concerned many Royalists who had lost their estates and had lived in penury during the Interregnum. *Marciano,* while celebrating 'restoration', placed on public record the hope that those who had served Charles I would be well rewarded.

Another variation on the theme of loyalty was being acted out across the Irish Sea, in a play written by Sir Roger Boyle, the Earl of Orrery. As Nancy Maguire has demonstrated, Boyle attempted to find patterns in his past experiences in order to produce a rationale for his own motives and obsessions which could have articulated, for some of his contemporaries, shared experiences of the Interregnum.[72] Although his sympathies were monarchical, he had been previously attached to the Parliamentary cause. Under Cromwell, he had been one of the four commanding officers of the Irish army. He had risen to serve on Cromwell's Cabinet Council and by 1659 had become an adherent of the Monck party in Ireland and had on his own initiative sent a letter to the future Charles II in Breda. Boyle's guilt about his switch of allegiance during the Interregnum was both purged and expiated through the writing of his heroic plays in which the heroes were continually faced with agonising choices but where pragmatism and expediency, guided by honour, ultimately won the day. His play, *The Generall* (1664), was a slightly altered version of an earlier play, *Altemera,* that had been performed in Dublin in 1662 in honour of Lord Ormonde. Nancy Maquire has claimed that Orrery gave the manuscript to

---

[72] Maguire, *Regicide and Restoration,* See Chapter 6.

Charles II in 1661 and that it must have circulated around the court.[73] It was at once a public confessional, an apology and a reaffirmation of allegiance to the crown. Although Orrery's play exalted loyalty as a cardinal virtue, the author showed a continual awareness of the political imperatives of the last twenty years.

The setting of the play is mythical and only in the characterisation is there a connection between the ideal and reality. The plot revolves around Clorimun, a general, who is called from retirement to restore the rightful king, Melizer. Clorimun is a free agent who has withdrawn from politics, thereby paralleling the experience of many of the exiled Royalists during the Civil War. Clorimun's love for Altemera is the impetus which entices him back into the political arena. Altemera, his beloved, personifies loyalty. Clorimum is thus torn between two conflicting loyalties, again mirroring the situation of many men in the Civil War. The general, like Orrery himself, stands by his decision to support the usurper, who in the play has no name and is called the 'King'. The usurper king represents Cromwell. When the play was performed in Dublin the usurper was pardoned.[74] However, in the London production of *The Generall* in 1664, Orrery ensured that the usurper dies a violent death in the concluding act. Initially, Clorimun is under pressure from Altemera to restore the rightful king, Melizer. The rules of honour will not allow this. Clorimun explains his position:

> Justice herselfe wou'd blush shou'd shee receive
> A right which treachery does to her give,
> And virtuous *Melizer* wou'd never owne
> From falsehood the possession of the Throne.
> Disgrace I feare lesse than to be unjust.
> 'Tis such to take and then betray a trust.
> Though I my power and *Melizer* esteeme,
> Yet I love honour more than power or him. [75]

---

[73] Ibid, p. 62.

[74] See *The Dramatic Works of Roger Boyle* for a stage history of the play, I, p. 104-5.

[75] Ibid, I, Act II, p. 135.

Orrery justifies his allegiance to the usurper using the language of honour. In the character of Clorimun he has explored the importance of honour in the resolution of a conflict of loyalties. This play, like *The Siege of Rhodes*, is infused with Hobbesian argument. It explores the possession of power through conquest.[76] The usurper king says: 'Whateever crymes are acted for a crowne/The gods forgive, when once they put it on' (Act IV, p. 142). Clorimun's behaviour, however, cannot be equated with that of the two generals, Archas, in Fletcher's, *The Loyal Subject*, or Martiall in *The Royall King and Loyall Subject*, whose loyalty to authority was unequivocal. Clorimun regards his imprisonment by the usurper as a valid excuse for releasing him from his obligations. When he switches sides, his breach of loyalty is vindicated by one of his commanders:

> The Generall too Vow's hee'd noe more defere
> By open force to restore *Melizer*,
> Which he noe longer cou'd esteem unjust,
> Th' usurper having freed him of his trust (Act IV, p. 143).

The Generall touched on a theme which would be developed further in the decade following the Restoration. It attempted to establish a corporate code of honour and identity that reaffirmed reciprocal obligations within the elite. This was achieved by extolling the bonds of 'friendship' which became the code word for reciprocal honour.[77] Clorimun defends his rival in love asserting, 'My foes are freinds, while they are in distresse' (Act V, p.156). In the concluding act a courtier asks forgiveness of his monarch, thus mirroring the thoughts and feelings of many who had switched sides during the Civil War. He says, 'I on my knees begg in this Warr you'l try/ Your late forgiven subjects Loyaltie'(Act V, p.164). This line highlights recurring motifs in the drama in the early years of the Restoration, the reassertion of loyalty and wish for pardon.

---

[76] For a full discussion of the conquest theory , see Glenn Burgess, *The Politics of the Ancient Constitution* (Pennsylvania, 1993), pp. 79-99 and J.P. Sommervillle, *Politics and Ideology in England 1603-1640* (London, 1986).

[77] The reaffirmation of reciprocal obligation within the elite was to be explored more fully by Orrery in his rhymed heroic plays of the second half of the 1660s.

Conclusion

The plays which were produced and published in the immediate aftermath of the Restoration were all permeated with the vocabulary of honour: a vocabulary that both accommodated the painful memories of the Interregnum and affected some kind of reconciliation within the honour community after the upheavals of the Civil War. In order to write themselves into a new political script the elite had to deal with the past, whilst at the same time looking to the future. The public stage became a shared forum for the articulations of these tensions and it is therefore not surprising that during the first few years of the Restoration the most urgent imperative was to rebuild the sense of honour due to the Crown. During these early years, drama dealt obliquely with the political upheaval of the Interregnum by drawing parallels between domestic and political conflict and by creating analogies between sexual fidelity and political allegiance. The paternal authority of the King that had been destroyed by the Civil War was now reinstated and the positive resolutions of the popular tragicomedies underscored this reinstatement. Plays like *The Rewards of Virtue* (1660) and *Love's Labyrinth* (1660) were examples of the exploration of this theme, yet it was the importance of loyalty as honour that was hammered home. In the first instance, there was an attempt to turn the clock back; hence the revivals and adaptations of the Caroline canon that were performed on the public stage. Operating didactically, the drama also reasserted and redefined the honour code by creating exemplary dramatic characters personifying loyalty. Yet the general optimism of 1660 was short-lived. By the close of 1662 none of the problems that had faced Charles II on his return had been solved. Perhaps, most importantly of all, the Bill for General Pardon, Indemnity and Oblivion seems not have allayed fears that 'disloyalty' would go unpunished or the expectations that loyalty might be rewarded. The growing feeling of general unease in 1662-1664 was further exacerbated by an atmosphere of heightened political tension. The next chapter will examine how the drama reflected this escalating anxiety.

CHAPTER II: RISING TENSIONS AND THE SECOND RESTORATION SETTLEMENT, 1662-1664

The following seasons on the London stage, those of 1662-64, opened in an atmosphere of heightened political anxiety which the drama correspondingly mirrored. There were widespread fears about rebellion and indeed the crown itself felt under threat. The hopes and expectations of the Convention Parliament were far from being fulfilled. It had proved impossible to please all of those concerned - and Charles's second parliament, the Cavalier Parliament, proved equally fractious and contentious. As a result, the second Restoration settlement was much less conciliatory than the first. By 1664 published plays were openly articulating fears about sedition and the threat of open rebellion that served to remind Restoration audiences of the past upheavals of Civil War whilst voicing concerns about the present political situation. These 'new' plays, written for the most part by ex-Cavaliers, not only redefined honour but also redrafted their personal and collective memories of the Interregnum. Because the discourse of honour was universally understood by the elite it provided a forum for political discussion which did not threaten the status quo.

In this tense atmosphere, harsh penalties had been imposed on those who dared to print, to write or to preach anything subversive to the crown. Dissatisfaction with the first Restoration settlement had been marked by the number of petitions presented to the Crown.[1] The plethora of unfulfilled expectations was in itself a source of disquiet. David Ogg has pointed out that in the initial aftermath of the Restoration many thousands of

---

[1] Cited in David Ogg, *England in the Reign of Charles II*, (2 vols., Oxford, 1955), I, p. 167. Ogg notes that these that these will be found in many sources, notably the *Calendar of State Papers Domestic*.

petitions had poured in on the King, the Council and the Parliament: from those who wanted restoration of their old offices, from those who wanted to fill new posts, and from those who were in prison for debt. There were even collective petitions from those who had been crippled in the King's service. Many clergy too, had petitioned the King, but a balance had to be struck between those who wanted to be confirmed in livings given to them by parliament and the loyal sequestered clergy. An act was finally passed banning petitions of over twenty signatures and deputations of more than ten people

Perhaps the most important source of tension surrounded religious toleration for non-Anglicans. In May 1662, an Act of Uniformity was passed which was designed to impose religious uniformity within the restored Anglican Church. Many dissenting ministers were ejected from their livings and the closing months of 1662 saw an increase in rumours of plots by disaffected non-conformists.[2] The Uniformity Act had pleased neither Charles nor his minister, Edward Hyde, Lord Clarendon, and the King even went so far as to issue a Declaration of Indulgence in 1662 which was intended to mitigate its rigours. All of these measures failed to quiet dissent and rumours were rife of conspiracy and plot. The Licensing Act of 1662 had not stopped Presbyterian polemic pouring from the presses. It is possible to trace this uneasiness and stress in the drama following the restoration of Charles. Reflecting the political tension, the drama attempted to resolve some of these issues on the public stage. In this chapter I will examine how individuals who had served the Stuart cause inscribed their experiences of both Civil War and Interregnum in their dramatic texts whilst confronting the political uncertainties of the Restoration. Frequently didactic, drama redrew models and anti-models of behaviour and the theatre itself became an agent of social and political change.[3]

---

[2] I.M. Green, *The Re-establishment of the Church of England* (Oxford, 1970), p. 161.

[3] Martin Butler, *Theatre and Crisis 1632-1642* (Cambridge,1984), p. 281. He argues that drama is not just a mirror of change but an agent of change.

Royalist Productions

One of the recurring themes that linked the plays was that of the use of the honour code as political discourse. The playwrights restated and redefined the honour code for those who had not lived through the experience of Civil War. Productions in these early years included the popular tragedy, *The Villain*, by Thomas Porter, Sir Samuel Tuke's, *The Adventure of Five Hours,* Lord George Digby's, *Elvira*, Henry Cary's, *The Marriage Night*, two plays by Sir William Killigrew, *Selindra* and *Ormasdes*, and Sir Robert Stapylton's, *The Step-Mother* and *The Slighted Maid.* Porter, Tuke, Digby, Killigrew, and Stapylton had all borne arms for Charles I and Cary's father Lucius had ridden headlong into enemy fire at Newbury. Each of these men was familiar with the code of military honour which was part of a larger 'European military culture'.[4] This code of military honour was at the centre of their lives and thus they re-inscribed their own personal view of honour into dramatic texts published after the Restoration.

Thomas Porter's *The Villain* was one of the most frequently performed plays of the season of 1662-1663. His father, Endymion, had been in constant attendance on Charles I and had briefly been in nominal command of a regiment of foot, though he saw no active military service and instead followed the king to Oxford. One of Thomas's brothers, Charles, died at the battle of Newbury. Another brother, George, was Lieutenant General of the Cavalry of the King's Army in the West during 1645-6. Like George, Thomas Porter was something of a rake. He was accused of abducting the daughter of the Earl of Newport whom he later married and then in 1665 had to flee England after having killed a man in a duel. His own personal experiences and his Cavalier connections enabled him to confront the political reality of the past years on the London stage.

---

[4] Barbara Donagan, 'The Web of Honour: Soldiers, Christians and Gentlemen in the English Civil War', *HJ*, 44, 2 (2001) pp. 365-389.

According to Downes *The Villain* was produced ten nights in succession.[5] Although it was not greatly appreciated by Pepys at the first performance in 1662, he later admitted that it had merit.[6] On the surface the play subverts honour, revealing a deep-rooted cynicism about the concept of honour. Its message is that a rigid adherence to the rules of honour can only lead in the last instance to death. This was in fact, dealing with the reality of the aftermath of Civil War. Many who had fought for the king had died in his service or been wounded. For many Royalists an honourable death had proved their only reward.

The villain, Maligni, an anti-hero, is able to manipulate all the other characters by playing on their sense of honour. Maligni represents the Machiavellian concept of relying on duplicity with its emphasis on the acquisition of power based on self-interest. Maligni uses honour as a cloak for his evil designs and treachery, thereby ridiculing it. At the outset of the play, he declares, 'I'll die the martyr for Truth and Honour'.[7] The use of the word 'martyr' would clearly have evoked the memory of the royal martyr, Charles I. The plot revolves around two sets of lovers who profess love openly to each other and speak of their love in terms of honour. Maligni casts suspicion and breeds jealousy between the lovers, because he desires one of them. He manages to orchestrate the deaths of all the leading characters that die in order to preserve their honour and ultimately he successfully engineers a duel in which his rival is killed. The plays ends on a cynical note with the Governor complaining, 'Virtues rewards are slow' (Act V, p. 67). This may have

---

[5] Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume (eds.), Downes, *Roscius Anglicanus* (London, 1987), p. 54.

[6] Robert Latham and William Mathews (eds.),*The Diary of Samuel Pepys* (11 vols., London, 1970-1983), III, p. 201.

[7] Thomas Porter, *The Villain* (London, 1663), Act II, p. 33.

been a cynical reference to the fact that Charles II had been dilatory in granting rewards for loyal service. The play pictures a world where the protagonists speak the language of honour yet Maligni subverts their code of reciprocal loyalty and uses honour as a tool for his own self-interest. As Nancy Maquire has surmised, the theatre audience could well have made the connection between Cromwell and Maligni whose ultimate death overturns evil and restores 'good'.[8]

More conventional interpretations of honour were supplied in redrafted plays based on translations and adaptations. Especially popular were Spanish intrigue plays which must have been familiar to those Royalists who had been in exile on the continent. Lord George Digby adapted a play by Calderon which he translated as *Elvira; or, The Worst is not Always True* that was probably produced at the end of November 1662. Digby, a colourful character, had been impeached for high treason in 1642, yet he had redeemed himself by fighting for the king at the battle of Edgehill. Having regained the favour of the king he had been appointed a principal secretary of state and admitted to the Privy Council in 1643. He had then succeeded Prince Rupert as Lieutenant General of the king's forces north of the Trent in 1645. Following his defeat at Carlisle Sands, Digby had escaped to Holland. In exile in France, he had fought for the French king during the Fronde. Despite his bravery he was most imprudent and his reputation had suffered in France as it had done earlier in England. Later in the 1650s he had allied himself with the Spanish camp in the Netherlands and had become friends with Don Juan.

Digby's *Elvira* is permeated with his own sense of military honour and his devotion to the monarch. The complicated plot revolves around mistaken identity, intrigue and disguise. The characters, nevertheless, are templates of honour whose loyalty is sometimes subject to conflicts of choice. The tone of the play is established by Don

---

[8] Nancy Klein Maguire, *Regicide and Restoration* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 68.

Fernando, the chief protagonist when he declaims, 'What I found honour dictated, I did'.[9] This play, like that of Orrery's, *The Generall*, becomes both an explanation and an apology for the way in which Digby had conducted his own life. Using the play as his voice he established that, although honour had been his guide, it had not been an easy path to follow. When Don Julio's honour is questioned he replies, in words which recall the clashing loyalties which had been experienced by many Royalists:

> I am a man never to fail, where once,
> I have engag'd my word, but Sir, withall,
> You must consider with a fair reflexion,
> That in this are all my chief Relations
> of blood and friendship; and though neither shall
> Have power t' exempt me from serving you
> In any just pretension, yet you know,
> That men of Honour, ever ought to seek
> How to comply with one duty without
> Violating another (Act III, p. 44).

All misunderstandings are resolved in the denouement and each character is able to uphold his code of personal honour.

Closely resembling this play is Sir Samuel Tuke's tragicomedy *The Adventures of Five Hours*(1663), a translation of a play by Coello.[10] Sir Samuel Tuke had been a Colonel of the Horse in the king's Army, had fought at Marston Moor, and had served with Charles II in the west under Goring during 1645-1646. He had sought refuge abroad during the Protectorate. Like Digby, he had also converted to Catholicism during his exile. Charles II entrusted him with diplomatic missions to the French court after the Restoration. Knighted in 1663-4, he was created a baronet in the following year. Antony Wood described him as 'person of complete honour and ingenuity'.[11]

---

[9] George Digby, Earl of Bristol, *Elvira: or, The Worst is not Always True* (London , 1667), Act I, p.7.

[10] The play on which the translation was based was attributed to Calderon by Tuke but recent research has shown that it was probably by Coello. See John Loftis, *The Spanish Plays of Neoclassical England* (New Haven, 1973), p. 76.

[11] *Dictionary of National Biography*, IX, p. 1227.

Tuke acknowledged in the prologue of *The Adventures of Five Hours* that was performed at court that Charles II had recommended him to adapt this play for the stage claiming that 'So should Obsequious Subjects catch the Minds/of Princes, as your Sea-Men do the Winds', thereby directly linking the King with newly emerging drama.[12] Presumably, Charles was familiar with Coello's play and Tuke's facility with the Spanish language made him the ideal adapter of this work. The play was dedicated to Henry Howard, the sixth Duke of Norfolk, Earl Marshall of England who had also been exile during the Restoration, and a friend of Tuke's. He likened the character of Don Antonio to Howard saying that he was 'as a Copy of your Steady virtue' and had been formed in his image. After its performance was Court it was performed for thirteen nights successively.[13] Like *Elvira*, the play is a love intrigue where the lovers ultimately find the right match.

The pivotal theme of the play is the friendship between two supposed love rivals, Don Octavio and Don Antonio, two gentleman of the city of Seville. Act II includes a political debate about reward for service to the king. In Tuke's 1662 version of the play, Don Octavio articulates the concerns of those contemporary Royalists who felt that they had not been properly recompensed for past service, Don Antonio takes the ultra-loyal line:

Don A I have been taught, to Deserve
But not to seek Reward, that does prophane
The Dignity of Virtue, if Princes
For theirown Interests will not advance
Deserving Subjects, they must raise Themselves
By a brave contempt of Fortune. (Act II, p.17)

Although the friendship of Don Octavio and Antonio is an important thread in the play, it is severely tested. Octavio claims that friendship is based on the honour code, claiming

---

[12] Samuel Tuke, *The Adventures of Five Hours* (London, 1662) Prologue.
[13] This was considered to be a long run on the Restoration stage.

that, 'I know too well, the Laws of Honor, to desert you now/ When I my friend such disorder see' (Act II, p. 23). Antonio agrees saying, 'He ought not to pretend to Friendships name/who reckons not Himself and Friend the Same' (Act II, p. 23). Confusion over identity leads to mistrust, and jealousy ultimately compels them to fight one another. Yet when Octavio is threatened, Antonio protects him. He justifies his action by saying, 'finding in my breast/An equal strife 'twixt Honor and Revenge, I do in just compliance with them both /Preserve him from your Rage, to Fall by my mine' (Act V, p.68). As in Davenant's *The Rivals*, this play elevates the crucial role of a fellowship of honour. Don Antonio offers to help Don Henrique in the closing act despite the fact that he experiences a conflict of loyalty:

> Honor's my Standard, and 'tis sure that I
> Had rather fall, than blush for Victory;
> But you are such a judge of honors' laws,
> That 'twere Injurious to suspect your Cause (Act V, p. 59).

John Loftis has described *The Adventures of Five Hours* as a 'courtier's play, Royalist in frequent innuendo'.[14] Certainly, the Spanish love and honour plot filled a niche which was familiar to the elite, in particular, to those who might have seen such plays whilst in exile. In the expanded edition of 1671 the language had lost some of its colloquial freedom and it more closely resembled the 'heroic' plays which had become popular on the London stage in the latter half of the 1660s. Although the code of honour was a pivotal component of the 1662 quarto, Tuke further amplified his discussions on honour in the edition of 1671 thereby pointing out the increasing use of the discourse of honour as political language.

For example, expanded discussions on the nature of honour are included in the 1671 edition which stress the raised tensions in the political sphere in the late 1660s. Act

---

[14] Loftis, *The Spanish Plays of Neoclassical England*, p. 75.

II includes a debate between Henrique and Carlos about the nature of honour. Henrique sees honour as personal and to be defended by the sword, but Carlos argues for the necessity for reason to overrule passion in the execution of the honour code. Their extended dialogue affirms that honour should be bound by reason and obligation in order to be effective.

By contrast, Viscount Falkland, Henry Cary's play, *The Mariage Night*, possibly performed in the spring of 1663 directly engaged with the realities of the Restoration.[15] Cary was the son of Lucius Cary, who had been killed on the field of battle in 1643 whilst fighting for the king's cause. Cary's play, set in a decadent ducal court, articulated some of the tensions that must have been felt by dispossessed Royalists or those men whose petitions had not been addressed. The play is imbued with a sense of bitterness that honour and service to the monarch have not been acknowledged or rewarded and drew on contemporary disaffection with the crown. The opening act finds a nobleman, Dessandro, who has been arbitrarily dismissed from his military post despite his military antecedents. Later on in the play his brother De Castro expresses his own disillusionment with the state of the court, saying that:

> These hopes are lost upon a high and angry sea;
> And I must see fools and state
> Parasites (whose progeny n'er bled one drop nor had
> A valiant thought to serve their Country).[16]

This criticism mirrored the feelings of disappointed Cavaliers who might have seen positions of power filled by undeserving men, when they had not yet been rewarded

---

[15] There is no evidence of performance as the 1664 quarto lacks a prologue and epilogue and list of cast. See Judith Milhour and Robert F Hume, 'Dating Play Premières from Publication Data, 1600-1700', *HLB*, 22 (1974), pp.374-385, p. 380.

[16] Henry Cary, *The Mariage Night* (London, 1664) Act II, p. 21.

for their loyal service. Sampayao, a courtier, describes the state of the country thus: 'the Clergy/ Has catched a Falling Sickness: the Court, a deep Consumption; and that the Commons have the Spleen'(Act I, p. 3.). Dessandro and his brother, De Castro reaffirm their mutual commitment to the honour of their family asserting that they will:

> Swear by all the Glorious acts
> Of our great Ancestry, their hallowed Urnes,
> Our Father's injur'd memory, and all
> The hopes and honour we derive from them,
> To pay his blood a sad account in some Revenge (Act III, p. 21).

The brother of the king, the Duke Bereo, plots to seize the crown. He schemes to have Dessandro killed by a rival and to poison the king. Miraculously, Dessandro and the king survive Bereo's wicked designs. The Duke is confronted with his own duplicity while he defends himself by turning the blame onto De Castro who proclaims his innocence: 'Help me dear Truth, or else I shall suffer/For my Loyalty' (Act V, p. 49). Bereo's plot is revealed and the 'restored' king is forced to deal with high treason. The king acts with moderation, apologising to De Castro and Dessandro for his wrongful accusations. His language is an important pointer in the context of the Restoration politics in the sense that there was a latent fear that the King could still enact revenge for treason against the Crown. At one point he states:

> And because; we do not Love to use the laws
> In their extremity, or execute
> with Blood, Where we can moderate without (Act V. p. 52).

He concludes with bright hopes for the future relationship between a king and his subjects observing that:

> nor wish we to live longer
> Than to gain the Faith of all; that we may find
> Our self and Title most secure, and greatest in your loves (Act V. p. 52).

This play acted as an open critique of the court yet the tone changed in the conclusion. The pseudo-Jacobean portrayal of intrigue and revenge was sanitised in the conclusion by a merciful king who ultimately rewarded loyalty and thereby forged connections between the drama and contemporary political concerns. Certainly the play made overt links with the political issues of the day. Cary's play stands out in the dramatic repertoire because of its oblique criticism of the Court. It acted as a warning to the King to reward honour gained on the field of battle but it pointed optimistically to a future where subjects were bound in loyalty to the crown. Despite its happy resolution it was a precursor to the plays of the latter half of the 1660s when the honour and integrity of the crown itself began to be openly questioned on the stage.

The plays of another Cavalier, Sir Robert Stapylton, were highly reminiscent of Caroline court theatre. Knighted by Charles I in 1642, Stapylton had accompanied the King to Oxford, where he had remained until the city surrendered to Fairfax in 1646. During the Interregnum, he had lived a studious life of seclusion on his estate. At the Restoration he was given the office of gentleman usher to the privy chamber of Charles II. As a loyal servant of the crown who was not tainted with service to Cromwell he felt no need for public confessional or for written expiation of guilt. His two plays, *The Slighted Maid* and *The Step-Mother* were performed by the Duke's Company in 1663 and were both accompanied by 'Instrumental, Vocal and Recitative Music'.

The use of music was significant because it formed generic links both with the court masques of the first half of the seventeenth century and with Davenant's opera introduced during the Protectorate. Davenant had defended the use of music in *The First Day's Entertainment at Rutland House* (1656). He referred back to ancient times when it had been commonplace for plays to be accompanied by music, asserting that his entertainment was to be performed with 'Declamations and Musick after the manner of the Ancients'.[17] Horace, for example, writing in the first century B.C., on the Art of Poetry had extolled music as a vehicle for ethical reform. He had cited Orpheus, the tamer of wild beasts, as a civilising influence, writing, 'in song too oracles were delivered and the way to right living taught'.[18]

Both of Stapylton's plays not only included music but also incorporated masques. His works formed a bridge between the newly emergent drama and Caroline court theatre. This mixing of genres highlights a revival of courtly Cavalier drama. The inclusion of a masque within a tragicomedy was an important new dramatic device because the political aim of both genres was to banish disorder and restore stability. Masques that had been performed for a courtly 'closed' coterie were now being performed on the public stage and reaching a wider audience. Thus Stapylton succeeded in intermeshing courtly and popular theatre. More importantly, for this discussion, his plays celebrated the restoration of monarchy and highlighted the significance of the concept of honour in political discourse in the post-Civil War period.

Stapylton's first play, initially performed on 23 February 1663, was *The Slighted Maid*, a comedy, dedicated to James, Duke of Monmouth. The prologue was addressed to the King, thereby reaffirming the loyalty of his subjects and the reinstatement of the nobility. Stapylton underscored the fact that the future of the nobility depended on the presence of the King for its existence. Significantly, he asserted that the honour had that been *lost* during the Interregnum was now restored:

> To Honour and to Freedom you redeem'd
> Now your Nobility are Lords aga'n
> Your Commonalty Valiant Loyal Men.[19]

---

[17] Quoted in Susan Wiseman, *Drama and Politics in the English Civil War* (Cambridge, 1998), See Chapter 6, p. 143.

[18] Horace, 'On the Art of Poetry' in *Classical Literary Criticism*, T.S.Dorsch trans. (London, 1965), p. 93.

[19] Sir Robert Stapylton, *The Slighted Maid* (London, 1663), Prologue.

Stapylton must have known that there were those in the audience with republican sentiments yet his prologue assumed a loyal reception. Its plot pivoted around the taking of oaths, a crucially important issue in the seventeenth century. Oaths and vows were a sign that political obligation was affirmed. The taking of an oath was both an outward affirmation of loyalty and of ensuing obligation.

Robert Stapylton's play deals with sets of lovers whose desires are circumscribed by earlier 'vows' or obligations. None of the characters appears to love those who are intended for them. Ercina, the 'slighted maid' takes a disguise in order to revenge the breaking of a marriage promise. The play is interlaced with questions about the nature of honour and the breaking of promises in relation to honour. The characters ask one another repeatedly if they have broken oaths and attempt to justify the breaking of promises.[20] One lover asserts that 'an oath is Form-sake meerly/Matrimony is sworn of course' (Act V, p.70). Arveido, who is termed a 'childe of honour'[21] in this play, offers a rationale for those who might have sworn oaths under the Protectorate saying:

> The man that is not in th' Enemies pow'r
> Nor Fetter'd by Misfortune, and breaks promise,
> Degrades himself, he never can pretend
> To Honour more (Act IV, p. 48).

The play is only able to reach a conclusion when one of the lovers, Iberio, exonerates himself and justifies his actions. He explains that he did not breach the rules of honour by breaking his vow to Ercina, the 'slighted maid', but instead there has been a misunderstanding. He was not dishonourable because he was, on the contrary, honouring an *earlier* vow made to another. Act III incorporates a masque, reminiscent of the

---

[20] See Douglas Canfield, *The Word as Bond in Engli8sh Literature from the Middle Ages to the Restoration* (Philadelphia, 1989), p. xii,

[21] See Edward Symmons, 'A Military Sermon' (Oxford, 1644) which describes a supporter of Charles I as a 'childe of honour'.

masques in the Caroline court; mutual reconciliation and closure is achieved by the celebration of three marriages that had been previously contracted.

Susan Staves has shown that during the Interregnum the government tried to 'secure itself by using oaths as instruments of purges'. [22] Many Cavaliers must have taken oaths under duress during the Protectorate and yet they were being asked by the Cavalier Parliament to take oaths again in order to maintain the security of the restored monarchy. Under the Corporation Act (1661) and the Act of Uniformity (1662) the Cavalier parliament had widened the net of people obliged to take oaths. This extended imposition of oaths strained the conciliatory mood that the Convention Parliament had first established on the return of Charles II. The taking of oaths became the subject of public debate and controversy in Parliament. For a Restoration audience, this play might have given comfort to those who had been coerced by circumstance into taking oaths during Cromwell's Protectorate. Above all, Stapylton stressed that order in the body politic was dependant on the reaffirmation of loyalty to the King.

Staplyton's second tragicomedy, *The Step-Mother* which was produced in October 1663, was overtly more political. He describes an unnatural political order, perhaps making direct comparison with the Interregnum. The step-mother, Queen Pontia, represents authority which is both corrupt and depraved. As Stapylton develops his plot, Pontia is unsuccessful in her designs and good triumphs over evil. The agent for this moral reformation is 'honour'. Plotting against both her husband, Sylvanus, and the true heir to the kingdom, Filamor who has returned from exile, her aim is to usurp the crown

---

[22] Susan Staves, *Players' Sceptres* (Nebraska, 1979), p. 193. See Chapter 4 for a full discussion of the significance of oaths and vows in seventeenth century England.

for own children.[23] Despite her duplicity, she is supported by a loyal general, Crispus, who underlines the importance of honour in the governance of the body politic, stating:

> My Principles are Honesty and *Honour*,
> Jewels of value in a poor man's hand,
> Inestimable in a Prince's Breast.[24]

His values contrast strongly with those of Pontia whose vision of power is Machiavellian. At one point she declares:

> Princes must dispute what's Advantageous,
> Not what's Just:
> A Crown he merits, who pile Tow'r on Tow'r
> To scale the Stars, and riffle Soveraign Pow'r (Act 1, p. 14).

Her general chides her, and reminds her that princes are not exempt from natural law. Despite his criticism she is assured of his loyalty. Yet even Crispus despairs when she continues to plot, asserting, 'therefore in this base Charge my Shame's the more/To serve my Prince I never blush'd before' (Act IV, p. 73). The son of Pontia , Adolph, partially redeems his mother's wrong by forming a friendship with Filamor. He warns him of his mother's designs against his life and urges him to escape. Filamor's reply is significant: 'and would my Friends have me to save my life/Lose th' end for which Man lives, Honour'(Act V, p. 76). The two men who are natural enemies both operate by the same code. By constructing this friendship the playwright reminds the audience that although the Civil War had divided the honour community it had been restored by the accession of Charles II.

Surprisingly, in the conclusion, Pontia, repenting of her evil deeds, blesses the marriage of her two children to the country's rightful heirs, Filamor and his sister.

---

[23] These names are significant. Sylvanus denotes woodland and could refer to one who is detached from political affairs while Filamor means one who loves, thereby affirming the connection of love between a ruler and his people.

[24] Robert Stapylton, *The Step-Mother* (London, 1664,) Act II, p. 25.

Praising the loyalty of her general, who has never compromised his own personal honour, she claims, 'let us all thank Providence that directs Bad Causes to produce such good Effects' (Act V, p. 92). In this play, Stapylton has succeeded in reconciling two opposing interests through the two marriages, thereby repairing the damage inflicted on a country by civil strife. The most unusual aspect of *The Step-Mother* was the redemption of Pontia who had been threatened with execution for treason. Instead, her fate was transformed by a complete change of heart. Both of Stapylton's plays were highly optimistic in tone and it is striking that he suggested that the reconciliation of divergent political interests was only possible through adherence to an honour code.

Another ex-Cavalier playwright was Sir Wiliam Killigrew, the brother of Thomas Killigrew, and manager of the King's Company. He had been knighted in 1626 and had been a gentleman usher to Charles I. He had also commanded The King's Lifeguard of Horse during the Civil War. After the Restoration Charles II appointed him vice-chamberlain to Catherine of Braganza, a post which he held for twenty-two years. He was the author of three plays, all published in 1665. Two in this series, *Selindra* and *Ormasdes* were politically topical. Like other Cavalier playwrights, Killigrew defined his own personal relationship to honour. Acutely aware of political issues, the plays can be interpreted as a litmus test of the political climate.

Recent evidence has come to light which shows that *Ormasdes* may have been performed, although there is no indication of the exact dates.[25] Nancy Maguire has

---

[25] Joseph Johnston and J.P. Vander Motten, 'Some Unpublished Restoration Prologues and Epilogues', *Modern Philology* 77 (1979-80), pp.159-163. They have suggested possible performance of the discovery of Killigrew's personal copy of his *Four New Plays* (1666) in which the epilogues and prologues were published. Especially see p. 159.

suggested that it had been written to flatter Catherine of Braganza.[26] This may well have been the case, but its year of publication connects it with the return of the Queen Mother, Henrietta Maria to England. *Ormasdes* more closely resembled *Erminia,* in which female chastity was tested. The plot encodes the royalist myths of exile and disguise. It tells the story of a queen, recently returned from exile, courted by an ambassador who is the king in disguise. The king, Valerianus, suspects that she is in love with her loyal general, Ormasdes, and impugns her honour. Her general defends her in a duel against her suitor and she praises the honour of her general and servant, Ormasdes, claiming, 'What you have done/ was what a man of honour could not shun'.[27] The general, in turn, is loved by a noblewoman yet at first he shuns the blandishments of love, saying that his life has meaning only on the field of battle.

The loyalty and honour of Ormasdes in juxtaposed with the character of Nearcus, a nephew of the queen who had been banished after killing his father in a sword fight. Nearcus persuades Ormasdes that the parricide was an accident and the general defends him to the queen as a man of honour. He urges that he be pardoned for his sin. The queen disagrees, claiming that '*Citherean* honour calls for Justice/Against so barbarous a breach of Faith' (Act V, p. 83). Ormasdes, nevertheless, stands firm. Although Nearcus had committed a cardinal sin, he belongs to the same honour community.

The denouement of the play incorporates the wedding of Ormasdes and the pardon and banishment of Nearcus. Killigrew uses honour to direct the moral outcome of the play in the characterisation of the general and the queen. Not only has he stressed the

---

[26] Maguire, *Regicide and Restoration*, p. 117.

[27] William Killigrew, *Ormasdes* (London, 1665), Act III, p. 45.

importance of loyalty, he has openly confronted the sin of parricide, an obsession in the Restoration period. In a sense, Killigrew produces an apology for this sin. Nearcus's defence was that his father's death was accidental. Perhaps some of those men who had been complicit in the regicide might have argued that they had acted in a moment of madness having been carried along by events. They had lost sight of the fact that Charles I had been their 'father' as well as their king.

Killigrew's other tragicomedy, *Selindra,* first performed in March 1662, follows a familiar paradigm in which a king is in open competition with his son. The play is a complicated love story revolving around a disguised princess, Selindra, living at a court in Greece. The king of Greece harms his own son when they become rivals for the same woman. The plot hinges on deception and disguise in which the characters are constantly being duped. The unstable family relationships generate constant turmoil and intrigue. The only constant value is the honour that is publicly claimed by the hero, Phillocles, the prince of Greece. He defends his actions in the language of honour commenting, 'You know I am engag'd in honour to performe what I have so publiquely declar'd, and I am sure you love my Honour, equall with my person'. [28] The final act incorporates two weddings and the restoration of the rightful rulers. Amidst this chaos, only the concept of honour is able to impose an ethical framework and its precepts ensure that political order is restored. Both of Killigrew's plays served as reminders of the Interregnum in which nothing was certain and loyalties shifted because of political expediency. Nevertheless, the discourse of honour was able to affect successful conclusions and pointed the audience optimistically to the future.

---

[28] William Killegrew, *Selindra* (London, 1665), Act I, p. 17.

Most of the plays written and produced in this season revived the memories of the recent past and attempted, in dramatic form, to effect a resolution of the political tensions that had inevitably emerged at the Restoration. The discourse of honour propelled the plots of much of the drama and effected reconciliation and political consensus on the stage. For some of the playwrights, drama was a vehicle for personal catharsis, whilst for others; it was a forum for reasserting allegiance and obligation. The atmosphere of the Cavalier Parliament became increasingly highly charged, and in the years 1663-4 the assembly was riven by serious factional rivalries: rivalries which centred on the conflict between the Chancellor, Lord Clarendon, and the faction led by the Earl of Bristol. The impeachment attempt on Clarendon in 1663 failed, but the whole incident underlined the instability of factional politics. In addition to unrest at court, there were persistent rumours of rebellion that produced a widespread climate of fear. In October 1663 there were minor uprisings in Yorkshire and Westmoreland. Although no blood was shed and the numbers of people involved were negligible, the political complexion of the rebels posed a threat and a serious concern for government. Ronald Hutton has described those who took part in the uprisings as men who had been prominent in the middle ranks of the army, the administration and religious bodies during the Interregnum.[29] The consequences for those who were captured were tragic. Of the forty-four who were charged, twenty-four were executed. Similar trials were held in twenty-three other counties and in London over the same period.

In the Parliament that reconvened in the following March, the King called for the repeal of the Triennial Act. Despite opposition in Parliament, the Act was at last repealed

---

[29] Ronald Hutton, *The Restoration: A Political and Religious History of England and Wales* (Oxford, 1985), p. 205.

because it was thought to be the source of rebellion: a cause of continuing strife between the King and the people. Parliament also facilitated the passage of the Coventicle Bill which had been rejected a year earlier. The bill passed in 1664 restricted the numbers who could attend orthodox religious gatherings to five and imposed a fine for the first two offences. If an individual was caught three times, he would be transported to the colonies. During its first year of operation, the Act produced trials all over the country, but its effects were mitigated by the discretion of individual magistrates and the prevailing religious affiliations of the towns and regions. As a result of the widespread fears of rebellion, it is not surprising that the plays that were published and produced in 1663-64 should have dealt unequivocally with issues of usurpation and rebellion.

Usurpation and Rebellion

The threat of civil unrest was acted out on the public stage and the playwrights began to make use of the language of honour in both a didactic and an admonitory sense. The gravity of the political situation meant that tragicomedy, which ensured a successful dramatic outcome, was slowly being superseded by tragedy. As in the earlier drama, loyalty to authority was stressed. Amongst the plays published in the season of 1663/64 were *The Unfortunate Usurper* (1663) by an anonymous author, *Andronicus Comnenius* (1664) by John Wilson and *Heraclius, Emperor of the East* (1664) by Lodowick Carlell. Turning to the plays which were actually performed, *The Usurper* by Edward Howard was produced by the King's Company in 1664 and an adaptation of *Macbeth* by William Davenant was performed by the Dukes's Company later in the same year. John Dryden and Sir Robert Howard's play, *The Indian Queen,* was performed in January 1664 and had a long run which lasted until March that year. These plays were concerned with issues of usurpation and restoration and served to underline the fact that the political situation had become increasingly tense.

Edward Howard's *The Usurper* had only one performance in 1664, but when it was performed again in 1668, Samuel Pepys called it a 'pretty good play, in all but what is designed to resemble Cromwell and Hugh Peters'.[30] Howard was the brother of the playwright, Sir Robert Howard and their sister was married to John Dryden. Their father, Sir Thomas Howard, the first Earl of Berkshire, had fought for Charles I and had been captured by Parliamentary forces during the First Civil War. In the epistle dedicatory, Howard declared that he wished the play to be performed in 'native design and language' and stated that he had thrown off all 'ornament'. Howard might have wished in this instance to reach a wider audience for his play. It is more likely however, that he, like his brother Sir Robert Howard, was not convinced about the efficacy of heroic rhyme in drama and felt that the dramatic language had to be close to the nature of what it represented. Although the use of heroic verse, pioneered by the Earl of Orrery had become increasingly favoured, it was not universally accepted by Restoration playwrights.

The Usurper, written in blank verse, revived the memory of the Civil War and the horrors of tyranny whilst attempting to rebuild ideas of honour and loyalty to monarchy. Set on the island of Sicily, in the court of a tyrant, Damocles, in the aftermath of a civil war, the play pivots around Cleomenes, a general, who is held up as a template of honour. He is described as one that, 'has Preserv'd the Honor of his Family and still maintain'd his Current clear, not mixed/With foul Rebellious streams'.[31] The characterisation of Cleomenes can be connected to the 'loyal generals' of the earlier Restoration plays: he

---

[30] *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, IX, p. 381. Peters an independent divine, had been a chaplain to Parliament's army and had preached sermons to inspire the troops prior to battle. A staunch supporter of Cromwell, he was a regular preacher at Whitehall. At the Restoration, he was exempted from the Act of Indemnity and executed in 1660, having been condemned for his part in preaching incendiary sermons at the King's trial. He was widely reviled by Royalists.

[31] Edward Howard, *The Usurper* (London, 1668), Act I, p. 3.

can be compared with Archas in Fletcher's *The Loyal Subject*, with Martiall in Heywood's *The Royall King and Loyall Subject*, and with Ormasdes in Killigrew's *Ormasdes*. Damocles is aided by Hugo Petra – clearly a reference to Hugh Peters - who is intended to remind audiences of the past horrors of Civil War, composition and sequestration. At one point Hugo declaims:

> If, in that Company, Or as you March, you
> See any Man, whose Look, Fashion or Beard you
> Like not, 'Tis enough to make him a Delinquent,
> And qualifie him for a Composition (Act I, p. 7).

Damocles imposes a reign of terror and oppression though he is aware that his deeds must be couched in the language of honour, following the pattern of Maligni, the anti-hero of *The Villain*. Despite his loyalty to monarchy, the general is suspected of supporting the tyrant. Calanthe, the daughter of the deposed king, accuses Cleomenes of dishonourable behaviour and treachery saying: 'My Confidence hath betrayed me to a Man that hath sold the Honour of his Family' (Act II, p 16). The son of the deposed king arrives disguised as a Moor,[32]Cleander, thereby retelling the story of the Charles II, the king who had escaped from battle of Worcester in disguise. Damocles reaches a nadir by killing his own son, Dionysus, who has formed a friendship with Cleander. When the tyrant dies by his own hand, his head is placed on public view, reminding the audience of the fate of Cromwell. The rightful king is restored to the throne, thus reconciling honour and loyalty. Cleander celebrates his triumph, declaring:

> Most Honour'd Subjects.
> I read firm Loyalty in every face,
> I should else think the Crown a Burthen to me (Act V, p. 68).

The issue of reward for services is openly addressed when Calanthe the king's sister is given in marriage to the general, telling him: 'Thou do'st deserve a Princess/ And shall't be read in Story to thy Honour' (Act V, p. 69). Neatly paralleling the actual events of the

---

[32] Again, we may recall that Charles II was often described as a black man because of his swarthy complexion.

Restoration, the newly restored king pardons his subjects and excuses their guilt. He proclaims, 'There shall be an Indemnity for those/Whose frailty, and not malice made 'em Act /Under the Tyrant' (Act V, p. 70).

An important source for some of the contemporary plays concerning usurpation was *The Life of Andronicus* in Thomas Fuller's edition of *The Holy State and The Profane State* (1642).[33] *The Unfortunate Usurper* retells the story of Andronicus, a tyrant. The anonymous play, first published in 1663, makes allusions to the story of the Interregnum and Restoration. The character of Andronicus is portrayed with a degree of sympathy and his arrival, as an honoured kinsman and guest, tests the loyalty of those who support the reigning king. When Andronicus is finally proclaimed king by the parliament, the daughter of the deposed king accuses those who support Andronicus of treachery, calling them cowardly traitors. By the fourth act the tragedy has unfolded. Throughout the play the playwright stresses that men are driven by circumstance to supporting a usurper, making allusions to those who were turncoats in the Civil War. The language of chivalry and chivalric metaphor is used in order to galvanise opposition to the usurper. Thus the admiral predicts:

> We must expect ere long.
> To blazon all our coats with the same colour:
> But seeing dye we must,
> Let's breath our last like men that have,
> Brave and Heroick Souls.[34]

Andronicus, unlike the usurper in Howard's play, is wracked with guilt at his evil actions. Not only has he usurped the crown, he has also executed dissenting nobles without trial. Although pretending to be honourable, he is stricken with remorse. Tortured by the guilt of his violent usurpation of the crown, he asks:

---

[33] O.M.C. Nahm, 'John Wilson and His some Few Plays', *RES*, 15 (1938), pp. 143-54. There is a full discussion of the influence of the *Life Of Andronicus* on various tragedies.

[34] Anon, *The Unfortunate Usurper* (London, 1663), Act IV, p. 43.

Will this pulse of my disrupted conscience
Never cease Beating?
Can no intermission be expected? (Act V, p. 59)

Conscience plays an important role in this play, in contrast to later Restoration tragedies where the action was propelled by passion with little reference to conscience. Andronicus's obsession with conscience enabled him to realise that he had lost his honour. It was commonly thought in the seventeenth century that both the law of nature and the law of God had a part to play in the role of conscience.[35] For a Protestant, conscience was not dictated by papal decree or church councils but was based instead on an individual's personal relationship to scripture and his own capacity for reason. Indeed issues of religion are dealt with openly in this play, in marked contrast with most of the drama both performed and published in the immediate aftermath of the Restoration.

The Unfortunate Usurper introduces Basilius, a church leader who is motivated by evil. Openly admitting that he uses the language of conscience and religion to cloak his designs, he is named a 'Presybiterian' in the play. A demon foretells the future in the concluding act, directly linking the play with past events in England:

But my main design is to unfold
The volumes of transactions to come,
By parallelling them with those of this your
Gracian Empire, and prophesie
What many years hence shall be
Acted on *England's* Stage. The patriarch
Basilius (who for his Black Deed may be call'd my Chaplain) shall have
his parallel in *England* by one name and base profession a 'Presbyiterian'(Act V, p.60).

He foretold that Angelus, or Charles II, will be a 'second *Hercules* to cleanse and purge the *Monstrous Whale*, The Rump'(Act V p. 64). Entitled a tragedy, the play functions

---

[35] Keith Thomas, 'Cases of Conscience in Seventeenth Century England', in John Morrill et al (eds.), *Public Duty and Private Conscience in Seventeenth Century England* (Oxford, 1994). See Chapter 4.

like Howard's *Usurper* as a tragicomedy; concluding with the restoration of the true king and the death of Andronicus.

The obsession with usurpation influenced other adaptations based on Fuller's *The Life of Andronicus*. For example, John Wilson's play, *Andronicus Comnenius*, published in 1664, reworked Fuller's text and stressed the point that the power of the 'common herd' was dangerous. Andronicus is portrayed as brutal and scheming for he stops at nothing to gain power. Intended as a mirror of the Interregnum, the play is constructed around the rise to power of the tyrant. Having been initially summoned by the nobles, Andronicus uses religion and demagoguery to consolidate his control while successfully coercing the army and the navy. His actions are not synonymous with honour. His own son has conflicting loyalties, for when confronted with the evil of his father, he uses honour as an excuse for disobedience, declaring:

> Disobedience is virtue here:-
> But this - Is such a thing that,
> Honour, Conscience, and Justice all forbid it.[36]

The play hammers home the dangers of populist rule, mocking:

> The people's favour;- the uncertain people
> Constant to nothing, but inconstancie;
> Prone to affect but without judgement still;
> Hot-headed-Envious-Suspicious,
> Yet credulous; - Frame whimsies to themselves
> And after fear 'um, Now set up one, then t'others;
> But deal with all, as Children with *Dirt-Pies*,
> First raise, then pash 'um out (Act V, p. 88).

In the context of fear of rebellion this play revives past memories and highlights how power can easily be subverted if the precepts of honour are not followed. Acting as a dire warning of the possibility of civil unrest, the play nevertheless points to a happy

---

[36] John Wilson, *Andronicus Comnenius* (1664), Act II, p. 55.

resolution by the restoration of the rightful king. The fear and tension in *Andronicus Comnenius* can be contrasted with an earlier play entitled *Andronicus* – based on the same story - attributed to John Wilson. Published anonymously in 1661, the tone of this play was didactic and it emphasised that the 'fount of honour' is the monarch. It upholds the hierarchy of honour and castigates the nobility who have been dishonoured through their disloyalty, declaring that:

> Concealed loyalty, as well as lands,
> We hope at last will fall to th' prince's hands,
> And let no Nobles hope their worth will shine,
> Who make the Sun of Majesty decline;
> If Honour's spring be dry, 'tis vain to dream
> That Rivers thence deriv'd can have a stream.[37]

An aged privy counsellor reminds the audience of the connection between service to the crown and honour and declares to courtiers:

> I was a subject born,
> To's grandfather my youth was servant, and
> To's Father my old age was Councellor,
> And therefore to his son, I will be just
> *I'll lose my life but not betray my trust* (Act II, p.35).

In *Andronicus*, Basilius, the patriarch, takes an important role in the restoration of the king, and hands him the sceptre declaring, 'this Scepter is to you from the Heavens/Onely it is our duty to deliver it' (Act V, p. 95). Basilius confirms that good is finally restored over evil. His role is in marked contrast to the parallel role in *The Unfortunate Usurper* where the bishop 'changes sides' by tacitly supporting the returned king but takes no active part in the restoration. On the other hand, the restoration of the king, Angelus, in *Andronicus Comnenius* is not peaceful and makes no reference to religion except as an opiate for the people. Basilius is portrayed, instead, as an aged

---

[37] Anon, *Andronicus* (London, 1661), Act II, p. 50.

counsellor not as a religious leader. By 1664, the political temperature was heightened and playwrights were more inhibited about touching on contentious issues. Wilson was careful, however, to be optimistic about the future, for Angelus promises in the concluding lines of *Andronicus Comnenius* to:

> Proclaim a general Pardon;
> Promise 'em better daies,
> And let 'em know;
> That though we're not in *Plato's* Commonwealth,
> To have what there's amiss at once remedy'd (Act V, p. 87).

None of these plays which dealt so explicitly and openly with the issues of the Civil War and Interregnum appear to have been performed on the stage. In some cases it was probably the references to religion that prevented them from getting permits. Henry Herbert had approved John Wilson's *The Cheats* in 1662/63, for the stage on the condition that the words such as 'faith'and 'Abram's bosom' were excised.[38] Although there is no evidence to suggest that this is why these plays were not performed, the isolated example of *The Cheats* suggests that references to religion were considered highly controversial. On the other hand it could have been that the plays were openly partisan and out of step with the mood of consensus which prevailed in the immediate post-Restoration period. Nevertheless, plays concerning the dangers of rebellion and usurpation were written and their didactic rationale further encouraged the production of revivals and adaptations of plays touching on these themes.

Sir William Davenant's adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* was an example of a successful revival adapted to reflect the heightened tensions of the early 1660s. Produced by the Duke's Company on 5 November 1664 in Lincoln Inn's Fields, in the

---

[38] William Van Lennep (ed.), *The London Stage* (11 vols., Carbondale, 1965), Part I, Introduction, p. cxvii.

aftermath of the northern 'rebellion', the production could have reminded the audience of the importance of honour and loyalty to the maintenance of political stability. The play pivots on the idea that betrayal of honour leads ultimately to tragedy.

The play opens with a battle against the Thane of Cawdor, who had rebelled against the king. Duncan refers to the thane's disloyalty complaining that 'He was a gentleman on whom I built/ An absolute trust'.[39] Macbeth, who has distinguished himself in the service of the king, reveals the nature of his disloyalty when he agonises over his own murderous plans, whispering:

> He's here in double trust,
> First, as I am his Kinsman, and his Subject
> Strong both against the deed (Act I, p.14).

Macbeth murders Duncan, usurps the kingdom and sets out to take revenge on his enemies. Lady Macbeth has fuelled his murderous ambitions and quashed all of his doubts. Davenant's production - in contrast to Shakespeare's original play - assumes a moral tone. Davenant was concerned with imposing a moral structure and with the triumph of poetic justice. He found it necessary to impose an ethical symmetry on Shakespeare's Macbeth, by balancing good against evil. The early Restoration audience demanded that virtue was victorious over vice[40] and Davenant ensured that his play was adapted for this end. The experiences of the last two decades of civil turmoil required that drama underlined that the forces of evil , could in the final instance, be overturned by virtue. Macbeth, who had been described by King Duncan as 'full of honour', had been driven by ambition to step outside the bounds of honourable behaviour – and had thus become a traitor.

---

[39] William D'avenant, *Macbeth* (London, 1673), p.8.

[40] Mongi Raddadi, *Davenant's Adaptations of Shakespeare* (Upsala, 1979), p. 107.

Lady Macbeth's malign influence is counterbalanced in Davenant's adaptation by the inclusion of Lady Macduff who acts as Macduff's conscience. Operating as a foil to Lady Macbeth, she assumes a masculinity that is imbued with the virtues of the chivalric caste. The play resembles Davenant's other plays, *Love and Honour* and *The Siege of Rhodes*, where, as Raddadi has pointed out, Davenant has rationalised the emotion of love and exalted honour.[41] Lady Macduff postulates the justification for usurpation and warns her husband against becoming a usurper in turn telling him: 'You'd raise your self whilst you would him dethrone/And shake his Greatness to confirme your own/That purpose will appear when rightly scan'd/But usurpation at the second hand' (Act III, p. 32). Macduff defends himself by saying, 'Ambition does the height of power affect/My aim is not to govern but protect' (Act III, p. 35) thus offering a defence for those who had supported the Protectorate. Unlike Shakespeare, Davenant, in his adaptation, is careful to declare victory over evil by carefully balancing the characters and the action. Lady Macbeth, like her husband, is troubled by a ghost; the ghost of Duncan. Davenant concentrates heavily on punishment, punishing those who have been guilty of the murders of Banquo and of Lady Macduff and her children. The play is characterised by a strong didactic element and by optimism that evil will be defeated by honour, the ethical agent that redeems the characters and exacts retribution.

The political crisis of 1664 was reflected in the drama. Although the published plays obliquely warned of civil unrest by replaying the horrors of usurpation, they simultaneously sought to reassert the dependence of the elite on the crown using the idiom of honour. Adaptations of Shakespeare and the popularity of the translations of

---

[41] Ibid, p. 106.

Pierre Corneille reveal that the exigencies of the political crisis demanded that plays were produced with an alacrity that the playwrights of the Restoration stage in London were unable to fulfil. It might have been easier to translate plays written in Spain and France because contemporary Spanish and French plays had thematic relevant relevance. As I have shown, the Spanish plays of Coello and Calderon which influenced the production of *The Adventures of the Five Hours* and *Elvira* met a demand for drama that redefined the code of honour. The plays of Corneille, on the other hand, were concerned primarily with how the theme of honour affected the relationship between the nobility and the crown.

Corneille, a lawyer and civil servant, was a resident of Rouen in Normandy, and a 'procureur des états', who administered the royal forests and navigation rights. His service in this role spanned the years of the Fronde enabling him to have a free hand in his interpretation of the royal prerogative. Couton has attributed to him a part in upholding the authority of the monarchy in France.[42] Georges Couton ascribes to those of his plays which were written during the Fronde two important political ideas, the importance of a hereditary monarchy and the idea that 'les révoltes restent inexusables'.[43] Charles II's escape to France brought about an inextricable link between the works of Corneille and the development of drama on the Restoration stage. Corneille had English friends at the French court and Rouen itself had been a haven for Royalists escaping from England. Corneille, for example, had taken the story of Charles II's daring escape from the battle of Worcester in disguise and retold it on the stage. In the words of Couton, 'la

---

[42] George Couton, *Corneille et La Fronde* (Clermont- Ferraud, 1951), pp. 101-117.
[43] Ibid, p. 107.

révolution anglaise a amené Corneille a reflechir au problème politique de l' usurpation at de la légitimité'.[44]

The season of 1664 saw a number of Corneille's plays adapted and translated for the London stage, against the backdrop of the unpopular Coventicle Act (1664) and the constant rumours of rebellion. Concerned with reinforcing the concept of divine right rule, these plays exalted the concept of the 'hero'. Corneille's hero was the embodiment of the chivalric ideal who owed his allegiance and his loyalty to his monarch. Corneille stressed the necessity of re-forging the communal values of the honour community in relation to the crown. In contrast to other dramatic works, Corneille's plays acted less as warnings than as didactic examples; working models of how honour operated in changing political circumstances. Corneille was writing during the first half of the seventeenth century in a France which had been beset by noble revolt and his plays were ideally suited to redefining how honour underpinned the relationship of the elite to the state.

Lodowick Carlell's play, *Heraclius, Emperour of the East* (1664), a translation of Corneille's play, was personally commissioned by Charles II, thereby giving this play direct royal sanction. Langbaine has described Carlell as 'an ancient courtier, being gentleman of the horse to Charles I, groom of the king and queen's privy chamber, and served the queen mother'.[45] The 'Author's' Advertisement' before the prologue of the play explains that the subject is: 'the restoration of a gallant Prince to his just inheritance, many years after the unjust and horrendous murder of a Saint-Like Father'.[46]

---

[44] Ibid, p. 93.

[45] *DNB*, II, p. 996.

[46] Derek Hughes, *English Drama 1660-1700* (Oxford, 1996), p. 37. According to Hughes it appears that Carlell approached one of the companies with his play (the Duke's ?) only to have to have it returned on the very day that a rival translation was staged in March 1664.

Carlell's play centres on a usurper, Phocas, who defends his actions to the daughter of the murdered king and his words might well have reminded the English audience of an excuse for regicide that Cromwell could have offered:

> The sword made his, the Sword now makes my way
> Who hath, or ever durst, dispute my power,
> That twenty years have raign'd as Emperor?
> I have but little need of your support;
> I was not the author of your Father's fate
> But griev'd his loss, forc'd to obey the State.[47]

The story, however, becomes increasingly complex. Phocas believes his natural heir to be Heraclius, who is in reality the son of the deposed king. Neither Heraclius nor Martian, the true heir to Phocas, is aware of his own real identity. In the complicated love plot, Heraclius runs the risk of making an incestuous love match. Corneille's only constant moral dictum is honour. Pulcheria, the sister of Heraclius, says it all: 'We're in a storm, lost by our hope and fear/Let honour hold the helm, and our Barque steer' (Act I, p. 13). This basic theme is reiterated constantly in the play, and the rigid code of honour ultimately simplifies the relationships and reaffirms the ties of friendship or class allegiance. The confusion surrounding the true inheritance to the monarchy and issues of allegiance tapped into memories of the Civil War. Thus a nobleman, Exuperius, celebrates the restoration of the legitimate ruler by the deposition of a tyrant and the redemption of honour, observing:

> Our Prince to be restor'd the chiefest good,
> We that were once disfavour'd and disgrac'd,
> Removed from Court are thus in Credit plac'd
> And that which to you treachery doth seem.
> Is a sure way our Honour to redeem (Act IV, p. 48).

Heraclius, when he discovers his true identity, has no wish to revenge himself on Martian. He claims, 'Justice requires that one thing must be done, though Phocas perish, yet preserve his Son/ He has no guilt, but that he's of his blood' (Act I, p. 22).

---

[47] Lodowick Carlell, *Heraclius, Emperor of the East* (London, 1664), Act I, p. 4.

This play, although it is entitled a tragedy, acts in effect as a tragicomedy. Phocas, the tyrant, follows the honour code in the end. Repentant, he offers the crown to Heraclius. He refuses to be the 'tyrant's heir' and later offers the crown to the tyrant's son, Martian. When the truth is revealed, Heraclius takes the throne asserting that 'By a just Prince much blood is seldom spilt' (Act V, p. 49). The play ends on a theme of mercy and forgiveness, again paralleling the concerns of the post- Restoration period. Throughout this complex play with its ambivalent relationships, the language of honour is the framework for action and resolution, and this translation exemplifies how Corneille's drama affected English dramatic productions in the latter half of the seventeenth century.

Another play which was influenced stylistically by the plays of Corneille was John Dryden and Sir Robert Howard's, *The Indian Queen.* Produced by the King's Company in 1664, it foreshadowed the emergence of the heroic drama that was to become increasingly popular in the latter half of the 1660s. Written in rhyming pentameter couplets - like Orrery's *The Generall* which was also shown in London this year – *The Indian Queen* had an unusually long run on the stage. Like Davenant's *The Siege of Rhodes*, the play formed a vital link between the epic poem and drama. The protagonists were heroes who behaved like figures in chivalric romances. The characters were not fully developed and they behaved as dramatic templates of ideals or concepts. Montezuma, the hero of *The Indian Queen,* was connected to the hyperbolic heroes of Christopher Marlowe and George Chapman.[48] Like the other plays of this season, *The Indian Queen* was concerned with the themes of usurpation and the relationship of the individual to authority.

---

[48] See Eugene, *Ideas of Greatness: Heroic Drama in England,1660-1671* (London 1971). See Chapter I for a full discussion of the chivalric links with the emergence of the hero in Restoration heroic drama.

Montezuma, the hero of *The Indian Queen*, is a general who becomes a kingmaker, underscoring the importance of noble support for the monarchy. In the first act, however, his loyalty is tested and when his desires are thwarted by the king, he breaks his trust with him. This disloyalty can be justified by the fact that Montezuma is an outsider and is therefore detached from the code of honour. He is contrasted with his rival, Acacis, who says, 'I as a Prisoner am by Honor ty'd'.[49] Acacis admonishes Montezuma:

Acacis	Your honor is oblig'd to keep your trust
Montezuma	He broke that Bond, in ceasing to be just.
Acacis	Subjects to Kings shou'd more Obedience pay
Montezuma	Subjects are bound, not strangers, to obey (Act I, p. 187).

What appears to be emerging in this play is an awareness of the difficulties of accommodating honour within political reality. Acacis is the personification of honour who forms a bond with Montezuma thereby reinforcing the idea of reciprocal obligation. Acacis bonds with Montezuma, declaring:

> And like friends suddenly to part, lets joyn,
> In this one act to seek one destiny;
> Rivals with Honor may together dye (Act II, p. 200).

Acacis's mother Zempolla, the Indian queen is devoid of honour and chastises her son for his loyalty to Montezuma affirming 'Honour is but an itch in youthful blood/ Of doing acts extravagantly good' (Act III, p. 204). Although the self-sacrificing Acacis is a rival to Montezuma for the hand of Orazia, honour guides him and he negotiates with the general, assuring him:

> That which my Honour ow'd thee I have paid:
> As Honour was, so Love must be obey'd
> I set *Orazia* as thy Captive free
> But as my Mistress ask her back from thee (Act IV, p. 216).

---

[49] J. Swedenborg (ed.),*The Works of John Dryden* (19 vols., Berkeley, 1962) VIII, Act I , p. 188.

Torn by conflicting loyalties, Acacis commits suicide in order to save his honour. The play dealt with the political realities of power, yet it nevertheless defended the concept of the divine right of kings. Even the Indian queen redeems herself by assuming a masculine courage. The characters of *The Indian Queen,* though not fully developed, are consumed with passions linking them with 'cornelion'[50] heroes who belong to an earlier chivalric ethos. This play may be said to have formed a bridge between the plays of period 1662-64 and the plays that were to follow in the second half of the 1660s.

Conclusion

Because the years following the Restoration had been characterised by fear and unease about imminent political change and threatened violence, the exigencies of political crisis had demanded a common vocabulary that was able to transcend differences of opinion. I have argued that a close examination of the drama of this period shows vivid evidence of the social and political unrest following the Restoration. The atmosphere of heightened political tension during 1662-64 encouraged a new group of dramatists to address these urgent political issues. The importance of upholding loyalty as honour remained paramount and encoded within dramatic texts was a continued discourse about honour as loyalty, one which was familiar to the audience. The published plays of this period attempted to redraft the chivalric social code that had been more closely defined in the courtesy texts of the Jacobean and Caroline courts.

The emergent 'new' drama in the early 1660s was dominated by a network of ex-Cavaliers, men like Sir Robert Stapylton, Sir Samuel Tuke, and Sir William Killigrew, whose own personal responses to conflicts of honour were interwoven into the plays

---

[50] Term for the heroes in Corneille's plays.

which they either wrote or adapted for the stage. The heroes of many of these plays were ideals of honourable behaviour and living embodiments of the virtues of a chivalric caste who, when presented with conflicting choices, were guided by virtue, often reflecting the personal preoccupations of the individual playwrights. Because most of these playwrights had fought for Charles I or had suffered under Parliamentary rule, they were reluctant to criticise the restored monarchy. Their lives were closely intermeshed with memories of the Civil War and its dire consequences for their own families. Because of the civil unrest of 1663, drama became increasingly preoccupied with fears of rebellion or usurpation. The common link between the plays published during 1662-1664 was a continued emphasis on loyalty to the crown and an increase in the use of an admonitory tone that warned against the dangers of rebellion and usurpation.

Against this background of heightened political tension, a series of disasters was to be visited on the nation in the second half of the 1660s. Fire, plague, ignominious naval defeat by the Dutch, and, most importantly, an uncertain succession were to bring new political challenges to the Stuart monarchy. As in the first half of the decade, responses to these political challenges can be viewed through the lens of the drama. When the alarming events of the second half of the 1660s unfolded, the way in which the concept of honour was articulated in dramatic texts sheds light on the difficulty of maintaining the ideals of honour when the stability of the country was under increasing threat.

CHAPTER III: LOVE AND HONOUR

By 1665, it is possible to discern a distinct shift in the way in which the concept of honour was used on the London stage in response to political crisis. Immediately after the Restoration the issue of loyalty to the crown had been paramount; however, the changing political landscape of the mid-1660s engendered new strands of the rhetoric of honour in the public theatre that echoed that landscape's complexity. These changes related to foreign policy, and in particular to the continuing war against the Dutch and the shift in the relationship with France. Issues concerning religious toleration continued to underscore politics and remained inextricably linked with both domestic and foreign policy. Parliament's opposition to the court had increased because of the King's desire to extend religious toleration and his continual demands for money, undermining his attempts to maintain unequivocal Parliamentary support.[1] Most importantly of all, the personal conduct of the King, and therefore the honour of the crown itself, had come under intense public scrutiny and criticism by the middle of the 1660s. In part, this reflected anxiety about the succession. Because the divisive issues generated by the Civil War had not been resolved, new political problems only served to highlight and further to aggravate partisan differences. Those involved in the political process continued to use a common language to endeavour to reconcile varying interests and to accommodate the growing criticism of the conduct of the King.

This chapter will examine how the escalation of political tensions shifted the rhetoric of honour. For example, after 1665 the drama was increasingly concerned with issues of foreign policy and plays began to criticise the King openly. By 1669, after the fall of the Earl of Clarendon, issues surrounding renewed religious toleration began to find their way onto the stage. These shifts of emphasis are only discernible through the close examination of

---

[1] Barry Coward, *The Stuart Age, England 1603-1714* (Harlow, 1996), p. 298.

various 'new' dramatic productions. Although loyalty to the crown continued to underpin the main stream of dramatic discourse, a newly emerging rhetoric underlined the importance of maintaining the bonds of reciprocal obligation within the elite itself. Didactic drama stressed the reciprocal obligations of the honour code which provided an ethical framework for conduct. Often the playwrights interwove various political issues - such as foreign policy and the general unease about the sexual conduct of the King - into the fabric of their plays. The honour code continued to provide affirmative resolution for the fictitious moral dilemmas which were posed on the stage. Dramatically staged 'love and honour' conflicts attempted to reconcile the tensions between criticising the King, airing concerns over domestic and foreign policy and religious issues as well as affirming loyalty. Underlying the preoccupation with topical events was a growing tension about the lack of a legitimate successor.

During the period 1665 and 1669 the dramatic repertoire of the two theatres had remained static. Many of the plays that were performed in the latter half of the 1660s were the works of earlier Caroline and Jacobean playwrights. These included the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, in particular *The Maid's Tragedy*, *Rollo, the Duke of Normandy*, and James Shirley's *The Cardinal.* There were also re-stagings of popular post-Restoration plays such as Thomas Porter's *The Villain*, Davenant's adaptation of *Macbeth* and Lord Orrery's, *The Generall.* The choice of plays is, in itself, an important political indicator, for the reliance on the earlier canon suggests that the issue of loyalty continued to be an important theme in the rhetoric of honour.

The main point of similarity which linked most of the 'new' plays was a preoccupation with the 'love and honour' plots made popular on the continent by Pierre Corneille. Up until the mid-1660s, as we have seen, the most popular genre was the tragi-comedy, a form which was celebratory in tone and which ended on a note of optimism. Shifts in genre were a direct result of changing audience pressure. Thus heightened unrest in the political climate in the latter half of the 1660s meant that the popularity of the tragi-comedies began to wane. As the national mood became more pessimistic, tragedies began to appear more frequently on the stage. What both of these genres had in common been the inclusion of a heroic sub-genre which invested heavily in love and honour conflicts, focusing on war and kingship, and written in rhyming 'heroic' couplets. The rigid format of this sub-genre was effective in addressing two divergent aims: both affirming loyalty and allegiance to the monarchy whilst at the same time providing a public forum for criticism of the King. Those members of the honour community who adhered to the strict code of gentlemanly behaviour used the theatre to reconstruct a form in which both loyalty to the crown and criticism of authority was possible. Throughout the reigns of both Charles II and James II, and well into the 1690s, public drama was continually subject to close scrutiny by government officials. Although strict censorship operated in theory, its operation, in practice was subject to the vagaries of individual monarchs.[2] Thus, despite this careful monitoring, the theatre easily accommodated public criticism of the King.

When the theatres reopened again after the outbreak of plague in 1666, the political climate had worsened, which meant that the issue of loyalty to the crown remained of paramount importance. Many of the problems which had troubled the government at the time of the Restoration Settlement remained essentially unresolved, most importantly that of religious toleration. These were now aggravated by the outbreak of war against the Dutch in 1665. Both countries were in competition for a larger share of world trade. England's expanding mercantile interests supported a second war against the United Provinces and as a result the Commons had voted £2.5 million in order to equip the navy. A decisive victory against the Dutch might well have strengthened popular support for the crown.

As Lord Admiral, James, Duke of York, was anxious to prove himself in battle and he achieved a great naval triumph at Lowestoft in mid-1665. His triumph rekindled support for the crown and for a short time regenerated a spirit of national consensus. Final victory, however, proved elusive. If the outcome of the war had been successful, it might have begun to heal some of the divisions that still remained in the body politic after the Interregnum.

---

[2] Annabel Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation* (Wisconsin, 1984), p. 46.

Instead, the tables were turned on the English. James's short-lived triumph was overturned by a disaster in the Medway, when the Dutch routed the English fleet in June 1667. The Dutch admiral, De Ruyter, succeeded in bombarding the stationary fleet, burning three warships and towing away the King's flagship, the *Royal Charles.* This naval debacle exposed both Charles II and his ministers, particularly the Earl of Clarendon, to yet more criticism. David Ogg has noted that 'English loss of life was not heavy, but of ships and prestige incalculable'.[3]

This defeat was doubly hard to bear after the ravages of the plague and the destruction of a major part of London in the fire of September 1666. These disasters had a providential dimension, for many believed that they had been inflicted by a wrathful God on the nation as a punishment for past sins. They represented, in other words, the just punishment of God on both a sinful nation and a sinful government. John Evelyn had noted in his diary in October 1666 that the country's sufferings were deserved, 'for our prodigious ingratitude, burning lusts, dissolute court, profane and abominable lives'.[4] The natural disasters also had deep and lasting effects on the domestic economy. Trade in many of the towns in the South and West was badly affected by the plague. The landed gentry, many still alienated by the Restoration Settlement, were troubled by widespread economic decline. Not only had rents and prices fallen but livestock sales were threatened by imports of cheaper Irish cattle. Paul Seaward has observed that 'the war, the plague, the fire and economic decline all contributed a new impetus to the sense of uncertainty and instability that pervaded English politics'.[5]

The lack of a Protestant heir contributed to this sense of political unease. Although there appeared to be no possibility that Charles II would attempt to divorce Catherine of Braganza, by 1666 there had already been several royal mistresses and illegitimate children. As Barry Coward has rightly noted, 'effective monarchical rule and mistresses were not

---

[3] David Ogg, *England in the Reign of Charles II* (2 vols., Oxford, 1956), II, p. 312.

[4] Cited in Paul Seaward, *The Cavalier Parliament and the Reconstruction of the Old Regime 1661-1667* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 245.

[5] Ibid, p. 244.

incompatible in the seventeenth century'.[6] The lack of a legitimate male heir exposed the monarchy to virulent criticism in the sense that it was considered to be a divine judgement on the moral laxity of the King. In Steven Zwicker's words 'the failure of the king's legitimate sexual abundance meant that the morals of the royal family were searched for that failure'.[7] Evidence of this search for explanations can be found in all the contemporary literary works including dramatic productions. The barren marriage of Charles II to Catherine of Braganza must have contrasted sharply in the public perception with the memory of his father's union with Henrietta Maria. The cult of love had assumed a great importance in the discourse of Caroline politics through the medium of court masques and Charles and Henrietta's perfect union had underscored kingship and public unity.[8] By contrast, Charles II's sexual profligacy and the uncertain future of the Stuart succession caused disunity - and criticism of the King became increasingly overt in the contemporary plays. The question of the succession was also touched on with increasing frequency on the stage.

Sexual Politics

Issues of the King's personal conduct and his questionable virtue had the most significant influence on the dramatic themes of the latter half of the 1660s. Public disquiet was reflected in the rhetoric on the London stage when the theatres reopened after the plague in 1666. The playwrights attempted to resolve these issues theatrically. Because of the outbreak of war in 1665, many of the new plays were set against a martial backdrop where military aspects of honour were exalted by underscoring the chivalric virtues of courage and fidelity to a ruler. Nevertheless, some of the new plays were permeated with a distinct unease about the health of the body politic: an unease which was reflected in the veiled criticism of sexual profligacy of the figures of authority who were depicted on the stage.[9] These plays depicted a diminution of authority of the king or ruler and revolved around stories of sexual

---

[6] Coward, *The Stuart Age*, p. 291.

[7] Steven Zwicker, *Lines of Authority* (London and Ithaca, 1993), p. 94.

[8] Kevin Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 137-148.

[9] This criticism was also seen in numerous satires on the court published at the time, satires such as Andrew Marvell's 'Last Instructions to a Painter'(1667) which was a satire on the conduct of Second Dutch War and which laid the blame for the debacle on the court.

competition between a ruler and his own progeny or subjects.

Although many of the themes explored in the new productions remained essentially the same as those of the early years of the Restoration, a new sub-genre had come into vogue: the rhymed heroic play. Pioneered by Sir William Davenant in his *Siege of Rhodes,* this genre had become increasingly popular by the second half of the 1660s. The structure of this genre and the use of rhyming verse made it an especially useful vehicle for the articulation of new ideas and reinforcement of argument. The love and honour conflicts encapsulated in the plays reflected current political conflicts and rhyming verse operated as a dialectical discourse which - on the stage, at least - resolved tensions and effected moral resolutions. Concerns about the future of the monarchy and the sexual licentiousness of the court were depicted on the stage in the familiar 'love and honour' plots of the late 1660s.[10]

Many of the 'new' productions written in heroic rhyme depicted rulers or kings whose natural authority had been corrupted by illicit sexual passion: a passion which in turn had detrimental effects on political stability. Illicit passion created a climate of sexual rivalry between the ruler and his own children or his subjects. Because the family was a familiar metaphor for the body politic in early modern Europe, a dramatic theme encapsulating unstable familial relations was a direct reflection on the actual health of the state. In these plays, the ruler was engulfed by sexual passion which threatened to overwhelm his political judgement. Instead of being a unifying force - the familiar metaphor for political reconciliation – love became a threat to political stability when it was expressed as sexual passion. Only the common language of aristocratic male honour, dramatically reinforced, could restore the authority of the crown and stabilise the political equilibrium. The traditional aspect of honour- depicted as allegiance to authority - still remained the most important component of the plays and counter-balanced the threats to political stability. Simultaneously, the theme of 'friendship' or corporate allegiance had become increasingly important on the

---

[10] See Derek Hughes, 'Theatre, politics and morality ' in *The Cambridge History of the British Theatre: Vol. 2 1660 to 1895,* Joseph Donahue ed., (Cambridge, 2004), II, pp. 90-107, p. 92.

stage. Noble characters not only demanded loyalty from, but also expressed loyalty to, their peers, and this loyalty was couched rhetorically in the language of honour. This may have been a natural or subconscious expression of class solidarity because of the seemingly fragile economic position in which the landed gentry found itself by 1665 - or indeed it may have been a natural result of military engagement.

The three plays which most clearly illustrated the new themes that would engage Restoration audiences were all produced between 1665 and 1667: *Mustapha* by Lord Orrery, and *The Indian Empero*r (1665) and *Secret Love* (1667) by John Dryden. In each of these plays, the theme of sexual profligacy was the pivotal crux of tension and in each of them that tension was eventually resolved by a strict adherence to the honour code. Another concurrent theme which featured in both *Mustapha* and *The Indian Emperor* was a preoccupation with issues of foreign policy. *Mustapha* was set in the midst of war and *The Indian Emperor* engaged directly with the ethics of colonial expansion for the purposes of trade.

The chief exponent of the rhymed heroic play was Lord Orrery. His *The Tragedy of Mustpaha,The Son of Solyman the Magnificent,* was first staged in April 1665. In the play, Solyman, the sultan, is diminished by a love rivalry with his son, the eponymous Mustapha. The plot was chiefly based on Richard Knolles's, *The General History of the Turkes* and was also influenced by George de Scudery's romance, *Ibrahim or The Illustrious Bassa.*[11] Orrery's play encapsulated many of the new themes concerning honour. As in his two earlier plays, *The Generall* and *Henry V,* Orrery not only looked backwards but very much engaged with current politics. The first two performances of *Mustapha* coincided with the declaration of war against the Dutch and significantly it was also the first play to be performed in the new season of 1666. Charles II was so delighted with the play that he engaged a designer to prepare stage designs for the performances at court and it was revived many times both at court and in the public theatre.[12]

---

[11] William Smith Clerk (ed.), *The Dramatic Works of Roger Boyle, The Earl of Orrery* (2 vols., Cambridge, 1937), I, p. 225.
[12] Ibid, p. 228.

This play represents a marked break from the earlier plays of the post-Restoration period. Although the tragic denouement was clearly didactic, its complexity incorporated various other aspects of honour. It appears superficially to be a straightforward 'love and honour' conflict, yet various other aspects of honour are cunningly juxtaposed within it. On the one hand, loyalty to monarchy is stressed, as are the chivalric codes of behaviour exemplified in the characters of Mustapha and Zanger: the heirs to the throne. On the other hand, the play has an important political resonance because the sexual proclivities of the ruler have placed the state at risk; it comments obliquely on the state of affairs in England and the proclivities of the King himself. Orrery depicts a Hobbesian world in which self-interest poses a threat to the chivalric code of honour, in the character of Roxolana, Solyman's wife. Roxolana is driven by self-interest and is not tied to any code of honour and her plotting and self-seeking precipitate the tragic outcome. In this play, Orrery has described a world in which old values are under threat from the Hobbesian world where men exist in a state of conflict in which only power is revered and the honour code is subordinate to interest.

The story is set in Solyman's military encampment on the plains before Buda and opens with a depiction of the diplomatic negotiations between the besieged Hungarian queen and the Turks. Orrery then introduces Roxolana and her son, Zanger, Mustapha's half brother. Roxolana plots throughout the play to gain the throne for Zanger by engineering the death of Mustapha. Orrery stresses the mutual respect and loyalty that the two brothers have for each other - despite their rivalry over the throne and their competing love for the defeated Hungarian queen. Solyman is a rival to both of his sons since he, too, has fallen in love with this queen. His overwhelming passion threatens the stability of the state and might have been interpreted by contemporary audiences as criticism of the King's wayward sexual conduct. At this time, Charles's mistress, Lady Castlemaine was being much criticised for her strong influence on the King. Orrery also analyses the nature of authority and stresses the importance of the dictates of honour by extolling the chivalric code of honour through the characterisation of the two royal brothers. Solyman's sons are exemplars of ethical behaviour, expressing both reciprocal obligations and filial loyalty. Their actions ensure a successful moral resolution to the play, based on the honour code.

Initially, Orrery's play mirrors the current debates about England's entry into the Dutch war. Charles II himself was not anxious for war against the Dutch nor were his two senior statesmen, Clarendon and Southampton, but there was a vociferous war party in the Commons.[13] Orrery could well have been criticising the King's timidity when Solyman, in the play, is depicted as reluctant to press his advantage against Hungary. The sultan is openly taunted for his lack of valour by his Grand Vizier, Phyrrus, who tells him:

> The Sword must end what Valour has begun,
> Else you disgrace what is already done;
> Your Foes would think if you should now relent,
> That you of conquests as of Crimes repent (Act I, p. 231).[14]

Solyman is suspicious of his advisers and soliloquises on the subject of monarchy, underlining the point that royal honour is under threat from self-seeking interest. The playwright also makes an oblique reference to the dishonourable actions of the Commonwealth of the 1650s when Solyman criticises his counsellors for disdaining honour, remarking that:

> *Divans* like common-wealths regard not fame,
> Disdaining honour, they can feel not shame;
> Each does, for what the publick safety call,
> Venture his Vertue in behalf of all,
> Doing by pow'r what Nature does forbid
> Each hoping, amongst all, that he is hid,
> Hidden because they on each other wink,
> When they dare act what Monarchs scorn to think (Act I, p. 231).

Later on in the play, Zanger and Mustapha - declaring loyalty to each other - vow to overturn the custom that commanded the mandatory death of all rival siblings on the heir's assumption to the Turkish throne. Mustapha tells Zanger:

> Since he who Friendship's sacred power has known,
> Rather than kill a Friend, would lose a throne,
> Your Friendship at so just a rate I prize,
> As I for this Empire can despise (Act I, p. 235).

---

[13] Ogg, *England in the Reign of Charles II*, I, p. 283.

[14] *The Dramatic Works of the Earl of Orrery*, I, pp. 225-303.

Mustapha's fate is finally sealed when he is condemned to death because he has incurred the Sultan's jealousy. Mustapha refuses to flee, stating that 'Since still my duty did my actions steer, I'le not disgrace my innocence by fear' (Act IV, p. 278). He then adds that 'fear or shame is worse than death to me' (Act IV, p. 279). When Mustapha relinquishes his claim to the throne and to his mistress, the Hungarian queen, Zanger replies that they are honour bound to die together for: 'When you are dead, Honour will make me dye' (Act V, p. 286). Mustapha then affirms their friendship: 'To ours alone the perfect praise is due/At once of being Friends and Rivals too' (Act IV. p. 279). Their heroic deaths save the throne for their father, thereby celebrating the aspect of the chivalric code that elevates friendship and conciliates rivalry. This emphasis on the relationship between friendship and honour was to become increasingly important later, in the 1670s, when the bonds of reciprocal obligation encouraged a tendency towards factionalism and the growth of party politics.

By highlighting the heroic deaths of the two brothers, Orrery focuses on one of the most important facets of the chivalric code - death was preferable to dishonour.[15] The example of the martyred king, Charles I, was ever-present in the consciousness of those who had lived through the Civil War. The notion of death before dishonour had its roots in the Roman period, when it had been commonly held that a 'failed' hero could redeem honour through self-annihilation or martyrdom. The idea that honour could be redeemed through death had always been a central tenet of the honour code and this tenet was highlighted by the heroic deaths of Zanger and Mustapha.

Orrery also reminds the audience that honour is synonymous with transparency and is opposed to all the dissimulation that had formed the basis of Machiavellian political theory. A dialogue between the two queens allows Orrery to tease out another aspect of honour.

---

[15] See Carlin A Barton, 'Savage Miracles; the Redemption of Lost Honour in Roman Society and the Sacrament of the Gladiator and the Martyr', *Representations,* 45 (1994), pp. 41-61 for a full discussion of this point.

When Roxolana tries to persuade the Hungarian queen to feign love for Mustapha, she refuses Roxolana's request claiming that 'Honour Madam, quickly will forget/ And lose itself whilst it does counterfeit' (Act IV, p. 271). She then goes on to add that Christians cannot dissemble: 'None but the guilty keep themselves unknown' (Act V, p. 272). Here, Orrery hints at the theme of personal guilt which had permeated his earlier plays. He had acknowledged his own guilt for having served Cromwell and deserted Charles I and in order to reaffirm his loyalty and perhaps, subconsciously, to expiate his personal guilt he wrote plays, in which he openly dealt with the themes of regicide and loyalty. Indeed, it may well be said that Orrery's early plays were public sites for his own private confessionals.

In the final act, when Mustapha is called to account by his father, he reasserts his loyalty to the crown by declaring, 'And who with a Father be in strife/Rather than duty lose, I'le lose my life' (Act V, p. 286). Orrery here links duty to one's 'father' with duty to a king or ruler. The deaths of Zanger and Mustapha provoke an uprising against the Sultan. Horrified, Solyman realises that Roxolana had orchestrated the plot, and he attempts to reclaim personal honour for himself by pardoning and then banishing his wife, saying to her: 'If what I did was then by Honour done/Let me that Honour keep when you are gone' (Act V, p. 300).

In this play Orrery dealt with several different aspects of the honour code such as honour as loyalty to authority and the reciprocal bonds of loyalty. The effectiveness of the honour code meant that Solyman, despite his public failings, retained his throne. By showing mercy, he redeemed an element of honour for himself. *Mustapha* openly criticised a weak ruler who had undermined both the honour of his country and the honour of the crown through his sexual lust. Despite its tragic ending, redemption was possible for Solyman through the honour code that had affected a moral outcome to the tragedy.

There were thematic parallels between *Mustapha* and John Dryden's *The Indian Emperor*, which was probably first performed in February or March, 1665, by the King's company.[16] In *The Indian Emperor* there is once again a focus on the dangers inherent in sexual passion that corrupts the judgement of the prince and undermines the honour of the crown and on the dangers associated with tyranny. The two plays - which were staged simultaneously by the two competing playhouses - had other marked similarities. Both were set outside Christian Europe, in exotic locations and within martial contexts, reminding the audience of the impending war with the Dutch. As Nancy Maguire has suggested, the publication of *The Indian Emperor* reflects the English preoccupation with competition with the Netherlands for the profitable trade in the new world.[17]

In both plays, the monarch is involved in a love triangle which diminishes the royal mystique. Wayward passion threatens the honour of these fictitious kings, thereby undermining their authority. Both Orrery in *Mustapha* and Dryden in *The Indian Emperor* directly confront the mounting criticism surrounding the sexual profligacy of Charles II. Nevertheless, both playwrights simultaneously attempt to uphold the ideal of divine right kingship. Dryden's play, which was set in Mexico, was the result of collaboration with Sir Robert Howard. *The Indian Emperor* is dedicated to the Duchess of Monmouth and praises the virtues of both the Duke of Monmouth, the illegitimate son of Charles II, and of his wife, extolling them as 'virtuous angels'. The dedicatory letter underlines the appeal of the heroic genre to a 'noble audience', stating that:

> The favour which Heroic Plays have lately found upon our Theaters has been wholly deriv'd to them from the countenance and approbation they have receiv'd at Court - the most eminent persons for Wit and Honour in the Royal Circle having so far own'd them, that they have judg'd no way so fit as verse to entertain a Noble Audience, or to express a noble passion.[18]

The Indian Emperor is a sequel to Dryden's earlier play, *The Indian Queen*. It features

---

[16] Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume, 'Dating Play Premières from Publication Data, 1660-1700, *Harvard Literary Bulletin*, 22 (1974), pp. 374-405, p .381.

[17] Nancy Maguire, *Regicide and Restoration* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 198.

[18] J. Swedenborg (ed.),*The Works of John Dryden* (19 vols,, Berkeley, 1970)IX, p. 23.

Montezuma, the Mexican ruler, who has raised the three orphaned children of the Indian queen, Orazia (the heroine of Dryden's earlier play) and his own two sons and a daughter by her. The plot pivots on the invasion of the Spanish conquistadores, who threaten not only Montezuma's kingdom but also his culture. The invasion by an alien culture and religion highlights the more naturalistic values of the Indians. Following the pattern of *Mustapha,* Montezuma is admonished by his own son because of his near-incestuous love for his step-daughter, Almeria. As Derek Hughes has observed, Montezuma's love subordinates his public interests to private passion and this love destroys his political judgement.[19] He counters his son's criticism by saying that censure overturns the natural order and defends himself thus, 'When Parent's loves are ordered by a Son/Let streams prescribe their fountains where to run' (Act I, p.34). In the opening act, although Montezuma's illicit passion has diminished his princely authority, his natural son, Odmar, continues to affirm his loyalty. 'In all I urge I keep my duty still', he declares, 'Not rule your reason but instruct your will' (Act I, p. 34). Odmar has qualified duty. He will only support his father if he acts within the bounds prescribed by reason but feels that he can openly admonish his father when he steps across moral boundaries.

The step-daughter, Almeria, represents freedom from moral constraints in contrast to her sister, Alibech, whose interests are intertwined with those of her country. When Alibech becomes the object of the affections of Montezuma's two sons, Guyomar and Odmar, she offers herself up as a prize for the brother who serves the interests of Mexico best. Dryden shapes three courtship scenarios which become metaphors for unity and harmony in politics in which the characters justify their decisions and actions in the code of honour which determines the outcome of the play. In *The Indian Emperor*, Dryden deals with contemporary political reality. Honour is continually challenged by shifting political circumstances – and some fail to live up to its precepts. Montezeuma, whose rule was weakened by passion, redeems his honour through suicide rather than allowing himself to be taken by the Spanish. Redemption of honour through death is again underlined for the contemporary audience.

---

[19] Derek Hughes, *Dryden's Heroic Plays* (London, 1981), p. 46.

Honour attained by heroism and sacrifice, of course, had a particular resonance for those who had experienced the Civil War and Interregnum.

The ongoing debate among scholars about whether Cortes, the leader of the conquistadores in the play, is a man of honour or merely a dishonourable cynic,[20] serves to emphasise that it is the concept of honour which underpins the love-polity of the drama. Cortes certainly seems to affirm the concept of honour. When questioned as to whether subjects should blindly follow the commands of their prince, he replies, 'To save my Honour I my Blood will pay'(Act II, p.50) and calls honour 'A raging fit of Vertue in the Soul/ Obtain'd with danger and possest with fear' (Act II, p.51). He asserts that honour is gained through sacrifice and danger, thereby making an oblique reference to the sacrifices made for Charles I in the 1640s. Cydaria urges him to ignore the demands of the honour code telling him to, 'Lay down that burden if it painful grow' (Act II, p.51) thus highlighting the temptation to forego the code's rigorous strictures. Cortes rejects her advice, reminding her that 'Honour once lost is never to be found' (Act II, p. 51).

As we have already seen, Alibech directs the actions of the play by setting the two sons of Montezuma, Guyomar and Odmar, against each other. Guyomar personifies loyalty and the two brothers debate about who best deserves Alibech's love. Guyomar observes:

> Her Country she did to her self prefer,
> Him who Fought best, not who Defended her,
> Since she her interest for the Nations wav'd
> Then I who sav'd the King, the Nation sav'd;
> You aiding her, your Country did betray,
> I aiding him, did her commands obey (Act III, p. 61).

The final act reveals the traitor Odmar in his true colours. Having made a pact with the Spaniards, he justifies his perfidy by *realpolitik* and asserts that the, 'gods are ever of the Conquering side' (Act V, p. 93). In contrast, Guyomar is extolled as a man of great courage. When Alibech protects him from the Spaniards he is ashamed, declaring, 'Kill not my

---

[20] For another view of the role of Cortes see Hughes, *Dryden's Heroic Plays*, pp. 46-58. Hughes claims that his intentions are of the best but that his actions are dishonourable.

Honour to preserve my Life' (Act V, p. 97). When the Spanish finally conquer Mexico, Montezuma dies with dignity, claiming that 'Kings and their Crowns have but one Destiny/ Power is their Life,.when that expires they dye' (Act V, p.106). Cortes and Cydaria offer to share the throne with Guyomar and Alibech. Declining the offer, the two men choose exile instead; clearly, Guyomar cannot honourably share the crown with a conqueror.

The Indian Emperor is didactic and therefore the moral outcome is determined by the demands of the honour code. But the stresses that the characters undergo have become increasingly complex. Love, rather than being a metaphor for union and harmony, has become a threat to the status quo, because it is illegitimate love, a love not sanctioned by the natural order. Only *legitimate* love, love within marriage, can underpin political balance. The conclusion of this play hammers home the point that love need not be destructive as long as the prescribed parameters of the code of honour operate effectively. In the context of contemporary politics, it was a stark warning to the King. Charles's sexual proclivities, the play hinted, threatened the political stability of the nation, leaving it prey both to outside enemies and the forces of internal dissension.

Another contemporary play by Dryden - *Secret Love or The Maiden Queen* - also well illustrated the current preoccupation with the threat of illegitimate love to honour. *Secret Love* was a favourite play of Charles II's, and was frequently performed at court. Based on the life of Queen Christina of Sweden, it was first performed in 1666. Dryden set out his dramatic intention in the *Preface* showing that he had set out to create a template of honour. 'It was as much as I design'd', he averred, 'to show one great and absolute pattern of honour in my Poem, which I did in the Person of the Queen'.[21]

Although *Secret Love* was obliquely critical of Charles II's personal conduct, the King's sanction of the play showed that Charles himself was open to criticism. Perhaps he acknowledged that the theatre was a good safety valve for discontent. The plot was based on

---

[21] *The Works of John Dryden*, IX, p. 117.

a story in *Artamene, ou le Grand Cyrus*, first published by Georges de Scudery in France in 1649 and the criticism was encoded very carefully within Dryden's play. The first edition of the de Scudery romances was published in England in 1653-54 and they were familiar to many English readers by the1660s. Stories taken from familiar popular romances could easily encrypt political commentary on contemporary Restoration sexual politics.

The play revolves around the queen's love for one of her courtiers, Philocles. Not only is he of low rank, but he loves another woman. The queen's unnatural love threatens the political stability of her kingdom, because she has spurned her intended suitor, Lysimantes who is described as a first prince of the blood. One of her maids reminds the queen that honour should guide her in a path of virtue, asking her mistress:

> Where is that harmony of mind, that prudence
> Which guided all you did, that sense of glory
> Which rais'd you, high above the rest of Kings
> As Kings are o're the level of mankind? (Act III, p.148).

The queen excuses herself by making a direct reference to the Restoration Act of Oblivion, declaring that 'Princes sometimes may pass/ Acts of Oblivion in their own wrong' (Act III, p.150). This refers to the Act of Oblivion passed by Charles II in 1660 in which mention of all hostilities between King and Parliament was consigned to oblivion and imposed fines on those who were found guilty of recalling reproachful memories of the Civil War.

Lysimantes next persuades the unwitting Philocles to imprison the queen for her own safety. Philocles agonises about taking up arms against his queen crying that 'I am a Traytor to her, to preserve her/ From Treason to her self' (Act IV, p. 175). The queen, however, at the nadir of her fortunes, sees the dangers inherent in her passion and steps back from both personal and political disaster. Lysimantes then reminds the audience that the faults of princes are always public, observing:

> You see, that Princes faults,
> (how e're they think 'em safe from publick view)
> Fly out through the dark crannies of their Closets (Act V, p. 192).

The queen calls on honour to redeem the situation saying, 'Now hold my heart, for this one act of honour/And I will never ask more courage of thee' (Act V, p. 193). Honour thus urges her to give up her 'base' love for the future of the kingdom and forsake her own desires for the wishes of her people. This may have been an oblique warning to Charles to renounce his current mistress, Lady Castlemaine, and to restore the honour of the crown by giving England a legitimate heir. The heroine of the play renounces her lover, allows him to marry and vows to remain celibate. She vows, in fact, to marry her people: something that might well have reminded audiences of the devotion of Elizabeth I to her people. This reference was perhaps also a celebration of the links between the Protestant faith and the crown. Religious issues remained very much in the public arena, for there had been much discontent when Charles had chosen a Catholic princess, but now that the choice had been made he was expected to fulfil his duty as King. Very carefully encrypted within this play is the theme of illegitimate sexual passion that threatened a monarchy. Like *The Indian Emperor*, the play was didactic, acting both as a covert warning against the danger of illegitimate love and upholding the concept of honour as a central tenet of political stability.

Not all the plays of this period, however, closely engaged with the current political issues. There was space in the dramatic repertoire for plays to continue to use the code of honour simply to uphold the rhetoric of divine right rule. A play that won special royal approval was the posthumously performed translation of Corneille's *Horace* by Katherine Philips. As we have seen, the works of Pierre Corneille were popular on the Restoration stage and familiar to those members of the government who had been in exile with the King on the continent. Various playwrights had tried their hands at translating and adapting Corneille for the London stage and one of the most successful adapters was Philips who had celebrated the Restoration in verse panegyrics and whose mentor was the Earl of Orrery.

As was the case with Dryden's and Orrery's earlier plays, Philips's *Horace* placed the chief characters in moral dilemmas which were resolved by the honour code. This production of *Horace*, with its divine right rhetoric and its emphasis on loyalty to the king harked back to the plays which were produced when the theatres first reopened in 1660. It is significant that the play received a particularly strong royal approval, for *Horace* closely mirrored an ideology of divine right that was confirmed by courtly participation in the play. The first showing of *Horace,* at the court, which took place on February 4 1668, was performed by courtiers bedecked in jewels from the royal treasury, and was resonant of the masque productions of the Caroline court. This, in itself, was an important sign of royal approval for royal clothing and regalia were not commonly lent to actors.

The 1669 edition of Philip's poems reveals the extent to which her work was steeped in the honour code. She appropriated the language of honour for the elite in one of her poems, '*To the truly competent Judge of Honour*, Lucasta'. In this work, Philips excluded 'the vulgar', declaring:

> Honour is its own Reward and End,
> And Satisfied within cannot descend,
> To beg the suffrage of a vulgar Tongue.[22]

The nobility took part in the first performance of *Horace* in 1668. Not only did the Duchess of Monmouth speak the prologue and play the role of Sabina, but Lady Castlemaine, the King's mistress, played Camilla: one of the central characters who was the mistress of an Alban knight. Lady Castlemaine's pivotal role in this production acknowledged the political importance of the King's mistress. A contemporary recorded that:

> This night there is a Play acted at Court by the duchess of Monmoth, countess of Castlemain and others. The Countess is adorned with Jewells to the value of £200,000 the Crowne Jewells being taken from the Tower for her. There are none but the Nobility admitted to see it.[23]

Horace was set in the midst of a war between Alba and Rome and the military conflict created tensions between the characters. Clearly, a play that dealt with conflicts of allegiance in what was essentially a civil war must have had a powerful resonance with a Restoration audience. Moreover, the most important theme of the play was the rhetoric of divine right. Horace is a Roman knight and his wife, Sabina, is the sister of Curtius, his

---

[22] Katherine Philips, *Poems, The Matchless Orinda to which is added Monsieur Corneille's Pompey & Horace* (London, 1678), p. 46.

[23] Cited in William Van Lennep (ed.), *The London Stage 1660-1800* (Illinois, 1962), Part I, p. 129.

enemy. Love and kinship strain allegiances in the first act. When Curtius and Horace are chosen to fight for their country, Sabina sums up the overriding dilemma of the drama, the problem of conflicting allegiances. She is torn between duty to her husband and duty to her brother. She agonises over this clash of loyalties, lamenting, 'Nature and Love for each does intercede/ And sense of Honour for them both does plead', [24] and then later adds, 'their Honour is the Object I'le adore/Their vertue imitate, and fear no more' (Act III, p. 92). Camilla restates the divine right of kings, declaring that in their: 'Supream Authority we see/A secret ray of divinity' (Act IV, p. 96).

In Act IV Horace appears to have fled from battle although in fact he has achieved a victory over the Albans. When Camilla berates her brother, Horace, for his part in this bloodbath, he kills her in a rage. Horace is strongly censured by his father for this 'barbarous' act which stains the honour both of the family and of Rome. Corneille has inscribed within this play the worst possible consequence of war; the disintegration of moral codes. Only the king can intercede to decide the case against Horace. Act V is based on a casuistic debate, where Horace's father finally supports his son on the grounds that he loved Rome more than his sister. Horace defends himself by claiming that only a king can judge honour asserting that 'Virtue and Honour lift themselves too high/ To be the objects of a Vulgar eye' (Act V, p. 122). In the closing scene, the king pardons Horace claiming that the honour code is above the law: 'Thy merits of thou liv'st may higher climbe', he intones, 'and raise thy honour far above thy cryme' (Act V. p. 123).

Horace, like the earlier Caroline masques, was an ideological statement of the divine right of kings and reiterated the point that loyalty to the crown was paramount. In contrast, the plays of Lord Orrery and John Dryden reflected the heightened political crisis and the emerging criticism of the crown which had shifted the way in which honour was evoked in contemporary drama. *Mustapha, The Indian Emperor,* and *Secret Love* all warned that illegitimate passion is a direct threat to the loyalty owed to the monarch; in fact, that passion

---

[24] Katherine Philips, *Poems,* p. 92.

undermines the authority of a monarch. Although the admonitions to the King were oblique, they were strong warnings, nevertheless. Charles's conduct had not only tainted the honour of the crown, but had threatened the stability of the body politic itself. Although there was a tension between the rhetoric of divine right and criticism of the King's actions, the drama was able to accommodate both sorts of discourses for it was the honour code itself that was the agent for a peaceful political solution.

Foreign Policy: History Plays

Honour was an important theme in another successful Restoration genre, the 'history play. Revivals and adaptations of Shakespeare's history plays had proved popular in the immediate aftermath of the Restoration. *Henry IV:Part I* was primarily concerned with issues of honour and loyalty and for that reason it appealed to audiences in the decade after the Restoration. It was performed frequently in the early 1660s and again when the Dutch War of 1665-1667 was in full swing. Pepys records: 'My Wife and Willet [their servant] and I went to the King's playhouse, and there saw *Henry the Fourth* and contrary to expectation, was pleased in nothing more than in Cartwright's speaking of Falstaffe's speech about What is Honour?'[25] Pepys's comment highlights the importance of the theme of honour within the context of post-Restoration value systems. History plays were useful vehicles for examining current political issues: and particularly the issues of royal sexual morality and foreign policy. By re-enacting stories of threatened succession set in the historical past, they obliquely registered concern about contemporary problems of authority and succession.

Lord Orrery had already produced his *Henry V* in 1664 and the commencement of the Dutch war in 1665 gave him another opportunity to explore the questions of authority and honour – especially those concerning military honour. Although Orrery's *The Black Prince* (1667) has similarities with the earlier *Mustapha,* its reconstruction of a chivalric world and its incorporation of a masque within the play attempted to reinstate a medieval code of

---

[25] Robert Latham and Willliam Matthew (eds.), *The Diary of Samuel Pepys* (11 vols., London 1970-1983), VIII, p. 516.

honour and stressed the importance of loyalty to the crown at a time of heightened political tension. In the autumn of 1666, after the Great Fire of London, rumours of a Catholic conspiracy were rife. Coupled with this there were tax disturbances and riots by unpaid seamen and in Scotland there was a nonconformist rebellion. Pepys commented in his *Diary* that the atmosphere in the country was similar to the 'very beginnings of the late troubles'.[26] The time was ripe, therefore, for a London company to stage a play which was not only retrospective but which also reaffirmed the authority of the crown.

The first production of *The Black Prince* took place in October 1667. Orrery stated in his preface that the play was completed at the King's request. Performed in front of a packed house, it was attended by Charles II, the Duke of York and many other members of the court. The prologue directly addressed the King and forecast victory over the French, predicting that:

> Their frightened Lillies shall confess their loss,
> Wearing the Crimson livery of your Cross;
> And All theWorld shall learn by their Defeat,
> Our Charles, not theirs, deserves the name of Great.[27]

William Clark, the editor of Orrery's dramatic works, has rightly observed that in *The Black Prince* Orrery had 'turned out a drama of rivalry in love'. [28] This theme was a highly effective one which allowed the playwright to rework the relationship of honour to loyalty in order to account for shifts in the political climate. Like the earlier plays discussed above, the story of *The Black Prince* was premised on sexual rivalry between a ruler and his subjects. Orrery was careful to keep his play topical, for Louis XIV had in fact declared war on England in January 1666. *The Black Prince* engages with the issue of war against France and opens with a fictional victory over the French - won against all the odds. The play then moves on to examine both the nature of kingship and the importance of friendship or loyalty among peers when the reciprocal obligations of honour are tested by conflicts over love. The universal object of desire in the play is Plantagenet, a princess who is 'loved' by all the male

---

[26] Ibid, VII, p. 343.
[27] *The Dramatic Works of Roger Boyle*, I, p. 308.
[28] Ibid, p.305.

protagonists.

Extolling English victory and celebrating chivalric valour, the English king praises his general, Lord Delaware: 'or, the Honour which you purchas'd in the Fight' (Act I, p. 312). In turn, Delaware flatters the young prince because he treated the defeated French king well. He reports: 'That Vanquished Monarch well might boast/ He there Receiv'd more Honour than he Lost' (Act I, p. 313). Romantic tensions are exposed in the first act when Alizia, the mistress of the king, realises that he has been unfaithful. She then underlines the way in which the concept of honour underpins the construction of the play by saying, 'Honour alone shall guide my Actions still/ Rather, I will do, I'le suffer Ill' (Act I, p.321).

The action is further complicated by the chivalric obligation that the French king feels for the prince. 'This Generous Prince doubly does me subdue', the French monarch remarks, 'By force of Armes and force of Friendship too' (Act II, p. 322). Thus Orrery carefully reconstructs the chivalric world that supposedly existed before the Civil War - creating a pseudo-historical setting through which the audience could re-enter this world. The production of this play restated the medieval bonds of obligation attached to noble status and attempted to give renewed importance to them.

Love rivalry becomes a testing ground for the ties of loyalty in the play. A counsellor to the captured French king advises his sovereign to tell the English prince that they are rivals for Plantagenet and urges the French king to call on the ties of friendship, observing: 'His Friendship for you and so great a Trust/Will make him cease to Love, or be Unjust' (Act II, p. 332). Here, the playwright has created a situation in which a 'captive' king can call on the code of honour to claim precedence in a love competition. The prince is able to act within the bounds of the honour code by reaffirming his friendship with the French king even after he becomes aware that they are rivals. Eventually, the English king realises that he, too, is a rival to his own son, the prince, and refuses him permission to marry Plantagenet. Delaware reminds the enraged prince of his duty to his father, advising him, 'Let calmer thoughts you to your Duty bring/Pronounce the names of Father and of King' (Act III, p. 340). The analogy of the king as father, and the duty owed to the king as father, continued to be an important tenet of the honour code and the playwright reiterates this.

The final act of *The Black Prince* sees the resolution of the competition as Plantagenet chooses the English prince whom she has always loved. Each of her suitors returns to the original object of his affections. Loyalty is highlighted as the supreme virtue that ultimately resolves conflicts. Delaware, who had orchestrated a deception which had kept the prince and Plantagenet apart, is berated by his own sister for his dissimulation. She chides him, adding:

> Make not your Crime an interest of State
> Better that War you dream'd of should ensue,
> Than you should shun what Honour bid you do (Act V, p. 357).

He accepts her criticism, admitting, 'As I perceive Love made me too long stray/And Honour now would lead me in the way' (Act V, p. 358). In the play sexual rivalry has posed a threat not only to royal authority but to the health of the state itself. Again, the parallels with the contemporary court of Charles II are striking. Even military honour could be tarnished by immorality. Profligate behaviour blurred the lines of authority between prince and subject and became a metaphor for political instability. Orrery showed his audience that strict adherence to a shared code of honour could resolve political tension.

The Black Prince was essentially a regressive play, in which a rigidly prescribed code defined the action and the outcome. The play thus suited the mood both of the court and of the public theatre. Once again, as in Orrery's earlier plays, the character of the monarch was demystified in *The Black Prince*. His passion leaves him open to public admonishment by women. Plantagenet accuses him of falsehood, refusing his advances, reminding him that 'Since perfect Love in Justice must excel/ Falsehood and he together cannot dwell' (Act IV, p. 353). Although by the conclusion of the play King Edward has reasserted his authority and reclaimed the allegiance of his son, his royal 'mystique' has been irrevocably undermined by illicit passion. Thus Orrery, despite his own royalist sympathies, draws attention to the shift in public perceptions of Charles's personal honour by the mid 1660s.

The other important history play to be produced on the London stage during the second half of the 1660s was John Caryll's, *The English Princess, or The Death of Richard III* (1667), a tragedy which retold the death of Richard III and which was a loose adaptation of Shakespeare's *Richard III.* Caryll, born in 1625, came from a prominent Catholic family. His mother was the daughter of Lord Petre and his father had supported Charles I. The playwright himself wrote from a royalist perspective. This play - one of the first heroic plays to be performed after the closure of the theatre during the plague in 1665 - is very reminiscent of the plays written during the immediate post- Restoration period. The issues of usurpation and civil war are revisited and loyalty to a 'rightful' heir is extolled. Because the history plays were vehicles for reasserting familiar loyalties, they reminded the audience of the dangers of civil unrest and disorder and the importance of reconstruction of *de jure* succession and government. Caryll's play opens with Richard, pictured before the battle of Bosworth, fretting over the issue of loyalty. A ruler must build his rule on trust and in this play it is clear that Richard can trust no one. The king himself ruefully observes that it is the 'Unhappy Fate of Monarchs, that we must/Often depend on those we most distrust' (Act I, p. 6). Contemporary audiences could have interpreted these sentiments as an allusion to Charles II's growing dissatisfaction with his political counsellors, such as Clarendon and others.

When Richard seeks the hand of the Princess Elizabeth, the daughter of Edward IV, Carlyll depicts the princess as a personification of honour. As the direct descendant of Edward IV, Caryll makes her the repository of hereditary kingly virtue. Elizabeth rejects Richard, calling him the murderer of the rightful heirs, her brothers. The Princess also castigates Lord Stanley, accusing him of breaking his word to the Earl of Richmond. She declares:

> This treach'rous Lord
> Revolts from Honour, and has broke his Word:
> Private Concern within his narrow soul
> Does all the case of Publick good controul (Act II, p. 15).

Caryll's play is about conflicting ties of loyalty. Moreover, as in the plays of Orrery and Dryden, love complicates all the issues. Honour is constantly evoked, thus propelling the action in the politically correct direction (from the Royalist point of view): the overthrow of the tyrant and the restoration of the rightful heir. The princess shows that she is prepared to die rather than to put up with a dishonourable marriage, and calls the crown her own. She tells Richard, 'My Int'rest shall my Honour still obey/Which abhors him, who does usurp my Crown' (Act III, p. 25). The use of the word 'interest' in this context is important in that it points to a concept which later emerged as a major threat to the values of the early Restoration world. The word 'interest' was increasingly used to denote faction by the late 1660s and had become a challenge to the honour code by the close of the 1670s. In *The English Princess*, however, interest and honour were joined in support of authority. The play openly compliments Charles II by introducing a prior who makes allusions to the Restoration and challenges the Dutch assuring the audience that:

> from this dark Eclipse, a prince shall Rise
> Who shall all Vertues of your Race comprise
> Forreign and Native foes he shall overcome,
> With force abroad, with levity at home (Act III, p. 33).[29]

Caryll issues a further veiled compliment to the King by averring that 'when his Sea-Dominions, they dispute/His thunder shall those Sons of Earth confute' (Act III, p. 33).

Lord Stanley, the nobleman who changes sides, is engaged in love and honour conflicts. Not only is he disloyal to Richard, he is also in love with the princess. Finally confronted with the demands of the honour code when his son is condemned to death, Stanley rails against its severe stricture, crying:

> O tyrant Honour! Why dost thou impose
> A Law, which that of Nature overthrows?
> Heaven does my Vertue too severely try,
> When to save others, my own son must dye (Act V, p. 50).

Caryll was surely looking back at the Interregnum and the rule of Cromwell, here voicing the dilemma of a *de facto* ruler by reminding the audience that he has unlawfully usurped the

---

[29] Levity or light hand in this context may have been an attempt to compliment Charles for his laxity of rule.

throne through murder. Indeed, Lord Stanley may be said to personify the divided loyalties of the ruling class during the Civil War and Commonwealth, for he constantly weighs up his own interests against the loyalty due to a reigning monarch. Although Stanley's resolution is weak, he eventually joins forces with Richmond against Richard. Nevertheless, Caryll manages to evoke sympathy for Richard III. When Richard is killed on the field of battle, Richmond is crowned Henry VII. Having won the crown, Henry marries the Princess Elizabeth, thereby validating hereditary virtue. Thus Caryll's *Richard III* was an apologia for *de facto* government which reaffirmed *de jure* succession and government. Other dramatic texts, however, combined critiques of governance whilst taking into account the growing factions within Parliament.

The Growth of Parliamentary Opposition

Concerns about the succession created a climate for plays in which it was essential that both the legitimacy of the monarchy and the legitimacy of succession were reasserted. Thus Edward Howard's, *The Change of Crownes* (1667) was structured on the theme of contested authority where the rightful heir, in both cases, was reinstated. As we have already seen, Howard's earlier play, *The Usurper*, was highly admonitory, reviving memories of the Civil War and of the grisly fate of Cromwell. *The Change of Crownes*, however, was lighter in tone and incorporated a comic sub-plot. Howard carefully distanced both plays from contemporary politics by setting them outside England.

In *The Change of Crownes,* Howard suggests that monarchy cannot share authority without losing honour. Perhaps because of growing parliamentary opposition to Charles II's policies and the emergence of factional politics, the play concentrates on the dangers of shared sovereignty. In this play, Howard tells the story of two kingdoms, in which each rightful king and queen has been supplanted by a younger sibling. In the kingdom of Lombardy, the legitimate king, Carolo, is thought to be dead, but he has been living in obscurity and appears at the court of Naples, to woo the new queen, Artemia. Artemia has usurped her elder sister, a probationary nun. When the nun, Ariana, accuses her of usurpation, Artemia offers to share power but her offer is rejected. The tragicomedy is happily resolved in the denouement in which two marriages restore the rightful heirs to both thrones. In the final act Howard stresses his point that power cannot be shared and only legitimate succession will produce a successful polity.

Honour is invoked as a virtue and as a guide for conduct in this play. The playwright suggests that it was lack of honour which had precipitated the discord in the two kingdoms in the first place. The elder sister, Ariana, who has been usurped by her younger sister, asks her, 'What Injurious act to Honour/ have I done that am Barr'd my Birthright?'[30] Believing that the partition of sovereignty would besmirch her honour, Ariana rejects her sister's power-sharing proposal, averring that 'This Competition would Blemish my whyte Name, my blood, and all/ the Trophys that Attend upon the Tombe of my Great Ancestors' (Act I, p. 30).

Artemia, the queen, acknowledges that honour is the force which drives action. In fact, she speaks of honour in religious terms and extols it as a virtue that can only be exercised by the nobly born, declaring:

> Honour, the soul of Humane things, by whose
> Bright Beames, our understanding sees, and Judges
> the Good and Ill of every Action;
> Does tamely sleepe in course, and Common Bosomes,
> And only wakes in Princes (Act III, p. 40).

Although Howard equates honour with virtue in this play, he equivocates when it comes to Duke Quarini who has a pivotal role in restoring the rightful queen. Like Orrery, Howard was clearly glancing back at the Interregnum world in which shifting allegiances had brought Charles II back from exile. The character of Quarini can be likened to the parliamentarian General George Monck who had negotiated secretly with Charles II and had played an instrumental part in the Restoration in 1660. This play encapsulates many of the shifts in the vocabulary of honour that had emerged in the aftermath of the Restoration. The playwright has created an idealised setting in which reciprocal ties of fealty were important while Quarini's ambivalent loyalties attest to the fact that loyalty to the crown needed to be

---

[30] Frederick Boas (ed.), Edward Howard, *The Change of Crownes* (London, 1959), Act I, p. 29.

constantly reaffirmed.

Despite initial acclaim, *The Change of Crownes* was banned after its first performance. On its opening night the playhouse had been packed with courtiers, including the King and Queen, and the Duke and Duchess of York, and Samuel Pepys had described the play in uncharacteristically glowing terms: 'as the best that I ever saw at that house, being a great play and serious', adding that it 'took very much'.[31] Pepys could not have been referring to the comic sub-plot which was interspersed with the main plot, for the diarist records: 'The King was so angry by Lacy's part as to abuse him to his face and commanded that they (i.e. the King's company) should act no more'.[32] Pepys adds, 'only Lacy did act that country-gentleman come up to Court, who do abuse the court with all the imaginable wit and plainness about selling of places, and doing everything for money'.[33] Lacy, as Asinello, had dared to conjecture on the stage that he might be able to buy the office of 'favourite'. The King interpreted Asinello's speech as a direct attack on his status as the fount of honour. Although the King's Company was allowed back on the stage, *The Change of Crownes* was never acted again. There had been open criticism of the King as he was much criticised for not repaying the loyalty of those who had supported the crown during the Civil War. Public offices had always been considered to be a just reward for loyalty and service and there were many who thought that the elevation to high office should be dependent on merit. Clearly it was much safer to criticise the counsellors of the King, than to openly deride the crown. The King appeared to have been tolerant of the criticism which was aimed at his sexual behaviour but was not prepared to accept public criticism of his governance.

Instead, public criticism of the King was transferred into criticism of the Lord Chancellor, the Earl of Clarendon. New plays now began to be written which were expressly

---

[31] *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, VIII, pp. 167-8.
[32] Ibid, p. 168.
[33] Ibid, pp. 167-8.

concerned with the rise and fall of a 'favourite'. Connections could clearly be made with the political anxieties surrounding the position of Clarendon as the King's chief counsellor and the father-in-law of the Duke of York. Clarendon's failures and the failures of the King's policies were explained by Clarendon's lack of personal honour. Thus, as we shall see in the next part of this discussion, Clarendon became the scapegoat for the failure of the Restoration Settlement – at least on the Restoration stage.

Drama and the Fall of Clarendon

By 1667 the English political scene was dominated by the controversy surrounding Clarendon's position. During the late 1660s Clarendon had become increasingly unpopular both with the general populace and with MPs. When the war against the Dutch had ended in disaster, he had become the ideal scapegoat and was finally impeached in 1667 through the collusion of his old enemies, the Earl of Bristol and the Duke of Buckingham. Many of the charges drawn up against him were hearsay and only one charge could have been considered as a treasonable offence.[34] The most important fact was that Clarendon had lost the confidence of Charles II, who might have saved him. Inevitably, Clarendon's disgrace, when it came, was widely alluded to on the London stage.

One of those instrumental in Clarendon's fall was Sir Robert Howard, the playwright. As an MP, he had harried Clarendon relentlessly in Parliament and it is therefore hardly surprising that his play, T*he Great Favourite; or the Duke of Lerma* produced by the King's Company in 1668, should have so closely paralleled recent political events. Moreover, a revival of Shakespeare's play, *Henry VIII,* was performed later in the same year by the Duke's Company. This play, too, had a topical political resonance. It dramatised the fall of Cardinal Wolsey, suggesting to the Restoration audience that some parallels could be drawn between the fate of Wolsey and the fate of Clarendon. The charges levelled against Clarendon in Parliament were that he was an evil counsellor, both high-handed and avaricious, and that he wished to make the King independent of Parliament. Howard's play

---

[34] Ogg, *England in the Reign of Charles II*, I, p. 316.

lucidly dealt with the issue of counsel, but, tactfully, he set his play in Spain and told the story of a king of Spain's favourite, the Duke of Lerma. The play opens with Lerma fearing the prospect of banishment or death on the accession of a new king. He decides to win the favour of the young king with the beauty and charms of his daughter, Maria, in order to save himself. This was most probably, a coded reference to the important position of Clarendon's daughter, Anne, the wife of the Duke of York. Lerma is successful in his aims, but his own brother, Medina, is suspicious about his machinations and warns the king against the designs of Lerma.

The rhetoric of honour is played down in *The Great Favourite.* The author implies that Lerma's ambitious quest for external honours, both money and office, was at the expense of virtue and ultimately led to his fall from favour. It is only in the character of Maria that honour is synonymous with virtue. When her father threatens the king, Maria's loyalties are torn between duty to her father and her king. She describes her dilemma thus:

> The only way now left me to preserve
> A King and Father is t'expose my Fame.
> Hard fate, when Vertue is the guide to shame. [35]

The only way to reconcile both father and king, in other words, is to lose her honour. Maria bewails her personal dilemma lamenting that 'My Duty to King and to a Father/My Countries shaken honour and my own/ Calling at once upon me to take heed' (Act III, p. 35). Medina warns the king of the dangers inherent in elevating the wrong men to power observing that:

> Honours, mighty sir,
> when they meet fortunes, are supports' to Thrones,
> But joyn'd to Poverty are the Shakers are of it (Act II, p. 22).

Lerma blames misplaced honour for his fall from grace. His brother, Medina, who might have owed him fraternal loyalty, was loyal only to the king. Lerma effectively subverts honour by accusing his brother of being *too* honourable. Lerma chides Medina, saying, 'there was a man/Whose Pious Love to Honour, made him forget/Friends and Alliance:Such

---

[35] Robert Howard, *The Great Favourite: or the Duke of Lerma* (London, 1668), Act II, p. 17.

chymera's/ Has brought on Cruelties in your cousen'd mind' (Act V, p. 60). This language suggests that Lerma did not value loyalty to the crown as highly as he should. Instead, he informs his brother that family obligations are equally important. Lerma, however, does not suffer the fate of a traitor. Ultimately, he is saved by his position as a cardinal and goes into exile. Significantly, Clarendon left England for France in 1667 and died in exile in Rouen in 1674.

In this play, it is possible to see how the idiom of honour could assume a heightened importance in a situation of political crisis. In the aftermath of the disastrous defeat by the Dutch and the removal of Clarendon, the play highlights the way in which honour can affect the health of the body politic. Honour, as an idiom for virtue and for political obligation, acted as an adhesive which could bind public relationships and the political process. The departure of Clarendon had left a political vacuum. Certainly as the decade came to a close there was an upsurge in the preoccupation with honour on the stage and once more it was loyalty to the crown that was being emphasised.

The preoccupation with the reaffirmation of honour as loyalty can also be seen in texts published during the late 1660s. These texts, like dramatic productions, looked back at the Civil War and redefined the reciprocal obligations of honour which existed between the King and the ruling elite. The publication of Edward Chamberlayne's *Anglia Notitia or the Present State of England* (1669) after the fall of Clarendon redefined honour as loyalty. *Anglia Notitia* recalled the 'late Boulversations, or over-turnings, when all the art that the Devil or Man could imagine'[36] had been instrumental in changing the monarchy into a democracy. Most importantly, it redefined high treason and reminded the reader that each subject is bound by his allegiance to the King to 'defend his person in his Natural and Poltick Capacity with his own Life and Limb'.[37] Chamberlayne called the King 'the fountain of honour', asserting that 'although it was fitting that the Oath of Supremacy, was exacted by

---

[36] Edward Chamberlayne, *Angliae Notitia; or the Present State of England (*London, 1669), p. 85.
[37] Ibid, p. 108.

the House of Commons, it was not required of any of the Lords, because the King is otherwise assured of their Loyalty and Fidelity'.[38] This text ran through eight editions before 1670 and clearly reiterated the duties of the nobility to the crown. With the departure of Clarendon Charles II himself now took personal responsibility for issues of governance. By the end of the 1660s issues surrounding the extension of religious toleration gained a new importance and that preoccupation with religious issues began to be unveiled on the stage. Simultaneously, the familiar tropes of regicide and restoration were re-engaged. The tone of the plays had shifted; instead of being eulogistic, drama had become highly admonitory.

Fears of Political Instability: The Rise of Tragedy

The dramatic productions of the late 1660s were overshadowed by fears of political unrest and fears of usurpation. Perhaps as a result, in the winter season of 1668, after the departure of Clarendon, the London stage was increasingly dominated by the performance of tragedies. For example, Edward Howard's *The Usurper* was produced several times, as was Davenant's *Macbeth* and various translations of the tragedies of Corneille. And though there were numerous comedies performed on the stage, as well as revivals of post-Restoration tragicomedies, the plots of the 'new' productions pivoted around love and honour conflicts. The political situation by 1667 can be compared to that of 1664 after Venner's Rebellion when the stage operated as a safety valve for assuaging fears about political unrest and new plays about usurpation began to reappear on the stage.

A new play by Orrery, entitled *Tryphon* and produced in December 1668, used familiar tropes and dealt openly with the issue of usurpation. Orrery himself was now threatened by political enemies in Ireland. Capitalising on the continued favour shown to him by Charles II, and perhaps in order to reaffirm his own political position, he produced a fifth play for the London stage, *Tryphon.* Orrery was once again able to compliment the King by rerunning a familiar Restoration trope: that of a usurper who is replaced by the *de jure* king. The plot of the play involves a usurping regicide, Tryphon, who is deposed by a general, who

---

[38] Ibid, p.421.

then restores the true heir, Aretus. The play thus mirrors the relationship of Cromwell to Monck and subsequently to Charles II.[39] Significantly, Orrery presents the 'conquest' theory of kingship when a courtier, Demetrius, asserts, 'What ever sins to gain a Crown are done/The Gods do pardon when they put it on'.[40] In a possible allusion to Clarendon, Tryphon is described as the subject whose service to the king has overstepped the mark. He is chastised by Nicanor, a courtier, in these words: 'Subjects, too oft, whose services are great/Consider that as merit, which is debt' (Act I, p. 381). Tryphon justifies himself saying that he feared for his own life. Nicanor then reminds all present that loyalty is owed to monarchy, replying:

> Nature is Reason, Sir, and that does show
> More to our Kings than to ourselves we owe,
> For in a subjects Death but one does fall,
> But a King's Life contains the Life of All (Act I, p. 382).

The plot hinges on love and honour conflicts which enable the protagonists to test their allegiances to authority. Cleopatra, the betrothed of Tryphon, will not break her vow to the tyrant although she loves Aretus. Her friend asks her: 'But how can you so Just to Honour prove/And yet resolve to be Unjust to Love?' (Act III, p.398). Cleopatra admits that she had agreed to marry Tryphon under duress because the tyrant had threatened to kill her father. Love and honour are not reconcilable in the early stages of the play.

As in Orrery's earlier plays, *Mustapha* and *The Black Prince*, wayward love is depicted in *Tryphon* as passion which destroys the social and political order. Tryphon, for example, quite suddenly and inexplicably transfers his affections to Cleopatra's sister, Stratonice, and thus puts himself unwittingly in competition with his friend, Demetrius. He asks Demetrius to court Stratonice on his behalf. Loyally, Demetrius puts aside his own interests and obeys the king declaring:

> I am resolv'd to Doe what I did Vow,
> For I were Guilty of so mean a Thing

---

[39] Nancy Maguire in *Restoration and Regicide*, p.188, has suggested that in this play the rhetoric of honour is used to camouflage emotional needs. I would suggest instead that the rhetoric of honour resolves desperate situations and effects a stable political solution.

[40] *The Dramatic Works of Roger Boyle*, I, Act I, p. 380.

> As to be False both to my Freind and King,
> And should thereby my End in Love obtain,
> The Joy would scarce be equall to the Pain (Act III, p. 406).

Honour for him is synonymous with reason and he remarks to Aretus, 'By me be taught to give your Passion Lawes/ And Bravely Suffer for your Country's cause' (Act IV, p. 414). Orrery, through the character of Demetrius, has created an exemplar of loyalty. Demetrius's loyalty is not rewarded - another theme which possessed great contemporary resonance. Instead, in a fit of jealousy, Tryphon has Demetrius executed.

Love is the force which both tests the honour code and creates competition for power. The two sisters, Cleopatra and Stratonice, remind their suitors of the importance of honour. Thus Cleopatra says to her lover, when she discovers that he has been guilty of duplicity: 'Yet Honor, which of all things most I rate/Would by this Falshood turn that Love to Hate' (Act V. p. 427). In the concluding act Tryphon is abandoned and he commits suicide. The throne reverts to the rightful heir, Aretus, the son of the murdered king. Orrery's play constructed a love and honour plot in a conventional way. Again he warned against the threat that illicit passion posed to political stability and once more he celebrated loyalty to a *de facto* king. The audience, however, found the plot repetitive[41] and *Tryphon* enjoyed only a short run on the stage. It was left to Dryden to engage more closely with the political problems that had surfaced in the wake of the departure of the Chancellor.

Dryden reworked and expanded many of Orrery's themes. As a result Dryden's plays were infinitely more subtle and more closely reflected the complexity of the contemporary political situation. At the close of the second Dutch War in July 1667, there were rumours of a possible French alliance between Charles II and his cousin, Louis XIV, and reports of the pregnancy of Catherine of Braganza. Most significantly, there was a renewed preoccupation with religious issues. Charles II continued to press for a measure of religious toleration which set him at loggerheads with Parliament. When the King met Parliament in February 1668 and made a speech in favour of religious toleration, the House of Commons refused to make the

---

[41] *Diary of Samuel Pepys*, IX, p 389. Pepys was scathing in his criticism of this play saying that it had the 'same design, sense and plot as every of his earlier plays'.

customary vote of thanks for his speech[42] and instead began work on another bill intended to replace the lapsed Coventicle Act of 1664. By 1668 the personal situation of Charles II had become more complicated because it was suspected that the Duke of York had decided to avow the Catholic faith and was reported to have discoursed freely with the Catholics in the King's entourage. Charles II had embarked on a secret alliance with his cousin, Louis XIV in France, through the agency of his sister Minette. The Treaty of Dover, when it was finally signed in 1670, omitted the pro-Catholic clauses in which Charles has agreed to reconcile himself with the Church of Rome when it was politically feasible. One can only speculate as to how widely these political machinations were known about at court or, indeed in the House of Commons. Charles's motives remain unclear but certainly the pro-Catholic clause remained secret. Nevertheless, the country at large was deeply suspicious of the possibility of any affiliation with the Catholic states of Europe and this unease was undoubtedly reflected in contemporary dramatic productions as early as 1669.

Anti-Catholicism: Testing Honour

Before 1666 most new plays had skirted carefully around the subject of religion. Although John Dryden's earlier play, *The Indian Emperor,* had obliquely attacked the Catholic Church, in general religious issues had been carefully avoided in immediate post-Restoration drama. However, Dryden's play *Tyrannick Love; or The Royal Martyr*, first performed in the summer of 1669, featured as its heroine St. Catherine, a martyr for her faith. Although some scholars have conjectured that this play may have been intended as a compliment to the Queen, Catherine of Braganza,[43] the play itself is highly critical of the role of religion in undermining the security of the state. In this production, Dryden highlights the threat of religious zeal to the body politic and extols instead the code of honour as the only shared set of values that could restrain that zeal.

The question of ensuring a legitimate Protestant succession was becoming

---

[42] Coward, *Stuart Age*, p. 305.

[43] Maguire, *Regicide and Restoration*, p. 204.

increasingly worrisome to many in England in the late 1660s and this may well explain why *Tyrannick Love* was dedicated to the Duke of Monmouth, the illegitimate son of Charles II and Lucy Walter. The dedication praised his 'Youth, Beauty and Courage' and Dryden justified the use of heroic verse in the preface claiming that 'By the Harmony of words we elevate the mind to a sense of Devotion'.[44] The martyr, St. Catherine, is a symbol of devotion. Although she is, as Derek Hughes has rightly remarked, 'extraneous to the mainstream of the drama',[45] her character is in stark contrast to that of Maximin, a usurping tyrant and atheist who attacks the Christian church. St. Catherine becomes first the object of Maximin's love and then later the object of his hate when she rejects him. Dryden was quick to defend his play in the preface by stating that Maximin was not a 'pattern to be imitated', but claimed instead that he was a pattern to be avoided. Maximin has placed the power of the monarch over both natural and divine laws,[46] and indeed he does express religious cynicism declaring that 'Free will's a cheat in any one but me/In all but Kings, 'tis willing slavery' (Act IV, p. 156), and again in the final act he warns against rebellion, saying: 'Ill is Rebellion 'gainst some higher pow'r/ The World may sin but not its Emperour' (Act V, p.180).

Like Orrery, Dryden hammers home the message that it is the code of honour, the code of reciprocal obligation, which underpins social and political stability. Stability in this play is threatened by religious zeal, a scenario which must have sounded all too familiar to the post-Restoration elite. When St. Catherine propounds her beliefs, Placidus, a captain of the guard, warns his emperor: 'T' infected zeal you must no mercy show/For, from Religion, all Rebellions grow' (Act II p. 131). This statement can only have reawakened memories in the audience of the dangers of the religious extremism of the 1640s and 1650s. The choice of the name Placidus, for a character who argues against zealotry, reveals Dryden's intention of calming the political temperature. Maximin, the tyrant, reiterates the point that religious dissent poses a severe threat to authority, asserting that:

And first they think their Princes faith not true,

---

[44] *The Works of John Dryden* (Berkeley, 1970) X, p. 109.
[45] Derek Hughes, *Dryden's Heroic Plays* (London, 1983), p. 59.
[46] Ann Barbeau, *The Intellectual Design of John Dryden's Heroic Plays* (New Haven and London), p. 104.

And then presume to offer him a new;
Which if refus'd, all duty from 'em cast,
To their new Faith they make new Kings at last' (Act II, p. 132).

Clearly alluding to the events of 1641-42, Dryden tells his audience that the greatest threat to authority is religious conscience. Maximin acknowledges this threat, remarking that 'Conscience is a greater Prince than I/At whose each erring call a King may dye/Who Conscience leave to its own free command/Puts the worst Weapon in a Rebels Hand' (Act IV, p.166). The threat of religious dissent posed the greatest danger to political stability.

Charles II's reluctance to relax laws against religious dissent stemmed from the fact that he feared that non-conformity fostered rebellion. Initially, he had tightened up on laws against dissent, passing the first Coventicle Act in 1664 in the wake of an abortive northern rebellion in 1663, although later he been persuaded to relax his attitude and had agreed that a 'more liberal policy might cause dissenters to look afresh to the crown for protection and leadership'.[47] By the late 1660s Charles II had made various concessions to religious dissenters.

Although *Tyrannick Love* contains several veins of diverse narrative, making it rather incoherent at times, the code of honour provides a consistent framework for moral resolution. The didactic message of the play is contained within the sub-plot. Maximin and St Catherine are supported by a cast of idealised mortals. Dryden has summoned up the forces of good and evil to battle it out on the stage, and these mere mortals become enmeshed in the maelstrom. Although Nancy Maguire has suggested that this play might have been motivated by pro-Catholic sentiments,[48] the character of St. Catherine was too egotistical and narcissistic to be considered a flattering personification of the Catholic faith. It can be argued instead that Dryden wrote this play as a warning against two extremes: the pull of the material world of power that Maximin represented and the impetus of religious zeal that St. Catherine represented. Both of these two powerful forces endangered the body politic and only

---

[47] Ronald Hutton, 'The Religion of Charles II', in *The Stuart Court and Europe*, Malcolm Smuts ed., (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 228-246, especially p. 243.
[48] Maguire, *Regicide and Restoration*, p. 200.

adherence to recognised codes of behaviour could ensure political order.

Dryden seemed to wish to highlight the threats that religious zealotry posed to public order, yet he also interwove other concerns into *Tyrannick Love* that were dominant themes in plays performed in the first part of the decade. The matter of legitimate succession, for example, is one which is confronted as soon as Maximin's son, Charinus, dies on the field of battle. Maximin asks the captain of his guard, Porphyrius, to become his heir apparent by marrying his daughter, Valeria. The plot is further complicated by the fact that Porphyrius loves Berenice, Maximin's wife. Berenice reciprocates his love - yet she remains faithful to her husband. It is in this relationship that Dryden underlines the importance of honour to political stability. Berenice admonishes her lover stressing that:

> We are both bound by trust and must be true;
> I to his Bed, and to his Empire you
> For he who to the bad betrays his trust,
> Though he does good, becomes himself unjust (Act II, p. 128).

Again, Dryden confronts the issue of illicit love, for it is Maximin's adulterous love for Catherine that propels the plot. Not only dishonouring his wife by his adulterous machinations, Maximin also loses the loyalty of his adopted heir, Porphyius. To add insult to injury, like Tryphon in Orrery's play, he elicits the aid of his rival. Berenice, however, stands firm declaring that her marriage vow guarantees her loyalty, affirming that she is, 'ty'd to that Honour, which all Women owe/Though not to their Husbands person, yet their vow' (Act III, p. 145). This, too, was a topical political reference, spelling out to the audience that loyalty to the king was compatible with criticism of him. Charles II had been criticised openly for his personal failures, yet he expected to command the loyalty of his subjects.

Maddened by the turn of events, Porphyius threatens to kill the emperor Maximin. Nevertheless, he struggles with his conscience and when confronted by a difficult moral choice, appeals to honour:

> O Honour, how can'st thou invent a way
> To save my Queen, and not my trust betray!
> Unhappy I that e're he trusted me!

As well his Guardian-Angel may his Murd'rer be (Act IV, p. 164).

Berenice castigates Porphyius for disloyalty, crying, 'if I a Tryant did detest before/ I hate a Rebel and a Traitor more' (Act V, p. 165). The issue of loyalty to authority is thus placed in the forefront. When Maximin ultimately meets his death at the hands of Placidus, the Senate is left to determine who will succeed him. This ending was uncharacteristic of Restoration drama in that it depicted a constitutional settlement of the right of succession. The conclusion inscribed the ultimate warning to Restoration government that it was imperative to resolve contentious religious issues and, most importantly of all, to ensure a legitimate succession.

Conclusion

Tyrannick Love encapsulated many of the issues which had confronted Charles II after 1665 and dealt directly with the escalating threats to authority in the aftermath of the second Dutch war. The complexity of the play mirrored the complexity of contemporary political issues and heralded the nascent concerns over religious toleration and the growth of factional politics that were to emerge more clearly in the 1670s. The two primary preoccupations on the political scene of the late 1660s had not yet been resolved. There was no legitimate heir and the sexual profligacy of the court continued to be the focus of widespread criticism, both in London and in the country at large. On the foreign policy front, the failed Anglo-Dutch war had been costly and appeared to have achieved little. The King, also, appeared to be moving closer to an alliance with his cousin Louis XIV; this was a source of much disquiet amongst those who feared a shift towards the absolutist tendencies of the French court. These pressures were exacerbated by underlying fears over the role of Catholicism in the governance of the country. The tensions surrounding the sexual politics of the court, foreign policy, religion, and the emergence of parliamentary factions were all aired on the stage through discussions of love and honour.

Playwrights engaged immediately with contemporary politics and used 'love and honour' conflicts to conciliate differences, to revive moral ideals and to uphold monarchy. For example, while at times obliquely critical of the sexual conduct of the king, the dramatists were able to maintain the tenet that loyalty to monarchy was the primary precept of the honour code. They reinforced the honour code by dramatically constructing moral dilemmas which were solved within its parameters. Plays like Orrery's *The Black Prince*, were able to achieve all of these ends simultaneously. That particular work had engaged concurrently with the issues of sexual behaviour, foreign policy and reciprocal obligation between the members of the elite, before finally concluding with a 'happy resolution'. By the end of the decade it was becoming increasingly difficult for playwrights to maintain familiar ideals of honour within the context of 'love and honour' themes. The gravity of the political crisis meant that it was no longer possible to sustain a mode of optimism and the tone of the drama changed.

The post-Restoration world was threatened by a resurgence of anti-Catholic sentiment, and by the time that *Tyrannick Love* was performed the ideals of Caroline honour that had been lauded on the immediate post-Restoration state no longer appeared to be working effectively. Most importantly, 'love', loosely translated as loyalty, could not always effect a moral resolution in dramatic productions. Instead 'love' had become a force for division, since the King's illicit love actually threatened the stability of the body politic. The King might be assured of the love of his people as long as he himself was an exemplar of morality. Although the code of honour remained the most effective means of regulating social behaviour, it no longer strongly underpinned support for the monarchy. It is highly significant that the ambivalent ending to *Tyrannick Love* was in sharp contrast to the successful conclusion of the tragicomedies of the first half of the decade. In the last instance loyalty had not saved the ruler, Maximin. Porphyrius had rebelled against him, claiming that 'Duty and Faith no tye on me can have' (Act V, p. 387), and the succession was unresolved. *Tyrannic Love* thus issued an unmistakable warning that unless the concept of honour was upheld, disaster was bound to ensue. In future years, those who engaged in politics and those who commented on the political scene would continue to try to use the political arena of the stage to heal the fissures that were appearing in the governance of the country.

CHAPTER IV: THE EMERGENCE OF FACTION, 1670-76

After the removal of Lord Clarendon from office in 1667 the English political landscape became far more complicated and confused. The power vacuum in Parliament, combined with public mistrust of Charles II, led to the corrosion of honour as a viable political cohesive. Honour - defined as loyalty to the crown - could no longer operate effectively as a binding political force. The departure of Clarendon to the Continent further weakened the interests of those who supported the established church. Charles began to formulate policy with ministers on a pragmatic basis, much to the alarm of the Cavalier Parliament, and though Charles had a firm control over the House of Lords, he found it more difficult to manage the House of Commons. The balance of political power was destabilised and a number of 'factions' had begun to emerge in parliamentary politics. Although contemporary observers gave these various factions different labels, it quickly became clear that Charles had to rely either on former Cavaliers who supported the newly re-established church or on their Parliamentary opponents for support.

Not surprisingly, the rhetoric of loyalty to the crown had diminished in most dramatic productions after 1667. Criticism of the sexual conduct of the King and the general loss of faith in his own personal honour had had a profound effect on the discourse of loyalty, which had been such a feature of the drama of the late 1660s. The sexual excesses of the King continued to be obliquely criticised throughout the 1670s. Significantly, the template of the 'faithful wife' as the epitome of loyalty portrayed in 'love and honour' conflicts almost disappeared from the stage altogether during this period. At the same time, the growing commercialisation of society and the weakening of the feudal ties between the crown and the elite meant that the traditional code of honour needed to be redefined. As a result of these pressures on the honour culture, issues of money and class in relation to honour were aired on the stage. During this period dramatic productions began to redefine honour in terms of personal reputation, rather than of public virtue. For a short period at the commencement of the Third Dutch War in 1672, there was a return to a more traditional discourse of honour when the honour of the nation came under sudden threat. The onset of war necessitated the re-introduction of a dramatic discourse which aimed to rebuild a political consensus based on the honour code and which celebrated both national honour and military honour. Yet this celebration of military honour was short-lived, for by the spring of 1673 the English had once again failed to gain a decisive naval victory against the Dutch Republic.

Charles II himself, meanwhile, had come under fierce attack in Parliament for issuing the Declaration of Indulgence in 1672 which had granted elements of freedom of worship to both dissenters and Catholics. The King's inability to support the newly revived Anglican Church accelerated the growth of oppositional interests both within Parliament and outside. The growth of factional interests placed the demands of the honour code up against those of 'interest', thus posing an immediate threat to political consensus. As a result, conflicts between honour and interest began to appear with increasing frequency in the dramatic productions after 1673. And in response, some playwrights attempted to revitalise love and honour conflicts in tragedies written in the aftermath of the Dutch war. For the most part, however, they failed to provide the didactic examples that had characterised the tragicomedies of the first decade of the 1660s. Indeed, love and honour, which had so often been coupled, were not compatible in these new productions. Instead, many of the tragedies of the early 1670s were sceptical and highly pessimistic in tone, although there were a few exceptions, notably the plays of John Dryden and Thomas Otway.

Although both writers made valiant attempts to present loyalty and honour to the crown as one and the same thing, by 1675 even their dramatic productions could not recapture the optimism of the early 1660s.

The death of Sir William Davenant and the Earl of Orrery had allowed a new group of playwrights to come to prominence: playwrights like Thomas Shadwell Neville Payne and the female professional dramatist, Aphra Behn. It was John Dryden alone who continued to form a link between the heady optimism of the immediate post-Restoration years and the disillusionment of the second decade of Charles's rule. The fact that the rhetoric of honour is almost absent from these new writers' plays partly reflects the fact that they had had little direct connection with the events of the Civil War and the Interregnum. With a few exceptions, most of them had still been children during the Interregnum and significantly none had borne arms for Charles I. Nevertheless, the two licensed companies continued to perform revivals of the dramatic repertoire of the early 1660s that highlighted issues of honour. And the continued popularity of some of these plays points to the fact that the general concern about honour in relation to political loyalty had not been altogether sidelined. The most significant change on the London stage during the early 1670s was a generic shift that was linked with shifts in the political relevance of the honour code. Another reason for the immediate decline in the number of heroic plays that were staged was the fact that the King's Company theatre was totally destroyed by fire in January 1672. Dryden, who wrote for this company, now went through a barren period which can be attributed chiefly to the fact that there was no longer a theatre that could mount the kind of production that he wanted to write.[1] He had no wish to write social comedy and his next serious play was *Amboyna* (1672) which was a

---

[1] Robert D. Hume, *The Development of English Drama in the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 1976), p. 281.

propaganda play against Dutch atrocities. Sadly, even the Drury Lane theatre, built in the aftermath of the fire, was unable to mount spectacular plays such as his ten act heroic play, *The Conquest of Granada* (1670). The decline in the number of the tragicomedies produced after 1667 resulted directly in a bifurcation of genre – tragedies and comedies. The comedies of the early 1670s were characterised by savage satires of the honour code. Increasingly honour began to be defined in the discourse of the comedies as personal reputation instead of virtue. Because it continued to be the most important element in determining social identity, a growing mercantile class, anxious to claim honour as a badge of status, appropriated it.

Simultaneously, a 'libertine' code of conduct - which had already been a component of elite behaviour earlier in the seventeenth century - became a social marker that set apart the social elite in Restoration London during the early 1670s. Libertinism has to be examined in the context of a self-conscious 'glorification of the anti-Christian aspects of the code of honour'.[2] This reversion to older traditions of gentlemanly behaviour stressed the competitive aspects of the honour code and was particularly linked to recurrent patterns of violent behaviour. Such social aberration can be directly linked with political changes. The decline in respect for the authority of the crown and the growth of factional politics encouraged a more competitive and aggressive society in which hierarchical structures based on service had become anachronistic, further serving to undermine the ethos of honour as loyalty.

The predatory sexual behaviour and the aggressive self-assertiveness of the 'libertine' mirrored the predatory nature of politics. The court of Charles II - unlike that of his cousin Louis XIV - lacked a hierarchical structure based tightly on the

---

[2] Anna Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility* (Oxford, 1998), p. 257.

importance of birth.[3] In the second decade of Charles's reign some members of the elite resorted to aggressive methods of defining their status in order to differentiate themselves from other social ranks. One of the methods of creating this social distance was through a conscious subversion of the honour code. In turn this subversion served to undermine the social aspirations of a growing mercantile class. The anti-Christian elements of older traditions of the honour code also had political implications. They served both to undermine the ideas of honour as duty and service to the crown and to reject the single most important issue that permeated parliamentary politics – religion. Political tension in the 1670s had been greatly exacerbated by Charles's attempts to extend religious toleration. Those who supported the established church had greeted his Declaration of Indulgence (1672) with dismay and parliamentary outcry resulted in the Test Act of 1673, which barred from public office all those who refused to take the Anglican sacraments.

Although Charles II was by nature a conciliator, his personal behaviour had a direct impact on the way in which the honour code operated. Both at the political level and at the personal level, the King had failed to live up to the initial expectations of many of his subjects. In many cases he had provided protection for courtiers who had engaged in 'libertine' escapades and generally had turned a blind eye to aberrant behaviour in the court. Yet it was his failure to provide a legitimate heir, his public elevation of the royal mistresses and the growing number of his illegitimate heirs that really undermined the royal honour. Politically, too, Charles was on shaky ground. From 1668 he had aligned himself with the interests of Louis XIV and had ceased to support the Triple alliance with the Dutch Republic and Sweden. Instead Charles committed England, in the secret Treaty of Dover (1670), to

---

[3] Ibid, Chapter 7 includes a full discussion of the difference in composition between the French and English courts.

support France in an attack against the Dutch in return for two concessions to Louis: increased toleration for Catholics and the King's agreement to convert to Catholicism at a propitious moment. Publicly, Charles committed himself to a treaty without these religious stipulations. Historians have disagreed on his motives for this alliance and it still remains unclear as to why he embarked on this dangerous scheme. He may well have wanted to ally with France - a country which he had always admired. Alternatively, he may have wanted revenge for the public disgrace of the Medway debacle. Yet the most likely reason was short-term financial expediency. As a result of the treaty Charles received total subsidies of £375,000 from Louis XIV.

Although there is no evidence that the two religious concessions ever became public knowledge, the conversion of James, Duke of York, in 1673 to Catholicism and his subsequent marriage to Mary Beatrice of Modena, a Catholic princess, served to further damage public confidence in the crown. The financial position of the Crown, was also in a perilous state: in 1670 Charles had agreed to a new Coventicle Bill in return for parliamentary supply. In 1672 over £1 million of debt came due and Exchequer officials had no choice but to issue a Stop of the Exchequer that was in force for a year. Although the cracks in the political fabric were only papered over, Charles gambled that the Stop, his extension of religious toleration and a third war against the Dutch would ultimately remove his political difficulties. His hopes were quickly to be dashed.[4]

If the war had been successful, it might have lifted the fog of distrust which surrounded the court. England's defeat at the hands of the Dutch (who had allied themselves with the French) and the subsequent growth in fears of arbitrary government because of possible alliances with Catholic Europe, meant that it had

---

[4] Barry Coward, *The Stuart Age: England, 1603-1714* (Harlow, 1994), p. 309.

become increasingly difficult for dramatists to rebuild a political consensus based on loyalty to the crown. Military defeat meant that ‘national’ honour had been undermined. So, the early 1670s were marked by a deep cynicism about the state of government, although some dramatists continued to attempt to shore up the paradigm of honour that had worked so successfully in other times of political crisis. After 1674 this task became increasingly difficult.

Honour in Transition, 1670-71

The shifts in the discourse of honour were not sudden or blindingly obvious. Indeed, after the first Declaration of Indulgence, when the power of the King was briefly in the ascendant, the tone of some of the dramas became tinged increasingly with cynicism, outlining the threat which ‘interest’ or faction might pose to the throne. Superficially, the rhetoric of honour appeared to be the impetus for virtuous action but on closer scrutiny it was shown not to be operating at all. The familiar 'love and honour' conflicts were no longer successful dramatic paradigms because love was not easily reconciled to honour as love was no longer a metaphor for loyalty and political consensus. These subtle transitional shifts can be seen very clearly in two of Dryden’s plays, *The Conquest of Granada* (1670) and *Marriage –a– la-Mode* (1671): both written during the period between the departure of Clarendon and the beginning of a third Dutch war. Dryden attempted to reinstate the code of honour, particularly in the heroic verse of *The Conquest of Granada*, yet his attempts failed. Instead he depicted a world in which honour was threatened by self-interest and loyalty was undermined, rather than reinforced, by love.

Ostensibly, *The Conquest of Granada* - a ten-act heroic play - belonged to an earlier chivalric ethos and was an attempt to reconstruct the code of honour that was part of a feudal order. Yet Dryden was unable to resurrect the concept of honour based on loyalty and service to the crown which had dominated the drama immediately following the Restoration. Instead, the template of honour that he created in this play – a character named Almanzor - was imbued with the chivalric ideals of militaristic and aggressive assertiveness. As a character Almanzor was devoid of any sense of duty.

Because Dryden's play engaged directly with contemporary political concerns, he created a scenario in which he celebrated a chivalric ethos. The playwright's motives were revealed by the fact that he chose to dedicate *The Conquest of Granada* to James, Duke of York, who was an exemplar of military valour. The play was based on Georges de Scudéry's ten-act prose romance *Almahide*, but Dryden redrafted it to concentrate on aspects of military honour. He stated in the dedication that if 'Almanzor, the hero has fail'd in any point of Honor, I must therein acknowledge that he deviated from your Royal Highness, who are the patern of it'.[5] Almanzor exhibited many of the characteristics of the Duke of York, both favourable and unfavourable, being portrayed as impetuous, self-centred and possessed of 'a propensity to change sides'.[6] Because James had fought with the Spanish against the English during the Interregnum many feared that he might in future side with France against England. Set against the background of open parliamentary rivalries, the opera warned against the dangers of political faction. Although *The Conquest of Granada* was performed before the political crisis reached its head in 1673, it nevertheless illustrates the interconnection of drama with contemporary political issues. The play's didactic elements underline the tension between upholding the honour code and political reality.

---

[5] J. Swedenborg (ed.), *The Dramatic Works of John Dryden* (19 vols., Berkeley, 1978), XI, p. 7.
[6] Susan Owen, *Perspectives in Restoration Drama* (Manchester, 2000), p. 19.

When the play was first performed in 1670-1671, critics, such as the Duke of Buckingham in his play *The Rehearsal* (1671), castigated the character of Almanzor for his libertinism. Dryden, however, defended him on the grounds of his gallantry and valour. Alamanzor sets out his *modus vivendi* in the first act: 'But know that I alone am King of me/ I am as free as Nature first made man' (Part I, I, p. 30) and his character is described by Abdallah, the king's brother:

> Vast is his courage; boundless is his mind,
> Rough as a storm, and humorous as wind;
> Honour's the onely Idol of his Eyes (Part I, I, p. 31).

The story is set in Granada: a Muslim city ruled by a weak king, who rejoices in the name of Boabdelin, and who is unable to defend his city against the attacks of the Spanish Christian forces. The city itself is rent by factional strife between two warring Moorish factions: the Abencerrages and the Zegrys. The king's inability to deal with their rivalry ultimately leads to internecine violence. Ann Barbeau has rightly argued that Dryden wished to make connections between the two factions in the play and contemporary politico-religious factions.[7] Thus, by asserting that the fervent religiosity of the Zegrys was a direct threat to the common good of Granada, Dryden reminds his audience of the zeal of the Puritan element in politics. The Abencerrages are depicted as more loyal to the crown – thereby linking them with the upholders of the established Restoration church.

Almanzor, the hero, remains outside factional politics and yet manipulates both factions for his own ends. Almanzor proves disloyal to Boabdelin, justifying his decision to desert the king on the grounds of a broken contract. This broken promise is a breach of honour – something that could have been construed as an oblique criticism of Charles's failure to live up to his promises since he had recently broken trust with Parliament by imposing the Declaration of Indulgence in Scotland.

---

[7] Anne Barbeau, *The Intellectual Design of John Dryden's Heroic Plays* (New Haven, 1970), p. 107.

Almanzor compares himself favourably to the king, declaring: 'The word which I have giv'n shall stand like Fate/Not like the King's, that weathercock of State' (Part I, III, p. 44). Boabdelin had indeed reneged on several promises and here Dryden implicitly warns Charles that the crown must be the exemplar of honour. Boabdelin, however, despairs of his ungenerous subjects, and his speech obliquely criticises a recalcitrant Parliament, complaining:

> Curst is that King whose Honour's in their hands,
> In Senates, either they too slowly grant,
> Or saucily refuse to aid my want:
> And when their Thrift has ruin'd me in Warr:
> They call their Insolence my want of Care (Part II, I, p. 111).

The king's brother Abdallah entreats Almanzor's aid to usurp his brother's throne and Almanzor agrees to aid the Zegrys to take the city. Almanzor makes his decisions on the basis of his newly discovered love for Almahide, an Abenceragges princess. Significantly, 'love and honour' have become separated in the character of Almanzor for whom love does not necessarily engender honourable behaviour since it is not love but a quest for glory that motivates his actions. This disjunction illustrates a political shift. The idea of 'love' within a dramatic context had been associated with loyalty and performed as a force for consensus. Here it operates as a destructive force. Alamanzor says tellingly, 'Honour burns in me, not so fiercely bright/ But pale, as fires when master'd by the light' (Part I, III, p. 56). The refusal of the Zegrys to give him Almahide as a prize makes him change sides. Love acts as a divisive force in the sub-plot in which Ozmyn, an Abencerrages, loves Benzayda, a Zegry. This is a Romeo and Juliet story in which both the lovers are prepared to disobey parental authority in order to be together.

In the second part of the plot Dryden makes an attempt to reinforce the concept of honour through the characters of Ferdinand and Isabella, the Spanish rulers, who remind the audience of the chivalric ethos, rekindling the discourse of love and honour. Thus Isabella declares

> Love's a Heroque Passion which can find
> No room in any base degenerate mind;
> It kindles all the Soul with Honours Fire (Part II, Act I, p. 110).

Indeed, the second part of the play arguably draws once more on honour as a force for political consensus. Ozmyn becomes the shining exemplar of honour who follows all the main precepts of that code. Thus he refuses to escape from captivity, refuses to kill an unarmed man and pledges to 'succour the opprest' (Part II, I, p. 119). As a reward for his behaviour, he is united with his beloved, Benzayda. Almanzor, to the end, remains cynical about honour. When he is chastised by Almahide for his general attitude, he replies, 'And what is Honour but a Love well hid?'(Part II, IV, p. 171). She counters his cynicism by seeking to define honour, stating that:

> tis the conscience of an Act well done:
> Which gives us pow'r our own desires to shun.
> The strong and secret curb of headlong Will;
> The self reward of good; and shame of ill (Part II, IV, p. 171).

Rejecting these maxims as too difficult to follow, Almanzor chooses to seek honour on the battlefield and the concluding act sees him fighting to save Granada from the Spanish. As he is about to vanquish the Spanish duke, he discovers that his intended victim is really his natural father. As a reward, the Spanish conquerors give him the kingdom of Granada. Ferdinand describes the forces of Granada in chivalric images of love and honour, relating how: 'the valiant *Moores* like raging Lyons, fight/ Each youth encourag'd by his Ladies sight' (Part II, V, p. 193).

The play was an attempt by Dryden to redraft the honour code in a chivalric context, yet this ethos is not consistently sustained. Only through the characterisation of Ozmyn is Dryden able to draw a template of the honourable man. In Act III, Part II, Almanzor is forced to explain away his breaches of loyalty, attributing his disloyalty to revenge: 'And, though I twice have chang'd, for wrongs receiv'd/That it was done for profit, none believ'd' (Part II, III, p. 149). Dryden is able to achieve a just resolution when Almanzor, the rightful king, gains both the throne of Granada and the hand of Almahide who was an emblem of constant virtue. To the end, Almanzor remains assertive and achieves personal honour through military heroism. He can be likened to Homer's Achilles, a 'great spirit' but not one who could achieve political consensus.

Another play which was much concerned with military honour was Aphra Behn's tragicomedy, *The Forc'd Marriage* also produced in 1670. Aphra Behn , a female dramatist, was an important figure on the Restoration stage and 'only the third professional dramatist of either sex to emerge after Dryden and Shadwell'.[8] Behn is best known for her contribution to the genre of social comedy during the late 1670s. The plays which she wrote during this period focused on changing values between the sexes, yet her earliest plays were very different, being romantic tragicomedies in which she criticised Charles II's sexual mores and implied that public scepticism about his personal honour was undermining the governance of England. Almost nothing is known about Behn's childhood in Kent. It is likely that she went to Surinam in 1663, in her early twenties, and returned the following year. In the mid 1660s she operated as a secret agent for England in the Low Countries. At some point during these wanderings, she met and married Behn, a Dutchman or German. He later mysteriously disappeared from her life and she was forced to support herself financially by writing for the commercial stage . Behn wrote exclusively for the Duke's theatre and the first of her plays to be performed was *The Forc'd Marriage* (1670) followed shortly afterwards by *the Amorous Prince* in February 1671.

---

[8] Derek Hughes, *The Theatre of Aphra Behn* (Basingstoke, 2001), p. 6.

Both tragicomedies used the vocabulary of honour to comment on the political scene. Behn's male protagonists are Alcippus, the general, and Phillander, a young prince, who is the secret admirer of the heroine, Erminia. Behn highlights the theme of loyalty when Erminia first remains loyal to her father by obeying his wishes to marry Alcippus – but then remains loyal to Phillander too by refusing to sleep with her husband. Behn's first play, *The Forc'd Marriage* is reminiscent of the plays of the early 1660s which portray a feudal military world in which loyalty must be rewarded. It was influenced by earlier plays, the most notable of which was Dryden and Howard's *The Indian Queen* (1664) in which a victorious general is rewarded with high status and the hand of a heroine.

The issue of reward is of seminal importance in this play for it touches on the prevailing criticism of Charles II: that he had been remiss in rewarding Royalists for past services. Although the king, Phillander's father, has attempted to redress the balance by rewarding Alcippus he has, albeit unwittingly, undermined the relationship with his son. This too, can be read as a critique of Charles II for it was claimed that his rewards had been unfairly distributed. Alcippus underlines the importance of duty and honour to the crown when he declares, 'The Duty which we pay your Majesty/Ought to be such, as what we pay the Gods.[9] His rhetoric defends the ideology of the divine right of kings. Erminia, however, is the true exemplar of honour, for she unwillingly obeys her father who wishes her to marry Alcippus. She accedes to her father's wishes saying, 'I cannot live and disobey your will' (Act I, p.16). The marriage takes place and Erminia manages to reconcile her own divided loyalties by performing the ritual without consummating the marriage. She tells

---

[9] Aphra Behn, *The Forc'd Marriage, or the Jealous Bridegroom* (London, 1670), Act I, p. 2.

Alcippus when he attempts to bed her, 'A double tie obliges me to be/ Strict to my vows, my Love and Amity'(Act II, p.28). She agrees to be his friend but will not be unchaste.

The plot pivots on reciprocal jealousy: Alcippus's jealousy of Phillander – who has won Erminia's heart - and Phillander's jealousy of Alcippus, who has married her. Behn contrasts the loyalty of the heroine with the assertive military honour of both Alcippus and Philander. Phillander's honour is personal and is equated with military glory. He threatens to kill his rival, Alcippus, declaiming, 'Justice and Honour on my Sword shall sit/ And my revenge shall guide the lucky hit' (Act II, p. 19). Philander's sister, Princess Galatea, loves Alcippus and attempts to save his life by pleading with her brother. For Alcippus, honour acts as an aggressively violent force which is reined in only by his sense of loyalty. Although he is enraged when he discovers his wife and Philander together in her bedroom, his loyalty to the prince overrides the sense of injury to his personal honour. He allows the prince to leave safely declaring, 'But you're my prince and that I own you so/ Is all remains in me of sense or justice' (Act III, p. 62).

The play echoes the plot of *Othello* for, in this sexually charged scene, the obsessively jealous Alcippus tries to murder Erminia. She does not in fact die, and Phillander and Alcippus duel over her seemingly lifeless body. Later, Erminia appears dressed as a ghost and when the truth is discovered there is reconciliation between the two men. Phillander tells Alcippus, 'And I love honour/I mean thee nothing but a perfect amity' (Act V, p. 86). Despite the potential for a blood-soaked final act, this play, like all tragicomedies, turns tragedy on its head and concludes with a restoration of order with celebrations of marriages to symbolise the importance of maintaining the status quo. Phillander marries Erminia and Galatea is given in marriage to

Alcippus. Despite having been the pawn of male power, Erminia becomes the instrument of the restoration of the rightful order and therefore the personification of loyalty. Alcippus, who is the embodiment of military honour, underlines the fact that this virtue, without the concomitant of loyalty, can be a divisive force. Loyalty and obedience are both celebrated in this play.

Resembling Orrery's and Dryden's tragicomedies of the early 1660s, Behn's second romantic tragicomedy of the 1670s - *The Amorous Prince, or, The Curious Husband* - acted as a strong critique of Charles II's sexual morality. The play is set in an aristocratic world, and the chief protagonist, Prince Ferdinand, is portrayed as a man without personal honour who preys on women. When questioned about his virtue, Ferdinand cynically replies, 'Just where it was, there's no such real thing' (Act III, p. 37). He is not a victim of love, but instead uses his power for nefarious ends. The opening scene shows him in the bedroom of a young woman, Cloris, with whom he has spent the night. The scene is sexually explicit leaving the audience in no doubt as to the nature of their relationship.

When Cloris's brother, Curtius, discovers the truth about his sister's dalliance his sense of personal honour is besmirched and he denounces Ferdinand as a 'false perfidious Prince'.[10] Curtius swears revenge, claiming that he will 'lay my interest and my duty by/And punish him or with my Honour dye' (Act I, p. 8.) Despite his anger with Ferdinand, Curtius recoils from the idea of disloyalty, crying, 'God forbid that I should raise my Arm against my Prince' (Act III, p. 44). Although Curtius and the prince later fight a duel, Curtius acknowledges the existence of the divine power

---

[10] *The Amorous Prince , or The Curious Husband* (London, 1671), Act I, p. 7.

of rulers when he asks rhetorically, 'where lies this power divine/That can so easily make a slave of mine' (Act IV, p. 56).

The play is much concerned with conflicts of loyalty and elsewhere the plot is further complicated through the use of disguise. Thus a nobleman, Antonio, wishes to test the loyalty of his wife Clarina and he engages his good friend, Alberto, to woo her. Clarina switches places with Antonio's sister, Ismena, and the luckless Alberto falls in love with Ismena thinking that she is Clarina. Alberto is well aware of the reciprocal obligations of friendship, and - as if to pledge his duty to his friend, Antonio - he claims, 'I will my Honour to my Love prefer' (Act I, p. 18). When he is tempted by Ismena, she chides him, reminding him of his friendship with Antonio and of, 'The fatal consequences which attend/The breach of Vows and Friendship' (Act II, p.25)

Not only does Behn underline the loyalty that rulers can call upon, she celebrates the male bonding that was an integral element of the aristocratic code. In this respect, the play is reminiscent of Orrery's *Black Prince* in which 'love' or the fierce competition over a woman, strains the reciprocal ties of duty and honour. Curtius's loyalty to the prince is tested to the utmost. He debates with himself in the final act, concluding that 'my Honour and my Love are there ingag'd/And here by tyes of duty, I'me oblig'd'/I satisfie but these if he must bleed/ But ruine the whole Dukedom in the deed' (Act V, p. 72). In the denouement the rightful lovers are reunited and several marriages are planned. Frederick talks about his 'reformation' when he asks Cloris to marry him. This happy restoration of honour is underlined by Frederick's closing speech when he pledges himself to moral reformation saying, 'It serves my future Manhood to improve/ Which shall be sacrific'd in War and Love'

(Act V, p. 81). In these two tragicomedies, Aphra Behn entered into the wider debate about how both the nature of loyalty and the nature of kingship needed to be redefined in the wake of the Civil War. Such concerns had been exercising contemporary dramatists ever since the Restoration, of course.

Yet, there was still a greater imperative to engage with these sorts of political issues in the aftermath of the Second Dutch War – when there was the growing unease about the King's ability to ensure an untroubled succession. Despite upholding the rhetoric of the divine right of kings – Behn, like her fellow dramatists Orrery and Dryden - depicted a world in which the mystique of kingship was diminished. The political climate had changed and oblique criticism of the Crown was becoming more prevalent. As Derek Hughes has noted *The Amorous Prince* thus appeared 'at a turning point in the stage portrayal of royalty'.[11]

The cynical mood of the early 1670s can be seen more clearly still in Dryden's *Marriage-a-la Mode*: a comedy that was probably first performed in December 1671.[12] *Marriage-a-la Mode* was a divided play that included two separate plots which seemingly upheld two conflicting codes of behaviour. The comic plot was devoid of references to honour while the heroic plot attempted to use honour as a virtuous impetus. The heroic plot failed, however, to uphold honour as a viable political bond, since, although the hero uses the rhetoric of honour, he acts primarily in his own self-interest and aggrandisement. Dedicated to the Earl of Rochester, *Marriage-a-la-Mode* was entitled a comedy though the heroic plot operated as tragicomedy. The comic sub-plot concerns lovers who interact at cross-purposes and, in the conclusion, each partner is restored to his 'rightful' lover. In the sub-plot there

---

[11] Derek Hughes, *The Theatre of Aphra Behn (*Basingstoke, 2001), p. 4.
[12] See 'The Date of Dryden's Marriage-a-la-Mode', *HLB*, 21 (1973), pp. 161-166.

is no mention of honour except with reference to the possibility of a duel. These characters existed in a world in which they had few moral or familial restraints, and celebrated marital inconstancy as an entertaining possibility that was eventually overridden by social reality. The heroic plot concludes, too, with a marriage, and this marriage was contingent on obedience to parental authority.

In the heroic plot, Dryden used all the tropes of post-Restoration tragicomedy to confront the problems of legitimacy and authority through the story of a Sicilian usurper in search of his long-lost child. Polydamas, the usurper king, meets a young man and woman, and adopts the young man, Leonidas, as his son. Unknown to everyone, Leonidas is the rightful heir who peremptorily rejects the king's authority by refusing his offer of a wife. Instead, he loves Palmyra with whom he has shared his exile. Leonidas challenges Polydamas by saying, 'You are a King sir, but you are no God/ Or if you were, you could not force my will'.[13]

Leonidas never accepts regal authority even when he believes that he is a humble subject. Eventually Polydamas discovers that Palmyra is his daughter and he has mistaken the identity of the prince. When Leonidas learns that he is indeed the true heir to the crown and that he owes nothing to Polydamas, he decides to seize both the crown and Palmyra. This puts the princess in a conflict of honour because she must either obey her father's wishes or follow her own desires. When Polydamas discovers what has happened he imprisons the young people – still not knowing the true identity of Leonidas. The conclusion sees Leonidas rightfully restored - thus enabling him to recompense and reward those who have helped him. He proudly declares:

I have power to recompence

---

[13] *The Dramatic Works of John Dryden*, XI, Act II, p. 252.

> Your Loyalty and Valour, Let mean Princes
> Or abject souls, fear to reward great actions (Act V, p. 312).

Like Behn's *The Forc'd Marriage* Dryden touches on the issue of reward for service, pointing the finger once more at Charles II and at his uneasy relationship with those who had served him so faithfully and had yet to be recompensed.

This play re-stages many of the themes that had suffused the drama of the immediate post-Restoration period. In this play two contrasting worlds - the comic and heroic intersect in which the characters play lip-service to the idea of loyalty. In the final act, the comic hero, Palamede, pledges loyalty to the new king declaring, 'no subject e'r can meet/ a Nobler fate, than at his Sovereign's Feet' (Act V, p. 311). Dryden underlined the importance of *de facto* rule, since Palamede had earlier declared his zeal to serve the usurper king. His assertions of loyalty did not ring true, for he had switched loyalty with no compunction. Nevertheless, despite evocations of the ethos of honour by the heroic characters, their rhetoric also has a hollow ring. Pure force of circumstance compels the characters to behave in an honourable way. Thus it may be said that this play signalled a subtle breaking-down of the bonds of honour that had previously helped to underpin the crown. The restoration of the rightful ruler, Leonidas, happened by chance, not by design.

Although both of Dryden's plays were imbued with royalist ideology[14], the production of *Marriage-a-la-Mode* revealed the shifts in the language of honour in the early 1670s. *The Conquest of Granada* was highly didactic, warning against the danger of faction, yet it was the comedy that was to prove the more popular. In *Marriage-a-la Mode* honour and loyalty were not fused; instead the language of honour had become a matter of form rather than of substance. Indeed the anachronistic elements of *The Conquest of Granada* became apparent when it

---

[14] Owen, *Perspectives in Restoration Drama*, p. 16.

suffered assaults from other playwrights. The most savage of these attacks on the play came in *The Rehearsal* by George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham in 1671.

Dryden is portrayed in Villiers's play as the playwright, Bayes, who has organised a rehearsal of a heroic play for some 'countrymen'. Dryden is accused of making tragedy laughable and the two heroes of *The Conquest of Granada*, Almanzor and Ozmyn, are ridiculed. Almanzor, who is caricatured by a character named Drawcansir in *The Rehearsal*, subverts the idea of a hero, because he derides the king, confuses armies, frightens his mistress and generally acts without any sense of proportion. In particular, the love and honour debates are ridiculed. For example, Prince Volscius makes the act of dressing into a parody of 'love and honour' conflict saying, 'Honour, aloud whispers pluck both boots on/But softer love does whisper put on none'(Act II, p. 88). Having ridiculed the language of love and honour, Volscius is finally portrayed limping off the stage with one boot on and one boot off – Buckingham's savage satire on Dryden's *The Conquest of Granada* served to presage the emergence of other dramatic modes in the years leading up to the Second Dutch War.

Honour as the Butt of Satire in the early 1670s

The years 1671-72 saw a plethora of comedies on the London stage and it was the Duke's Company which had a series of commercial successes. Although there was discontent with Charles's religious and political policies at this time as yet there was no concerted political opposition. Political discontent was expressed in comedies that pointed up the ways in which the honour code fell short of the ideal. Satire ridiculed social affectation and pointed to the fact that honour was no longer working as a cohesive social force. Several of the productions of the period 1671-72 proved to be very popular and they set the tone for the comedies of the late 1670s. These 'city' comedies were often preoccupied with redefining the ethos of gentility and increasingly defined honour as reputation. An expanding mercantile class whose wealth was based on commerce had begun to appropriate the language of social relations and the ideology of the elite. The language of honour – and thus the language of power - was rapidly ceasing to be exclusive to the higher echelons of society. The theatre satirised the aspirations of the burgeoning middle class and redefined the ethos of gentility by attempting to reset the parameters of its exclusivity.

Restoration social satire, like heroic tragedy, was constructed using a specific set of aristocratic mores which shed a good deal of light on the values of the elite. The gap between dramatic representation and the moral judgement of the author implies a strong criticism of the society that is represented.[15] The basis of the comedies was not consistently ethical and the denouements could not always be fitted into a moral framework. Laura Brown has rightly asserted that Restoration dramatic satire represents a genre in which conflicts are not always resolvable and in which there is a discrepancy between dramatic representation and the dramatist's moral judgement.[16] Satire was intended to mirror the times and, although it could not counter the course of events, it enabled the audience to appreciate the respects in which they fell short of the ideal. It intensified an awareness of the norm and established standards.[17]

The most popular, and the most frequently performed, of these comedies of manners in which honour was satirised was Thomas Shadwell's, *Epsom Wells* (1672). Born in 1640, Shadwell had connections to the Middle Temple and was the son of a Norfolk landowner who had lost much of his property during the Civil War. During his long career in writing for the London stage, he formed many important literary

---

[15] Laura Brown, *English Dramatic Form 1660-1760: An Essay in Generic History* (New Haven and London, 1981), p. 28. Chapter 2 provides a fuller assessment of the importance of dramatic satire.

[16] Ibid, p. 29.

[17] P.K. Elkin, *The Augustan Defence of Satire* (Oxford, 1973), p. 11.

connections. *Epsom Wells* appeared to have been written in collaboration with Charles Sedley who wrote the prologue. Dedicated to Shadwell's patron, the Duke of Newcastle, it was produced first at Dorset Garden and then later for the court at Whitehall. The play included both high and low plots. The plots contrasted those who were gentlemen with those who were not: in other words, with ordinary citizens. The first act introduces all the characters, who are gathered to take the waters at a spa: Epsom Wells. Following a night of heavy drinking, the men discuss drinking and fighting – both diversions of the elite. During the first act, Rains, a gentleman, apologises for the after-effects of these two 'gentlemanly' pastimes, saying, 'the first are the effects of our pleasure and last of our honour; which are two things absolutely necessary to the life of a Gentleman'.[18] Clodpate, a country gentleman, impugns the honour of London gentlemen, accusing them of corruption and stating that only those who live in the country can uphold the standards of honour.

The comedy revolves around flirtatious episodes and in the lower plot the sexual references are quite explicit. The married couples - in both plots - are unfaithful and Rains assures the audience that 'Marriage is the worst of Prisons' (Act I, p. 14). The language of honour is both ridiculed and subverted. Two gentlemen, Rains and Bevil, introduce themselves to the ladies whom they hope to seduce as 'Knights Errands, or Knights of Bath, bound to relieve Ladies by our Order' (Act I, p. 11). Under cover of the language of chivalry, they hide their dishonourable intentions. The women place a purely external value on honour, for when Lucia is courted by the country gentleman, Clodpate, she rejects his advances saying, 'Tis not profit, but honour I respect, and I have vow'd never to Marry one that cannot make me A Lady, and you are no Knight'. He retorts, 'why I have known a Fishmonger

---

[18] Thomas Shadwell, *Epsom Wells* (London, 1673), Act I, p. 3.

Knighted' (Act II, p. 18). Throughout, the play makes continual allusions to the degrading effect of moneyed interests on established hierarchies.

Although the principal characters repeatedly refer to themselves as 'men of honour', their behaviour attests to the reverse. Thus Shadwell makes a political reference to honour in which the values of 'virtue and honour' have become subverted. Shadwell also makes an oblique reference to the current criticism of the monarchy when Woodley says to the woman he is seducing, 'I am too loyal to rebel against you, but I may attack your evil Counsellors, your virtue and your honour' (Act III, p. 52). The whole ethos of the play in which honour is subverted is summed up by Bevil's comment, 'I would renounce my Honour, for my Love' (Act V, p. 82). The play ends in a divorce. Aspects of the play are critiques of Charles II's aberrant sexual behaviour. Although the King's personal honour was under attack, there was no possibility that he would ever renounce his honour completely and divorce Catherine of Braganza.

Admittedly, the divorce in *Epsom Wells* is amicable and there is harmonious agreement about the marriage portion. Even so, the higher plot contrasts unfavourably with the lower plot where - despite numerous sexual indiscretions - the couples remained married. Biskit, a comfit-maker says, 'We Citizens use our Wives better' (Act V, p. 180). Marriage and sexual loyalty had frequently been celebrated in earlier dramatic productions as metaphors for political loyalty. The play portrayed sexual infidelity as the norm, yet infidelity could be read as disloyalty that threatened the political status quo. Dramatic texts translated personal sexual transgressions into public transgressions and highlighted the gap between social reality and the ideal. Playwrights of satire, on the whole, made no attempt to affect moral resolutions and this lack of closure had its own didactic goal. Although Shadwell was to expand on the theme of loose sexual morals in his later play *The Libertine (*1676), the continuing success of *Epsom Wells* during the period from 1672 until the time of the Exclusion Crisis points to both its social and political topicality.

Another play that satirised honour's origins in feudal chivalry was Edward Ravenscroft's, *The Citizen Turn'd Gentleman* (1672). Based on Moliere's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme,* the play ridiculed social affectation and the aspirations of the growing citizen class by disparaging the way in which honour had been appropriated by an ambitious bourgeois class. The play features as one of its principal characters, Mr Jordan, a wealthy merchant, who is tricked into receiving a fictitious Turkish title of 'Mamamouochi'. In a fake ritualised ceremony, Jordan is told that he must not own land 'for it might be a threat to the crown'.[19] Parodying heroic drama on the Restoration stage, Jordan competes with his son for the affections of a woman. The young man's behaviour is that of an 'ideal gentleman' in contrast to that of his father. Yet it is not until the last act that Jordan is forced to realise that it is correct conduct that makes a gentleman, not the conferment of external honours or biological inheritance. Obsequious in his manners, he is flattered by any association with the court and is pleased to marry his daughter off to a knight despite the fact that the latter is suspected of having venereal disease. The final act sees the status quo restored when Jordan realises that he has misunderstood the true essence of gentility.

Henry Neville Payne's, *The Morning Ramble* (1672), an altogether more savage satire on the debasement of the honour code, achieved its effect by polarising the values of the city and the country. The first act of the play establishes the point that feats of 'drinking' are marks of gentlemanly behaviour. Set in London, the play examines the codes of honesty and honour and uses two female characters to test their

---

[19] Edward Ravenscroft, *The Citizen Turn'd Gentleman* (London, 1672), Act IV, p. 89.

male counterparts' honourable credentials. The play portrays the city as a den of iniquity. Townlove, one of the principal characters, reminds the audience of his libertine values asserting that 'Then since no Action, be it good or bad, but hath its vouchers, I am for letting every one have his humour'.[20] Payne gives the women the opportunity to analyse and criticise the way in which honour functions. Two countrywomen, Rose and Honour Muchland, disguise themselves and take part in a rowdy wedding night. The choice of the name, 'Honour' for one of the heroines is obviously significant here because she and Rose act as censors for the values of the town by casting a jaundiced eye on the mores of city life. Through them, Payne ridicules those who think that they can buy honour. Ruffle, a rich man, is mocked for his social affectations. A servant jeers at him, saying, 'I think he is mad, for he talks of nothing but Honour, Death, Victory and the Like' (Act IV, p. 48). Ruffle is clearly not able to live up to his social pretensions. He is too much of a coward to fight yet he wishes to 'lye in the Bed of honour', asking, 'Who would desire more?' (Act IV, p. 48). Payne parodies honour in his tavern scene in which four prostitutes loudly declaim their honour and gentility. Payne links honour to the commerce that has corrupted its very essence, a point which is made very clear when Rose defines honour thus:

> Love and Honour are the two great wheels on which all business moves, The Tradesman Cheats you upon his honour and like a Lord swears by that, but that he particularly loves you, you should not have it so---Your coffee-Drinking-Crop-ear'd little Banded Secretary, that pretends not to know more of Honour than its Name, will out of abundance of Love be still fighting and Groaning for the Honour of the Nation (Act IV, p. 54).

Thus we are shown that honour has been democratised - disconnected from its chivalric ethos – and made accessible to those who are able to conform to external social forms. Rose continues in her cynical vein, avowing that:

To play the part of a right Town Gallant, raise Quarters and then prevent them

---

[20] Henry Neville Payne, *The Morning's Ramble* (London, 1672), Act I, p. 10.

> by Discovery, this is the way most Men find Honour now a dayes (Act IV, p. 55).

Payne has, in this satire of honour, revealed the gap between the ideal and the real. Because the play was written in a quiet space before the outbreak of hostilities with the Dutch, there was no urgent political need to use the rhetoric of honour to rekindle loyalty to the crown.

The Outbreak of the Third Dutch War: National Honour Defended

The impending war against the Dutch Republic in March 1672 encouraged a handful of playwrights to attempt to rebuild the ethos of honour that had been so seriously undermined in the late 1660s and early 1670s. Although plays like John Crowne's *The History of Charles VIII of France, or The Invasion of Naples by the French* (1672) restated the importance of loyalty to the crown, there was a shift in the meaning of honour. What had clearly emerged by the close of the war was a resurgence in a sense of national honour. The honour of a nation that had been fractured by civil war was now unified in the face of common enemy, the Dutch. The commercial rivalry with the Dutch that dated from the early 1620s, engendered a growing sense of national consensus in the 1670s and that was expressed as honour. The defence of England's honour was acted out on the stage.

John Crowne's tragedy in verse highlighted the importance of loyalty and hinted that external alliances were a way of defending the state. Crowne himself had suffered from the traumas of the Civil War and this perhaps explains why the language of this play was resonant of an earlier decade. The Crowne family fortunes had declined during the Interregnum after the family had immigrated to Nova Scotia in 1656, after having received a grant of land there from Oliver Cromwell. When the French seized their lands, the title to those lands were never upheld by the authorities in England and the family returned to England where John was forced to turn to the writing of plays in order to earn his living. Dedicated to the Earl of Rochester, and first performed in November 1671, Crowne's *History of Charles VIII* was to prove very popular, playing for six days consecutively on the London stage.

The plot of Crowne's tragedy in verse centred on a weak king, Alphonso, whose kingdom was about to be invaded. Set against the background of a threatened outbreak of hostilities in Europe, the play warned the audience against the dangers of disloyalty, which could all too easily result in civil unrest and international conflict. The opening lines resonate with fears about religious dissension. Thus Isabella, the daughter of King Alphonso, declaims, 'When heaven abandons a declining King/Rebellion then grows a religious thing'.[21] As the play was again performed on 17 September 1672, two weeks after Charles had issued the second Letter of Indulgence in Scotland, its plot was highly topical.

In the play King Alphonso is depicted as completely unable to retain the loyalty of his subjects. Two men in particular, Trivultio and Salerno, attempt to justify their disloyalty. Trivultio bases his disloyalty on self-interest remarking that 'All my allegiance to my self is due' (Act I, p. 141). Salerno is equally dangerous for he uses honour to justify disloyalty, observing:

> My honour's safe in that my cause is good,
> And I am loyal to my father's blood:
> And I shall be bold in such a glorious cause,
> To tread on Kings, loyalty and laws (Act I, p. 142).

Like *The Conquest of Granada*, Crowne's play warns against rebellion. The text constantly reiterates the point that there is greater danger from civil disorder than from outside forces. The two princes, Ferdinand of Naples and Charles of France, form a friendship based on honour. Although they are enemies, Ferdinand defends the

---

[21] J. Maidment and W. Logan (eds.), *The Dramatic Works of John Crowne* (4 vols., Edinburgh, 1873), I, Act I, p. 135.

honour of his friend on the field of battle. This is the *leitmotiv* that runs through this play and which is reinforced in the concluding act when the crown of Naples is offered to Charles, the invader. Refusing it, he says that he came only for honour and asks instead for the hand of the princess of Naples. The two princes pledge undying friendship and in this way the playwright openly hints at the possibility of an alliance with France. Surprisingly, the friendship between the two princes leads to talk of a religious conversion. In Act V, Ferdinand says to Charles 'That nothing thou can'st do can be a crime/If such high Vertue an offence can be/ I my religion change and worship thee' (Act V, p. 216). The secret clauses of the Treaty of Dover were not public knowledge at this time, but without a doubt this play posed the possibility of an alliance between Charles II and his cousin Louis XIV. Under the terms of this treaty, Charles was said to have to have agreed to convert to Catholicism at a propitious moment in return for financial support.

Dryden's dramatic response to the outbreak of war was very different to that of Crowne. Dryden chose to break away from the familiar tropes of chivalric discourse that he had expounded in his *The Conquest of Granada.* Instead in his play, *Amboyna, or the Cruelties of the Dutch to English Merchants* – which was first performed after the outbreak of war in the late spring of 1672 - Dryden was concerned with reinforcing a sense of national honour. There had been long-standing commercial rivalry between England and Holland and Dryden was prepared to invoke memories of Dutch atrocities in this play. In *Amboyna* he created a dramatic scenario in which England's honour was defended not by its military but by its merchants.

The plot of the play was based on the story of the torture and massacre of a small number of English merchants by Dutchmen at an English trading post in

Amboyna in the East Indies in 1623, accounts of which had long been used in anti-Dutch propaganda in England. Although the East India Company had sought financial redress from the Dutch at the time, James I had failed to champion the claims of the Company. As a result, it was not until 1654 that the Company and the heirs of the men concerned had received any financial compensation. In November 1672 Antonio di Voto in his open-air booth at Charing Cross, advertised *The Dutch Cruelties at Amboyna*. The Lord Chamberlain forbade him to 'take pieces or scenes out of ye plays Acted at ye said Theatres'. This was probably a direct reference to Dryden's play that had been performed earlier in the year.[22]

Dryden's play paints the Dutch in the worst possible light, accusing them of various piratical acts – stopping ships, imprisoning sailors and seizing goods. It also sublimates mercantile rivalry into rivalry over love. In the play, the English merchant Towerson is betrothed to a native girl, Ysabinda, whom a Dutchman, Harman, also loves. The play is cynical about honour throughout. At the very outset Harman compares Dutch honour to English honour:

> interest is their God as well as ours: to that Almighty, they will sacrifice a thousand *English* Lives, and break a hundred thousand Oaths, e're they will punish those that make 'em rich, and pull their Rivals down. [23]

Honour becomes politicised in the play when Harman rapes Ysabinda. The trope of rape is associated with a monstrous transgression[24] – the act of ultimate dishonour. In chivalric terms Ysabinda's sexual violation has also dishonoured the man who was her protector. In this case, rape has become a metaphor for the transgression of national boundaries. The Indian girl is the 'property' of the Englishman whom the Dutchman forcibly violates. Fiscal, a Dutch spokesman, glosses over the crime when Harman shows remorse by expiating his guilt in political terms, alleging that 'The

---

[22] Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume, 'Dating Play Premières from Publication Data, 1660-1700', *Harvard Library Bulletin*, 22 (1974), pp. 374-405, p. 385.

[23] *The Dramatic Works of John Dryden* (Berkeley, 1994), XII, p.13.

[24] Susan Owen, *Restoration Theatre and Crisis* (Oxford, 1996), p. 175.

Dutch are of a Race that are born Rebels and live every where on Rapine'(Act IV, p. 52). Towerson is honour-bound to avenge the rape and rails against the Dutch, encouraging his English friends to be valiant by urging them to remember that 'no unmanly weakness in your sufferings/disgrace the Native Honour of our Isle' (Act IV, p. 61). After the English have been brutally tortured and killed by the Dutch, Towerson calls for revenge against this act of barbarism. Dryden looks back critically at the mores of the Interregnum period in *Amboyna* when he attacks the idea of an honourable Commonwealth. *Amboyna's* epilogue impugns Dutch honour when it tells the audience that the Dutch 'Common-Wealth has set 'em free/Onely from Honour and Civility' (Epilogue, p. 77).

As it turned out, the English were not to acquit themselves well against the Dutch in a military sense during the early 1670s, for yet again they failed to win a decisive victory. This military stalemate had disastrous effects on the relationship between the King and Parliament. Incipient Francophobia had been resurrected among the public, for the war was thought to have been a Catholic conspiracy orchestrated by Louis XIV and rumours were rife that the Treaty of Dover signed in 1670 between Charles II and Louis XIV was tied to Catholic toleration. There were, in fact, two treaties and the one which became public knowledge promised that England would support France against the Dutch in return for a French subsidy. However, it was the issuing of the Declaration of Indulgence in 1672 that most alarmed Parliament - and MPs reminded the King that he had no power to suspend matters ecclesiastical without the consent of Parliament. John Miller has rightly stated that 'the year 1673 saw the greatest outburst of anti-Catholic feeling since 1640-1642'.[25] When Parliament met in 1673 it was utterly intransigent. The Commons declared that only they could revoke religious legislation and reminded the

---

[25] John Miller, *Popery and Politics in England, 1660-1688* (Cambridge, 1973), p. 124.

King that they had not been asked to support the war against the Dutch. Forced to cancel the Declaration of Indulgence and sign the Test Act, Charles prorogued Parliament. This collapse in the relationship between the King and Parliament was exacerbated by the King's continued failure to reward royalists for their loyalty and to understand the concerns of those who regarded themselves as natural supporters of the crown. During a particularly stormy session of Parliament in March 1673 one MP wrote, 'God deliver us from the fate of 1641. These days look too like them'.[26]

The results of the parliamentary session of early 1673 were far-reaching because the ministers who had formed the basis of Charles II's government had now disappeared from the political arena. Arlington and Buckingham were blamed in part for the military debacle of the Dutch war and Lord Clifford, the Lord Treasurer, resigned because he had felt unable to take the Test Act. On the other hand, Shaftesbury became a victim of the King's personal displeasure. Charles did try to allay the fears of the country at large but the refusal of the Duke of York to conform to Anglican rites and his marriage by proxy to a Catholic princess raised tempers to fever pitch. When Parliament met again in October 1673 the Commons petitioned the King not to allow James's marriage to be consummated. The spread of Dutch propaganda, alleging that the aim of the Anglo-French alliance was to strengthen Catholicism, only further undermined the position of the crown. The lack of trust in authority was evident in the content of the plays produced on the London stage during the season of 1673-74.

The depth and gravity of the contemporary political crisis can be traced in Elkanah Settle's very successful and much acclaimed heroic play, *The Empress of Morocco* (1673). This play occupied an important position in relation to the politics of

---

[26] Ibid, p.135.

the period as it was first performed during a time of open and growing public disaffection with the crown. Because of this - and, perhaps, because the play was first performed at Whitehall - Settle was careful to emphasise the rhetoric of loyalty. Yet the language of the play was inconsistent with the development of the characters and most of the characters behaved without reference to the honour code. More importantly, the tone of the play was pessimistic and its denouement bleak. Initially, *The Empress of Morocco* was performed at court and the tragedy was so successful that John Dryden, John Crowne and Thomas Shadwell all clubbed together to damage Settle's credibility in an ill-tempered attack on the play.[27] Settle (1648-1724) was a 'city' poet who wrote for the London stage. His first play was *Cambyses, King of Persia* (1671) and was supposedly written when he was only eighteen. Its immediate success encouraged him to continue to writing plays. His plays were characterised by bombastic language, a linguistic development which was much criticised by Dryden.

The Empress of Morocco told of a collapse in family relations that precipitated a rapid change of rulers. An empress, driven on by lust, orchestrated the chaotic and bloodthirsty events. Determined to put her lover on the throne, she poisoned her husband and engineered the death of her own son. Loyalty, and in particular marital loyalty, had been completely excised in this production. The play contrasted starkly with the earlier heroic tragedies of the 1660s in which the language of honour had restated and reaffirmed the bonds of loyalty. Instead Settle's play reflected the fact that the discourse of 'honour as loyalty' was no longer an effective political tool. The tragedy painted a picture of familial chaos that was translated metaphorically into political chaos.

---

[27] *Notes and Observations on The Empress of Morocco* (London, 1674).

Derek Hughes has rightly stressed that Settle portrays authority as problematic in *The Empress*.[28] In the play, the natural authority of the father is undermined, as is all sense of the natural familial order of hierarchy. Instead, the imperial family is portrayed in a state of dysfunctional chaos. The play opens with the rightful heir, Muly Labas, imprisoned on the command of his father. Labas is freed when his father dies, only to be murdered later by his mother. The empress is constructed in the mould of Lady Macbeth, scheming to place her lover, Crimalhaz, on the throne. Despite the dark tone of the play, it includes a vignette in which 'animated' ships appear, perhaps to remind the audience of the ongoing war with the Dutch. The boats, we are told, have 'Their Topsails lower'd, their Heads with Reverence bow'. [29] A song then extols loyalty in war, averring that there is 'No Homage like what from Loyalty springs/We'll kneel to our Gods, but we'll dye for our Kings' (Act II, p. 12). These musical scenes are merely tableaux that operate as masques in order to restore order and harmony to the play. In contrast, the main plot depicts the family dynamics as dark and unstable.

The empress contrives to falsely accuse the prince, Muly Hamet of rape and have him imprisoned. He accepts his fate submissively merely remarking that 'Monarchs may destroy what Monarchs make/For Subject's glories are but borrow'd things/Rais'd by the favourable Smiles of Kings' (Act III, p. 24). Authority is here portrayed as highly volatile and arbitrary. Rulers do not act within the honour code and the empress upholds the theory of the divine right of kings by declaring that 'Closets of Princes should be held Divine/As a Saints' Presence consecrate his shrine' (Act III, p. 18). This is not to say that all semblance of honour has disappeared. On the contrary, Muly Hamet, who is also a general, voices the language of duty and

---

[28] Derek Hughes, *English Drama, 1660-1700* (Oxford, 1996), p. 99.
[29] Elkanah Settle, *The Empress of Morocco* (London, 1687), Act II, p. 8.

allegiance when he swears to Muly Labas, the young king, in the second act: ‘I owe my Laurels to my Royal Cause/ My Actions all are on your Name enroll’d’ (Act II, p. 9). Abdel exalts in the reciprocity of friendship – a tenet of the honour code - when he swears to stand by Muly Hamet in his times of trouble, declaring, ‘Your outward Pomp laid by, and all Honours raz’d/The Saint’s not less although the Shrine's defac’d’ (Act IV, p. 37). Indeed, much of the language in the play relates to religious symbolism, for Settle repeatedly evokes images of temples and shrines.

The final act awakens memories of the martyrdom of King Charles I. When the young king, Muly Labas, dies, it is the villain who reminds the Moroccan people that the blame for royal martyrdom falls on the whole nation:

> But when a Martyr’d Monarch dies, we may
> His Murderers Condemn; but that’s not all
> A Vengeance hangs o’re Nations where they Fall (Act V, p. 58).

Coming as it did at a time when fears about the pro-Catholic stance of the monarchy were at their height, this reference is highly topical. References to 'royal martyrdom', played on the memories of those who had been embroiled in the Civil War

Although Settle depicted a bleak scenario, he managed to restore a sense of political optimism in the final act with the accession of the virtuous prince, Muly Hamet, to the throne. This optimism was mirrored by events in Parliament because, although the King had been forced to concede defeat on his religious policies, he still held the whip hand through the appointment of a new minister, the Earl of Danby in 1674. Despite the fact that the stormy parliamentary sessions of January and February 1674 had begun to show a degree of coherent orchestration and a hardening of opposition to crown policy, Danby’s power as first minister of the crown was secure.

His aim was to 'settle the church and the state'[30] and Paul Seaward has plausibly suggested that Danby's was the most Anglican administration of the reign.[31] Danby's goals were two-fold: to restore the financial viability of the crown and to restore good relations between the crown and Parliament by urging the King to adopt policies which would appeal to the mass of country MPs.[32]

Honour Threatened by Interest, 1674-1675

In the event, Danby was to prove only partially successful in fulfilling his aims but the critics of the crown were not to regain the upper hand until events on the Continent in 1677 again destabilised English politics. Although the King's opponents had achieved considerable success in changing the King's policies in 1673 and 1674, when he was forced to withdraw the Declaration of Indulgence and conclude the Dutch War, they were not able to match these achievements in the parliamentary sessions of 1675. In 1674 Danby introduced a second Test Bill, which 'proposed that all MPs and office-holders make a declaration of non-resistance and swear never to alter the established government in Church and state'.[33] But the extreme Anglican measures that Danby proposed aroused resistance from many MPs. The Test Bill was opposed by men like Shaftesbury, Buckingham and Halifax and indeed it pushed the dissenters and the Catholics into an uneasy alliance. Yet there is little sign that organised parties had begun to appear. Instead oppositional politics took the form of a resurgence of factional groups led by a few outspoken critics of the crown, like Shaftesbury. Distrust of the King's personal motives had clearly escalated despite his attempts to quell the suspicions that he had pro-Catholic and pro-French leanings. Although Charles had assured Parliament that there was no alliance with France

---

[30] Cited in Paul Seaward, *The Restoration 1660-1688* (Basingstoke, 1991), p. 54.

[31] Ibid, p. 55.

[32] Coward, *The Stuart Age*, p. 321.

[33] Ibid, p. 321.

(which was not true) he was reluctant to support MPs' demands to bring home the English soldiers who were serving with French troops on the Continent. The plays produced in London in the aftermath of the war show that the underlying distrust of government had not receded.

As a result of the continued political disquiet, the discourse of honour had again shifted in the plays. With the conclusion of the Anglo-Dutch war, national honour was no longer at stake. The brief interlude that had permitted dramatists to pit English honour against the enemy was no longer possible. It became increasingly difficult in dramatic texts to reconcile private virtue with loyalty to the crown. Although many of the plays of the post Anglo-Dutch war period continued to be admonitory in tone, warning of the dangers of faction and rebellion, they were not able to reconstruct the world of the immediate post-Restoration period in which the discourse of honour could reconcile political differences. Indeed faction was equated in dramatic terms with 'interest' and it was interest that was the threat to honour after 1674.

Henry Neville Payne's tragedy, *The Siege of Constantinople* (printed in 1675, but first acted at the Duke's theatre in the autumn of 1674) engaged directly with the political stresses that emerged in the aftermath of the war. In particular, *The Siege of Constantinople* served to highlight the uneasy relationship that existed not only between the King and Parliament but between the King and his brother, the Duke of York. Payne, who was himself a Catholic, was to serve as an agent for James II after 1688 and he later became a Jacobite conspirator. As Harold Love has rightly observed, Payne's play was the 'most accomplished of the theatre's contributions to the political crisis of 1672-1674'.[34] Love argues that *The Siege of Constantinople* is as 'much concerned with analysis as with persuasion'.[35] The persuasive element, however, is the most important element of the play since *The Siege* performs primarily as an admonitory agent, warning the audience about the perils of faction or self-interest. The total absence of the discourse of honour in relation to service and loyalty very clearly underscores the point that this particular type of discourse was ceasing to operate as a viable political bond and that the honour code itself was increasingly on the defensive.

Payne's play is set in Constantinople, a city under siege from the Turks, and highlights the point that the real threat to any state comes from faction. The position of the emperor, Constantine, and his brother, Thomazo is undermined by the threat of self-interest. Thomazo is cynical about the loyalty of the counsellors of the crown and accuses them of operating for their own advantage, asserting that 'For such arn't Counsellors but Advocates/And plead the cause of their own Interest'.[36] In this play, it is interest and not honour that guides the action. The competitive assertiveness of the honour culture was being replaced by the language of interest. In order to maintain political stability, the political concerns of the honour community had to be linked with those of the crown. If the two diverged the monarchy was at risk and, to be sure, this play recorded a divergence of interests.

The Siege of Constantinople, however, deals with the more pressing issues of the 1670s. Constantine, the emperor of Constantinople, who could be said to represent Charles II, bemoans his lack of money and the lack of parliamentary support for the war by lamenting that 'the Turks shall find it's not our want of Courage/but factions

---

[34] Harold Love, 'State Affairs on the Restoration Stage, 1660-1675', *RECR,* 14 (1975), pp. 1-9..
[35] Ibid, p.6.
[36] Henry Neville Payne, *The Siege of Constantinople* (London, 1675), Act I, p. 2.

in our State that makes them be/Successful still in all their Wars against us' (Act I, p. 20). Payne's play breaks from the tradition of earlier heroic tragedy in which military commanders had been shown fighting not only for their own glory but also out of principled loyalty to the crown. In *The Siege of Constantinople* the general, Justiniano, is a mercenary who, instead of pledging loyalty to the emperor, directly challenges the 'honour' of Thomazo and sets his own personal honour on a par with royal honour. Justiniano frankly asserts that 'My Honour full fledg'd can mount above your weak observance/Though you're of th' Eagle's Brood' (Act I, p. 19).

Debates about supply for the war had dominated the parliamentary sessions of 1673 and 1674 and these debates were re-enacted on the stage. In Payne's play the emperor is forced boldly to reassert the royal prerogative stating that 'To none but Heav'n for any thing I do/I take advice tis true, but still am free/To act as I see cause' (Act III, p. 48). Lack of supply for his war against the Turks eventually forces Constantine to face political reality, as indeed Charles II had been forced to do during the stormy Parliaments of 1673-1674. Constantine attempts to woo his senate but he does *not* use the language of honour to coerce their loyalty; instead he reassures them of his conciliatory aims, expostulating:

> No Emperor, ever Raigned, had a less mind,
> To place harsh rules or commands than myself;
> The Freedom of Debate should be preserv'd
> If it were possible in every Council (Act III, p. 49).

Payne's play mirrored contemporary political reality, for Charles's addresses to the Commons during the sessions of 1673-74 had been highly conciliatory. His aim had been to establish reciprocity of interest between himself and Parliament and in his prorogation speech he had pledged that 'I will not be idle neither in some other things which may add to your satisfaction; and then I shall expect a suitable return from you'.[37]

In the play the Chancellor, who could be said to represent Shaftesbury, embarks on a course of treachery by tricking the king into believing that his own brother, Thomazo, is treasonous. The cause of the Chancellor – who secretly favours the king's enemies - is helped when a foreign ally (clearly intended to represent France) does not provide the promised aid. The emperor cannot punish his brother and instead transports him to the court of the Turkish sultan. The character of Thomazo could represent that of James, Duke of York, with whom Charles sometimes had a difficult relationship. Constantine, like Charles II, is then forced literally to beg for money. The emperor laments at one point, 'My subjects obstinate to all entreaties/Deny me their supplies' (Act V, p. 80). He blames factional interest for the threat to his honour which serves to highlight current political fears about the threat of faction both to regal authority and political stability. Instead of linking his personal honour with dynastic honour, Constantine connects his personal honour with the 'common good' or the honour of the nation. Charles, too, had pleaded with Parliament to 'have a care of my honour, and the honour and safety of the nation, which are now so deeply concerned'.[38] Constantine despairs for the future security of his rule asserting:

> Faction grows and spreads it self through Council, Court and Nation.
> And nothing can be heard but accusations,
> These when we wou'd Unite for common good,
> They say we cherish for our private safety,
> If we believe them all, then none are honest;
> If we give Ear to none, all will grow angry,
> So whether we're severe or moderate,
> Our Glory, died in the Ruine of the State (Act IV, p. 61).

---

[37] Arthur Bryant (ed.), *The Letters, Speeches and Declarations of King Charles II* (London, 1935), p. 272.

[38] Ibid, p. 274.

In the concluding act of Payne's play, Constantinople is taken by the Turks and the Turkish sultan dispenses justice by executing the perfidious chancellor. The emperor is slain in the fighting and Thomazo regains personal honour by supporting his brother. Overall, *The Siege of Constantinople* acts as a warning against the perils of a parsimonious state, for it reminds the audience that national honour and the honour of the crown are symbiotic. Lack of Parliamentary support has destroyed the Byzantine state and the conquering sultan points up the moral by remarking that 'The riches of that Town are found prodigous/Though basely they deny'd their Prince assistance' (Act V, p. 86). The contemporary political parallels would not have been lost on Payne's audience. Quite clearly, Payne was laying the blame for the failure of the Dutch war on MPs' reluctance to grant adequate funds. Above all, his play was concerned with the growing criticism of the crown and with the dangers of the rise of factional politics. Payne's warnings are well summed up by a statement made earlier in the play when the emperor asserts that 'Contempt of pow'r is a State's worst disease' (Act II, p. 22).

Another playwright, Elkanah Settle, enlarged on the theme of the threat of 'interest' to honour in a slightly later play, *The Conquest of China by the Tartars* (1675). Settle's play pivots on the story of a king of the Tartars, Theinmingus, who invades the kingdom of China in order to avenge the death of his father. The Tartar prince, Zungteus, reluctantly helps Theinmingus, but he is ambivalent about fighting the Chinese. This is because Zungteus was raised in the Chinese court and therefore feels a close affinity with the enemy, China. It is possible that Settle was making a parallel with the early life of Charles II who had spent his youth in the court of France and was known to feel strong emotional ties with that country. Settle makes another contemporary allusion to the succession issue when he constructs part of the plot around an unresolved Chinese succession. Chinese rule has been unsatisfactorily divided between two princes of royal blood, Quitazo and Lycungus. The discourse of honour has subtly shifted in this play when the playwright acknowledges that 'interest' threatens honour. Lycungus, who usurps the Chinese crown, asserts, ‘Allegiance can do much; but Interest more’.[39] Even the virtuous prince, Quitazo, attests that ‘Kings may our bodies/not our Souls Enslave’ (Act III, p. 34).

In Settle’s play the complex relationships which exist between the main characters are shown to subvert some of the bonds of honour - in particular those between father and son. Thus Zungteus disobeys his father’s wishes when he refuses to conquer the Chinese because of his past relationship with the Chinese court. Zungteus tells his father that he should help Quitazo, and adds, ‘tis a Debt I to my Honour owe/To give him back the forfeit of his Crown’ (Act IV, p. 39). Angered by Zungteus's disobedience, his father accuses him of effeminacy. Undeterred, Zungteus reaffirms his personal ties with China and pledges to support Quitazo to rid the country of the usurper, Lycungus. The language Zungteus uses is resonant of the chivalric language which had been used by Orrery in his plays when the reciprocal bonds of friendship were celebrated. At the end of the play, the king of China commits suicide. His last act is to bequeath his crown to Zungteus, the foreign prince, declaring as he does so, ‘A Monarch should bestow/His Empire rather on a Forreign Foe than on a Traytor’ (Act V, p. 61). In the contemporary political context of an undetermined succession and the fears surrounding the French alliance, this play was a stark warning of the threat that interest posed to national honour.

Although the chivalric language of fealty to the crown had largely disappeared from many of the new productions for the London stage in the seasons that spanned

---

[39] Elkanah Settle, *The Conquest of China by the Tartars* (London, 1675), Act II, p. 18.

1673-75, there were still some attempts to rekindle the discourse of loyalty through dramatic revivals. A number of plays which had been produced in the early 1660s - like James Shirley's *The Traitor*, Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, and John Fletcher's *Rollo, Duke of Normandy* - were revived in the season of 1673-74. All of these didactic plays reinforced the idea that subversion of the honour code leads ultimately to rebellion and tragedy.

Sexual Fidelity: Continued Criticism of Charles II, 1674-1675

Although some of the new plays which were written for the dramatic season of 1674 engaged with these same concerns, they were much more pessimistic in tone and sceptical about the nature of authority than the earlier pieces. The criticisms of the crown which had been voiced in the late 1660s had not abated and playwrights of the early 1670s once again warned that tragedy was the consequence of sexual indiscretion. Elkanah Settle, for example, was not able to reconstitute a framework in which honour was a cohesive political force in the plays which he wrote after 1673. Instead, his work, following the pattern of *The Empress of Morocco*, depicted a world where authority was uncertain and the family had become highly dysfunctional. Settle's play, *Love and Revenge* (November 1674) had an important political resonance in the context of concurrent concerns about the succession and the known antipathy that existed between Charles II and James, Duke of York. *Love and Revenge* contains oblique criticisms of the King and warns that honour is threatened by unchecked sexual passion.

Basing his play on Hemings's *The Fatal Contract,* a work which illustrated a world in which authority was threatened by sexual infidelity; Settle was, nevertheless, anxious to uphold the right of hereditary rule. The conventional post-Restoration tropes of love and honour do not appear to be working very effectively in this play.

For, although Settle attempts to resurrect the rhetoric of loyalty to the crown, the sexual behaviour of the Charles II had strained the ties of allegiance, both by undermining the honour of the crown and threatening the legitimate succession. The play's theme of sexual infidelity therefore underlined the fact that there was a state of political unease.

In *Love and Revenge* the lecherous king, Clotair, attempts to seduce the lover of his brother, Lewis By doing so, of course, he debases his personal honour. Clotair does, however, retain some semblance of virtue. It is the lustful queen mother who becomes the true paradigm of evil when she poisons her husband and plots against her sons in order to be with her lover. When Clotair discovers her perfidy, he is surprisingly forgiving of the sin of lust, perhaps recognising it in himself. Thus he remarks, 'I find the sin of lust, is not so capital',[40] but then follows this up by assuring the queen that she will be punished stating that 'What Nature pardons, Honour punishes' (Act III, p. 30). Ultimately, Clotair realises that he, as king, must obey the rules of honour.

Clotair is criticised openly for the excess of sexual passion that threatens his personal honour. When he makes illicit overtures to Aphelia, the beloved of his brother, for example, she rejects him saying, 'Honour, obey and reverence a King/ I can but Love I can't' (Act III, p. 39). This statement, examined in the political context of 1674, might be read as a criticism of the personal conduct of Charles II. After rebellion breaks out, Clotair's brother, Lewis, and the humiliated Aphelia support the king. Aphelia explains, 'My allegiance/Will never let me see my Sovereign bleed/The sacred blood of Kings' (Act III, p. 42). Settle obliquely criticises wayward passion when it becomes clear that Clotair has raped a young

---

[40] Elkanah Settle, *Love and Revenge* (London, 1675), Act III, p. 29.

woman, Clotilda. Her quest for vengeance is central to the plot. At one point she declaims, 'Curse on this whistling passion/Th' amorous King/ Minds Love so much that he forgets his Honour' (Act IV, p. 47). Furthermore, the audience is reminded that Clotair has neglected the business of government: 'All other interests/Neglected lye, where Soveraign Woman reigns' (Act IV, p. 47). Clotair has even pardoned those who have rebelled against him. Instead of securing his own personal safety, he is obsessed with winning the love of Aphelia, and is even prepared to ask her own brother, Brisac, to plead his case. Loyalty to the king does not bind Brisac, for he says:

> The King has sent me hither
> To court my sister for him. But the Laws
> Of Friendship and Nature ought to be
> Obey'd before th' unjust commands of Kings (Act IV, p. 56).

At this juncture of the play, honouring the laws of family and friendship seem to have become more important than duty owed to the crown. Eventually Clotair is captured and killed by Clothilda who has cleared the path to the throne for Lewis, the king's brother. Lewis is disconsolate, although he eventually rebels against his brother, he is not responsible for his death. Clothilda attempts to expiate her sin by calling it not, 'Treason, but Revenge', and calls herself an, 'honourable Murderer' (Act V, p. 72). Despite the unstable nature of authority and the resultant strains on the honour code in the play, it attempted to provide a framework in which both hereditary kingship and virtue were combined. Nevertheless, the play reflected a world in which the code of honour was unstable.

Another important contemporary playwright was Nathaniel Lee. Born in 1654, he was the son of Richard Lee, vicar of Hatfield and one-time chaplain to General Monck, architect of the Stuart restoration On his arrival in London, Lee had obtained the patronage of the Duke of Buckingham but they had parted company. Instead, Nathaniel Lee's first heroic tragedy, *The Tragedy of Nero, Emperor of Rome* (1674) had been dedicated to the Earl of Rochester, Charles's Bedchamber friend and notorious libertine. Lee's second tragedy, *Sophonisba,* was to make his name. Charles II and other members of his court saw this play several times and Lee himself attributed its success to the 'favourable aspects of the Court-Stars'.[41]

Sophonisba; or Hannibal's Overthrow (1675) has been well described by Laura Brown as a transitional play in which heroic action is subverted and pathos is introduced.[42] Like Settle's protagonists, Lee's dramatic characters were torn between their public and their private loyalties and these tensions could not easily be reconciled. This dramatic shift reflected a political reality - the honour code was no longer performing the same task that it had previously done. Private loyalties had superseded public loyalties. Lee's play was dedicated to the King's mistress, the Duchess of Portsmouth, and contained two inter-related plots. Throughout the play it is 'love', and not the honour code, that drives the action. Although honour is certainly a component of the play, it has become somewhat peripheral.

One plot tells the story of the heroic Hannibal and his lover Rosalinda, who are pitted against the Romans. The other tells of King Massinissa, king of Numidia, and his lover, Sophonisba. Both pairs of lovers are victims of fate who are unable to master their own destinies. In the first few acts, Sophonisba is depicted as a Cleopatra-like figure who rediscovers her love for Massinissa when her husband dies. Massinissa realises that passion has made him effeminate and not fit to rule. He vows

---

[41] R.G. Ham, *Otway and Lee* (New York, 1969), p. 66.

[42] Brown, *English Dramatic Form*, p. 22.

that 'To cure my honour, I my Love will kill'.[43] The Roman general, Scipio, who epitomises virtue and courage, admonishes him, declaring:

> By this Act of Softness you will drown
> Those Noble parts and forfeit your Renown;
> Truant to all the Honour that you had (Act II, p. 94).

Lee has created a world in which values are turned upside down and idealism does not exist. Honour is not the primary impetus for the dramatic action as it had been in the earlier heroic tragedies, yet the play records one of the most moving conflicts between love and honour in Restoration literature.[44] Ultimately, obsessive love drives the plot and subsumes virtue. The play ends in tragedy with the suicide of Sophonisba and the king of Numidia. In the concluding act the general Scipio relinquishes his personal honour by withdrawing from the imperial project. The play acts as a warning against the dangers of obsessive love and highlights the fact that the honour code is no longer performing as a political cohesive.

Disillusionment with the honour code was paralleled in comedies like Wycherley's *The Country Wife* (1675) in which style and wit took the place of morality. The milieu of this comedy was the world of Wycherley's own class, that of the urban upper class. *The Country Wife* can be contrasted with Ben Jonson's pre-Civil War social satires that both ridiculed and celebrated the lower classes of London or with plays like John Lacy's *The Old Troop* (1664) that had caricatured foreigners and outsiders. Instead, *The Country Wife* satirised pretensions of gentility and depicted a materialistic and self-seeking world. Indeed, honour was disconnected in this play from internal virtue and became instead 'reputation'. Reputation could be based on pretence and not on virtue. Laura Brown has argued that the play has no

---

[43] Thomas Stroup and Arthur Cooke (eds.),*The Works of Nathaniel Lee* (New Jersey, 1945), I, Act I, p. 92.

[44] Paulina Kewes, 'Otway, Lee and the Restoration History Play' in *The Cambridge Companion to Restoration Theatre: Volume 2 1660-to 1895*, Deborah Payne Fisk ed. (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 355-377.

moral resolution because the designs of its 'libertine' anti-hero, Horner, are never revealed to those he cuckolds.[45] His prey, the women, collude in maintaining his deceit. The writing of this satire, however, did in itself effect some sort of moral resolution by noting the large gap between the ideals of the honour code and the way in which they were sometimes practised.

Horner - whose name is both a pun on the 'horns' sported by cuckolds and on the word honour itself - has decided to portray himself as a eunuch in order to seduce as many women as possible. The sexual politics of the play can be translated into the realm of politics. If this play is examined in the context of contemporary uses, it has strong connections to the more overt political drama. Tragedy in the early 1670s was concerned with the alleged decline in heroic values and honour, and most critics have agreed that it had a didactic purpose. Comedy, on the other hand, did not create an idealised world, but instead depicted hyperbolic social realities. *The Country Wife* exalts in libertine opportunism and the protagonist, Horner, is the trickster who manipulates love and friendship, thereby ridiculing and negating accepted codes of 'honourable' behaviour. The play is a scathing indictment of the social mores of a particular segment of society.

The driving impetus of the plot is the abuse of honour by the leading characters. Horner has become a mere tool of deception for the advancement of their materialistic ends. In Act I Horner admits to his manipulation of honour by asserting that, 'women no more than honour are compas'd by bragging'[46] and he makes clear his rejection of the chivalric ethos based on binding oaths. He avers that 'women, as you say, are like souldiers, made constant and loyal by good pay, rather than by Oaths

---

[45] Brown, *English Dramatic Form*, p. 53.

[46] William Wycherley, *The Country Wife* (London, 1675), Act I, p. 2.

or Covenants' (Act I, p.14). The women in the play use the word 'honour' frequently but by its frequent repetition it loses its meaning. For example, Lady Fidget, a minor character, claims that honour only exists in relationships within one's own class. She claims, 'a Woman of Honour looses no honour with a private person' (Act II, p. 26). Parallel with Horner's plot of chicanery is his friend's Harcourt's courtship of the young woman, Alithea. Both of these names reveal their importance to the plot for Alithea, meaning truth,[47] and Harcourt's name is resonant of courtliness. Their eventual marriage does effect a moral resolution in that they are only characters who act within the parameters of the honour code. In a sense, the inclusion of the characters of Harcourt and Alithea signal a return to older values and harked back to the tragi-comedies of the immediate post-Restoration years where marriage affected a moral closure. In this sense, Wycherley contrasted the material world of contemporary social relations with a bygone courtly world that based its values on an honour code. The debasement of the honour code in this play is well summed up by a servant girl, Lucy, who declaims:

> but what a Divil is this honour! 'tis sure a disease in the head,
> Like the megrim or falling sickness, that always hurries People away to do themselves mischief.
> Men loose their lives by it; women what's
> Dearer to 'em, their love, the life of life (Act V, p. 47).

Honour has become externalised. As Horner tells the audience, 'your Bigots in Honour are just like those in Religion; they fear the eye of the world, more than the eye of Heaven' (Act IV, p. 65). It is Lady Fidget who sums up the degradation of honour in the play, underlining the fact that women's reputations are used for deception: 'Our virtue is like the Statesman's Religion, the Quakers word, the Gamester's Oath, and the Great Man's Honour, but to cheat those that trust us' (Act V, p. 92). She claims that honour is nothing but pretence and a sham.

---

[47] Alithea means truth in Greek.

The discourse of honour had become both a common linguistic currency and a tool for social expediency in Wycherley's satire. Its use was highly political in that social or sexual relations mirrored political relations. Thus, the exposure of pretence and the debasement of honour had a direct political relevance. Comedies such as *The Country Wife* depicted a world that was based on deceit in which honour had become a commodity. In the realm of sexual relations, honour was used as a currency. This was a cynical view of the body politic in which allegiance was an exchangeable commodity and there was no solid value placed on loyalty. The metaphor of sexual relations was further amplified in Thomas Shadwell's *The Libertine* (1675): a play that also cynically satirised the discourse of honour.[48]

Shadwell's play was much more brutal than Wycherley's. Shadwell presents his audience with a libertine, Don John, and his two friends, all three gentlemen, who profit from their status to break honourable codes of behaviour. Thus they commit seduction, rape, incest, parricide, robbery and murder, and are proud that 'By Nature's order, Sense should guide our Reason'.[49] It is only the servant, Jacomo, who has any sense of honour. The villains incessantly define each other as 'men of honour', thus satirising gentility. Clara, a Spanish woman, bemoans her impending marriage, and wishes she was in England saying 'there, they say a Lady may chuse a Footman, and run away with him, if she likes him, and no dishonour to the Family' (Act III, p. 44). Her friend, Flavia, ridicules the whole basis of honour by stating, 'that's because the Families are so very Honourable that nothing can touch 'em.' (Act III, p. 44).

---

[48] Hughes, *English Drama,* p. 102.

[49] Thomas Shadwell, *The Libertine* (London, 1676) Act I, p.2.

The Libertine sets a moral example but the play is so full of extreme hyperbole that it may almost be said to satirise morality itself. At one point, a monument to one of Don John's victims is brought to life again and the 'spirit' exacts his revenge on Don John by calling on devils to take the villains. The playwright lays down a challenge to the audience in the epilogue spoken by Jacomo, in which he pours scorn on the mercantile classes when he asserts, 'They start at ills they do not like to do/ But shall in Shops be wickeder than you'. The savage satire of Shadwell's play revealed a collapse in the traditional discourse of honour which linked many of the different themes of the comedies and tragedies of the early 1670s. Tragedies had already shown that the honour code was not working and by 1675 the production of comedies was further highlighting this trend. It can be seen, however, that there were attempts to effect a workable political consensus and that these attempts coincided with a resurgence of heroic rhyme.

Rekindling Heroic Rhyme and Fears about the Succession, 1675-1676

The reversion to heroic rhyme in 1675 indicated a renewed effort to redraft the honour code. Despite the problems of the succession and the general mistrust of the court, playwrights attempted to rebuild a communal system of political values. The generic revival was, no doubt, prompted by the brief period of relative calm when Danby was in the ascendant. His advocacy of a return to a strong royalist philosophy was reflected in a reversion to the heroic verse that had successfully re-inscribed the code of honour during the early years of the Restoration. Danby's strong support of the Anglican interest marked a return to the values that had characterised the years in which the Earl of Clarendon was the King's most trusted servant. His policies echoed the views of a number of MPs who wished to reinstate the policies of the Clarendon code.[50]

Danby's Anglican policies succeeded in radically altering the political scene. In his pamphlet, *A Letter from a Person of Quality to His Friend in the Country* (1675), Shaftesbury indicated the extent to which the Test Act had polarised political opinion, claiming that Danby's design was a Cavalier plot to wreak revenge for the Civil Wars.[51] Danby's position, however, remained unassailable for a brief period. Although the autumn session of Parliament of October to November 1675 saw dissenters press the King for dissolution of Parliament, all that happened was that Parliament was prorogued for fifteen months. The Parliamentary hiatus became an opportunity to reassert Anglican interests. Danby wished to make the recusancy laws financially profitable in order to subsidise the salaries of JPs and sheriffs. Addressing an issue that had not been laid to rest by the Restoration Settlement, he reminded the King that he should reward Anglican Cavaliers by promoting those men 'who have actually been in armes or sufferers for your majestic or royall father, and to the sons of such'.[52] He also proposed the erection of a brass statue of Charles I at Charing Cross and the re-interment of the martyr king in a special ceremony. These proposals revived memories of the Civil War. The attempt to re-engage with the memories of the war was marked, on the stage, by a return to a dramatic genre that had been popular in the early years of the Restoration: heroic rhyme.

Dryden was especially quick to respond to this shift in the political climate. His *Aureng-Zebe*, performed during the stage season of 1675, was his last rhymed

---

[50] See Coward, *The Stuart Age*, p. 321.

[51] Miller, *Popery and Politics.* There is a full discussion of the politics of this period in Chapter 7 of this book.

[52] Cited in Coward, *The Stuart Age*, p. 321

heroic play. The play marked an important shift in the definition of honour. While *Aureng-Zebe* underlined the importance of a legitimate succession, honour in this play was not synonymous with loyalty and service to the crown. Instead, Dryden placed a greater emphasis on 'private' virtue. The Earl of Mulgrave was extolled in the dedication where Dryden stated that 'True greatness, if it be any where on Earth, is in a private Virtue'.[53] The play was highly political in that it engaged directly with the most urgent contemporary problem, that of the succession, and Dryden claimed that he had shown the text to King before it was finished. Dryden's earlier plays had been concerned with factional politics but these conflicts had been 'externalised' when Christians had been pitted against heathens. In *Aureng-Zebe*, as in many of the earlier heroic plays, the family was the metaphor for the state of the kingdom and factional politics were shown as the greatest threat to the state.[54] Dryden's metaphor was highly relevant to the contemporary political situation because Danby's policies were not proving to be a success. Many MPs felt threatened by his attempts to build a court party and there was widespread mistrust of Danby's motives. Much of this mistrust was in fact inspired by Charles II's activities: his support for the French alliance and a Catholic heir. The plot of *Aureng-Zebe*, however, was highly charged since it dealt with an unstable succession and divisions within a royal family. Contemporary political anxieties were played out dramatically in *Aureng-Zebe*.

In the first act of the play Dryden emphasises the dangers of 'interest' to political stability, by causing a courtier to remark that 'the depth of Factions as in Mazes go, Where Int'rests meet and cross so oft, that they/With too much care are wilder'd in their way' (Act I, p. 164). The brothers of Aureng-Zebe vie for the throne of India but Aureng-Zebe himself prefers virtue to a crown. Each of his brothers is

---

[53] *The Works of John Dryden* (Berkeley, 1994) XII, p 153.
[54] Douglas Canfield, *Heroes and States: On the Ideology of Restoration Tragedy* (Kentucky, 1999), p.20.

disqualified for rule and the reasons for their exclusion have a topical political resonance. Thus one brother, Dorat, is too vengeful and the other, Sujah, is a member of a religious sect who is swayed by foreign interest. Sujah was not eligible for rule because it was claimed that he: 'by a Foreign Int'rest seeks to Reign/Hopeless by Love the Sceptre to obtain' (Act I. p. 165). This may well have been an oblique criticism of James, Duke of York.

Although each son has been exiled to the provinces to avoid conflict over the succession, nevertheless, internecine strife erupts. Dryden has made Aureng-Zebe a chivalric hero who proclaims, 'I ne'r did Crowns ambitiously regard/Honour I sought the generous mind's reward' (Act I, p. 171). Later still Aureng-Zebe claims, 'I'm taught by Honour's precepts, to obey' (Act II p. 190). The plot revolves around contested love for Indamora, a captive princess. When both the emperor and his son Aureng-Zebe vie for her affection, the son bows to the precedence of his father. The emperor, out of jealousy, rejects his virtuous son for his more ambitious son, Morat. Unlike his older brother, Morat does not think that rulers need necessarily be guided by honour, for he says of himself: 'Tis not with me as with a private Man/ such may be sway'd by Honour or by Love/But Monarchs onely by their int'rest move' (Act III, p. 205). Thus Dryden acknowledges the threat of 'interest' to the honour code.

Aureng-Zebe retains some faith in his brother when he says: 'Morat, perhaps has Honour in his breast' (Act II, p. 96). However, Morat soon proves him wrong by admitting to their father: 'You cancell'd Duty when you gave me pow'r' (Act IV, p. 218). Aureng-Zebe argues with his brother and plays on his latent loyalty but Morat once more decrees that 'might is right' and the sword is the decider of man's fate. However, Morat ultimately undergoes a moral reformation through his love for

Indamora. Finding the path to virtue, he forsakes the crown for her saying, 'Unjust dominion I no more pursue' (Act V, p. 231). When Morat dies in defence of Indamora, Aureng-Zebe receives both the kingdom and Indamora's hand in marriage. In the closing scenes, his father points up the moral, telling his son that he should 'the just Rewards of Love and Honour wear/ /Receive the Mistres you so long have serv'd/ Receive the Crown your Loyalty preserv'd' (Act V, p. 248).

In *Aureng-Zebe,* Dryden has reverted to the chivalric language of his earlier plays. The characters in this play appear truer to nature and the dialogue is less extravagant than in Dryden's earlier productions. Although the playwright emphasised the importance of virtue in the private sphere through the character of Aureng-Zebe, both public and private virtue were finally reconciled in the positive conclusion of the play. As in the tragicomedies of the early 1660s, this work reconstructed political stability through the uncontested succession of a virtuous prince and the celebration of a dynastic marriage. Nevertheless, the play accentuated a shift in the definition of honour when it was expressed primarily as private virtue which was only synonymous with loyalty when the stability of the state was under direct threat.[55]

Thomas Otway's first play *Alcibiades* (1675) also reverted to the heroic rhyme that had been so popular immediately after the Restoration yet he could not match Dryden's positive outlook. Like the earlier tragedies of Settle and Lee the play was bleakly pessimistic in its tone: indeed it ended in a bloodbath. Born in 1651, Otway was very much a part of the literary world and this play was his first tragedy. A prolific writer for the London stage, he went on later to become the tutor to Charles

---

[55] See Douglas Canfield, *Heroes and States*, p. 24.

Beauclerk, the eldest son of Nell Gwyn by the King. Although *Alcibiades* is thematically similar to Orrery's *The Generall*, Otway was unable to successfully reconstruct a chivalric world in which the discourse of honour dictated a successful dramatic resolution. His play is set in ancient Greece where Alcibiades, a general, has fled the state of Athens leaving his mistress Timandra behind. As a free agent, Alcibiades puts himself at the service of the king of Sparta, and helps to defend Sparta from the Athenians. When he becomes the prey of a lustful queen of Sparta, he rejects her advances out of loyalty to her husband. Otway expands on the theme of friendship, a favourite theme of Orrery's, when he celebrates the friendship of Alcibiades and Patroculus, a Spartan hero. Discovering his father's plot against his friend, Patroculus is torn between filial duty and his sense of personal honour. At one point he observes anxiously that 'duty does forbid/yet what's my duty if my honour bleed'.[56] Patroculus is torn between filial duty and the reciprocal obligations of friendship.

In *Alcibiades,* Otway created a world in which the protagonist was an outsider and was never able to gain the trust of those whom he served. Despite the elegant language and high-flown love and honour sentiments, Otway's play bears a closer resemblance to the inchoate world recreated in the plays of Settle. The lustful queen, spurned by Alcibiades, orchestrates a violent ending. Despite the personal honour of the protagonist, his exemplary values are detached from a system of political order. The concluding act underlines this state of political chaos. Only Patroculus is left to ponder the difficulties of rule and to comment, 'how uneasily on Thrones they sit /That must like me be wretched to be great' (Act V, p. 66).

---

[56] Thomas Otway, *Alcibiades* (London, 1675), Act IV, p. 40.

Plays like *Aureng-Zebe* and *Alcibiades* were regressive in the sense that they were formulaic attempts to restore the values of a chivalric code of honour - and in this respect both plays plainly failed. The strains that factional interests had imposed on the honour code were now apparent. There was a sense that honour was increasingly defined by personal reputation rather than by loyalty or service to the crown. Interest had become the greatest challenge to the revival of older values of fealty to the crown. The dramatic revival of heroic rhyme in 1675 was not successful, and for the time being, its failure signalled the death knell of the rhymed heroic play.

Aphra Behn's only tragedy, *Abdelazer, or The Moor's Revenge*, which was first produced in July, 1676, was also an attempt to look back in order to restore the values of the honour code. The plot was based on *Lust's Dominion* possibly by Dekker, Day and Haughton.[57] Yet its plot more closely resembled that of Settle's *Empress of Morocco*: a play which - as we have seen - depicted a royal family in a state of turmoil and in which events were orchestrated by an evil queen. *Abdelazer* is set in Spain: a kingdom where the laws of nature appear to have been subverted. Here, the royal family and its mirror image, the body politic or state, are threatened by an outsider: in this case, a Moorish prince and general named Abdelazer. Abdelazer himself has been well termed a 'Machiavel', a villainous schemer who 'threatens the aristocratic code of loyalty'.[58] He is abetted in his evil designs by the perfidious queen mother - the mother of the young king Ferdinand, his brother Philip, and the princess Leonara. She has murdered her husband, their father, in order to be with her lover, Abdelazer.

In order to further emphasise the unstable nature of politics, Behn depicts the king, Ferdinand, as deeply in love with Abdelazer's wife, Florella. She had been

---

[57] There is some dispute about the authorship of the play. Marston may had some hand in its authorship and it probably dates from the first decade of the 1600s.

[58] Canfield, *Heroes and States,* p. 3.

promised to him before her marriage to Abedelazer. His errant love for Florella undermines his political judgement when he fails to exile Abdelazer despite the obvious threat that the general poses to the safety of the kingdom. Following the pattern that she had created in her earlier tragicomedies, Behn here devised a play in which the most virtuous protagonists were noblewomen. Florella and princess Leonora - the king's sister, and the daughter of Abdelazer's mistress, the wicked queen - are exemplars of honour.[59] In this play, Behn has regendered honour as a female virtue. The wicked queen's actions are in direct contrast to those of the honourable noblewomen, Florella and Leonora. Her evil subversion of the honour code is starkly contrasted with their virtuous behaviour. It is through the development of the female characters that conflicts of honour are played out and resolved. The male characters play only peripheral roles in the moral resolution of the plot.

Florella is shown as attempting to balance the conflicting loyalties which are owed simultaneously to her husband and the king. She refuses to collude with her husband, Abedalazer's plot to kill the king declaring, 'To save my King's, my life I will expose/No Martyr dies in a more Glorious Cause'. [60] Similarly, when Ferdinand tries to seduce Florella she rejects him, saying, 'I owe a Duty where I cannot love' (Act III, p. 32). Nevertheless, when Florella and Ferdinand are found together by Abdelazer and the queen, it transpires that Florella is holding the dagger that Abdelazer had pressed upon her earlier. Thus it appears as if she had indeed been preparing to kill the king. The queen promptly kills her and Abledazer, in turn, kills the king. Behn makes it clear that Abdelazer loves his wife, but at the same time shows that he is ultimately prepared to sacrifice her life in order to further his ambition.

---

[59] Ibid, p. 37. Canfield describes Florella and Leonara as 'true and constant women'.

[60] Aphra Behn, *Abdelazer, or, The Moor's Revenge* (London, 1677), Act III, p. 29.

After Ferdinand's death, a civil war - a battle for power - erupts between Abdelazer and Philip, Ferdinand's younger brother. In order to assist Abdelazer's ambitions the lustful queen is willing to impugn her own personal honour by declaring that Philip, is a bastard and that a cardinal is his true father. The plot of *Abdelazer* thus reflects the growing contemporary disquiet about the fears of Catholic influence in the governance of the state. It is highly significant that one of the main protagonists in the play – and one who is able to influence the succession - is this cardinal who is in love with the queen. The queen attempts to manipulate him for her devious purposes. Wishing to disinherit Philip and place her lover, Abdelazer, on the throne, she enlists the cardinal's aid. Nevertheless, initially, the cardinal is very reluctant to assist her in her evil machinations and reminds her of his duty to her son. Significantly, the cardinal uses the language of honour, saying, 'My Honour and Religion bids me serve him'(Act III, p. 47). Eventually, the queen persuades the cardinal to overcome his scruples and imprison Philip.

The depth of Abdelazer's duplicity is revealed when his lover, the queen, is killed on his orders. Because he has harboured a secret passion for the princess Leonora, he surrenders the crown to her. A nobleman, Alonzo accuses Abdelazer of double dealing saying, 'You gave a Crown/But you'l command the Kingly power still' (Act, V, p. 61). When Abdelazer declares his love to Leonora, she rejects him asserting, 'I cannot hear it, Sir, with Honour' (Act V, p. 61) for she is betrothed to Alonzo. Leonora's conduct is in stark contrast to that of Abdelazer and she reminds him of the importance of honour but to no avail. Abdelazer is depicted in the play as a usurping tyrant whose sole aim is to retain the crown and to gain the hand of the Leonora. When Abdelazer is crowned in Act III, Behn deploys rhetoric which recalls the events of the Interregnum. Thus Abledazer claims that he is a 'protector' of Spain and pledges to stay in power, 'Till we agree about a lawfull Successor'(Act III, p. 38). Behn's play engages very closely with the contemporary concerns about the difficulty of assuring a legitimate succession. Although the political climate had not yet overheated in 1676, the year of the play's publication, there were signs that the succession was about to become the predominant political issue. Behn attempted to defuse this issue in her tragedy. The denouement of the play sees the restoration of the rightful monarchy and a resolution of the succession crisis when Abdelazer is killed and Philip is restored to the throne. Significantly, it is Leonora who reasserts the royal family's right to the crown when she turns to Philip and declares, 'Come my dear Brother, to that Glorious Business/Our Birth and Fortunes call us' (Act V, p. 71).

In many ways *Abdelazer* is strongly reminiscent of some of Dryden's and Orrery's plays of the 1660s in which honour was also gendered. For example, Orrery's *Tryphon* (1668) had posited honour in the characters of Cleopatra and Stratonice who upheld the tenets of the honour code. Similarly, Dryden's *Tyrannick Love* (1669), like *Abdelazer*, had told the story of a tyrant who had a loyal wife: in this case, Berenice, who remained loyal to her husband despite his shortcomings. In *Tyrannick Love,* however, the succession had remained unresolved. In sharp contrast, Behn ensured that in *Abdelazer*, Florella and Leonora - the exemplars of honourable behaviour - were able to orchestrate the restoration of the rightful royal line. Florella dies rather than betray her principles. Similarly, Leonora refuses to give in to Abdelazer's demands and finally assumes her rightful place at the side of her brother. Philip, on the other hand, who exemplifies the martial aspects of the honour code, is not able to use his assertiveness as an effective political tool. Again, Behn emphasises the power of feminine honour. Abdelazer, the outsider, acts throughout as the political catalyst. It is his alien and malign influence, his evil machinations, which force the other characters of the play to question their loyalties and to resolve conflicts of allegiance. In *Abdelazer,* Behn had engaged with some of the most burning political issues of the moment, the uncertainty about the royal succession, the widespread fears of growing factionalism and the pervasive anxieties about the influence of the Roman Catholic Church. In this sense, the play acted as a double warning - that 'wayward' love could undermine stable political governance and that factionalism could reopen the unhealed wounds of the Civil War. Thus Behn, in very much the same vein as her fellow-dramatists, had attempted to use the honour code in order to effect a successful resolution of a critical political situation.

Conclusion

It was the course taken by Charles II in the early 1670s that had precipitated political crisis in England. If he had not made the secret treaty with France and issued the Declaration of Indulgence in 1672, he might well have had a more co-operative Parliament and politics might not have become so polarised. Although it is easy with hindsight to point to specific events, there is little doubt that the general mistrust of Charles stemmed from the outbreak of the First Dutch War in 1665. The discourse of honour and loyalty was no longer operating effectively on the London stage by the early 1670s. At the same time social change – and, in particular, the influence of a widening mercantile class – was having an impact on the political consensus.

This is not to say that there were not real attempts to revive old notions of honour on the London stage. The onset of the Third Dutch war meant that it was crucial that the honour of the nation was upheld. Even at the height of the political crisis in 1673, a number of plays that had first been performed earlier in the 1660s and which had dealt explicitly with issues of rebellion and usurpation were revived on the

London stage. The playwrights of the 1670s were beginning to use the discourse of honour in different ways: ways that did not always connect honour with loyalty. The concept of honour was by now beginning to become detached from the idea of service to the crown or reciprocal obligation and honour was coming to mean personal reputation. And the privatisation of honour meant, in turn, that Charles's own personal honour continued to come under attack as it had done in the latter half of the 1660s. As a result of his sexual infidelities the language of sexual fidelity as a metaphor for loyalty was no longer a prominent theme in dramatic productions. 'Love' had become a corrosive threat to the honour code and few plays concluded with 'happy' marriages or requited love. Honour's elite status had also come under attack as the commercialisation of society increasingly blurred the lines of demarcation between the elite and the mercantile class. For some playwrights, such as Shadwell and Wycherley, the remedy was to satirise honour itself. These threats to the honour code had subtly shifted the meaning of honour in relation to the exercise of politics. Indeed, like the crown itself, the concept of honour was on the defensive by the mid 1670s.

Political language, too, had markedly changed by 1675. In dramatic productions 'interest' had become the real threat to honour. Interest could be translated loosely as the importance of private duty at the expense of public duty, which became the basis for faction or party. By 1678 'interest' underpinned the polarising of two political groupings - the Whigs and the Tories. The Whigs were intent on excluding the Catholic heir to the throne while the Tories wished to protect the legitimate succession. The Exclusion Crisis of 1679-1681 was without doubt the most important crisis since 1640 and the discourse of honour had a crucial part to play in its outcome.

CHAPTER V: POPISH PLOT AND THE EXCLUSION CRISIS, 1679-1681

The Exclusion Crisis was precipitated by the revelation of an alleged conspiracy to take the life of Charles II and to change the foundations of government. On 13 August 1678 the King was informed of a plot against his life instigated by a Catholic faction. The bearer of this grisly tale was Titus Oates, a discredited Jesuit novice, who was able to manipulate the volatile political circumstances of the late 1670s. The design was related in two parts. Firstly, the King was to have been estranged from his people by accusations that he supported popery and absolutism and secondly he was to be assassinated. An uprising of the Catholic population would follow. This mob would then murder every Protestant they could find and fire the city of London. The tale had its origins in earlier scares, most notably William Prynne's theory of the origins of the Civil War, and it was received with a great deal of scepticism by the King himself.[1] The Popish Plot conspiracy was the symptom and not the cause of the anti-Catholic hysteria that revived the fears of another civil war and polarised political opinion from 1679.

It was inevitable that these fears and tensions would be played out on the London stage. Throughout the reign of Charles II, the discourse of honour had been not only a litmus test for political tension on the public stage but more importantly, had also provided a public forum for the redrafting of codes of loyalty and for the expiation of Civil War guilt. By the close of the 1660s the public discourse of honour had shifted. Although honour - as loyalty - continued to be an important thread that interwove both published and performed drama, the concept of honour was also used to criticise the exercise of monarchical authority. As we have already seen, the sexual conduct of the

---

[1] See John Miller, *Popery and Politics in England, 1660-1688* (Cambridge, 1973), p. 155.

King and his failure to produce a legitimate heir had served to undermine the honour of the monarchy itself. The values of the honour code had increasingly come under threat in the early 1670s for a variety of other reasons: a rapidly expanding mercantile class, the growth of commerce and the further breakdown of feudal ties. Throughout the 1670s, the discourse of sexual fidelity or 'love' and honour was no longer able to affect moral resolutions in dramatic productions. These social issues became more peripheral in the theatre as the decade neared its close and religious issues once more began to dominate both politics and public discourse.

The Exclusion Crisis was played out in the long shadow of the Civil War and the Interregnum and for that reason many of the plays that were published during 1679-82 were often contradictory in tone and ambivalent in meaning. Dramatists were forced to address a politically divided audience and they attempted both to persuade and conciliate. Oates's allegations were shocking enough, but the regime was also rocked by the revelation that the Earl of Danby, the King's chief minister, had had secret dealings with the French monarchy at a time when the ministry was asking for money from Parliament for a war against France. This made the current Parliament unmanageable and there was no choice but to dissolve it and to call for new elections. The country now entered a period of sustained political crisis in which there were three elections in three years and the crown was placed under great pressure to exclude James from the succession. There were real fears of renewed civil war and cries of 'Forty-One is come again' were heard throughout the kingdom.

Anti-Catholic hysteria had already been whipped up by the publication of Andrew Marvell's *An Account of the Growth of Popery and Arbitrary Government in England* (1677). Marvell had blamed the conspiracy to establish a Catholic absolutist state on the machinations of the Earl of Danby, although it was well known that Danby was both anti-French and anti-Papist. Marvell's personal attack was rationalised by the fact that Danby had consistently shown authoritarian tendencies and was in agreement with the Catholic Duke of York. Fears about the motives of York and Danby had become fused in the public mind and subsequently there were widespread fears that the army raised for the impending war against France might be used instead to impose arbitrary government in England. Marvell did not name the conspirators but referred to them as men 'that are above either honour and conscience, but obliged by all the most sacred tyes of Malice and ambition to advance the Ruin of the King and Kingdome'.[2] The unmasking of the plot blew open the fragile consensus that Charles had tried to maintain within Parliament and, more importantly, polarised political opinion by pushing to the forefront certain crucial issues about the succession. The next in line to the throne was James, Duke of York, a professed Catholic, who was married to a Catholic princess. There was a public perception that he might be inclined towards arbitrary government. An army of 30,000 men on English soil - intended to be used in a war against France - generated further fears that this army might turn against Parliament itself.

As a result of the Test Act and the conversion of James to Catholicism, the country had become divided on the issue of the succession. The legitimate succession of James was seen as a direct threat to the Protestantism of England. Contemporary political

---

[2] Andrew Marvell, *Account of the Growth of Popery and Arbitrary Government* (Amsterdam, 1677), p. 16.

commentators saw factionalism, concerning issues surrounding the succession, as the most serious threat to the future of the monarchy. In response to political tensions in the second half of the 1670s, the theatre attempted to redraft the ethos of honour as loyalty and to warn against the dangers of political instability through factional politics. From the late 1660s honour had come increasingly to be seen as a matter of personal reputation and less as a reciprocal bond of obligation. As a result of the various political crises of the first two decades of the reign of Charles II, the bonds of fealty to the crown had indeed been greatly weakened by this conceptual shift. Although it had become increasingly difficult for playwrights to invoke the language of chivalry and the concomitant idea of obedient and loyal service to the crown on the stage, the code of honour remained a potent force that could still be used to rekindle personal obligation to the crown. When the revelations of the Popish Plot became public knowledge, the resulting political ramifications were acted out on the stage. As before, the drama engaged with concurrent political debates while also acting as a dynamic force in the manipulation of public perception of politics.

The crisis precipitated by the Popish Plot should be seen within a wider European context. Although Protestantism in England seemed secure, in Europe as a whole, it had been marginalised. On the Continent, between 1590 and 1690, the territories under Protestant control had been very greatly reduced.[3] Although Jonathan Scott has argued that the threats to the crown were indeed real and not imaginary, he lays the blame for the heightened political tension on the policies of Charles II within a European context.[4] Charles had abandoned the Triple Alliance with the United Provinces in favour of

---

[3] Jonathan Scott, 'England's Troubles: Exhuming the Popish Plot', in *The Politics of Religion in Restoration Englan,* T. Harris et al (eds.), (Oxford, 1990), pp. 109-127, p. 114.

[4] Ibid, p. 118.

supporting France, the Catholic military super power. However, the fact that Charles had reached the age of maturity in a French court and had close European connections did not mean that his domestic policies ran counter to the aspirations of the majority of his subjects. His secret alliance with France in the early 1670s was not about religion but was about continental power politics.[5] Although the crisis of 1679-1681 had been fuelled in some measure by international events, it was the failure of Restoration government to resolve some of the essential problems of governance that had resulted in heightened political tension and the subsequent revelations of a 'popish plot' in 1679. By examining the language of the plays which were performed and published during the Exclusion Crisis years it is possible to argue that even those dramatic works that were in opposition to court interests validated the honour code in order to reconstruct a viable political consensus.

The tense political atmosphere of 1679-81 had a profound effect on literature. Some 54 new plays were written during this period, including several new versions of old plays, and the concerns of the dramatists were varied and complex. Whilst most of them aimed to uphold a broadly royalist ideology, that aim certainly did not preclude them from engaging with themes of opposition. Several dramatic motifs constantly recurred during the Exclusion Crisis and it is necessary to examine how honour was defined within these thematic parameters. As the sheer scale of the crisis became apparent, so appeals to 'loyalty' and 'honour' increased. By examining the work of a playwright like Nahum Tate one is able to trace distinct shifts in the discourse of honour as the crisis deepened. Tate openly supported the claims of the Duke of Monmouth, the illegitimate

---

[5] See Ronald Hutton, 'The Religion of Charles II', in *The Stuart Court and Europe*, Malcolm Smuts (ed.) (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 226-246, p. 239.

son of Charles, who had sworn to uphold the supremacy of Protestantism in England. Tate later moved to a more loyalist and conservative stance; his plays encapsulate the gravity of the crisis and the imminent threat of civil war.

The issues that were addressed again and again in Tate's plays were those of the danger of factional politics to stable government; the question of bad counsel and its possible threat to monarchical authority; and the rhetoric of anti-popery. Most importantly, the plays engaged with fears of endangered succession and political instability. Underlying the interplay of these themes were concerns about the absence of patriarchal authority. In the Restoration theatre, the figure of the absent father was a metaphor for the threat of a return to the instability of Interregnum government.

Susan Owen has argued that, in relation to the drama of the period, the Exclusion Crisis created two separate but 'intersecting polarities, of Whiggery and Toryism'.[6] Certainly many plays of this troubled period did show partisan tendencies; yet these intentions were often set out in the prologues and the epilogues and were not necessarily clearly written into contemporary drama. Within the text of the plays there were contradictions and, as a result, it is difficult neatly to categorise partisanship. Partisanship was evident in some of the plays,[7] yet there is a danger in concentrating on this fact and ignoring important abstract concepts which underpin the drama as a whole. Most of the plays, regardless of their thematic emphasis or party allegiance, were didactic. In many instances, they attempted to rebuild an ethos of honour or, conversely, they attempted to show how the absence of honour had corroded the body politic.

---

[6] Susan Owen, *Restoration Theatre and Crisis* (Oxford, 1996), p. 33.

[7] Ibid, p. 23.

The Exclusion Crisis coincided with a distinct shift in the genre of the plays performed on the London stage. By the mid-1670s rhyming heroic verse tragedy had been largely abandoned in favour of blank verse tragedy. It was this latter form, pioneered by Neville Payne in his *Siege of Constantinople* (1675) that occupied the stage in the later 1670s when the crisis over the succession came to a head. The idealism of playwrights like Orrery, who had been writing in the first decade of the Restoration, was now forsaken and later playwrights were disinclined to use the heroic genre. Indeed the ideals associated with this genre had disappeared and when heroic verse was used in the late 1670s, it was only in plays with martial themes: plays about siege, conquest and destruction. Such plays, all set against a background of war, were filled with a pervading sense of pessimism and gloom.

The first stage of the Exclusion Crisis in autumn 1678 was characterised by a series of shocking disclosures; first, the 'unmasking' of the plot itself; second, the discovery of the treasonable correspondence of Coleman, James's confessor, and third, the revelations of Montague, the former ambassador to France, that Danby had been negotiating secretly with France. After the dissolution of Parliament in January 1679, the new elections brought no comfort to the court, for the new Parliament included an even larger anti-court majority than its predecessor. The theatrical season coincided directly with this atmosphere of raised tension and as a result the themes that permeated the drama were symptoms of the wider political crisis. Initially, before the issue of the succession had come to the fore, the most important dramatic theme was that of the dangers of factionalism - for it was factional interests that threatened the authority of the monarch and the legitimate succession. The drama articulated these anxieties until the defeat of the Whigs in 1681.

Factionalism

Factionalism was the driving force behind the Exclusion Crisis and inevitably its divisive latent power raised the spectre of the Civil War of 1642-46. Those who had fought against Charles I at this time had considered themselves to be men of honour, whose bonds of loyalty to the crown had been broken - thus leading them to form other allegiances. Playwrights were well aware of these loosened bonds and warned against the dangers of faction, although they conveyed their admonitions against dissension obliquely. Most plays were set in far-away lands and, whereas the political messages contained strongly worded warnings, they could not always be linked easily to political commentary on actual events. John Crowne, for example, had written an admonitory play in heroic verse, before the crisis erupted, entitled *The Destruction of Jerusalem by Titus Vespasian* (1677). It tells the story of the city of Jerusalem, a town rent apart by two factions, 'proud separatists' who are fanatical Pharisees and pious priests of the Sanhedrim who are accused of importing idolatry. The performance and publication of *The Destruction of Jerusalem* demonstrates that factional divisions based on religion had already begun to appear in society at large before the Exclusion Crisis. However, it was not until after the full complexities of the Popish Plot had been revealed, that the dangers of faction based on religious differences became a recurring theme in drama. In the first few months after Oates's revelations became public knowledge and at a time when political opinions were beginning to polarise, drama homed in on the dangers of noble faction and evil counsel.

At the first stage of this politically critical time, public theatre responded to events in a rather tentative way. In early 1679 the implications of Oates's tales of conspiracy had still not had their full effect. The plays published and performed in the early days of the crisis pointed out the dangers of an elite who had a highly developed sense of individual or personalised honour but who had no particular sense of loyalty to the crown. Charles had yet to reward many of the gentry families who had helped his father during the Civil War and partly as a result he had not created a tightly knit system of patronage.

The politically de-stabilising effects of a more personalised sense of honour - a sense of honour as reputation - can be seen in John Banks's *The Destruction of Troy* (November 1678) in which Banks likens London to New Troy. Although the tale of the siege of Troy is characterised by treachery and deceit,[8] Banks seeks to redraw chivalric images and initially reasserts an ethos of honour on both sides. This ethos is subversive of authority, however, for none of the protagonists are bound by any real sense of hierarchical allegiance. In the first act, Ulysses summons all the Greeks and makes them take an oath to continue the war on Troy. 'Let's take an Oath, by all the Gods, our Lives/Our Faith, Religion, and our Honours, N're to forsake these Cursed Walls of Troy', he cries.[9] The Greeks quickly fall to fighting among themselves and they eagerly seek to validate a sense of personal honour. Achilles and Ulysses are constantly at odds and accuse each other of a lack of honour. Troy, like Greece, is riven with dissent and disagreement as the citizens wish to return Helen, the cause of all the enmity. The image

---

[8] Derek Hughes has suggested that the play was about the dishonour of war. I believe that the playwright has created a play in which characters are driven by a quest for personal honour. See Derek Hughes, *English Drama, 1660-1700* (Oxford, 1996), p. 242.

[9] John Banks, *The Destruction of Troy* (London, 1679), Act I, p. 9.

of the culpability of Helen, a foreign queen, had intense political resonance at this time, because Charles II had been criticised constantly for his foreign Catholic mistresses, who were considered by some to be a political threat, and James's marriage to Mary of Modena was unpopular.

The playwright returns to a chivalric theme when the chief protagonists, instead of engaging in general conflict, prepare to engage in single-handed combat cheered on by 'all the Ladies, drest like Goddesses' (Act II. p. 19). The play is filled with premonitions of doom and is deeply pessimistic because even the warlike Achilles - who later kills both Hector and Trolius, the Trojan heroes - is prepared to switch sides for the love of a Trojan princess. The concluding act sees the destruction of Troy but neither side appears to win and there is no sense of leadership on either of the opposing sides. Thus the fall of Troy results simply in the creation of a political vacuum in which the only positive ethos is that of personal or individual valour. London had been called New Troy in the early seventeenth century and as a result, later in the 1670s, writers continued to make a comparison between the two cities. They were both cities rent by faction and the playwright highlights the negative effects of factional strife driven by the quest for personal honour.

Another play that elaborated on the siege of Troy later on in the crisis was Dryden's adaptation of Shakespeare's *Trolius and Cressida*; *or, Truth Found Too Late* (1679). This adaptation was heavily influenced by the politics of the period in which it was written. As Nancy Maguire has observed, Shakespeare's 'thickly valent plays suited the ambiguity of the Restoration crisis'.[10] No fewer than ten Shakespeare plays were adapted between 1678 and 1683 compared with only one between 1673 and 1678. Although Shakespeare's original play, *The Famous Historie of Troylus and Cresseid* (1609), had been written as a history play and not as a tragedy, Dryden made the play conform to classical notions of tragedy and engage with poetic justice. The overriding didactic purpose of Dryden's play is to secure obedience to the crown by warning against the dangers of faction. Its closing words caution the audience, warning them that: 'from homebred Factions, ruine springs'.[11] The play was dedicated to the Earl of Sunderland, the principal Secretary of State, and Dryden used it as a vehicle to rail against faction, or opposition to the crown. In contrast to the *Destruction of Troy*, the characterisation in *Troilus* is more fully developed and therefore, the play performs more effectively as a didactic tool. In his dedication to Sunderland, Dryden asks that the 'quiet of the nation be secur'd; and a mutuall trust, betwixt Prince and people be renew'd' (p. 221). Personal honour was a negative component of this play. As in *The Destruction of Troy*, honour became an impetus for faction, a force for division rather than consensus, and certainly a threat to political stability. Dryden bemoaned the rise of faction and the threat to monarchy in the first act, when Ulysses exclaims:

> Upon this plain, so many hollow factions:---
> O when supremacy of Kings is shaken,
> What can succeed? How coul'd communities
> Or peacefull traffick from divided shores,
> Prerogatives of Age, Crowns, Scepters, Lawrells,
> But by degree stand on their solid base! (Act I, p. 253).

Unlike in Banks's play, the issue of threatened authority is stressed. Agamemnon avers that the dignity of kings must be upheld and urges that 'You who cou'd show whence the

---

[10] Nancy Maguire, Chapter 4, 'Factionary Politics in John Crowne's Henry VI', in *Culture and Society in the Stuart Restoration*, Maclean (ed.) (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 71-92, p. 74.
[11] J. Roper (ed.) *The Works of John Dryden* (19 vols.,Berkeley, 1984), XIII, p. 353.

distemper springs/Must vindicate the Dignity of Kings' (Act I, p. 255). The heroes on both sides resemble the heroes of *The Siege of Troy* and are cast in a chivalric mould. Hector defends the honour and dignity of a king, declaring that 'vallue dwels not in opinion only/ It holds the dignity and estimation/As well, wherein 'tis precious of it self' (Act II, p. 266).

The play touches on many of the politically sensitive issues that had exacerbated the fears of a Popish Plot. One can see, for example, a return to a critique of the effeminacy of Charles's court. Thus Paris is accused of risking the future of Troy through his commitment to Helen, a foreign queen. As we have seen, the importance of Helen to the plot would have been interpreted by the audience as a criticism of the court: as a reference to the unpopular marriage of James to a Catholic princess, or more specifically, as an attack on the Catholic duchess of Portsmouth, Charles's mistress. Mirroring the relationships of the English court, the two Trojan heroes, Hector and Troilius, are brothers and the latter is accused of selling his country for a woman's love. Troilius is irascible and disdainful of public opinion, like James. He refuses to give up Cressida and the brothers fall out. When Hector eventually fights with the Greek, Ajax, it emerges that they are cousins, thus making a topical reference to the relationship between Charles and Louis XIV of France. The outcome is determined by the women of Troy who want the war to cease. Andromache, the wife of Hector, is tormented by premonitions of death in her nightmares, and is prepared to acknowledge that, although there is honour in revenge, her husband should not fight Achilles. Hector dismisses her fears, telling her that he is not prepared to: 'lose my Honour for a dream' (Act V p. 336). In the end the outcome is bloody and the Trojans are defeated. Ulysses has the last word about faction when he laments that pride ‘among thy factious Nobles discord threw/While publique good was urg’d for private ends/And those thought Patriots, who disturb’d it most’(Act V p. 353). Ulysses ends the play on a note of optimism by asserting that ‘peacefull order has resum’d the reynes’, but adds a warning, ‘Let Subjects learn obedience to their Kings’ (Act V, p. 353).

When these two plays were published, the true gravity of the Exclusion Crisis was not yet apparent: hence they concentrated on familiar themes concerning the dangers of faction and operated as mild critiques of the court. There were, however, stark warnings in both these plays against the rebellion of a factious nobility. Although issues of succession had not come to the fore, it is obvious that the figure of authority or the 'strong ruler' had disappeared from dramatic representation by 1678. Although Dryden asserted the necessity of obedience to monarchy, he was unable to draw an image of a strong ruler in *Troilus and Cressida*. Instead, it was apparent that personal honour or ‘glory’ drove the action of the play. In the context of contemporary politics, the personalisation of honour posed a threat to the future of the monarchy and to political stability. The feudal language of service and obeisance had almost completely disappeared from the drama, even if chivalric images relating to personal combat formed an important component of both these plays. Political events had an immediate and direct effect on the drama as can be seen by a comparison of these two particular plays. Although they deal with the threats of the diminished bonds of honour within the nobility, it is possible to hear fears about other political tensions between their lines.

Ambitious Statesmen: Danby and Shaftesbury

The fears of the playwrights came to head in the spring of 1679. The Exclusion Bill was presented to Parliament in May 1679 at the direction of the Earl of Shaftesbury. Almost immediately Monmouth was exiled to Belgium and James was sent to serve the King in Scotland. The submission of the Exclusion Bill highlighted the fact that the monarchy was in very real danger from the threat of faction. The individuals who were involved in these political machinations were not yet labelled as Whigs or Tories and it is correspondingly difficult for us to put labels to the plays of this period in terms of partisan support. In fact, many of the plays published between 1679-1680 blamed the origins of political crisis on specific individuals taking the reins of power in their own hands: ambitious statesmen, who were responsible for creating political tension.

One such play, which engaged directly with the effects of extreme factionalism was Otway's tragedy, *The History and the Fall of Caius Marius* (1679) which was a radical transformation of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet.[12] A deeply pessimistic play, *Caius Marius* was set in Rome and recreated a sense of chaos and civil disorder: of an Interregnum world where a power conflict between two men, Marius, the social upstart, and Sylla, the patrician, tore the city apart. Power is posited in the people, who chant for liberty in the opening lines of the play. Interwoven into this story of a power conflict between two men is a love story that parallels the story of Romeo and Juliet, for the two lovers are allied to two opposing factions. It seems probable that the character of Marius is one of the many contemporary stage versions of Shaftesbury, whose recent

---

[12] Jessica Munns, *Restoration Politics and Drama: The Plays of Thomas Otway, 1675- 1683* (Newark, 1995), p. 97. Jessica Munns has noted that the adaptation was highly politically topical. Many Restoration had used the 'Roman plays' which provided models for civil conflict.

Parliamentary actions had greatly raised the political temperature.[13] The play opens with a scene in which the boundaries between the rulers and the ruled have disappeared. A senator bemoans the fact that 'the Guardians of an Empire should be chosen/By the lewd Noise of a Licentious Rout'.[14] The patrician Sylla embodies the innate honour of a nobleman, yet his virtue cannot protect the body politic from the machinations of a demagogue like Marius. Marius is unable to retain any sustained allegiance because his behaviour has not created any real bonds of obligation between himself and his followers. His supporter, Metellus, switches sides to the patrician, Sylla. Lavinia, the daughter of Metellus, is in love with the son of Marius, from whom she is separated by the enmity between their parents. The dramatic discourse of love is not able to reconcile the two opposing families and the lovers become the first casualties of a general bloodbath in the concluding act. Otway had, in fact transposed sections of Romeo and Juliet for the romantic sub-plot. The language of love is no longer acting as a cohesive social bond within dramatic discourse. Instead, the sub-plot of unrequited love only further creates a sense of tension and division. Despite the fact that the lovers are exemplars of honour who obey the wishes of their parents, the play ends in tragedy.

The distinguishing characteristic of this play is that Otway gives a voice to the 'people' who criticise the patrician class. Nevertheless, he also mocks contemporary Whig propaganda with its frequent appeals to the people. Indeed, the people are criticised by Marius even though he owes his power to them. At one point he rails against them, terming them: 'These wide mouth'd Brutes, that bellow thus for Freedom', and adding

---

[13] See Hughes , *English Drama 1660-1700*, p. 272 and also Matthew Wikander, ' The Spitted Infant: Scenic Emblem and Exclusionist Politics in Restoration Adaptations of Shakespeare', *Shakespeare Quarterly* , 37 (1986), pp.341-358, p. 349.

[14] Thomas Otway, *The History and Fall of Caius Marius* (London, 1680) Act I, p.2.

scornfully, 'Oh! how they ran before the hand of Pow'r' (Act II, p. 24). Indeed, Otway warns of the dangers of civil war breaking out through the manipulation of an ill-informed lower class.[15] He refers directly to the Popish Plot in the play when Sulpitius, a supporter of Marius, exclaims:

> Keep the Fools hot, preach Dangers in their Ears.
> Spread False Reports, o' th' Senate, working up
> Their Madness to a Fury, quick and desp'rate,
> Till they run headlong into civil Discords (Act III, p. 26).

As early as the autumn of 1679, then, Otway's drama had created a world in which all sense of political allegiance had been greatly weakened. The play depicts the consequences of civil war and political instability.[16] The language of honour was vestigial in this play and was invoked only in the martial scenes where honour had become military glory, to be won on the battlefield. Thus Marius, banished from the city by Sylla, eventually manages to raise an army to take Rome again. He rejects offers of peace from Rome's senators, feeling that his honour has been slighted. Cinna, his cohort, speaks for him, saying to the Senate, 'Thus 'tis you think to heal up smarting Honour/By pouring flatt'ring Balm into the Wound' (Act V, p. 54). Despite extolling the military prowess of the plebian, Marius, Otway ensures that patrician values ultimately overcome the power of a 'rabble'.[17] When Sylla enters Rome, Marius realises that the end is near for him. The closing lines warn against personal ambition and lust for power. It is Marius himself who, in despair, issues a stark warning to the audience, advising them:

> Be warn'd by me, ye Great ones, how y'embroil
> Your Country's Peace, and dip your Hands in Slaughter,
> Ambition is a Lust that's never quencht (Act V, p. 66).

---

[15] Munns has argued that Otway is reminding the audience the nation must unite against a common enemy in order to avoid civil war. See Munns, *The Plays of Thomas Otway*, p. 103.

[16] Ibid, p. 102.

[17] Ibid, p. 98. Munns has noted that in this play Otway has responded to new kinds of political activity.

Of course ambition - or the desire for personal fame or glory - had always been a component of the honour code. However, when it was not linked with a sense of service to the crown or allegiance to a monarch it could become both dangerous and divisive. This dramatic theme had already been explored at the time of the criticism of the Earl of Clarendon and his subsequent banishment in 1667. Plays like Sir Robert Howard's, *The Great Favourite*(1668) had warned against the dangers of excessive ambition. Indeed, it was considered politically 'safe' to level criticism at statesmen who had over-stepped the boundaries of their role as counsellors and had taken power into their own hands. Danby had been blamed, for example, for corrupting the mind of the King and becoming the agent of popery and arbitrary government. It was he who had paid the price for the political events that unfolded after the Popish Plot, when he was impeached and imprisoned. In his place, Shaftesbury emerged as a powerful statesman in 1679, yet to those who supported the 'court' party he was a threat. By March 1679 the battle lines had been drawn and Danby had disappeared from the political scene, resigning in the hope of avoiding impeachment. The first Exclusion Parliament was by this time in session. When the dramatic season opened in the spring of 1679 two plays, *The Tragedy of Sertorius* and *The Ambitious Statesman,* appeared and they dealt directly with the dangers of challenges to authority from excessively ambitious statesmen. Although these two plays shared a common theme, they differed greatly in tone.

John Bancroft's *The Tragedy of Sertorius,* first performed in March 1679, was set in the context of a time of civil war when allegiances were shifting and there was no obvious figure of authority. The protagonist of his play, Sertorius, is a Cromwell-like figure who acts as the champion of the people. Challenges to the political status quo in this play appear to be multi-layered, for while Sertorius is ready to take matters into his own hands in Rome, he in turn is challenged by Perpenna, a villain. Intending to free the people of Rome from the tyranny of Sylla, Sertorius returns from exile and enters Rome as a hero. Yet he ends up being accused of being a tyrant himself. It is likely that the playwright was commenting here on the ambivalent political role of Shaftesbury. Shaftesbury's supporters certainly used the rhetoric of liberty that pervades the first few acts of this play. Thus, in the first act, the senators who support Sertorius call him a 'man divine' who has arrived in time to save Rome from tyranny and Sertorius claims that 'We fight for Liberty and for our god'.[18] Although Susan Owen has argued that both sides, those who opposed the policies of the King and those who supported the views of Shaftesbury, used the language of liberty and law,[19] this language had become a mask for ambition. The plot of the play is imbued with duplicity and shifting allegiances. Thus the villain, Perpenna, pledges a false allegiance to Sertorius and invites him to enter Rome. Sertorius behaves with honour, pledging himself to protect Rome's imperial boundaries. He hears of the plots against his life but is convinced by pledges of loyalty in the name of honour. Ultimately he is betrayed and murdered, after which the conspirators turn on Perpenna. The ambition of Sertorius, although seemingly well-intentioned, has led Rome into civil war. However, his supporter, Bebricus, compliments him claiming that 'In his rough soul such Honour is imprest' (Act IV, p. 37). In the play, Sertorious is portrayed as being preoccupied with personal glory which in the last instance is a threat to a political stability. Nevertheless, he displays an overriding duty to Rome. The playwright seems confused about the nature of authority and there is no clear sense of justice in the conclusion of the play which contains a warning that to follow personal

---

[18] John Bancroft, *The Tragedy of Sertorius* (London, 1679), Act I , p. 4.
[19] Owen, *Restoration Theatre and Crisis*, p. 120.

principles leads to destruction. The playwright supports the Hobbesian view that obedience to authority - even a flawed one- ensures political stability.

This pessimistic outcome can be contrasted with the tone of John Crowne's *The Ambitious Statesman; or the Loyal Favourite* (1679) a play first performed in the same month as *The Tragedy of Sertorius.* Although the action of Crowne's play takes place in medieval France, *The Ambitious Statesman* comments on recent political events by personifying Danby as the evil constable of France who has sold his country out to England. Loyalty is heavily stressed in this play and it is loyalty that redeems the constable's perfidious machinations. At this early stage in the Exclusion Crisis, it would seem, playwrights were still trying to bring about a favourable political outcome through exhortations to loyalty.

Crowne's play is dedicated to the Duchess of Albermarle, the grand-daughter of the Duke of Newcastle and wife of the then Duke of Albermarle, son of General Monck. In the dedication, Crowne terms Monck and Newcastle - who had fought on opposing sides in the Civil War – 'two Hercules pillars of honour and loyalty, beyond which none can travel'.[20] He emphasises, in particular, the Duchess's relationship with her grandfather, the Duke of Newcastle, who was a pillar 'erected against the great flood of Rebellion' (p.143). The prologue refers directly to the Popish Plot that had sparked the Exclusion Crisis by warning of the dangers inherent in the volatile situation. Disagreement between the Anglican Church and Catholic Church would open up the

---

[20] Maidment and Logan (eds.), *Dramatic Works of John Crowne* (4 vols., Edinburgh and London, 1873), III, p. 142.

floodgates to popular sects, mirroring the political situation of the 1640s. Crowne warned his audience that:

> now the nation in a tempest rowles,
> And old St. Peter's jostles with St. Pauls......
> And whilst these two great ladies fight and brawl,
> Pickpocket Coventicle whore gets all (Prologue).

The moral flaw in the constable is his obsession with personal honour or glory and he is portrayed as a highly Machiavellian character. We learn that he has ruled France for ten years and that he is plotting a rebellion which will overthrow the monarchy. Even the constable's natural affection for his own son, the Duke of Vendosme, is twisted, as he asserts that he places power and status above natural affection, adding that 'I got him in one night, I did not get/ Honour so fast: I toil'd for that some years' (Act II, p. 176). He defines himself succinctly by stating that 'Power is my pleasure' (Act I, p 158) and then admits that he has played one religion off against another, just as Danby had been accused of doing. The constable goes on to claim that he will 'Set up all faiths, that so there may be none/And make religion throw religion down/ I will seem loyal, the more rogue to be' (Act I, p.159). He damages the relationship between the king and his son, the dauphin, by questioning the dauphin's loyalty to his father. Although the natural order of loyalty and love is subverted in the character of the constable, the Duke of Vendosme personifies honour. Vendosme warns the king against ambitious men who use war as a means to attain glory, observing:

> he who cuts the throats of men for glory,
> Is a vain savage fool; he strives to build
> Immortal honours on man's mortality,
> And glory on the shame of human nature (Act II, p. 177).

Vendosme is loyal to the dauphin but his father stirs up enmity between the two young men. The constable even uses Vendosme's own troops against the crown. The duke discovers the full extent of his father's duplicity but not until he is to be racked for treason. The final act vindicates the honour of Vendosme through the discovery of his father's conspiracy, although by this time it is too late. The duke does not survive. In the final scene Vendosme directs his persecutors to 'Fall at your Prince's feet, and ask him pardon' and then later he adds, 'Nor shall you all here rob me of my honour' (Act V, p. 235).

This play contains strong warnings against the dangers of rebellion through ambition. It integrates many of the dramatic themes of the immediate post-Restoration period with exhortations to loyalty and warnings against civil disorder based on popular support. Beyond that it is royalist in outlook. Although the kingdom has been threatened, the monarchy has remained intact. Crowne's closing lines are exhortations to loyalty:

> Princes are sacred!
> Whate'er religion rebels may pretend,
> Murderers of Kings are worshippers of devils;
> For none but devils are worshipt by such sacrifices.
> They who derive all power from the people,
> Do basely bastardise it with that buckler,
> Which fell from heaven to protect innocence (Chapter V, p. 238).

Crowne was making an impassioned plea to the nation not to repeat the errors of 1641. He must have felt that he needed to stress the importance of loyalty at this time for the political dangers were very real. There appeared to be two strong contenders for the succession: the legitimate heir, the King's Catholic brother, James, and Charles's own illegitimate son, the Duke of Monmouth. Exiled by Charles, Monmouth returned to England illicitly in November 1679 and was cheered as a Protestant hero in the streets. Most frightening of all for the King, those who opposed James's succession had organised a petitioning movement. Petitioning had been banned by Charles but it was extremely difficult to prohibit and many thousands of signatures were collected, thus launching a pamphlet war. Monmouth now embarked on a triumphant 'progress' through the West of England where he touched for the King's evil, thereby assuming the prerogative of kings. No one knew what would happen next and not surprisingly contemporary dramatists became obsessed with issues of succession and the breakdown of familial order. On the stage, brother was pitted against brother, father against son, and son against father. The prevailing mood at this time was one of deep-seated pessimism.

Contested Succession: The Polarisation of Opinion, 1680

The contested succession was the issue that polarised political opinion during the early 1680s most of all, pitting the 'exclusionists' or 'Whigs' against the supporters of the legitimate succession who took the name of 'Tories'. In the wake of a mass petitioning campaign that called for James's exclusion and the return of Monmouth after his triumphant tour, the victory of the exclusionists appeared to be an imminent possibility. Charles remained intransigent: he would not part with any of the prerogatives of the crown nor the true succession. The aftermath of the petitioning campaign saw the publication of Sir Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha* (1680) a work which justified the divine right of kings by the use of biblical precedents. Filmer saw the king as being second in command to God and as a paternal authority who represented the authority of God on earth. He argued that 'kings were the fathers of their people and the successors of Adam', leaving no room for negotiation in his advocacy of passive obedience to the crown.[21] On the other hand, the public theatre reflected all of the anxieties and uncertainties of the

---

[21] Sir Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha, or the Natural Power of Kings* (London, 1680), Chapter 1, p. 12.

crisis.[22] At first, the playwrights were not necessarily royalist in outlook and were prepared to engage with contentious political issues. However, things were soon to change. The rapid shifts in dramatic responses to the emerging crisis are best exemplified by the plays of Nahum Tate.

Nahum Tate was the first playwright whose productions during the Exclusion Crisis directly addressed the issues of a troubled succession. Tate, a prolific writer, was later to become the poet laureate of England from 1695 until 1715. Born during the Commonwealth in Ireland, he came from a long line of Puritan ministers who were connected with Trinity College, Dublin. On his arrival in London he collaborated with Dryden and became a poet and translator of Latin verse. Tate's first play to be shown on the London stage was *The Loyal General* (1679) which was followed shortly after by John Crowne's *The Misery of the Civil War* (1680). *The Loyal General* and *The Misery of the Civil War* were both concerned with the highly topical issue of a contested succession and were clearly indicative of the rising political temperature. Tate's play, however, was more tentative and oblique in its political references.

Tate's play, *The Loyal General* is a deeply pessimistic play. Derek Hughes has termed it unreservedly pro-Monmouth[23] and it was certainly performed almost immediately after Monmouth's sudden return to England in November 1679. Already deprived of his generalship, Monmouth had arrived unbidden in England after which he was stripped of his other offices of power. Against this background of heightened

---

[22] Douglas Canfield, *Heroes and States: On The Ideology of Restoration Tragedy* (Kentucky, 1999) See p. 37.

[23] Hughes, *English Drama 1660-1700*, p. 273.

political tension, Tate is anxious, in his prologue, to remind the audience of the dangers of Civil War and to rekindle memories of regicide, telling them:

> The plays that take on our corrupted Stage,
> Methinks resemble the distracted Age,
> Noise, Madness all unreasonable things,
> That strike at Sense as Rebels do at Kings,
> The Rise of Forty-one our Poets write,
> And you are grown to judge like Forty-Eight.[24]

As the plot unravels, Tate subtly admonishes the crown for its failure to ensure an untroubled succession. The plot concerns a manipulative queen who wishes to usurp the succession on behalf of her own daughters. It was thus politically highly topical and contentious. If James was excluded from the succession, who then would be eligible to assume the crown? Certainly Monmouth's supporters believed he had a valid claim, but Charles II had numerous illegitimate children who were also possible future contenders and Charles had made no assurances to Monmouth.

Tate's play opens with a critique of the king. A courtier, Diphilus, criticises him by telling him that he has brought his troubles on himself through his own lack of judgement: 'Were you as quick to punish a Delinquent/As to reward the smallest Worth', Diphilus admonishes the monarch, 'Your Throne had still been fixt' (Act I, p. 6). The disloyal queen plots with Escalus, a courtier who has made an alliance with a foreign power. Here we surely see an allusion to the suspected actions of Danby. The character of Escalus can be contrasted to that of Theocrin, the general, who can be seen to represent Monmouth and who is fashioned in the manner of the loyal general of Orrery's drama of the early 1660s. Theocrin returns from banishment pledging loyalty to his king and he behaves in a consistently honourable way as does Arviola, the daughter of the queen, who

---

[24] Nahum Tate, *The Loyal General* (London, 1680), Prologue.

is a pawn in her evil designs. Although this plot is reminiscent of the heroic tragedies of the early 1660s, Tate is not able to construct a dramatic scheme that protects the succession. The forces of evil are too strong. Theocrin proclaims himself to be a loyal subject of the king, and is given the hand of Arviola, but then it becomes politically expedient for her to be given in marriage to Ardannes, the invading king of Thrace. The invasion of the Thracians, orchestrated by Escalus, has parallels with Whig suspicions of Danby's collusion with the king of France to invade England. Danby had countered these suspicions in 1677 by arranging the marriage of Mary, daughter of James, to William of Orange. The Whigs supported a strengthened alliance with the Netherlands and this move was aimed at restoring Protestant confidence. The manipulation of political alliances by Escalus could well have been interpreted by a 1680s audience as another direct attack on Danby for, despite his earlier conciliatory moves, there was deep public distrust about his political motives.

The concluding act of Tate's play is very bleak indeed. Theocrin is seized by the king. He fears that Arviola will desert him and he warns her, 'take heed/How thou reviled'st a Souldiers Loyalty' (Act IV, p. 42). Later Theocrin cautions his troops to remain loyal. 'Forget my Abuses from the Court', he exhorts them, 'spight of all my Wrongs be Loyal still' (Act V, p. 47). The play is imbued with the language of loyalty, particularly in the person of Arviola, through her devotion to Theocrin. But loyalty as honour ultimately fails. Both Arviola and Theocrin die, the queen's plot is revealed and the king resigns leaving the succession open to popular election. In the context of the Exclusion Crisis the play can be read, both as an appeal to loyalty, and as counsel to the King to reward and trust his supporters. Tate underlines Theocrin's loyalty and exonerates him from any plots to take the throne. What stands out, however, is that there is no clear right of succession and Tate leaves the choice to the people: a pointer to the dangers inherent in the strength of anti-exclusion sentiments. Clearly at this early stage in the Exclusion Crisis, Tate openly supported the claims of Monmouth.

As we have seen, John Crowne had recently published a highly political play, *The Ambitious Statesman,* which criticised the stewardship of Danby and which had ended on a pessimistic note by leaving a political vacuum. Crowne again aired his anxieties about the contested succession in his *Misery of the Civil War* which might have been produced in 1680 was an adaptation of the second and third parts of Shakespeare's *Henry VI.*[25] Hastily put together as the political tension mounted, the play took a stronger anti-exclusion position by advocating adherence to a code of honour in which loyalty to the crown was the central tenet. In *The Misery of the Civil War,* Crowne underscored his anti-exclusionist position but he also equivocated by obliquely criticising the honour of the King. Nevertheless, the tone of the play was admonitory because of its strong emphasis on how the failure of bonds of obligation or honour would lead finally to rebellion and a threatened succession. Through its close engagement with contemporary politics the play attempted to influence the outcome of the crisis. Although T*he Misery of the Civil War* was a revival of a play dealing with the civil war between the houses of York and Lancaster, the play had an obvious resonance with the Civil War of 1642-46.[26] Crowne made other historical parallels too, for his characterisation of Queen Margaret as the Duchess of Portsmouth, a French woman, stirred up fears of the political influence of

---

[25] See Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume, 'Dating Play Premières from Publication Data, 1660-1700', *Harvard Library Bulletin*, 22 (1974), pp. 374-405, p. 391.

[26] As Matthew Wikander has noted the Henry VI plays offered Crowne stories about the legacy of civil war which connected with recent memory. See Wikander, 'The Spitted Infant: Scenic Emblem and Exclusionist Politics in Restoration Adaptations of Shakespeare', 37, *SQ* (1986), pp. 340-358, p. 341.

Catholicism in the court of Charles II.[27] The play overtly addressed many problems that were connected with the Exclusion Crisis: the threat of noble faction through ambition, for example, and the importance of assuring a peaceful legitimate succession. Crowne's play was open to several different interpretations for there were oppositional elements included in the text. However, whichever way the audience chose to read the political messages, the playwright underscored the point that loyalty to the crown was the only viable political solution to ensure political stability.

Jack Cade, the figure of rebellion in the play, was clearly intended by Crowne to represent Titus Oates, the man whose revelations had whipped up the populace of London against James's succession.[28] Clifford, a nobleman who serves as an exemplar of chivalry in the play, is made to say that 'the Tricks of ambitious men poison the people to disloyalty'.[29] These tricks affect even Henry himself, who reveals his self-doubt when he tells his queen, just as he is about to relinquish his crown, that 'I have no Title to it/But what is founded on Rebellion/The murder of a King and usurpation' (Act II, p. 26).

Many of the tensions of the Exclusion Crisis were played out on the stage in this work and the honour of the king himself was criticised. Thus when Edward IV is accused of womanising, he replies to his critics, 'My heart to Beauty always lies too open/ And that infirmitie thou givest no quarter' (Act II, p. 39). The parallels with the amorous Charles II were clear. Yet despite the numerous passing asides that criticise the

---

[27] Maguire, 'Factionary Politics, in John Crowne's Henry VI' in *Culture and Society in the Stuart Restoration* , p. 74.

[28] See Matthew Wikander in 'Scenic Emblem and Exclusionist Politics in Restoration Adaptations of Shakespeare', p. 346. He notes that Cade's speeches connect with the 1640s for they portray 'levelling' sentiments.

[29] John Crowne, *The Misery of the Civil War* (London, 1680), Act I, p. 10.

sexual preoccupations of the king, the single most important message of the play is that honour is due to kings; for when loyalty to the crown is undermined, the whole body politic suffers. At one point, Clifford, in a powerful speech, accuses the dissembler Warwick of lack of honour, crying, 'Thou hast divided thyself from the King/The spring of honour, so then thou has no honour' (Act I, p. 13).

Within the play there are frequent allusions to the bonds of service due to the crown and to the breaking of oaths. Both Richard and Warwick pledge themselves to Edward. Edward, however, redefines kingship by rejecting the divine right of kings. His attitude illuminates a conceptual shift, a de-mystification of kingship. At this point Crowne appears to qualify his support for the crown. The criticism of Charles II that had surfaced in the 1660s and had continued for more than a decade had continued subtly to undermine the King's right to rule and his right to command obedience. Edward makes a public apology for the faults of kings by saying that when a king puts on royal robes he 'does not/Therefore put off th' Infirmities of man' (Act III, p. 41). Henry, on his restoration to the throne through the machinations of Warwick, also stresses royal vulnerability, remarking that kings are subject to the vagaries of faction and their rule is contingent on their own personal honour. Henry goes on to admit that kings can be judged by their subjects confessing that:

> Kings may lose their rights for want of Virtue
> And Subjects are the judges of that Virtue;
> Then Kings are Subjects and all Subjects Kings
> And by that Law that Subjects may destroy
> Their Kings for want of Virtue (Act V, p. 58).

Although Crowne clearly felt uneasy about the inherent political risks of the king's besmirched virtue, he, nevertheless, advocated loyal support for the crown. His opposition to *de facto* rule was illustrated by the appearance of Richard II's ghost who swears vengeance on all usurpers and traitors. This powerful play highlights the dangers of faction and misplaced loyalty and is admonitory in its tone. Thus Edward IV, the newly-crowned king, cautions his political opponents that 'tis better obeying their Kings, the Fathers of their Country/ Than run and wast their Fortunes and their Liberties' (Act V, p. 71).

Both John Crowne and Nahum Tate chose to adapt Shakespeare in this highly charged political atmosphere because Shakespeare's fears about civil war were expressed his history plays about the Wars of the Roses. The controversies that started the civil war in the '1640s drew parallels with the 1680s'.[30] Like Dryden, Tate laid the blame for political tension on noble factions who were motivated by a heightened sense of personal honour. By the time the play was performed, political events had taken a far more threatening turn. Issues about the succession were paramount and threatened the future of the Stuart monarchy itself. Although the 'new' plays produced during the Exclusion Crisis did not revive the language of chivalry and fealty that had characterised the heroic plays of the 1660s, the Shakespeare adaptations restored this language. When the succession was under threat the rebuilding of the ties of fealty to the crown was all important.

Tate had shifted his position by 1680 in order to construct a loyalist text. He contrived to rekindle the discourse of honour as loyalty in an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Richard II* (1595). His earlier play, *The Loyal General*, had supported the claims of

---

[30] See Wikander, 'Scenic Emblem and Exclusionist Politics in Restoration Adaptations of Shakespeare', p. 349.

Monmouth, leaving the issue of the succession to the whim of the people. As the political temperature rose, however, sparking real fears of another civil war, Tate was anxious to affirm legitimate succession. Tate's choice of this particular Shakespeare play as a vehicle for his message was distinctly tactless. When the play was first performed for Queen Elizabeth, she was less than amused to discern a parallel between Richard II who, of course, had no heir and herself.[31] The parallel with Charles - a monarch without a legitimate heir - was obvious and indeed when the play was published during Elizabeth's reign, the deposition scene was always omitted.

It is perhaps rather surprising that Nahum Tate should have chosen to adapt Shakespeare's *Richard II* following the presentation of the second Exclusion Bill to Parliament. The King had by this time come under personal attack when Shaftesbury had tried to declare James a recusant and to label the Duchess of Portsmouth as a French agent. Tensions were running high on both sides and the personal attacks on James and Louise de Keroualle were direct assaults on the integrity of the crown itself. In this tense climate, Tate attempted to revive the innate honour and virtue of kingship through the speeches of Richard II. Essentially, however, *The History of King Richard II* was a very grim tale revolving around the banishment and subsequent deposition and death of a king

Tate's play, entitled the *The Sicilian Usurper, The History of King Richard II* was first performed in early December 1680, some nine months after *The Misery of the Civil War*. Not surprisingly, the censors considered it to be too highly charged a subject when both Charles and James were under personal attack and the play was banned. In an

---

[31] Christopher Spencer, *Nahum Tate* (New York, 1972), p. 78.

attempt to re-stage the play Tate gave it a new title, *The Tyrant of Sicily*, and when it was performed again in January 1681, he made some changes to the names of the characters. This also proved unsuccessful, and the play was only performed for two nights. In the preface Tate defended his play, claiming that it was not disloyal and indeed on close examination of the text it seems that he was right to say so. Disingenuously, Tate defended his adaptation when he wrote in the epistle dedicatory that 'why a History of those Times shou'd be suppresst as a Libel upon Ours is past my understanding'.[32] In fact, Tate's adaptation revived the language of fealty and his characterisation of Richard II was that of a man of honour: a man misunderstood and surrounded by factious nobles. It was not the honour of the king that was shown as at fault in the play, rather it was the weakened bonds of fealty which were shown to destroy the king. The collapse of honour as loyalty led ultimately to the death of Richard II.

The most important change was to revise the persona of Richard himself, thereby ennobling his character. Tate made no textual changes to Shakespeare's language of fealty in the first few acts. Gaunt, when speaking to the King in the first act repeats Shakespeare's words when he calls him my 'most honour'd Liege' (Act I, p. 2) In Tate's version, Richard retains all the virtuous attributes of kingship. The playwright highlights Richard's sense of justice and clemency when he makes the king tell Bullingbroke and Mowbray to 'forget, forgive, conclude and be agreed' (Act I, p. 4). Mowbray wants to defend his personal honour but continues to swear his loyalty to the crown. Richard bans armed combat between the two nobles. In this first act, there is a direct reference to the Civil War which Tate has added to his adaptation. 'Our eyes detest the spectacle of Civil

---

[32] Nahum Tate, *The Sicilian Usurper, The History of Richard II* (London, 1681), Epistle Dedicatory.

Wounds', one character observes, 'from whence the dire infection of general war may spring' (Act I, p. 19). In Tate's play, as in Shakespeare's play, the two chief characters are banished. It is here that the play connects to contemporary events because of the recent forced absence of both James and Monmouth from the court.

The overriding purpose of Tate's dramatic discourse, however, was to warn against the threat of faction to succession. Although Richard is criticised for the way he has handled some of the affairs of state, he swears to 'redress our States corruption' (Act II, p. 14). York is unable to stop the designs of Bullingbroke who has broken all the codes of honour by challenging the crown.[33] Bullingbroke has appealed to the rabble, providing a parallel with contemporary criticisms of Shaftesbury. When Bullingbroke returns illicitly to England he begs forgiveness and is allowed to come back from exile. Tate retains the language of fealty or obeisance but substantially cuts the dialogue between the two men. The perfidious Bullingbroke seizes the king and it is left for the queen to try to convince Richard to retain his title. This is a departure from Shakespeare's text in which the queen is told of the king's deposition by a gardener. Instead, in Tate's play, the queen is a template of loyalty. She calls on loyalty within the court, though her words go unheeded by the warring nobles. 'Has Loyalty so quite renounc'd the World', she asks rhetorically, 'that none will yet strike for an injur'd King?' (Act IV, p. 39). Significantly, the scene in which Richard resigns the crown to Bullingbroke was considerably shortened by Tate. Whereas Shakespeare depicted a king whose inner weakness brought tragedy on himself, Tate subtly altered Shakespeare's characterisation of the weak monarch. Excising most of Richard's soliloquies of self-doubt, he portrayed instead a king who is

---

[33] Douglas Canfield notes that loyalty is stressed in thin play. See *Heroes and States*, p. 41.

brought down by the outside forces of noble faction. Tate acknowledges the nobility of Richard when he retains Shakespeare's line in Richard's resignation speech in which he says, 'Heav'n pardon all Oaths that are broke to me/Heav'n keep unbroke all vows made to thee' (Act IV, p. 42).

The possibility of the outbreak of civil war pervades the final part of Tate's play. Significantly, Richard vows, 'Let Crowns and sceptres go/Before I sink 'em in subjects blood' (Act IV, p. 39). Through the resignation of his crown, the play contrives to make Richard a hero, who saves the country from civil war. This could have been read by the exclusionists as a demand for James to resign his claims and certainly would not have pleased the court party. The queen feels dishonour on Richard's behalf and tells him that 'foul rubbish lodge in thy annointed Locks/O thou dishonour'd flower of Majesty'. (Act V, p. 47). In contrast, however, to Shakespeare's play in which the newly crowned Henry IV swears to do penance for the death of Richard, Tate's Henry pleads for the restoration of the rightful king.

Each of these three plays – Tate's *Loyal General* and *Sicilian Usurper,* and Crowne's *Misery of the Civil War* - made topical political connections allowing audiences during the Exclusion Crisis to interpret them in the context of rapidly unfolding contemporary events. The history plays of Shakespeare, in particular, were ideal for the exploration of contested political issues. The playwrights at this stage in the crisis were anxious to uphold the political status quo and for this reason, in the main, they concurred that faction or personal ambition was the most potent threat to monarchy. Thus, the ambitious statesmen in the plays could either have been identified as Danby or

Shaftesbury depending on the political affiliation of the reader. The way in which a play was read or observed depended on a multiplicity of factors and indeed the nuance of the language could be interpreted differently depending on the political circumstances at the time of performance or reading.

However, as events in London brought about a polarisation of political opinion, a few playwrights contrived to write about fictitious kingdoms that were distanced from political reality. The gravity of the political situation necessitated a distancing from the actual events, yet in reality drama was intensely involved in political debate. Two examples of such productions were William Whitaker's, *The Conspiracy; or the Change of Government* (1680) and Charles Saunders's new play, *Tamerlane the Great* (1681). Both plays involved disputed succession between two brothers. Whitaker's tragedy, the earlier of the two, was permeated with a greater sense of pessimism. *The Conspiracy* tells of a sultan who is murdered and the play turns around an unsuccessful attempt to replace the rightful heir with another of his sons. The new king is threatened by deceitful relatives and a faithless queen who is at the centre of a dissolute court.

This is one of the few plays written during the Exclusion Crisis in which the force for 'evil' is personified in a woman and *The Conspiracy* is linked thematically with earlier plays of the post-Restoration period, such as Dryden's *The Indian Queen* or Behn's *Abdelazer* (1676).[34] The prologue appeals to the nation to be loyal to the king and to cease petitioning, declaring:

> Let Corporations leave petitioning,
> And learn all due Allegiance to the King.

---

[34] For the most part, the plays published at the height of the Exclusion Crisis portray female characters as paradigms of loyalty, as faithful lovers who are martyrs for love.

Let Politicians not be so hot,
To Swear that a Spring-Tides is a Popish Plot.
Forget not what is due to Majesty.[35]

Written in rhyming verse, *The Conspiracy* is resonant of the drama produced in the immediate aftermath of the Restoration. However, it makes no reference to civil war but is rather an exhortation to loyalty and a plea for settled succession. It highlights the dangers of conspiracies and of plots by ambitious courtiers. The plot is orchestrated through the machinations of an evil queen mother who has designs on the life of her own son. The playwright sets out arguments about the nature of kingship by stressing that loyalty and honour is due to kings. Underlining the divine right of kings, the sultan's sister, Flatra, observes that 'Our Will's, our Law and whensover we please/We alter or abolish our decrees' (Act I, p. 8).

As the play develops, the sultan comes directly under threat from a conspiracy - though the playwright at this point is careful to introduce two characters who are the epitome of loyalty. The two men swear to the sultan: 'Brave Prince/ for thee we'll spend our latest breath/To save thy life, or to revenge thy death'(Act III, p. 24). Nevertheless, they are unable to save the sultan. He is murdered and his son, Mahomet, is crowned in his place. Despite its protestations of loyalty, this play is critical of the politics of a corrupt court in which merit is overlooked. This refrain was a recurrent one from those who had supported Charles II and not been rewarded for their efforts. Thus the loyal Ipfir states:

The Royalist in vain to court does go
The Rogue that made him needy keeps him so......
These Rogues get Pardon, and Preferment too,

---

[35] William Whitaker, *The Conspiracy; or the Change of Government* (London, 1680), Prologue.

The Men for gain, and Women for their Sport (Act IV, p. 42).

Later on in the play, another plot is foiled to replace Mahomet with one of his younger brothers. This play not only upholds legitimate succession but also revitalises the language of loyalty. Mahomet's closing speech sums up the play's didactic purpose:

I thank you for your loyalty and care,
While I have hearts so stout and heads so wise
One to attaque, the other to advise
I look upon my self as absolute (Act V, p. 54).

Whitaker, writing about the anxieties of a disputed succession, was able to conclude on an optimistic note. Saunders's play, *Tamerlane the Great,* was altogether more positive in tone, because it told the story of a thwarted conspiracy against the crown. Dryden, who helped to write the preface, assisted the young playwright in his work. The timing and setting of the play was highly political. It was performed for the King and the audience may well have included many members of the Commons and the Lords. *Tamerlane* was performed immediately before the opening of Parliament in Oxford on 19 March 1681,[36] prior to the reading of the Exclusion bill. The production was a plea for hereditary succession. The atmosphere was tense. After the dissolution of Parliament in January in the interests of safety, Parliament had been called again to Oxford where it might be free from the influence of the London mob. Many now feared an outbreak of violence. Members of Parliament had taken precautions by bearing arms and the road between Oxford and London had been heavily guarded. Saunders's play formed a strong contrast to the earlier revisions of Shakespeare published in 1679 which were more tentative about the nature of loyalty and more admonitory in tone.

---

[36] See Milhous and Hume, 'Dating Play Premières', p. 39'.

Tamerlane, like Whitaker's *Conspiracy*, revolves around familial upheaval. Tamerlane, the king of the Tartars, is portrayed as a strong monarch and contrasted with the weak kings who appeared in plays at the commencement of the Exclusion Crisis. Tamerlane is unsure about the loyalty of his exiled son, Arsanes. Sibling rivalry plays a part, too, since Arsanes is in competition with his supposed brother, Mandricand, both for the affection of his father and for the love of Asteria, the daughter of the enemy Turk. The play retells the story of the exiled prince who professes loyalty to his father. Arsanes could have been either James or Monmouth. Saunders's play leaves no doubt in the minds of the audience that loyalty, as honour, is due to a father, the monarch. He rebuilds and reasserts the honour of a son, who has been misunderstood and yet who retains the virtues of honour and loyalty. That Saunders was attempting to make dramatic connections with Monmouth is highly likely, for Arsanes begs Tamerlane, 'Behold your wretched Son, your Darling one/ Now less than Stranger to you, banish't, spoil'd/ Of all my Honours, Father, Country, Name'.[37]

Arsanes is unflinchingly loyal to his brother, Mandricand, even though his brother is determined to undermine him. Mandricand, however, is an imposter: he is Odmar's son. The plot nearly succeeds through the machinations of the evil courtier, Odmar. When Tamerlane realises that Arsanes's loyalty is unblemished he gives him the crown and the hand in marriage of the Turkish princess, for whom he has waited so long. The concluding act - which assures a hereditary succession and the reconciliation of two warring forces - might have been read at the time as a positive sign that the hopes of exclusionists were to be fulfilled: that the crisis would pass and that opposition would be

---

[37] Charles Saunders, *Tamerlane the Great* (London, 1681), Act II, p. 15.

reconciled in agreement. Indeed, on 26 March, Shaftesbury had approached the King and had suggested that Monmouth be named his successor in order to guarantee the Protestant succession.[38] Saunders's play equivocates since the manipulative courtier, Odmar, may well have been intended to be Shaftesbury himself who had supported the claims of Monmouth. *Tamerlane* is a good example of how, at the height of crisis, the characterisation of plays was ambiguous, encouraging various interpretations.

In some ways, *Tamerlane* reads more like a play of the immediate post-Restoration period in which values tended to be more clearly defined. Honour is upheld as loyalty and the characters do not shift allegiances. Moral values are consistent. Written after the publication of Filmer's *Patriarcha*[39], the play upheld unwavering loyalty to paternal authority. The themes that had pervaded the drama of the crisis concerned the dangers of faction, of ambitious statesmen and most importantly the dangers surrounding a contested succession. The whole crux of the Exclusion Crisis was religion. It was anti-popery that had initially fuelled the succession crisis, but during the early stages of the crisis dramatic productions had made only oblique references to anti-papist sentiments. It was not until the height of the crisis that strongly anti-Catholic themes began to emerge. Pope-burning processions were prevalent in 1679 and it was only natural that anti-Catholicism should have become a theme for dramatic representation. The discourse of anti-popery was not, however, the exclusive domain of the 'whigs' led by Shaftesbury. Royalist writers like John Crowne also engaged in anti-Catholic rhetoric - though the language of those who supported the legitimate succession was altogether more restrained. Both sides, however, did portray the Catholic Church in a

---

[38] David Ogg, *England in the Reign of Charles II* (2 vols, Oxford, 1955,) II, p. 618.

[39] Filmer died in 1653, but *Patriarcha* was not published until the height of the Exclusion Crisis.

negative light and in particular both the Whigs and the Tories characterised agents of that church as men devoid of honour.

Religion and Honour: The Crux of the Crisis

Arguably, the most powerful of the 'whig' plays of 1680 is *The Female Prelate: Being the History of the Life and Death of Pope Joan* (1680) by Elkanah Settle. Dedicated to Shaftesbury, it proclaimed that Shaftesbury was 'his Sovereign's best Subect, and his Countries truest and best Champion'.[40] Instead of dealing with the issues of faction or uncertain succession, the play was a polemic against the corruption of Rome and contrasted the Pope's wickedness with the actions of an exemplar of an honourable prince. The Catholic Church was traditionally portrayed as the enemy of Parliamentary privilege and tradition and an attack on Rome was thus a defence of the common law. Settle starkly defines the Pope as the 'whore of Babylon'. The whore in Settle's play was a female Pope disguised as a man. The Pope, Joanna Anglica, is a rejected lover of the duke of Saxony and in revenge for her rejection she murders him. Later she assumes the guise of a priest and goes to Rome. On the eve of her election as Pope, she meets the young duke of Saxony, the hero of the play, who seeks to avenge the murder of his father. Settle's portrayal of the duke of Saxony as a wronged man who seeks the truth about his murdered father, makes a dramatic connection with the young Charles II who was often represented as the wandering exiled prince in the plays of the immediate post-Restoration period. There are no hints, however, that Settle suggests that this prince is a convert to the Catholic faith. On the contrary, the prince makes no attestations of faith and is highly critical of the Catholic Church, only wishing to exonerate his father's reputation.

---

[40] Elkanah Settle, *The Female Prelate: Being the History of the Life and Death of Pope Joan* (London, 1680), Epistle Dedicatory.

Settle portrays the duke of Saxony as a man of honour who operates on the old code of honour that requires vengeance. Thus the duke declares, 'That's not enough, t'appease a Father's Ghost/Blood requires blood, and Vengeance wields a Sword/That cuts on both sides' (Act I, p. 3). This speech is in marked contrast to the speeches of the immediate post-Restoration plays in which there is no language of revenge or retribution. Saxony, in an attempt to reinstate the reputation of his father, appeals to the honour of the Roman prelates but to no avail. The duke begs them: 'Oh, Roman prelates, if you've Truth, Faith, Honour / Remove this cloud that shades my Father's Fame' (Act I. p. 16). Later, he rails against the church claiming that 'Princes are less than Dogs where base-born Priests controul' (Act II, p. 20). When he is stripped of all his honours by the papal court, moreover, he asks angrily:

> By what authority officious Slaves
> To thy proud Lord, am I thus basely seiz'd
> Against all Honour, Conscience, Law, Religion? (Act II, p. 21).

The honour of monarchy pervades this play, hence the duke's wife bids him not to forget his 'Princely Birth' telling him: 'Keep up your Courage/ and guard your Royal Honour' (Act II, p. 23). Settle is anxious to contrast the honour of a sovereign prince with the corrupt, dishonourable behaviour of the Roman prelates. Significantly, the conclusion conjures up the anger that had inspired the pope-burnings on the streets of London in 1679.[41] The true identity of the Pope - who is portrayed as a lustful whore - is revealed in the concluding act when her sex is unmasked, though not until after she has tricked her way into the bed of the duke of Saxony. When Pope Joan miscarries publicly, her true

---

[41] There was a pope-burning in 1679 on the anniversary of Elizabeth I's accession, 17 November, attended by 200,000 people. See Ogg, *England in the Reign of Charles II,* II, p. 595.

identity is revealed and she is burned at the stake. Settle's closing lines attack her as 'Rome's universal, Teeming, Fruitful, Prostitute' (Act V, p. 70).

The play was clearly popular. The prologue of the *Soldiers Fortune* by Otway 'upbraids the audience for deserting Dorset Garden to see *The Female Prelate* at Drury Lane'.[42] The Duchess of Portsmouth, the Catholic mistress of the King, was so incensed by the play that she took the court to the other playhouse to see *Macbeth* on 31 May 1680.[43] Louise De Keroualle played a significant role in the politics at Whitehall. Whig satires frequently attacked her as a 'whore' and the frequent and scurrilous - and often anonymous - satirical attacks on the duchess meant that she must have construed this play as yet another personal attack.[44] Unlike Catherine of Braganza, Louise was indeed 'fruitful' and had borne the King a son, who held the title of the Duke of Richmond.

By contrast, John Crowne's *Henry VI, The First Part* (1681) was an altogether more subtle attack on the Catholicism of the court: a court pervaded by the influence of the Duchess of Portsmouth. This many-layered play portrayed an England governed by a weak king on the brink of a civil war and troubled by an uncertain succession. Whereas Crowne's first play, *The Misery of the Civil War*, had upheld the honour of the monarchy, in this later play he seems to be treading a more politically ambiguous path. Crowne had taken sections from Shakespeare's *Henry VI Part II* and from *The Tragedy of Richard II,* but had rewritten the plays to fit his own purposes in this highly volatile political climate.

---

[42] Quoted in William Van Lennep (ed.), *The London Stage, 1660-1680* (11 vols., Carbondale, 1965) Part I, p. 287.

[43] Ibid, p. 287. Taken from 'Wilson, Theatre notes from the Newdigate Letter', p. 80.

[44] Nancy Klein Maguire, 'The Duchess of Portsmouth: English royal consort and French politician 1670-1685' in R. Malcolm Smuts (ed.), *The Stuart Court and Europe* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 247-273. Maguire discusses the importance of the political influence of the Duchess of Portsmouth in the court of Charles II.

The play was dedicated to Charles Sedley, the father of a mistress of the Duke of York and Crowne termed his production 'no indifferent satyre upon the most pompous unfortunate folly, that ever reigned over the minds of men, called Popery'.[45]

Performed in April 1681, the month after the Oxford Parliament was dissolved, Crowne's *Henry VI* was fiercely anti-French and anti-Catholic; indeed, it was banned because of its negative and hostile portrayal of a Catholic court and for its open criticism of Charles for his pro-Catholic and pro-French inclinations. It is not surprising that Crowne admitted that it was 'stifled by command'.[46] Crowne's critique of Catholicism came too close to the heart of the Charles's rule. It was out of line with the optimistic tone of current dramatic productions. Crowne's dramatisation of a weak king surrounded by a corrupt court certainly would not have found favour within the context of Charles's recent tactical victory over Parliament. The play's plot was orchestrated by the intrigues of an adulterous Catholic queen and a wicked cardinal. Crowne portrays a weak king in the person of Henry VI whose authority has been fatally undermined. The queen claims that 'the King's the Only subject in the Kingdom/ He obeys all, and no one obeys him' (Act I, p. 10). When the king is ultimately deposed by the duke of York, the queen supports her lover the duke of Suffolk. Despite the negative portrayal of kingship, this play attempts to construct an exemplar of loyalty through the character of Gloucester, who persistently proclaims his loyalty to the crown. When his wife works on him to betray his king, he expresses his fidelity asserting, 'I will keep my Loyalty/Whilst I can keep my Life' (Act III, p. 36). When Gloucester is arrested for treason, he is accused - like Danby - of taking bribes from France and of not paying the army. The king,

---

[45] John Crowne, *Henry the Sixth, The First Part with the Murder of Humphry, Duke Of Gloucester* (London, 1681), Epistle Dedicatory.

[46] Quoted in Hughes, *English Drama 1660-1700*, p. 274.

however, believes him to be innocent saying to him that he sees on his face 'a map of Honour, Truth and Loyalty' (Act III, p. 44).

This play combines all the elements that characterised anti-exclusion politics - most notably, fears of faction and uncertain succession - with the primary aim of attacking the power of the papacy and its evil agents. For example, the cardinal, whose shameful illegitimacy is exposed, has only his own interests at heart. Even though Gloucester, the epitome of loyalty, is eventually murdered with the connivance of the cardinal, the play does not conclude on an altogether negative note. The queen finally sees the error of her ways and tells her husband, 'Take comfort Royal sir, we'll all stand by you' (Act V, p. 68).[47] Surrounded by factious nobles and warring women, the king finds his authority weakened still further by the machinations of priests. In this bleak play, the code of honour, as exemplified by Gloucester, cannot save the king from the religious turmoil that surrounds him and threatens to undermine the succession.

Certainly it is not surprising that Crowne's play was banned. In contrast John Dryden's *The Spanish Fryar; or, The Double Discovery* (1680) had a most successful run. Dedicated to John, Lord Haughton, Dryden called it a 'Protestant Play to a Protestant patron'.[48] It was published before the dissolution of the Third Exclusion Parliament. Although the play is an attack on the dishonourable actions of the Catholic Church, it has a comic plot in which a corrupt Catholic friar is the object of satire. The friar, however,

---

[47] Although Nancy Maguire has likened the character of the Duchess of Portsmouth to the queen , it is more likely that the characters are composite and shifting. See Maguire., 'Factionary Politics, John Crowne's Henry VI', p. 8.

[48] *The Works of John Dryden* (Berkeley, 1992), XIV, Dedication.

is not overtly evil and this gentle satire of popery is based instead on misunderstanding and misplaced love.

In the tragic plot Dryden has created a play in which the authority of the crown is challenged by usurpation, though in the conclusion he is careful to restore legitimate rule. The play is peppered with references to how the Catholic Church has corrupted the political fabric. The friar, as the impetus for the comic plot, undermines all the tenets of honour. He advises a young woman, Elvira, about marriage, saying that 'A vow is a very solemn thing: and 'tis good to keep it: - but notwithstanding, it may be broken upon some occasions' (Act II, p. 138). When a young man meets Elvira after bribing the priest, he justifies his use of bribery and lack of honour by stating that 'tis Interest governs all the World' (Act II, p.142).

Torrismond, the hero of the play, is portrayed as a valiant warrior who is victorious against the Moors. He states that he fights for honour, not for the applause of the people. This is a critique of the practice of appealing to mob rule and can be read in various ways, as an oblique criticism either of Monmouth's recent royal progress through England or of Shaftesbury's petitioning campaign, or of both. Torrismond adds that 'I have not taste of popular Applause/ the noisie Praise of giddy Crowds as changeable as winds', and continues, 'but let Honour/Call for my Bloud; and sluce it into streams ....There I will be the first' (Act I, p. 115). Torrismond has married the usurping queen of Aragon, who fearing that her subjects are not loyal, claims, 'I fear my People's Faith' (Act III, p.152). Torrismond pleads to save the life of the imprisoned king when his wife decides that the only way to protect her crown is through regicide. When the queen refuses to listen to Torrismond's pleas, he warns her that 'never, never, shall it be forgotten/High Heaven will not forget it, after Ages/Shall with a fearful Curse remember ours' (Act III. p.156). This play rekindles memories of the Civil War – the usurpation of the throne, the unlawful killing of the king, and the divided loyalties. Initially, Torrismond defends the queen's usurpation saying that 'When from the Conqueror we hold our Lives/We yield our selves his Subjects from that hour/ For mutual Benefits make mutual Ties' (Act IV, p. 176). When he discovers that he is the true heir to Aragon, he is horrified, realising that his wife has murdered his father, and exclaims, 'I am all a Civil war within!' (Act V, p.180). Yet, Torrismond defends her against rebellious subjects and is prepared to relinquish the crown for her love.

Even at this crucial stage in the Exclusion Crisis, Dryden hints that 'love' is a force that can threaten political stability. This is a fleeting concern for Dryden, for he optimistically restores legitimate rule by resurrecting Torrismond's father, the old king Sancho. The restoration of the king leaves the lovers free to marry, their marriage effecting forgiveness and reconciliation, and the play looks forward to a positive outcome to political strife and uncertainty. The purpose of play is summed up in Torrismond's closing words:

> So mercifull a King did never live;
> Loth to revenge and easie to forgive:
> But let the bold Conspirator beware,
> For Heaven makes Princes its peculiar Care (Act V, p. 201).

The optimistic conclusion of *The Spanish Fryar* sets the tone for the drama that followed. Not only had Charles dissolved parliament, he had also signed a secret treaty with Louis XIV in which he obtained a lump sum of £40,000 and an annual subsidy. Although Charles offered to make James the king in name only, and William and Mary to be appointed as regents, exclusionists still pressed ahead for Monmouth to be named as Charles's successor. Charles was intransigent. He followed up the dissolution of Parliament on 8 April with, *A Declaration Touching the Reasons that Moved Him to Dissolve the Two Last Parliaments* which served to strengthen the growing loyalist reaction. Charles had shrewdly defeated his opponents: an increase in tax revenues meant that the King was no longer dependent on Parliament. The exclusionists had lost the battle. Shaftesbury was arrested in July and many Whigs were purged from commissions of the peace and other posts. Following the dissolution of Parliament, the discourse of drama showed a distinct shift away from the pessimism that had permeated earlier theatrical productions. For the time being, the honour of the crown had been restored.

Rekindling Honour as Loyalty, 1681

The conclusions of all the plays that were produced after 1681 were unreservedly loyalist or positive, and on the whole the tone of the dramatic productions performed in the theatre had subtly switched to one of optimism. Perhaps the most remarkable of the plays which was performed at the time of the Oxford Parliament was another adaptation of Shakespeare, *The History of King Lear* by Nahum Tate. Tate added new strands to Shakespeare's play and as a result substantially changed it. Significantly, he introduced a happy ending in which Cordelia and Edgar marry and rule the kingdom and Lear and Gloucester (who has survived) announce their retirement from public affairs.

Tate's various adaptations of Shakespeare's plays from 1679 to 1681 – which conclude with *The Ingratitude of the Commonwealth* (1681) - serve to highlight how playwrights had shifted the discourse of honour in response to the political temperature.

The volatility of the political climate meant that the plays' dramatic discourse had become multi-valent, with political exigencies demanding open-ended interpretations. Up until the spring of 1681, when it became clear that the King would succeed against the forces of parliamentary opposition, it was expedient for Tate to hold a politically equivocal position. As the strength of the crown's position became increasingly apparent, however, Tate began to take a more firmly royalist stance. His first play, *The Loyal General,* had been pessimistic in tone and left the question of the succession unresolved. It operated more as a critique of the crown which had not rewarded loyal service. At the height of the crisis, however, his position shifted and he was careful to revalidate kingship in his positive characterisation of Richard II, elevating the honour of the crown. In *The Tragedy of Richard II*, too, he railed against the dangers of faction that led to the usurpation of Richard. His adaptation of *King Lear* was concerned with issues of loyalty - for filial loyalty was the crux of Shakespeare's original - and Tate succeeded in refashioning it to celebrate a legitimate succession and the reconciliation of opposing claims.[49]

Evil is personified in the character of the bastard, Edmund, whose very illegitimacy taints his character. This could have been read as a harsh criticism of the political aspirations of Monmouth, since the play pivots around a father who is doubtful of the loyalty that he commands. This went to the heart of Restoration politics. Charles had never been assured of the loyal support of all of his subjects yet he was highly astute and sensitive to shifts in political nuance. In the wake of the crisis he had to fall back on honour as loyalty. The anxieties surrounding the Exclusion Crisis are summed up by

---

[49] At the height of the Exclusion Crisis Wikander has noted that the Shakespeare adaptations were more patriarchal and more terrified of civil disorder than the originals. See Wikander 'Scenic Emblem and Exclusionist Politics', p. 357.

Gloucester who remarks that 'Love cools, and friendship fails/In Cities mutiny, in countrys discord/ The bond of Nature Crack't twixt son and father'. [50] Edgar, the honourable son of Gloucester, is at odds with his illegitimate brother Edmund. Illegitimacy is equated with dishonour and indeed Edmund breaks all the rules of the honour code by plotting against his own father, Gloucester. Whereas in Shakepeare's play there is no direct confrontation between the two brothers, in Tate's play Edgar challenges Edmund to a duel in Act V, by terming him, 'Edmund, that usurps the Name of of Gloster' and calling him a traitor, 'false to thy gods, thy Father and thy Brother' (Act V, pp. 57, 60).

Honour is redeemed through the moral victory of Edgar and his marriage to Cordelia. Lear realises that he has undervalued loyalty and asks for the forgiveness of his daughter, Cordelia. She tells the audience, in Tate's adaptation:

> Your image suffers when a Monarch bleeds
> Tis your own Cause, for that your Succours bring,
> Revenge your Selves, and right an Injur'd King (Act IV, p. 53).

Tate's play is essentially a tale of a contested succession in which honour is threatened but then is ultimately redeemed by a king as father. Unlike in Shakespeare's original plot, honour is restored through the exemplary behaviour of Cordelia and Edgar. King Lear lives to see that all parties are reconciled in peace. Shakespeare's play had ended on a note of bleak despair. In contrast, Tate's Lear acknowledges the loyalty of his subjects through Edgar's closing lines:

> Our drooping country now erects her Head,
> Peace spreads her balmy Wings, and Plenty Blooms
> Divine Cordelia, all the Gods can witness
> How much thy Love to Empire I prefer! (Act V, p. 67).

---

[50] Nahum Tate, *The History of King Lear* (London, 1681), Act I, p. 9.

Thus the play closely paralleled political events. Tate's *King Lear* celebrated an untroubled succession, and in the relative calm of the summer of 1681 it was possible once more to remind the King that he undermined his own honour if he did not reward loyalty.

After 1680, the writers of comedies, as well as tragedies, were also becoming more overtly political. They were beginning to write a more polemically Tory drama which underpinned the King's recent victory over Parliament. The gravity of the recent crisis was highlighted by the production of Durfey's comedy, *The Royalist* (1682). The play was intended as a piece of Tory propaganda appearing at the same time as Aphra Behn's revision of *The Rump* (1660) entitled the *The Roundheads* (1681). Both plays were published after the publication of Dryden's political satire, *Absalom and Achitophel* November 1681 and imitated comedies like *The Committee* (1660) which had been performed in the earliest years of the Restoration. Durfey chides his audience in his preface, complaining that 'Loyalty and Honesty' are 'as frozen as Charity' and asked them to remember 'Boscabel'[51] and accept the play as a 'Memento of the Past.- or as Caveat of Future Mischiefs'.[52] Many of the plays written in this period of the crisis rekindled memories of 1641 and recalled the terrible events of the Civil War. Durfey states that the play was written for those who considered themselves to be loyalists. Indeed, the prologue refers approvingly to the Whigs as being 'defied' and defines royalists in a most positive vein:

---

[51] Boscabel was the location of the 'royal oak' which had afforded Charles II shelter after his escape from the battle of Worcester.
[52] Thomas Durfey, *The Royalist* (London, 1682), Preface.

> A *Royalist* by Nature, not by *Art*
> That loves his Prince and Countrey at his Heart....
> Perfect in Honour, constant to his Friend,
> And only hath one fault, he's wondrous kind.

The hero of this play is Sir Charles Kinglove who owns the oak tree in which the future Charles II had hidden after the battle of Worcester. The tree is called the 'the tree of honour' and Kinglove ritually kneels to the tree thrice yearly. Philippa, the chaste daughter of a regicide, loves him and pursues him throughout the play disguised in men's clothes. Kinglove is reminded of a Roundhead's daughter whom he had once loved but for whom he had 'sacrificed his love for loyalty'. The play comments on the subversion of authority and ridicules the Roundheads. For example, Oldcut, chairman of the committee of sequestration, is the son of a turnip seller and Durfey ridicules his social pretensions.

Whigs too come in for a great deal of censure. Jonas, entitled in the cast list 'a seditious rascal', claims to have got rid of loyalty, boasting to Oldcut that 'that weed *Loyalty* is (thanks to Providence) rooted out and *Interest* planted in its place' (Act II, p. 14). In the aftermath of the Exclusion Crisis, the word 'interest' begins to reappear in dramatic texts. During the crisis itself it had almost disappeared. It was if it had been too dangerous to acknowledge that self-interest operated as a political motive. In the years immediately preceding the revelations of the Popish Plot, interest had been the primary threat to the honour of the monarchy. Now that Charles had won his victory and ensured that the hereditary principle would stand unchallenged, dramatic discourse returned to the theme that had been considered a dangerously corrosive influence on the body politic.

The play addresses those who have turned their coats - Sir Charles remarks at one point, 'No man is the man he seems' (Act III, p. 24) - and it stresses how quickly people are willing to change sides. Durfey also comments on a world in which the lower orders have claimed an honourable status. Act IV closes with a song which ridicules the 'levelling' instincts of the Civil War:

> What reason then in Church and State
> One Man should rule another?
> When we have Pill'd and Plunder'd all,
> And Levell'd each Degree (Act IV, p. 50).

In the concluding act, reconciliation is effected when the cavalier Kinglove marries Philippa who pledges her loyalty to the crown saying, 'I hope you will think me a royalist' (Act V, p. 52). Kinglove sums up the whole rationale of the play in the final act, declaiming:

> Who loves the king, must love his Honour,
> Grandeur, and prerogative: His regal State
> Which Money must support - Tis the Nations
> Honour and Magnificence, a noble and becoming Royalty (Act V, p. 53).

By replaying the past and keying into memories of the civil war, Durfey has coded all the issues of the present which the crisis had resurrected. This play did not engage with doubts about the succession. Honour continues to be validated as the defining virtue of a royalist, as Kinglove declares, 'My Actions still in this Plebeian Age,/Grounded on Justice, Honesty and Honour/Shall teach the Erring Natives to be Loyal' (Act V, p. 63).

The performance of this play was to herald a shift in the tone and tenor of dramatic productions. Tragedies continued to be produced after the Exclusion Crisis, such as Southerne's *Loyal Brother* (1682) and Tate's adaptation of *Corialanus,* renamed *The Ingratitude of the Commonwealth* (1682). Yet they were slowly being supplanted by comedy. One of the reasons may have been that, after 1682, the two theatre companies merged. Yet the most likely reason for the decline of tragedy was that Charles's victory over Parliament had obviated the need for a dramatic exorcism of political conflict.[53] Derek Hughes has observed that 'Tory triumph turned hitherto ambivalent dramatists into partisans and thereby assisted the decline of tragedy'.[54] There were several new plays published in the wake of the Exclusion Crisis but nothing new appeared until the spring of 1688 when James had begun his campaign to pack Parliament in 1687, and political crisis once again threatened the future of the monarchy.

Conclusion

The Exclusion Crisis was, without doubt, the most politically charged episode of Charles II's reign and throughout this period the theatre was instrumental in reflecting and fashioning responses to unfolding events. At the outset of the crisis, honour had lost its potency as a force for loyalty. Instead it had become personalised and was used in the sense of personal reputation. This conceptual shift presaged an undermining of the bonds that tied the subject to the crown, for honour had lost its links with service to the crown. In the immediate aftermath of the Restoration there had been attempts by playwrights to rebuild the ethos of honour in relation to loyalty to the king. By the end of the 1660s, however, personal honour or the quest for glory had produced factions, or bred ambitious men who acted out of personal glory. The theatre in the late 1670s attempted to reopen a dialogue within the honour community, by acting as a safety valve and as an admonitory tool. By 1681 it had achieved the reinstatement of the communal values of honour. No longer did faction or 'interest' threaten the honour code. The polarisation of politics

---

[53] Hughes, *English Drama, 1660-1700*, p. 307.
[54] Ibid, p. 307.

around religious issues between 1679 and 1681 had had the potential to endanger the honour community to the point where it could have fractured as it had previously in 1641.

It was only an outright threat to the legitimate succession that heralded a shift in the dramatic discourse that aimed to revitalise bonds of loyalty and to reinstate the image of the king as father. Although the language of honour had been rekindled in the aftermath of the Exclusion Crisis, its flame burnt faintly. In the initial stages of the crisis, some playwrights were ambivalent in the way they proclaimed their support for the Tory Anglican party. It was not yet clear how the succession crisis would be resolved, although all playwrights could agree that factionalism was dangerous to the health of the body politic. Early on in the crisis there was a possibility that Charles would ultimately accede to the demands of the exclusionists and perhaps support the claims of his natural son, Monmouth. The gravity of the political situation meant that many of the plays rekindled memories of events leading up to Civil War. Nahum Tate's early dramatic career encapsulated, within a very short time space, the important shifts in political meaning of the discourse of honour. He changed from an ambivalent position of royalist support in *The Loyal General*, as a supporter of Monmouth, to a more conservative position of loyal support of the crown in his *Tyrant of Sicily* and *The History of King Lear.* There were always clear reservations, however, in his support for the Tory Anglican position. He and other playwrights in the early days of the crisis were careful to equivocate and hedge their bets. However, by the time his last Shakespeare adaptation, *The Ingratitude of the Commonwealth,* was performed, Tate was confident enough to give covert counsel to Charles's successor, James, Duke of York.

The whole tenor of politics changed rapidly after 1682. Charles was now able to govern without Parliament for he had effectively crushed the Whig opposition, preventing them from controlling parliamentary elections as they had done during the crisis.[55] Charles was never able effectively to resolve the sources of the conflict that had precipitated the Exclusion Crisis, yet for the rest of his reign he was able to balance all the forces that had threatened the Stuart succession. The theatre had played a large part in exorcising many of the issues that had beset his reign and the discourse of honour had been an effective tool in healing the rifts in the political community. Charles II was able to claim victory over his opponents and call on the loyalty that the crown had won by the close of 1681. In 1685 James inherited a stable monarchy supported by the Anglican Church. It does not seem to be going to far to suggest that the peaceful resolution of the Exclusion Crisis may have owed something to the close rapprochement between drama and politics which had taken place during this period.

---

[55] Coward, *The Stuart Age*, p. 334.

CONCLUSION

In the course of this thesis, I have argued that shifts in the concept of honour after the Restoration were expressed in dramatic texts and that a close analysis of these texts sheds an important light on the political relationships of the reign of Charles II. The discourse of honour, as it was performed on the stage, reopened a dialogue between those who had conflicting interests and reinstated a political language that was common to the governing elite. I have identified a political language which was of prime importance in the reconstruction of political relationships after 1660: a language which acted both as a mirror and as an agent of change. This thesis challenges the idea that the dramatic texts of the period 1660-81 cannot be linked by a common thematic thread. There was a recurring theme throughout the drama of the reign of Charles II - and that theme was honour. From the accession of Charles II in 1660 until his victory over the Whigs in 1681, the monarchy was challenged by a succession of political crises, culminating in the Exclusion Crisis. Because the theatre operated as the 'Nation's weather glass'[1] it was inevitable that drama would be an active agent in the political process as the crises unfolded.

I have argued that Restoration theatre was an extension of the Caroline theatre, and indeed, of Interregnum opera, both of which had a political *raison d'etre.* A detailed political analysis of the Carolean canon has been neglected because of its perceived escapist tendencies and its close association with the libertine court of Charles II. Yet, as early as 1660, politics was a fundamental concern of this drama. At first, it is true, the political voices were tentative but, once the two theatres were established, playwrights addressed political issues in new plays or revived plays which addressed contentious issues. Although, there has recently been a detailed focus among scholars on the highly politicised drama of the Exclusion Crisis, there has hitherto been no study

---

[1] Ruth McGugan, *Nahum Tate and the Coriolanus Tradition in English Drama With a Critical Edition of Tate's Ingratitude of a Commonwealth* (New York, 1987), Act II, p. 48.

dedicated to the continuity of a specific political language within the plays of Charles II's reign.

My thesis has argued that language had a share in the authority of governance and was a political agent, in that it was able to effect change. As a result, language and power were interchangeable. Historians of the seventeenth century know there were agreed sets of languages; those of scripture, the common law, custom and precedent.[2] One of these languages was the discourse of honour - and it is not surprising that that discourse was a vital tool in the rebuilding of a consensus between opposing ideologies. The languages of law and of scripture had been manipulated by both sides during the Civil War and were used in arenas of ideological combat in order to legitimise conflict on the field of battle. In the same way that religious language polarised the conflict of the Civil War, so the revival of the language of honour at the Restoration was a step towards the secularisation of language. The language of honour performed as a forum for negotiation during the Civil War because the leaders of the opposing sides belonged to the same honour community and fought within the same rules of the military honour code. The main difference was that, for Parliamentarians, honour as unconditional loyalty to the crown ceased to operate as part of that code. It is for this reason that it was imperative at the time of the Restoration to use that discourse to rebuild loyalty to crown. The tensions inherent in the Restoration Settlement created a situation which encouraged the revival of a consensual language. Nevertheless, by the late 1670s, the language of interest challenged that of honour as party politics became increasingly polarised over religious issues. This study has revealed the importance of the relationship between the language of honour and the definition of political relationships during the reign of Charles II.

Loyalty was the theme that was hammered home at the accession of Charles II and this theme was further expanded during the period 1662-64. The network of ex-Cavaliers - men like Robert Stapylton, Thomas Porter and Lord George Digby - had written or adapted plays which

---

[2] Kevin Sharpe and Steven Zwicker (eds.), *Politics of Discourse* (California, 1987), p. 8.

interwove their experiences of Civil War and Interregnum rule and used the discourse of honour to explore contemporary political issues. In this connection, I have stressed the links between the drama of the 1630s and 1660s. The Restoration theatre, like the Caroline theatre, was not a socially exclusive domain which allowed no voice for criticism. Indeed, the second half of the 1660s was characterised by a good deal of questioning about the way in which the monarchy fell short of the ideal. Uncertainty over the succession and the moral failings of Charles were closely scrutinised and criticised on the stage. In that sense, the drama acted as a safety valve – a forum in which to air anxieties and fears. By the 1670s, the emergence of factional politics had encouraged a vocabulary of 'interest' that was to underpin the polarising of the two political groups that emerged in the Exclusion Crisis. This language threatened that of 'honour as loyalty' in that it undermined the concept of duty to the monarch. The growth of factional interest increasingly fractured the honour community and these cracks were dangerous to the honour of the Crown.

The outcome of the Exclusion Crisis highlights the importance of the language of honour as that language was used once again to rebuild support for the monarchy. This is not to say that playwrights were not often ambivalent in their support: many hedged their bets. Some playwrights such as Nahum Tate, who had supported the claims of Monmouth earlier in the crisis, switched their positions as the outcome of the crisis became clear. Thus the drama of the Exclusion Crisis underlines the fact that the idiom of honour was an effective political tool when political differences were expressed and worked out on the stage. During the Exclusion Crisis, in particular, because memories of Civil War and Interregnum were always in the background, the theatre played a pivotal role in the resolution of political differences.

In 1682, as we have seen, the two drama companies united and became a monopoly, thus seriously reducing the production of new plays. One notable exception was Dryden's *Albion and Albanius* (1685) which sought to revive loyalist fervour by looking back at the Restoration through the presentation of various iconographical tableaux complete with triumphal arches in which the King was restored. The epilogue notes, 'He plights his Faith, and we believe him just/His Honour is to Promise, ours to Trust'.[3] By the close of Charles's reign the King's honour was indeed restored, but he himself died before *Albion and Albanius* was performed. James II inherited a strong monarchy but one which was rapidly to weaken as the country became polarised along religious lines. The moral absolutes engendered by the language of religion had affected the language of honour and the Glorious Revolution of 1688 would demand another huge shift in the way in which honour was expressed. This thesis has shown that, by the close of the reign of Charles II, honour had increasingly become defined as private virtue and less as public virtue that could be harnessed for the benefit of the crown. The plays produced at the time of the Exclusion Crisis had demanded that honour as loyalty to the Crown be reinstated, yet this loyalty was unsustainable when James's policies proved divisive. It was inevitable that the honour code would revert back to that of an earlier code which was expressed and defended within a private sphere. The religious tensions during the reign of James II meant that political language became polarised again and religious issues defined the language of politics. Politics began to be defined in terms of party which licensed diverse political values[4] and thus the consensual language of honour could no longer be such an effective agent in maintaining stable political relationships. The departure of James and the accession of William and Mary would demand that a vocabulary was found that would legitimise the new political order and authority.

The language of honour formed a powerful link between the pre-Civil War world - in which there had been a general consensus of agreement about the nature of authority and the nature of political relationships - and the new world of politics that had emerged by the end of the seventeenth century. It was the honour community, both Tory and Whig, which defected to William of Orange in 1688 and yet there is little evidence to suggest that many of these individuals

---

[3] John Dryden, *Albion and Albanius* (London, 1685), Epilogue

[4] Zwicker and Sharpe, *Politics of Discourse*, p. 10.

had initially wished to rebel against James II. A detailed investigation of the ways in which dissent was expressed during the reign of James II might well cast light on how the discourse of honour operated at this time of extreme crisis that heralded the end of Stuart monarchy but such an investigation is beyond the remit of the present study. This thesis has reviewed the critical importance of the links between political discourse and the exercise of politics in early modern England – to show that the discourse of honour played a vital role in English politics throughout the period 1660-1681.

CHRONOLOGY OF POLITICAL EVENTS, 1660-1681

1660	14 May	Charles II proclaimed King of Great Britain and Ireland in Edinburgh and proclaimed King of Ireland in Dublin.
	29 August	Act of Free and General Pardon, Indemnity and Oblivion is passed.
	3 September	James, Duke of York marries Edward Hyde's daughter, Anne.
1661	January	Thomas Venner's Rising: abortive Monarchist uprising in London.
	20 April	Edward Hyde is created Earl of Clarendon.
	May	First session of the Cavalier Parliament (which sought a more strongly Royalist and Anglican settlement).
	December	Corporation Act (to exclude non-Anglicans from borough corporations) is passed.
1662	May	Act of Uniformity requires use of new Prayer Book. (Almost a thousand clergy were deprived for failure to comply with its terms by 24 August 1662.
	20 May	Charles II marries Catherine of Braganza.
	26 December	Charles's first Declaration of Indulgence (which sought to use royal dispensing power in order to provide liberty for tender consciences).
1663	29 April	Charles withdraws the Declaration of Indulgence.
	October	Rising of radical dissenters in Yorkshire.
1664	April	Coventicle Act, prohibiting religious assemblies of five or more people.
1665	4 March	Charles declares war on the Dutch Republic (beginning of the second Anglo-Dutch War).
	Summer	Outbreak of plague in London.
	3 June	Duke of York routs the Dutch fleet off Lowestoft.
	October	Five Mile Act is passed. Ministers ejected under the Act of Uniformity and other unlicensed preachers are forbidden to come within five miles of their parishes.

1666	!-4 June	Dutch inflict heavy losses on the English fleet.
	2-6 Sept.	Great Fire of London.
1667	13 June	Dutch raid the English fleet in the Medway.
	11 July	Treaty of Breda ends the Second Anglo-Dutch War.
	25-29 July	Seventh session of the Cavalier Parliament: MPs calls for Clarendon's resignation.
	30 August	Clarendon resigns as Lord Chancellor.
	29 November	Clarendon flees to France.
1668	13 January	England, Sweden and the Dutch Republic form the Triple Alliance.
1670	March	Second and more draconian Coventicle Act is passed.
	22 May	Secret Treaty of Dover signed between Charles and Louis XIV.
1672	20 January	Stop of the Exchequer (Crown suspends repayments of loans to its creditors).
	15 March	Charles issues the second Letter of Indulgence.
	17 March	Charles declares war on the Dutch Republic (beginning of the Third Anglo-Dutch War).
	28 May	Indecisive Anglo-Dutch engagement off Southwold.
	17 November	Shaftesbury appointed Lord Chancellor.
	28 November	Clifford appointed Lord Treasurer.
1673	8 March	Charles withdraws the second Declaration of Indulgence.
	29 March	Charles assents to First Test Act (designed to exclude Catholics from public office).
	30 March	Duke of York publicly fails to attend Anglican communion, thereby confirming his conversion to Catholicism.
	15 June	Duke of York resigns as Lord High Admiral under the terms of the Test Act.
	18 June	Clifford resigns as Lord Treasurer under the terms of the Test Act.
	19 June	Sir Thomas Osborne is appointed Lord Treasurer.

	30 June	Duke of York marries Mary of Modena, a Catholic.
1674	9 February	Treaty of Westminster ends the Third Anglo-Dutch War.
	27 June	Sir Thomas Osborne created Earl of Danby.
1675	April- June	Abortive attempt to impeach Danby is made by Parliament.
	17 August	Secret agreement between Charles and Louis of France (French subsidies promised in return for the prorogation of Parliament).
	November	Publication of the *Letter from a Person of Quality to his Friends in the Country* (Possibly by Shaftesbury and John Locke).
1677	4 November	Marriage of Princess Mary toWilliam of Orange.
	31 December	Anglo-Dutch treaty: alliance against France.
	December	Publication of Andrew Marvell's *An Account of the Growth of Popery and Arbitrary Government.*
1678	17 May	Further secret agreement between Charles and Louis of France.
	31 July	Peace of Nijmwegan between France and the Dutch Republic.
	17 October	Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey found dead, fuelling anti-popish hysteria.
	1 November	House of Commons accepts the existence of a Catholic plot.
	4 November	Proposals that James, Duke of York, be barred from the King's presence and counsels.
	November	Second Test Act excludes Catholics from both Houses of Parliament; James is granted a special exemption to retain his seat in the Lords.
	19 November	Danby's part in negotiations for French subsidies is revealed; moves to impeach Danby are again made by Parliament.
1679	24 January	Charles dissolves the Cavalier Parliament.
	6 March	First Exclusion Parliament meets.
	26 March	Danby resigns but is imprisoned until 1684.
	20 April	Charles appoints several of his leading critics to the Privy Council.
	27 April	James is apparently implicated in discussions with France and Rome.

	15 May	Exclusion Bill passes its second reading in the Commons.
	12 July	Charles dissolves the First Exclusion Parliament.
	September	Monmouth temporarily exiled to the Netherlands.
	Autumn	Mass petitioning calls for James's exclusion from the succession.
	November	James is sent to Scotland as the King's Commissioner.
1680	Spring	Beginnings of a Loyalist backlash against the exclusionists.
	26 June	Shaftesbury attempts to bring charges that James is a recusant and the Duchess of Portsmouth (Charles's mistress) is a French agent.
	21 October-January 1681	Second Exclusion Parliament; Exclusion Bill passes in the Commons but is defeated in the Lords.
1681	18 January	Charles dissolves the Second Exclusion Parliament.
	18 March	Secret treaty between Charles and Louis of France (Charles was to gain further French subsidies in return for not summoning another Parliament for three years).
	21-28 March	Third Exclusion Parliament is dissolved at Oxford. This dissolution effectively marked the end of the Exclusion Crisis.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

Anon, *Cromwell's Conspiracy* (London, 1660).

_____, *Heraclius* (London,1663).

_____, *Irena, A Tragedy* (London,1664).

_____, *The Unfortunate Usurper* (London,1663).

_____, *The Ungrateful Favourite* (London, 1664).

Arrowsmith, Joseph, *The Reformation* (London, 1673).

Military Memoirs: Richard Atykins and John Gwyn (Peter Young and Norman Tucker eds., Harlow, 1967).

B.B., *The Way to Honour* (London, 1678).

Bankes, John, *The Destruction of Troy* (London, 1679).

___________,*The Unhappy Favourite* (London, 1682).

Bancroft, John, *The Tragedy of Sertorius* (London, 1679).

Beaumont, Francis and Fletcher, John, *The Loyall Subject* (London, 1618).

_____, *Philaster, or Love Lies a Bleeding* (London, 1676).

_____ , *A King and No King* (London, 1676).

_____, *A Maids's Tragedy* (London, 1630).

Behn, Aphra, *Abdelazar* (London, 1677).

___________ The Forc'd Marriage, or The jealous Bridegroon (London, 1670)

___________ The Amourous Prince,sor the Curious Husband (London 1671)

Boyle, Roger, *The Generall* (Dublin, 1662).

______, *History of Henry the Fifth* (London, 1664).

______, *Mustapha* (London, 1665).

______, *The Black Prince* (London, 1669).

______, *Tryphon* (London, 1668).

______, *Guzman* (London, 1692).

______, *Herod the Great* (London, 1694).

______, *King Saul* (London, 1703).

Carlell, Lodowick, *Heraclius, Emperor of the East* (London, 1664).

Caryll, John, *The English Princess; or the Death of Richard II: A Tragedy* (London 1667).

Cary, Henry, *The Mariage Night* (London, 1664).

Chamberlayne, Edward, *Angliae Notiti; or the Present State of England* (London, 1669).

Cartwright, George, *The Heroick Lover; or the Infanta of Spain* (London, 1661).

Carter, Matthew, *Honor Redividius; or an Analysis of Honour and Armory* (London, 1673).

Cleland, James, *The Scottish Academie; or The Institution of a Nobleman* (London, 1612).

Clerke, William, *Marciano; or the Discovery* (Edinburgh, 1663).

Crowne, John, *Calisto* (London, 1675).

_______, *The Destruction of Jerusalem by Titus Vespasian* (London, 1677).

________, *The History of Charles VIII of France* (London, 1672).

________, *The Ambitious Statesman* (London, 1679).

________, *The Misery of the Civil War* (London, 1680).

________, *Thyestes* (London, 1680).

________, *Henry the Sixth, The First Part* (London, 1681).

Digby George, *Elvira* (London, 1663).

Davenant, William, *The Unfortunate Lovers* (London, 1647).

______________, *The Rivals* (London, 1669).

______________ *The Siege of Rhodes* (London, 1656).

______________, *Love and Honour* (London, 1649).

______________, *Macbeth* (adapted) (London, 1673).

______________ and Dryden, John, *The Tempest* (London, 1667).

______________,*Law Against Lovers* (London, 1662).

Dekker, Thomas, and Massinger, Phillip, *The Virgin Martyr* (London, 1621).

Digby, George, Earl of Bristol, *Elivra: or, The Worst is not Always True* (London, 1663).

Dryden, John, *The Rival Ladies* (London, 1664).

_______, *An Evening's Love* (London, 1668).

______, *Secret Love; or the Maiden Queen* (London, 1668).

______, *The Indian Emperor* (London, 1667).

______, *Tyrannic Love* (London, 1669).

_______, *The Conquest of Granada* (London, 1672).

______, *Marriage-a-la-Mode* (London, 1672).

______, *Amboyna* (London, 1673).

______, *Aureng-Zebe* (London, 1675).

______, *The Assignation* (London, 1672).

______, *The State of Innocence and Fall of Man* (London, 1672).

______, *The Spanish Fryar; or the Double Discovery* (London, 1680).

______, *The Duke of Guise* (London, 1683).

______, *Troilus and Cressida; or, Truth Found too Late* (London, 1679).

Dover, John, *The Roman Generalls: or the Distressed Ladies* (London 1667).

Duffet, Thomas, *The Amorous Old Woman* (London, 1674).

___________, *The Spanish Rogue* (London, 1674).

Durfey, Thomas, *The Injur'd Princess*; *or the Fatal Wager* (London, 1682).

___________, *The Royalist* (London, 1682).

Downes, John, *Roscius Anglicanus*, (Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume., eds, London, 1987).

Etherege, George, *The Man of Mode* (London, 1676).

Evelyn, John, *The Diary of John Evelyn*, (E.S.de Beer ed., 6 vols., Oxford, 1955).

Flecknoe, Richard, *Erminia* (London, 1661).

Forde, Thomas, *Love's Labrinyth* (London 1660).

Fletcher, John, *Rollo, Duke of Normandy* (London, 1639).

______, *The Loyal Subject* (London, 1618).

______, *The Island Princess* (London, 1621).

Fletcher, John and Philip Massinger, *The Sea Voyage* (London, 1619).

Fountain, John, *The Rewards of Virtue* (London, 1664).

Glapthorne, Henry, *Argalus and Parthenia* (London, 1639).

Thomas Gumble, *The Life of General Monck, Duke of Albermarle... with remarks upon his actions* (London, 1671).

Habington, William, *The Queen of Aragon* (London, 1640).

Heywood, Thomas, *The Royall King and Loyal Subject* (London, 1637).

Hobbes, Thomas, *Leviathan* (C.B. Macpherson ed., Harmondsworth, 1968).

Howard, Edward, *The Usurper* (London, 1667).

______, *The Committee* (London, 1661).

______, *The Change of Crownes* (London, 1667).

______, *The Surprisal* (London, 1662).

Howard, Robert, *The Blind Lady* (London, 1660).

_______, *The Duke of Lerma* (London, 1668).

_______, *The Vestal Virgins* (London, 1665).

_______,*The Great Favourite, or the Duke of Lerma* (London, 1668).

Howard, Robert and Dryden, John, *The Indian Queen* (London, 1665)

Killigrew, Thomas, *Claracilla* (London, 1641).

Sir William Killigrew, *Three Plays* (London, 1665).

______, *Selindra* (London, 1662).

______, *Ormasdes* (London, 1663).

______, *The Imperial Tragedy* (London, 1669).

Lacy, John, *The Old Troop; or Monsieur Raggou* (London, 1672).

Lee, Nathaniel, *Sophonisba; or Hannibal's Overthrow* (London, 1675).

________, *Gloriana* (London, 1676).

_______, *The Tragedy of Nero* (London, 1675).

_______, *The Rival Queens; or the Death of Alexander the Great* (London, 1677).

_______, *Gloriana; or the Court of Augustus Caesar* (London, 1676).

_______, *Oedipus* (London, 1678).

_______, *Theodosius; Force of Love* (London, 1680).

_______, *The Duke of Guise* (London, 1682).

_______, *The Massacre of Paris* (London, 1680).

_______, *Lucius Junius Brutus* (London, 1680).

_______, *Caesar Borgia; Son of Pope Alexander VI* (London, 1681).

_______, *Constantine The Great* (London, 1683).

_______, *Mithradates* (London, 1678).

_______, *The Princess of Cleve* (London, 1682).

Logan, John, *Analogia Honorum, Or a Treatise of Honour and Nobility* (London, 1677).

Maidwell, L., *The Loving Enemies* (London, 1680).

Marvell, Andrew, *An Account of the Growth of Popery and Arbitrary Government in England* (Amsterdam, 1677).

Morgan, Sylvanus, *The Sphere of Gentry* (London, 1661).

Otway, Thomas, *Alcibiades* (London, 1675).

________, *Don Carlos* (London, 1676).

________, *The Orphan* (London, 1680).

________, *Venice Preserv'd* (London, 1682).

________, *The History and Fall of Caius Marius* (London, 1979).

________, *Alcibiades* (London, 1674).

Payne, Neville, *The Siege of Constantinople* (London, 1675).

___________, *The Morning Ramble* (London, 1673).

___________, *The Fatal Jealousie* (London, 1673).

Porter, Thomas, *The Villain* (London, 1663).

Pepys, Samuel, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys* (Robert Latham and William Matthews eds., 11 vols., London, 1970-1983).

Philips, Catherine, *Pompey* (London, 1669).

________, *Poems* (London, 1664).

________, *Horace* (London, 1669).

Phillips, Fabian, *Tenenda non Tollenda, or the necessity of preserving tenures in capite and by knight-service* (London, 1661).

Pordage, Samuel, *Herod and Mariamne* (London, 1673).

Ramesay, William, *The Gentleman's Companion: Or a Character of True Nobility and Gentility* (London, 1676).

Ravenscroft, Edward, *The Citizen Turned Gentleman* (London, 1672).

Rutter, Joseph, *El Cid* (London, 1650).

Saunders, Charles, *Tamerlane the Great* (London, 1681).

Sedley, Sir Charles, *A Mulberry Garden* (London, 1668).

Settle, Elkanah, *The Empress of Morocco* (London, 1673).

____________, *Ibrahim, the Illustrious Bassa* (London, 1677).

____________, *Love and Revenge* (London, 1675).

____________, *The Conquest of China by the Tartars* (London, 1676).

___________, *The Female Prelate, being the History of the Life and Death of Pope Joan* (London, 1680).

___________, *Fatal Love; or the Forc'd Inconstancy* (1680).

____________, *The Empress of Morocco* (London, 1673).

____________, *The Conquest of China by the Tartars* (London, 1676).

____________, *Love and Revenge* (London, 1675).

Shadwell, Thomas, *The Sullen Lovers* (London, 1668).

______________, *Epsom Wells* (London, 1672).

______________, *The Royal Shepherdess* (London, 1669).

_______________, *Psyche* (London, 1675).

_______________, *The Libertine* (London, 1676).

_______________, *The Tempest* (London, 1667).

Shakespeare, William, *I Henry IV* (London, 1598).

______, *II Henry IV* (London, 1600).

Shirley, James, *The Traitor* (London, 1635).

_______, *The Cardinal* (London, 1641).

Southerne, Thomas, *The Loyal Brother; or the Persian Prince* (London, 1680).

Stapylton, Robert, *The Slighted Maid* (London, 1663).

__________, *The Step-Mother* (London, 1664).

Suckling, John, *Aglaura* (London, 1638).

__________, *Brennoralt; or the Discontented Colonel* (London, 1648).

Symmons, Edward, *A Military sermon* (Oxford, 1644).

Tate, Nahum, *The Loyal General* (London, 1680).

__________, *The History of King Richard II* (London, 1681).

__________, *The History of King Lear* (London, 1681).

Tuke, Sir Samuel, *The Adventures of the Five Hours* (London, 1663).

The Works of His Grace, George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham (Anon ed., 2 vols., London, 1675).

Waller, Edmund, *Pompey The Great* (London, 1664).

Weston, John, *The Amazon Queen* (London, 1667).

Whitaker, William, *The Conspiracy* (London, 1680).

Wilson, John, *Andronicus Comnenius* (London, 1664).

Wycherley, William, *The Plain Dealer* (London, 1677).

______________, *The Country Wife* (London, 1677).

COLLECTED AND INDIVIDUAL EDITIONS

The Works of Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher (J. Glover and A.R.Walker, eds., 10 vols., Cambridge 1966).

Aphra Behn, *The Rover* (Frederick Link, ed., London, 1967).

The Dramatic Works of Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery (William Smith Clark II, ed., 2 vols., Cambridge, 1937).

The Dramatic Works of John Crowne (J. Maidment and W. Logan, ed., 4 vols., Edinburgh and London, 1873).

The Complete Works of William Davenant, (Anon ed., 5 vols., Edinburgh, 1873).

The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker (Fredson Bowers, ed., 4 vols., Cambridge, 1958).

The Works of John Dryden 1631-1700 (various editors, 19 vols., Berkeley, 1954-)

The Dramatic Works of Sir Robert Howard (Anon. ed., London, 1722).

A Select Collection of Old English Plays (W. Dodsley, ed., 11 vols., London , 1876).

Edward Howard, *The Change of Crownes* (Frederick Boas, ed., London, 1949.

The Dramatick Works of Mr Nathanael Lee (Anon. ed., 3 vols., London, 1734).

The Works of Nathaniel Lee (Thomas Stroup and Arthur L. Cooke eds., New Jersey, 1954).

The Poems and Plays of Philip Massinger (Philip Edwards and Colin Gibson, eds., Oxford, 1976).

The Complete Works of Thomas Shadwell (Montague Summers, ed., 5 vols., London, 1927).

Sir Samuel Tuke, *The Adventures of Five Hours* (A.E. Swaen ed., Amsterdam, 1927).

The Complete Works of Thomas Otway (Montague Summers, ed., 3 vols., London, 1920).

The Plays of William Wycherley (Arthur Friedman, ed., Oxford, 1979).

SECONDARY SOURCES

Amussen, Susan and Mark Kishlansky eds., *Political Culture and Cultural Politics in Early Modern England: Essays presented to David Underdown* (Manchester, 1995).

Arundell, D.D. ed., *Dryden and Howard, 1664-1668* (Cambridge, 1929).

Richard Aschraft and Alan Roper, *Politics as Reflected in Literature* (Los Angeles, William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 1989).

Avery, Emmet L., 'The Restoration Audience', *PQ*, 45 (1966), pp. 54-61.

Aylmer, G.E., 'Collective Mentalities in Mid-Seventeenth-Century England: I, The Puritan Outlook', *TRHS* , 5th Series, 36 (1986), pp. 1-25.

______, 'II: Royalist Attitudes', *TRHS*, 5th Series, 37 (1987), pp.1-30.

______, 'IV: Cross Currents: Neutrals, Trimmers and Others', *TRHS,* 5th Series, 37 (1989), pp. 1-25.

Barber, C.L., *The Idea of Honour in English Drama, 1591-1700* (Gothenburg Studies in English, VI, Goteborg, 1957).

Barbeau, Anne T., *The Intellectual Design of John Dryden's Heroic Plays* (New Haven and London, 1970).

Barton, Carlin, 'Savage Miracles: The Redemption of Lost Honor in Roman Society and the Sacrament of the Gladiator and the Martyr', *Representations,* 45 (1994), pp. 41-61.

Bawcult, N.W. ed., *The Control and Censorship of Caroline Drama* (Oxford, 1996).

Berman, Donald 'Wycherley's Unheroic Society', *ELH,* 51 (1984) pp. 465-477.

Bredvold, Louis I, *The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden* (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1956).

Birdsall, Virginia Ogden, *Wild Civility* (Indiana, 1970).

Bock, Gisela, Skinner, Quintin and Viroli, Maurizo eds., *Machiavelli and Republicanism* (Cambridge, 1990).

Bolton, F.W. and Gardner, Jane F., *Ben Jonson: Catiline* (Regents Renaissance Series London, 1973).

Bosher, R.S., *The Making of the Restoration Settlement* (London, 1951).

Boswell, Eleanor, *The Restoration Court Stage, 1660-1702* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1932).

Braden, Gordon, *Senecan Tragedy and the Renaissance Tradition* (New Haven, 1985).

Braverman, Richard, *Plots and Counterplots* (Cambridge, 1993).

Brewer, John, *The Pleasures of the Imagination* (London, 1997).

Brown, Laura, *English Dramatic Form 1660-1760: An Essay in Generic History* (New Haven and London, 1981).

Brown, R.E., 'The Dryden –Lee Collaboration', *Restoration,* 9 (1985) pp. 12-25.

Browning, Andrew, *Thomas Osborne, Earl of Danby and Duke of Leeds* (3 vols, Glasgow, 1951).

___________,'Parties and Party Organisation in the Reign of Charles II', *TRHS,* 4th series, 30, (1948) pp. 21-36.

Bryant, Arthur ed., *The Letters, Speeches and Declarations of Charles II* (London, 1934).

Burgess, Glenn, *The Politics of the Ancient Constitution* (Pennsylvania, 1993).

Burtt, Shelley, *Virtue Transformed* (Cambridge, 1992).

Butler, Martin, *Theatre and Crisis, 1632-1642* (Cambridge, 1984).

Bryson, Anna, *From Courtesy to Civility* (Oxford, 1998).

Canfield, J. Douglas, 'The Ideology of Restoration Tragicomedy', *ELH,* 51 (1984) pp. 447-64.

__________, *Tricksters and Estates: On the Ideology of Restoration Comedy* (Kentucky, 1997).

___________, 'The Significance of the Restoration Rhymed Heroic Play', *ECS,* 13 (1979), pp. 49-61.

_______________, *Heroes and States: On the Ideology of Restoration Tragedy* (Kentucky, 1999)

_______________, *Word as Bond in English Literature from the Middle Ages to the Restoration* (Philadelphia, 1989).

Childs, John, *The Army of Charles II* (London, 1976).

Clarke, J.C.D, *English Society 1688-1832* (Cambridge, 1985).

Clayton, J.W., *The Personal Memoirs of Charles II* (London, 1859).

Charlanne, Louis, *L'Influence Francaise en Angleterre Au XVII Siecle* (Paris, 1906).

Council, Norman, *When Honour's at the Stake* (London, 1973).

Couton, Georges, *Corneille et la Fronde* (Clermont-Ferrand, 1951).

Coward, Barry, *The Stuart Age, England 1603-1714* (Harlow, 1994).

Cust, Richard, 'Honour and Politics in Early Stuart England - The Case of Beaumont versus Hastings', *P & P,* 149 (1995), pp. 57-94.

Cust, Richard and Hughes, Anne, eds., *Conflict in Early Stuart England* (Harlow, 1989).

Danchin, Pierre, ed., *The Prologues and Epilogues of the Restoration 1600-1700: a Complete Edition* (5 vols.,Nancy, 1981-1988).

Davies, Godfrey, *The Restoration of Charles II* (Oxford, 1955).

Deane, Cecil, *Dramatic Theory of the Rhymed Heroic Play* (London, 1923).

Dickinson, Harry T., *Liberty and Property* (London, 1977).

Dobree, Bonamy, *Restoration Comedy 1660-1720* (Oxford, 1924).

Dobson, Michael, *The Making of the National Poet: Adaptation and Authorship 1660-1769* (Oxford, 1992)

Donagan, Barbara, 'The Web of Honour: Soldiers, Christians and Gentlemen in the English Civil War', *HJ,* 2, 44 (2001), pp. 365-389.

Donahue, Joseph, ed., *The Cambridge History of the British Theatre 1660-1895* (Vol 2, Cambridge, 2004).

Downie, J.A., *To Settle the Succession of the State: Literature and Politics, 1678-1750* (London, 1984).

Elias, Norbert, *The Civilising Process, The History of Manners* (E. Jephcott, trans., Oxford, 1978).

_______, *The Civilising Process: State Formation and Civilisation* (E. Jephcott, trans., Oxford, 1982).

_______ , *The Court Society* (E. Jephcott, trans., Oxford, 1983).

Edmond, Mary, *Rare Sir William Davenant* (Manchester, 1987).

Elkin, P.K., *The Augustan Defence of Satire* (Oxford, 1973).

Erskine-Hill, Howard, *The Augustan Idea in English Literature* (London, 1983).

France, Peter, *Politeness and Its Discontents: Problems in French Classical Culture* (Cambridge, 1992).

Ferguson,.A.B., *The Indian Summer of English Chivalry* (Durham, N.C., 1960).

Finkelpearl, Philip J., *Court and Country Politics in the Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher* (Princeton, 1996).

Firth, C.H., *The House of Lords During the Civil War* (London, 1910).

Fish, Stanley, *Is There a Text in This Class*? (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1980).

Fisk, Deborah Payne(ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to English Restoration Theatre* (Cambridge, 2000).

Gagen, Jean, 'Love and Honour in Dryden's Heroic Plays', *PMLA*, 3, (1962), pp. 209-220.

Gardiner, Samuel, ed., *The Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution* (Oxford, 1949).

Gaunt, Peter, *The British Wars, 1637-1651* (London, 1997).

Green, I.M., *The Re-Establishment of the Church of England, 1660-1665* (Oxford, 1978).

Goldgar, Anne, *Impolite Learning* (Yale, 1995).

Goldberg, Jonathan, *James I and the Politics of Literature* (Baltimore, 1983).

Goreau, Angeline, *Reconstructing Aphra* (Oxford, 1980).

Guerard, Albert, *Life and Death of an Ideal* (London, 1929).

Goubert, Pierre, *L'Ancien Regime* (Paris, 1973).

Ham, Roswell Gray, *Otway and Lee* (New York, 1969).

Harbage, Alfred, *Cavalier Drama, an Historical and Critical Supplement of the Study of the Elizabethan Stage* (New York, 1964).

Hartmann, Cyril Hughes, *Clifford of the Cabal* (London, 1937).

Harris, Tim, *London Crowds in the Reign of Charles II* (Cambridge, 1987).

Harris, Tim, Seaward, Paul, and Goldie, Mark, eds., *The Politics of Religion in Restoration England* (Oxford, 1990).

Harwood, J.T., *Critics, Values and Ethics in Restoration Comedy* (Illinois, 1982).

Haydn, Hiram, *The Counter-Renaissance* (New York, 1950).

Hill, Christopher, *The Intellectual Origins of The English Revolution* (Oxford, 1965).

_____, *The World Turned Upside Down* (London, 1972).

_____, *The Century of Revolution* (London, 1961).

Hirst, Derek, *Authority and Conflict: England 1603-1658* (London, 1986).

Hirst, Derek and Strier, Richard eds., *Writing and Political Engagement* (Cambridge, 1999).

Hopper, Andrew, 'The Farnley Wood Plot and the Memory of the Civil Wars in Yorkshire', *HJ*, 45, 2, (2002), pp. 281-303.

______, 'Fitted for Desperation: Honour and Treachery in Parliament's Yorkshire Command 1642-1643', *History,* 86, 282 (2001), pp. 159-172.

Hotson, Leslie, *The Commonwealth and Restoration Stage* (Cambridge, 1928).

Hughes, Derek, *Dryden's Heroic Plays* (London, 1981).

___________, *English Drama 1660-1700* (Oxford, 1996).

___________, *The Theatre of Aphra Behn* (Basingstoke, 2001).

Hume, Robert, *The Development of English Drama in the Late Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 1976).

Hunt, Lynn, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (California, 1992).

__________, *The Invention of Pornography* (New York, 1993).

Lynn Hunt ed., *Eroticism and the Body Politic* (Baltimore, 1991).

Hume, R., 'The Date of Druden's *Marriage-la-Mode*'. HLB, 21 (1973), pp. 161-66

Huntley, M. 'The Concept of Honour in Early Stuart England', unpublished MA thesis (Southampton, 1999).

Hutton, Ronald, *The Restoration: A Political and Religious History of England and Wales 1658-1667* (Oxford, 1985).

Hurstfield, Joel, *The Queen's Wards* (London, 1958).

Ives, E.W., 'The Genesis of the Statute of Uses', *EHR*, 82 (1967), pp. 673-97.

Jacob. J.R. and Raylor, T, 'Opera and Obedience: Thomas Hobbes and *A Proposition for Advancement of Moralitie* by Sir William Davenant' *SC* (1991), pp. 205-50.

James, Mervyn, 'English Politics and the Concept of Honour 1485-1642' *P & P,* Supplement no. 3 (1978), pp.1-92.

Jones, J.R., *Country and Court: England, 1658-1714* (London, 1978).

________, *The Anglo-Dutch Wars of the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1996).

________, *The First Whigs: The Politics of the Exclusion Crisis* (London, 1961).

Johnson, Odai, *Rehearsing the Revolution* (London, 2000).

Johnston, Joseph and Vander Motten, J. P, Some Unpublished Prologues and Epilogues: New Loght on the Stage History of Sir William Killigre's Plays', *Modern Philology* 77 (1979), pp.159-163.

Jose, Nicholas, *Ideas of the Restoration in English Literature, 1660-1671* (London, 1984).

Kastan, D.S., 'Nero and the Politics of Nathaniel Lee', *Papers in Language and Literature,* 13 (1977), pp. 125-135.

__________, 'Performances and playbooks: The closing of the theatres and the politics of drama' in *Reading, Society and Politics in Early Modern England* (Kevin Sharpe and Steven Zwicker, eds., Cambridge, 2003), pp. 167-184.

Keen, Maurice, *Chivalry* (Yale, 1984).

Kelsey, Sean, *Inventing a Republic* (Manchester, 1997).

Kiernan, V.G., *The Duel in European History* (Oxford, 1988).

Kirsch, Arthur, *Dryden's Heroic Drama* (Princeton, 1965).

Kishlansky, Mark, *A Monarchy Transformed: Britain 1604-1714* (London, 1996).

Klein, Lawrence, *Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness: Moral Discourse and Cultural Politics in Early Eighteenth Century England* (Cambridge, 1994).

Lievsay, J.L., *Stephen Guazzo and the English Renaissance, 1525-1675* (Chapel Hill, 1961).

Loftis, John, *The Politics of Drama in Augustan England* (Oxford, 1963).

_________ ,*The Spanish Plays of Neoclassical England* (New Haven, 1973).

Lord, George de Forest, *Classical Presences in Seventeenth Century English Poetry* (New Haven and London, 1987).

Love, Harold, 'State Affairs on the Restoration Stage, 1660-1675', *RECR*, 14 (1975), pp.1-9.

_________ ,'The Restoration Audience', *The Yearbook of English Studies,* 10 (1980) pp. 22-54.

Lynch, K.M., *Social Mode of Restoration Comedy* (New York, 1926).

Maclean, Gerald, ed., *Culture and Society in the Stuart Restoration* (Cambridge, 1995).

Macfarlane, K.B., *The Nobility of Late Medieval England* (Oxford, 1973).

Malcolm, J.L., 'Charles II and the Reconstruction of Royal Power' *HJ,* 32 (1992), pp. 307-340.

Magendie, M., *La Politesse Mondaine et Les Theories de l'Honnetete in France au XVIIe Siecle, de 1600 a 1660* (Paris, 1925).

Markley, Robert, *Two Edg'd Weapons: Style and Ideology in the Comedies of Etheredge, Wycherley and Congreve* (Oxford, 1988).

Marston, Jerrilyn, 'Gentry Honor and Royalism in Early Stuart England', *JBS,* 13 (1973), pp. 21-43.

Mason, J.E., *Gentlefolk in the Making: English Courtesy Literature* (Philadelphia, 1935).

Maguire, Nancy Klein, *Regicide and Restoration* (Cambridge, 1992).

McFadden, George, *Dryden, The Public Writer 1660-1685* (Princeton, 1978).

McGugan R. ed., *Nahum Tate and the Coriolanus Tradition in English Drama with a Critical Edition of Tate's The Ingratitude of the Commonwealth* (New York, 1987)

Milhous Judith and and Hume Robert, 'Dating Play Premières from Publication Data, 1660-1700', *HLB,* 22 (1974), pp.374-405.

Miller, John, *Popery and Politics in England 1660-1688* (Cambridge, 1973).

______ , *After the Civil Wars* (Harlow, 2000).

_______, *Charles II* (London, 1991).

_______,'Charles II and his Parliaments' *TRHS,* 5th Series, 32 (1982), pp. 1-23.

Morrill, John, *The Nature of the English Revolution* (London and New York, 1993).

Morrill, John, et al eds., *Public Duty and Private Conscience in Seventeenth Century England* (Oxford, 1993).

Munns, Jessica, *Restoration Politics and Drama: The Plays of Thiomas Otway 1675-1683* (Delaware, 1995)

Nahm, O.M.C., 'John Wilson and "His Some Few Plays", *RES,* 15 (1938), pp. 143-54.

Nethercot, A.H., *Sir William Davenant* (Chicago, 1938).

Nicoll, Allardyce, *A History of English Drama 1660-1900* (6 vols., Cambridge, 1952-1959).

Newman, P.R., *The Old Service: Royalist Regimental Colonels and the Civil War, 1642-1646* (Manchester, 1993).

Norbrook, D., *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance* (London, 1984).

Norland, Howard B., ed. *The Maid's Tragedy: Beaumont and Fletcher* (London, 1968).

Ogg, David, *England in the Reign of Charles II*, (2 vols., Oxford, 1955).

Osborn, Scott, 'Heroical Love in Dryden's Heroic Drama', *PMLA*, 77 (1955), pp.480-90.

Owen, Susan J., *Restoration Theatre and Crisis* (Oxford, 1996).

__________, *Perspectives on Restoration Drama* (Manchester, 2002).

___________, *A Companion to Restoration Drama* (Oxford, 2001).

Parsons, A.E. 'The English Heroic Play', *MLR*, 33 (1938), pp. 1-14.

Patterson, Annabel, *Censorship and Interpretation: the Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England* (Berkeley, 1987).

Perkin, Harold, *The Origins of Modern English Society, 1730-1880* (London, 1969).

Pendelbury, B.J., *Dryden's Heroic Plays: A Study of the Origins* (London, 1923).

Phillipson, Nicholas and Skinner, Quintin, *Political Discourses in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 1993).

Pincus, Steven C.A., *Protestantism and Patriotism* (Cambridge, 1996).

Prigent, Michel, *Le Heros et l'Etat dans La Tragedie de Pierre Corneille* (Paris, 1986).

Pocock, J.G.A., *The Ancient Constitution and Feudal Law* (Cambridge, 1957).

______, *Politics, Language and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History* (London, 1972).

______, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, 1975).

______, *Virtue, Commerce and History* (Cambridge, 1985).

Pollock, Sir John, *The Popish Plot* (Cambridge, 1944).

Pooley, Roger, 'Language and Loyalty: Plain Style at the Restoration', *L&H*, 6 (1980), pp. 1-16.

Potter, Lois, *Secret Rites and Secret Writing* (Cambridge, 1989).

Price, Curtis 'Political Allegory in Late Seventeenth Century Opera' in *Music and Theatre: Essays in Honour of Winton Dean*(Nigel Fortune ed., Cambridge, 1987)

Raddadi, Mongi, *Davenant's Adaptations of Shakespeare* (Upsala, 1979).

Raylor, Timothy, *Cavaliers, Clubs and Literary Culture* (Delaware, 1994).

Risdall Smith, Geoffrey, *Without touch of dishonour: the life and death of Sir Henry Slingsby, 1602-1658* (Kineton, 1968).

Rothstein, Eric, *Restoration Tragedy: Form and the Process of Change* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1967).

Sawday, Jonathan, 'Rewriting the Revolution: History, Symbol and Text in the Restoration', *SC,* 7, 2 (1992), pp. 171-199.

Schneider, Ben Ross, *The Ethos of Restoration Comedy* (Illinois, 1971).

Sharpe, Kevin, *Criticism and Compliment* (Cambridge, 1987).

__________, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven, 1992).

__________, ed., *Faction and Parliament* (London, 1985).

Sharpe, Kevin and Lake, Peter eds.,*Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England* (London, 1994).

Sharpe, Kevin, and Zwicker, Steven eds., *Politics of Discourse* (Berkeley, 1987).

____________, *Refiguring Revolutions* (Berkeley, 1998).

____________, *Reading, Society and Politics in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2003).

Seaward, Paul, *The Cavalier Parliament and the Reconstruction of the Old Regime, 1661-1667* (Cambridge, 1989).

Spencer, Christopher, *Nahum Tate* (New York, 1972).

Sprague, A. C., *Beaumont and Fletcher on the Restoration Stage* (Cambridge, 1926).

Springarn, J.E ed., *Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century* (3 vols., Oxford, 1908).

Smuts, Malcolm, (ed.), *The Stuart Court and Europe* (Cambridge, 1996).

Smuts, Malcolm, *Culture and Power in England* (Basingstoke, 1999).

Sommerville, J.P., *Politics and Ideology in England, 1603-1640* (London, 1986).

Staves, Susan, *Players' Sceptres* (Nebraska, 1979).

Styan, J.L., *Restoration Comedy in Performance* (Cambridge 1986).

Stoyle, Mark, *Loyalty and Locality: Popular Allegiance in Devon during the English Civil War* (Exeter, 1994).

Szanto, George H, *Theatre and Propaganda* (Texas, 1978).

Thirsk, J., 'The Restoration Land Settlement', *JMH,* 26 (1954), pp. 315-26.

Thomas, P.W., *Sir John Berkenhead: A Royalist Career in Politics and Polemics 1617-1679* (Oxford, 1969).

Turberville, A.S., 'The House of Lords under Charles II', *EHR*, 64 (1929), pp. 400-417.

Ustick,W. Lee, 'Changing Ideals of Aristocratic Character and Conduct in Seventeenth Century England', *MP,* 29 (1932), pp. 147-166.

Underwood, Dale, *Etherege and the Comedy of Manners* (New Haven, 1957).

Van Lennep, W. ed., *The London Stage, 1660-1800* (11 vols., Carbondale, 1965), I.

Wagner, Anthony, *The Records and Collections of the College of Arms* (London, 1952).

Waith, Eugene, *Ideas of Greatness: Heroic Drama in England 1660-1671* (London, 1971).

Watson, Curtis Brown, *Shakespeare and the Renaissance Concept of Honor* (Connecticut, 1976).

Wheatley, Christopher J., *Without God or Reason: The Plays of Thomas Shadwell and Secular Ethics in the Restoration* (Lewisburg, 1993).

Wikander, Matthew, ' The Spitted Infant: Scenic Emblem and Exclusionist Politics in Restoration Adaptations of Shakespeare', *SQ*, 37 (1986) pp. 340-358.

Wildeblood, Joan and Brinson, Peter, *The Polite World* (London, 1965).

Wilson. J.H., *The Court Wits of The Restoration* (Princeton, 1948).

Wiseman, Susan, *Drama and Politics in the English Civil War* (Cambridge 1998).

Winterbottom, John A., 'The Development of the Hero in Dryden's Tragedies', *JEGP,* 52 (1953), pp. 161-73.

Witcombe, D.T., *Charles II and the Cavalier House of Commons 1663-1674* (Manchester, 1966).

Wyatt-Brown, Bertram, *Southern Honour* (Oxford, 1982).

Wormald, B.H.G., *Clarendon: Politics, History and Religion 1640-1660* (Cambridge, 1951).

Zwicker, Steven, *Lines of Authority* (London and Ithaca, 1993).