

Performing Masculinities in Restoration Adaptations of Shakespeare

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines performances and representations of masculinity and masculine identity within adaptations of Shakespeare's work written during the English Restoration. Following the reopening of English theatres in 1660, the new presence of professional female performers on the London stage motivated a complex renegotiation of the ways in which gender could be enacted and embodied in English drama. During this period of historical transition, playwrights would adapt the works of Shakespeare for Restoration audiences, altering Shakespeare's texts in ways that reflected the changing material conditions of gender performance. I argue that Restoration playwrights often used these adaptations as means of exploring and contesting different forms of masculinity within the public space of the theatre, and that this ongoing contemplation of masculinity was representative of greater changes in the way that maleness was being interpreted as a discernable gender category. In focusing on Shakespeare's work, I draw connections between pre- and post-Interregnum theatrical traditions in order to document the effects of the shift from a tradition of boy players in women's roles to a practice of employing both women and men on stage. This shift in dramatic practice not only altered the ways in which audiences and authors interpreted women's roles for the stage, but also transformed their understanding of masculinity and men's roles. My chapters chronologically trace the developing interpretations of masculinity as a performative category from 1660 to 1700, using the following plays as case studies: John Dryden and William Davenant's *The Tempest* (1667), Dryden's *Troilus and Cressida* (1679), John Crowne's two *Henry VI* adaptations (1680, 1681), and Colley Cibber's *Richard III* (1700). My analysis of these texts demonstrates that, while these adaptations often reinscribe patriarchal notions of authority, monarchic power, and

nationhood, they also destabilize gender categories and provide transgressive possibilities for maleness as a performed identity.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette thèse examine les performances et représentations de la masculinité et de l'identité masculine dans les adaptations d'œuvres de Shakespeare écrites au cours de la Restauration anglaise. Suite à la réouverture des théâtres anglais en 1660, la nouvelle présence des comédiennes professionnelles sur la scène londonienne a engendré une renégociation complexe des façons dont le genre pouvait être joué et incarné dans le drame anglais. Pendant cette époque de transition historique, les dramaturges adaptaient les œuvres de Shakespeare pour les spectateurs de la Restauration, modifiant les textes de Shakespeare pour y incorporer les conditions matérielles changeantes de la performance de genre. Je soutiens que les dramaturges ont utilisé ces adaptations pour explorer et contester des formes de masculinité différentes dans l'espace public du théâtre, et que cette contemplation de la masculinité était représentative de changements plus importants dans la façon dont la masculinité était interprétée comme une catégorie distincte du genre. Dans mon analyse des œuvres de Shakespeare, j'établis des liens entre les traditions théâtrales d'avant et d'après l'Interregne afin de documenter les effets du changement d'une tradition de garçons dans les rôles de femmes à une pratique d'employer à la fois des femmes et des hommes sur la scène. Ce changement dans la pratique théâtrale a transformé non seulement la manière dont le public et les auteurs interprétaient les rôles féminins pour le théâtre mais aussi leur compréhension de la masculinité et des rôles masculins. Mes chapitres analysent chronologiquement les interprétations de la masculinité en tant qu'une catégorie performative entre 1660 et 1700, en utilisant les pièces suivantes : *La Tempête* de John Dryden et William Davenant (1667), *Troilus et Cressida* de Dryden (1679), les deux adaptations de *Henri VI* de John Crowne (1680, 1681), et *Richard III* de Colley Cibber (1700). Tandis que ces adaptations renforcent souvent les notions d'autorité patriarcale de la monarchie et de la

nation, mon analyse de ces textes démontre également que ces adaptations déstabilisent les notions catégoriques de genre et offrent des possibilités transgressives pour la masculinité en tant qu'identité performée.

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INTRODUCTION

“And What’s Her / His Story?”: Approaching Gender Performance in a Transitional Century

In the second act of Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*, the disguised Viola responds to Orsino’s description of a fundamentally embodied experience of male desire by proposing an alternative reading of masculinity as a performative category. While attempting to communicate the intensity of his love for Olivia, Orsino posits an essentialized material difference between his own body and the bodies of women. “There is no woman’s sides”, Orsino declares, “Can bide the beating of so strong a passion / As love doth give my heart; no woman’s heart / So big, to hold so much” (2.4.91-94). In their “passions”, women are instead “as roses, whose fair flower / Being once displayed, doth fall that very hour” (37-38). In Orsino’s misogynist characterization of female love, a woman’s experience of desire quite literally lies closer to the surface of the body: “their love may be called appetite, / No motion of the liver, but the palate, / That suffer surfeit, cloyment, and revolt” (95-97). Unlike the desires of women, Orsino’s own love is “as hungry as the sea, / And can digest as much” (98-99). Orsino describes his own body as possessing an interior depth of feeling that is unfathomable when compared with the “appetites” of women—Orsino internally “digests” what women experience at the level of the “palate”.

The disguised Viola, however, when asked about the “history” of “Cesario’s” fictional sister, shares the following story with Orsino:

ORSINO:	And what’s her history?
VIOLA:	A blank, my lord. She never told her love, But let concealment, like a worm i’th’ bud, Feed on her damask cheek. She pined in thought, And with a green and yellow melancholy

She sat like patience on a monument,
 Smiling at grief. Was not this love indeed?
 We men may say more, swear more, but indeed
 Our shows are more than will; for still we prove
 Much in our vows, but little in our love. (108-117)

Viola's response to Orsino—the story of Cesario's sister who “pined in thought” until her death—acts as a re-evaluation of Orsino's delineation of gendered interiority and exteriority. Orsino's “fair flower” is replaced instead with the “bud” that is never displayed, a love that remains tragically unexpressed and permanently internalized as a “monument” of grief. Viola, a female character engaged in a sustained performance of masculinity as the page boy Cesario, locates male desire not in the body as Orsino does, but instead in the realm of performative expressions—the acts of “saying”, of “swearing”, of making “vows”—which constitute a series of “shows” that exceed the “will” of the performer.¹ Viola's gendered position was additionally complicated by the fact that the character would have been originally performed by a boy actor in keeping with early modern theatrical practices. By way of this uniquely layered gender position, Viola, capable of observing masculinity from both an “inside” and “outside” position, offers in this scene a new perspective on how masculinity functions to both Orsino and the audience of Shakespeare's play, one that stands in contrast with Orsino's ontological vision of an essential male experience.

¹ In a formative work of speech act theory entitled *How to Do Things with Words*, J. L. Austin cites promises and vows as examples of “performative utterances”, or statements whose expression “is, or is a part of, the doing of an action, which again would not *normally* be described as, or as ‘just’, saying something” (4-11). Judith Butler summarizes the “performative” within speech act theory as the “discursive practice that enacts or produces that which it names” (*Bodies That Matter* xxi).

Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* was staged in the first few years of the seventeenth century, a period in which theatrical performances of gender were continually interrogated, reappraised, and reinvented by the scholars, playwrights, and performers who, for various and often divergent reasons, were deeply concerned with the effects that the theatre might have on English culture. The all-male casts of early modern English theatre would be the subject of a series of ideological debates that questioned the effects that the performative space of the stage would have on the bodies of both male performers and spectators.² Ever suspicious of the influence of theatre on public sexual morality, early Puritan antitheatricalists believed that the practice of having boys perform as women would not only work to inspire sodomitical desire in audience members,³ but would threaten to effeminize the male body to the point of unintelligibility. In his polemical

² For modern scholarship on boy actors in Shakespearean theatre, see Jean E. Howard, "Crossdressing, the Theatre, and Gender Struggle in Early Modern England," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (1988): 418–40; Stephen Orgel, "Nobody's Perfect: Or Why Did the English Stage Take Boys for Women?" in *Displacing Homophobia: Gay Male Perspectives in Literature and Culture*, ed. Ronald R. Butters, John M. Clum, and Michael Moon (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989), 7–29; Lisa Jardine, "Twins and Travesties: Gender, Dependency and Sexual Availability in *Twelfth Night*," in *Erotic Politics: Desire on the Renaissance Stage*, ed. Susan Zimmerman (New York: Routledge, 1992), 27–38; Michael Shapiro, *Gender in Play on the Shakespearean Stage: Boy Heroines and Female Pages* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994); and Tracey Sedinger, "'If Sight and Shape Be True': The Epistemology of Crossdressing on the London Stage," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 48, no. 1 (1997): 63–79.

³ In *Th'Overthrow of Stage Playes* (1599), John Rainolds claims that "what sparkles of lust to that vice the putting of wemens attire on men may kindle in vncleane affections, as Nero shewed in *Sporus*, *Heliogabalus* in him selfe" (11). William Prynne similarly makes reference to queer figures of antiquity when he asks, "was ever the invirility of Nero, *Heliogabalus*, or *Sardanapalus*, those Monsters, if not shames of Men and Nature: was ever the effeminate lewdnesse of *Flora* or *Thais*, comparable unto that which our artificiall Stage-players (trayned up to all lasciviousnesse from their Cradles) continually practise on the Stage, without blush of face, or sorrow of heart, not onely in the open view of men, but even of that *all-eyed God*, who will one day arraigne them for this their grosse effeminacie?" (171). Philip Stubbes, in *The Anatomie of Abuses* (1583), suggests that sodomitical desire extended into the players' off-stage lives, writing that actors "in their secret conclaues (couertly) . . . play the *Sodomits*, or worse" (204). Reactionary responses to cross-gender dress can also be found in the pamphlets *Hic Mulier* and *Haec-Vir*, both published in 1620.

work *Plays Confuted in Five Actions* (1582), author Stephen Gosson addresses theatrical performers who “put on, not the apparel only, but the gait, the gestures, the voice, and the passions of a woman”. Drawing from biblical precedent, Gosson argues that “the law of God very straightly forbids men to put on women’s garments. Garments are set down for signs distinctive between sex and sex; to take unto us those garments that are manifest signs of another sex is to falsify, forge, and adulterate, contrary to the express rule of the word of God” (101-102).⁴ While attempting to condemn the practice of cross-gender performance in theatres, Gosson inadvertently reveals an inherent instability in the “signs” governing gender identity. In Gosson’s configuration, gender difference—the distinction “between sex and sex”—is made legible by way of a regulatory semiotic code, one that governs not only “garments” and “apparel”, but also the “gait”, “gestures”, “voice”, and “passions” of each individual. Theatrical practice, however, had exposed the way that these signs could be “put on” by performers in such a way as to create a coherent—though, for Gosson, “falsified”—gendered self. By Gosson’s terms, the fictional gender created on stage and the assumed “real” gender of any individual are both implicitly constructed by way of the same imitative process: each person enacts the outward “signs” of their gender identity so as to make themselves legible to a public audience.

Further expanding upon the tradition of antitheatrical Christian scholarship, William Prynne, in his 1632 tract *Histriomastix*, would cite from the third-century theologian Saint Cyprian to comment upon male performers who “*adopt the very habit and order of Strumpets*”:

A man enfeebled in all his joynts, resolved into a more than womanish effeminacy, whose art it is to speake with his hands and gestures, comes forth upon the Stage: and for this

⁴ The “law of God” cited by Gosson has its roots in the edict in Deuteronomy that “woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman’s garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God” (KJV, 22:5).

one, I know not whom, neither man nor woman, the whole Citie flocke together, that so the fabulous lusts of antiquity may be acted. Yea, men . . . are unmanned on the Stage: all the honour and vigour of their sex is effeminated with the shame, the dishonesty of an unsinued body. (168)

For Prynne, the threat of effeminization posed by the theatre was brought on not only by the theatrical practice of crossdressing, but by the inherently performative nature of the stage. By making his body visible—by adopting the art of “speaking with his hands and gestures”—the performer allows himself to become subject to the “fabulous lusts” of his audience. By acting on the stage, his body is “acted” upon and becomes passively “enfeebled” and “unsinued”. The actor’s gender is left unintelligible by the performance; he is “I know not whom, neither man nor woman”. As Prynne continues, male actors performing as women “make themselves, as it were, neither men nor women, but Monsters, (*a sin as bad, nay worse than any adultery, offering a kinde of violence to Gods owne worke*)” (172). These performances acted as a violation of the sanctity of the male body: Prynne asks, “is this a laudable . . . a *triviall, veniall, harmelesse thing, as most repute it?* Is this a light, a despicable effeminacie, for men, for Christians, thus to adulterate, emasculate, metamorphose, and debase their noble sexe?” (172). Prynne, in his condemnation of cross-gender performance, makes the claim that the male body had the potential to “metamorphose” into something else simply by way of theatrical performance. The stage itself was a transformative space that could disrupt the legibility of gender codes, changing the male body into something that was, to Prynne, unintelligible.

What then, for Prynne, constituted an “intelligible” vision of the male body? What constituted an intelligible or unintelligible performance of masculinity for seventeenth-century audiences? In the influential 1998 work *Female Masculinity*, Jack Halberstam takes up the

question of what constitutes a legible performance of masculinity by examining the processes by which “dominant male masculinities . . . present themselves in the register of the real, eschewing the performative and the artificial” (266). As Halberstam explains:

...white men derive enormous power from assuming and confirming the nonperformative nature of masculinity. For one thing, if masculinity adheres “naturally” and inevitably to men, then masculinity cannot be impersonated. For another, if the nonperformance is part of what defines white male masculinity, then all performed masculinities stand out as suspect and open to interrogations. (235)

According to Halberstam, dominant masculinities present themselves not only as biologically “natural”, but as essentially nonperformative. Expressions of gender which are visibly “performative” open themselves up to interrogation, and thus to hegemonic regulation and corrective coercion. It is not only the recognizably “feminine” that becomes the subject of interrogation, but any form of masculinity that finds its expression away from the heterosexual white male body. Halberstam goes on to explain, however, that the process of making masculinity visible and exposing its performative characteristics can work to “unmask the ideological stakes of male nonperformativity” (255). In a chapter examining American drag king culture of the 1990s, Halberstam argues that the drag king “performs masculinity (often parodically) and makes the exposure of the theatricality of masculinity into the mainstay of her act” (232). While the character Viola is not herself engaged in a parodic drag performance,⁵ her ability to articulate the “shows” that constitute male behavior gestures towards a renegotiation of

⁵ As Jennifer Drouin clarifies in her article on “Cross-Dressing, Drag, and Passing: Slippages in Shakespearean Comedy”, Viola, in her disguise as Cesario, is not herself participating in the parodic act of *drag*, but is rather attempting to *pass* as male, a practice which is “neither parody nor an intentional exposure of normativity”, but is rather a “subversive infiltration of normativity in which the performance of gender itself is disguised” (23-24).

what the category of “we men” might include. If Viola is, as a woman, capable of producing a legible performance of masculinity for Orsino and the characters who surround her, this would begin to suggest, in Halberstam’s terms, that “masculinity does not belong to men, has not been produced only by men, and does not properly express male heterosexuality” (241).

How, then, do we define the concept of “masculinity”?⁶ How might we be able to expose the performative nature of a hegemonic gender identity that tends to define itself as inherently nonperformative? Judith Butler, a formative contributor to the development of queer theory, has explored how regulatory sexual norms “work in a performative fashion to constitute the materiality of bodies and, more specifically, to materialize the body’s sex, to materialize sexual difference in the service of the consolidation of the heterosexual imperative” (*Bodies That Matter* xii). In the book *Gender Trouble* (1990), Butler proposes a theory of gender not as a “stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow”, but rather as a historically and socially contingent identity “tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a *stylized repetition of acts*” that produce “the illusion of an abiding gendered self” (191). Butler describes these stylized acts as “*performative* in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are *fabrications* manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means” (185).⁷ According to these terms, the very

⁶ Halberstam takes up the difficult question of “What is ‘masculinity’?” in the first chapter of *Female Masculinity*. In this chapter, Halberstam “attempts to compile the myths and fantasies about masculinity that have ensured that masculinity and maleness are profoundly difficult to pry apart” (1-2). See Halberstam, *Female Masculinity*, 1-43.

⁷ As Butler goes on to clarify in their later book *Bodies That Matter* (1993), the concept of a performative gender should not “be conflated with voluntarism or individualism”, but rather “cannot be theorized apart from the forcible and reiterative practice of regulatory sexual regimes”. While the “constitutive constraint” entailed in these regulatory regimes “does not foreclose the possibility of agency, it does locate agency as a reiterative or rearticulatory practice, immanent to power, and not a relation of external opposition to power” (xxiii).

concept of a prediscursively gendered body is the result—rather than the source—of a cumulative set of performative actions that work to materialize sexual difference. The very assumption of an essentially *nonperformative* masculine identity is itself the result of a *performative* process, one which reifies the notion that gender is an ontologically stable and epistemologically coherent trait of human bodies. By reconfiguring gender as a performative process, Butler argues that “gender identity might be reconceived as a personal/cultural history of received meanings subject to a set of imitative practices which refer laterally to other imitations and which, jointly, construct the illusion of a primary and interior gendered self or parody the mechanism of that construction” (188).

Butler’s analysis of the social and historical contingency of gender would provide the groundwork for a critical re-evaluation of the concept of “masculinity” not simply as an expression of biological “maleness” but, as Homi K. Bhabha would describe in the essay collection *Constructing Masculinity* (1995), as “the ‘taking up’ of an enunciative position, the making up of a psychic complex, the assumption of a social gender, the supplementation of a historic sexuality, the apparatus of a cultural difference” (58). Gail Bederman, in her book *Manliness and Civilization* (1995), would describe masculinity as a “continual, dynamic process” by which “men claim certain kinds of authority, based upon their particular type of bodies” (7). In discussing the means by which masculinity is naturalized, Bederman explains:

...gender is constructed as a fact of nature, and manhood is assumed to be an unchanging, transhistorical essence, consisting of fixed, naturally occurring traits. To study the history of manhood . . . is to unmask this process and study the historical ways different ideologies about manhood develop, change, are combined, amended, contested—and gain the status of “truth.” (7)

To expose masculinity as a performative category, then, is not only to reveal the ideological processes by which certain forms of male identity are naturalized, or take on the value of “truth”, but also to reveal the historical processes by which hegemonic masculinities take shape and gain precedence over other forms of masculinity.

In the years following the reinstatement of Charles II as English monarch in 1660, London theatres would reopen with a new set of conditions governing the ways in which masculinity, and gender more broadly, could be performed and embodied on stage. In the first few years of the Restoration, London theatre companies would move away from the practice of casting male actors in female roles, and would instead begin to employ female performers to act as women on stage. The arrival of actresses to London theatres would motivate not only a change in the way in which women were represented on the English stage, but also a more comprehensive renegotiation of the way in which gender was understood within the context of dramatic performances. Scholars of Restoration theatre have explored the contributions made by female performers to English drama during this time at which women had access to a new level of agency and visibility within the public space of the playhouse.⁸ Elizabeth Howe, in her

⁸ For critical studies focused on the new roles of women in Restoration theatre, see John Harold Wilson, *All the King's Ladies: Actresses of the Restoration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958); Katharine Eisaman Maus, “‘Playhouse Flesh and Blood’: Sexual Ideology and the Restoration Actress,” *ELH* 46, no. 4 (1979): 595-617; Jacqueline Pearson, *The Prostituted Muse: Images of Women and Women Dramatists, 1642-1737* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988); Elizabeth Howe, *The First English Actresses: Women and Drama, 1660-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Deborah C. Payne, “Reified Object or Emergent Professional? Rethorizing the Restoration Actress,” in *Cultural Readings of Restoration and Eighteenth-Century English Theater*, ed. Payne and J. Douglas Canfield (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995), 13-38; Laura J. Rosenthal, “Reading Masks: The Actress and the Spectatrix in Restoration Shakespeare,” in *Broken Boundaries: Women and Feminism in Restoration Drama*, ed. Katherine M. Quinsey (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1996), 201-218; Felicity Nussbaum, *Rival Queens: Actresses, Performance, and the Eighteenth-Century British Theater* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010); and Fiona Ritchie,

foundational work *The First English Actresses* (1992), has analyzed the arrival of female performers in relation to a broader “profound change in contemporary attitudes to women, female sexuality and theatre among the upper and upper-middle classes in the late seventeenth century”. As a result of this change, Howe explains, “a new model of sexual relations became increasingly accepted, in which the woman as well as the man was entitled to full and adequate individuality” (21). This shift in gender codes was being played out publicly by the actresses who would become major contributors to the direction that English drama would take throughout the late seventeenth century. Felicity Nussbaum identifies the professional actresses of the Restoration as the “sentient site of negotiations regarding gender and genre, negotiations arising from specific practices and performances” (64). Over the course of the Restoration, the London stage became a space in which actresses were able to publicly redefine what it meant to be a woman within English society.

In primarily focusing on the ways that actresses reshaped the performance of women’s roles, critics of the Restoration have often overlooked the nuanced ways in which hegemonic masculinity was altered within English drama during the late seventeenth century. I seek in this dissertation to explore the changing conditions of masculinity as a gender category within dramatic performance in the decades following the reopening of the theatres in 1660. As Viola had recognized in *Twelfth Night*, masculinity too was a performative category, one that is constructed in time by way of a “stylized repetition of acts” that produce the illusion of a coherent and legibly “male” gender identity. Throughout the Restoration, the theatre would act as a creative space in which playwrights and performers could explore, redefine, and challenge

Women and Shakespeare in the Eighteenth Century (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 1-25.

what it meant to perform the role of a “man”. This re-evaluation of masculinity was not only carried out by the male performers who appeared on stage: the new popularity of breeches roles during the Restoration allowed for women to actively engage in the construction of masculinity as a performative category on stage. While on-stage depictions of masculinity had the potential to open up transgressive possibilities for maleness as a performative gender category, they could also often reify patriarchal gender codes—codes that were propagated by playwrights, audience members, and the regulatory legal framework that governed the stage. The renegotiation of performative gender codes brought on by the arrival of female actors would have the effect of naturalizing some forms of masculinity, while making other forms of masculinity subject to a more intense form of corrective scrutiny.

In setting out to study the changing gender codes brought about by the shifts in theatrical practice that happened in the late seventeenth century, I have taken as my subject matter adaptations of Shakespeare’s work written and staged during the Restoration. During this period, the playwrights who adapted Shakespeare’s work were expanding upon Shakespeare’s own interest in exploring gender identity within the space of the theatre—an interest expressed through characters like Viola. In focusing on the way that Shakespeare was interpreted and rewritten by Restoration authors, I not only intend to examine how playwrights adapted pre-Interregnum dramatic texts for post-Interregnum theatrical traditions, but also hope to examine how Shakespeare was himself reinvented and re-evaluated during this historical period. As Michael Dobson has pointed out in *The Making of the National Poet* (1992), the “canonization” of Shakespeare as the preeminent English author during the long eighteenth century took place during a time when adaptations of Shakespeare’s plays were often staged more frequently than their original source texts—a time at which many of Shakespeare’s plays “were in practice only

tolerated in the theatre in heavily revised versions” (4-5). Early twentieth-century critical overviews of Restoration Shakespeare adaptations, such as those carried out by George C. D. Odell (1920) and Hazleton Spencer (1927), tended to be dismissive of the adaptations, comparing the plays unfavourably to their Shakespearean originals. Spencer, for example, made the claim that it was “impossible to exaggerate the harm these versions have done, not only in the long career of some of them on stage, but also because they inaugurated the fashion for adaptation” (371). Dobson has claimed that, for these early critics, “what is at stake in preserving the Complete Works from adaptation is the integrity and indeed masculinity of Shakespeare himself. . . . [To] produce a different version of Shakespeare’s book is to produce a different version of Shakespeare; to rewrite a play is to tamper not just with its text but with its father, the author” (10). For critics such as Odell and Spencer, Restoration adaptations represented a historical degradation in their movement away from Shakespeare’s original authorial paternity.

As the twentieth century progressed, subsequent critics would seek to reassess these adaptations as the products of their specific historical circumstances. In the introduction to a collection of *Five Restoration Adaptations of Shakespeare* (1965), Christopher Spencer would make the claim that “[we] can best understand the adaptations if we regard them as new plays”: “we should consider the Shakespearean original as the source, which the Augustan dramatist followed closely at times, but in which [the author] made changes that are keys to *his* [sic] vision of the potentialities of story, character, and theme” (8-9). More recently, Jenny Davidson (2012) has described the process of adaptation as “a serious imaginative and interpretive endeavour, with a full complement of intellectual and aesthetic and technical components distinct from those of the Shakespearean originals” (191). For these critics, Restoration adaptations can be interpreted as “distinct” works whose merits can be evaluated independently of their original

source texts. Further studies of Shakespearean adaptation, such as those by Dobson, Sandra Clark (1997), and Barbara Murray (2001; 2005), view these works as being expressive of the societal conditions in which they were produced. Clark summarizes this approach as follows: “these adaptations participate in the new cultural conditions of their times, revealing, for instance, changed attitudes to domestic life, marriage, and gender roles, as well as new concepts of literary and dramatic decorum. . . . They afforded audiences the chance to see Shakespeare in a form specifically designed to appeal to their own times” (xlvi).⁹ In being specifically tailored to the tastes of Restoration audiences, these adaptations reveal the normative social codes of the era; Shakespeare’s adapters have rewritten the author’s work in a way that adheres to the ideological framework of their own time. Dobson furthermore argues that studying the adapted works of Shakespeare destabilizes an idealized vision of Shakespeare as an author, as it can reveal the “various and contingent means by which that very idea of the ‘true’ Shakespeare was constructed” (10). Shakespeare’s own identity was historically contingent, and was continually reshaped by the authors who were adapting his texts.

Studying these adaptations as works independent of their Shakespearean source material, however, can obfuscate the ways that Shakespeare’s original texts generate and suggest certain readings. In their introduction to the essay collection *Shakespeare and the Eighteenth Century*

⁹ Murray claims that these adaptations are furthermore expressive of the changing material conditions of the theatre during the Restoration: “the reworking of Shakespeare in this period was driven by new stage-production techniques that enhanced immediate visual impact, and that this was reinforced by a developing theoretical prescription for the coherently visual in poetic imagery” (*Restoration Shakespeare* 17-18). Approaching Shakespeare adaptations within the context of performance, editors Amanda Eubanks Winkler, Claude Fretz, and Richard Schoch have more recently assembled a collection that sets out to study these adaptations “not as relics of a theatrical past but as vehicles for performance that can transcend their printed texts and their original political and material staging conditions” (9). See Winkler, Fretz, and Schoch, eds., *Performing Restoration Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023).

(2008), Peter Sabor and Paul Yachnin argue against a “one-way narrative of ideological appropriation” in which Shakespeare’s eighteenth-century adapters, editors, and interpreters are seen as strictly *acting upon* Shakespeare’s work by applying their own ideas to a neutral Shakespearean source text. This approach to interpretation “[assumes] that Shakespeare is ‘conscripted’ and ‘rewritten,’ the terms of his reception are ‘dictated,’ the ontology and epistemology of his text are ‘specified’ within narrow boundaries that have no connection with his own time, the identity of the text is ‘determined’ so as to radically circumscribe how it can be read” (3-4). Sabor and Yachnin instead propose that adaptation is part of a “dialogic movement” between Shakespeare and adapter, in which Shakespeare’s source text generates certain meanings alongside the meanings created by the adapter (4). In the context of gender performance, Shakespeare’s plays can hardly be considered a neutral body of work. Recent critics and practitioners have explored the possibilities of on-stage embodiment that are opened up by Shakespeare’s texts, as well as the limitations that are inherent within Shakespeare’s depictions of gender, race, and ability.¹⁰ In my own work, I argue that Shakespeare provided the foundation upon which Restoration authors could explore and interrogate gendered identities, and the ways in which those identities could be enacted on stage. In engaging with Shakespeare’s own exploration of masculinity, Restoration playwrights were able to recognize the historically contingent nature of gender categories by reflecting upon the ways that masculinity had changed and developed between Shakespeare’s lifetime and their own era.

¹⁰ For recent collections on Shakespeare’s approach to gender and embodiment, see Valerie Traub, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Shakespeare and Embodiment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); Jennifer Drouin, ed., *Shakespeare / Sex: Contemporary Readings in Gender and Sexuality* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2020); and Kate Aughterson and Ailsa Grant Ferguson, *Shakespeare and Gender: Sex and Sexuality in Shakespeare’s Drama* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2020).

The chapters of my dissertation chronologically examine a series of Shakespeare adaptations written between 1660 and 1700 in order to trace the development of on-stage performances of masculinity during this period. My first chapter tracks the shift in theatrical practice, one carried out in the early 1660s by the emergent patent theatres of the Restoration, from a tradition of boy actors in women's roles to companies which now included both men and women as performers. I argue that this shift in practice coincided with a more comprehensive naturalization of the gendered bodies of actors on stage, a process by which the "real" off-stage body of the performer supplanted the "fictional" body being performed, the actor's off-stage body becoming the referent by which an on-stage performance of gender was made legible. Restoration theatre companies promised their audiences voyeuristic access to the bodies of their female performers, performatively uncovering the "real" gendered bodies of their performers on the public stage. The actresses of the Restoration, however, would perform not only as women, but would engage in performances of masculinity by way of the era's popular breeches and travesty roles. My chapter turns to an analysis of John Dryden and William Davenant's 1667 adaptation of *The Tempest*, which introduces the character of Hippolito, a role performed in breeches by actress Jane Long. In this adaptation, Shakespeare's magical island setting becomes a space in which gendered bodies are often rendered confusingly illegible as the play's characters seek to understand the markers of gender difference. The character of Hippolito, a young man isolated by Prospero who has never seen a woman, is gradually socialized into the normative masculinity of the European sailors who arrive on the island. The complex gender layering of the play's narrative, in which an actress learns to effectively perform masculinity, works to expose masculinity as a socially-constructed category, one that is made legible through a series of normative codes.

In my second chapter, I examine the ways in which the figure of Shakespeare was interpreted and mythologized during the Restoration as a symbol of masculine literary authority. The chapter begins with an analysis of the critical writings of William Davenant and John Dryden, who viewed themselves as the inheritors of a tradition of English playwriting that had its origin in Shakespeare's work. Dryden's critical work in particular reveals a fraught relationship between the author and his literary "father" Shakespeare; as both a practitioner of theatre and a dramatic theorist, Dryden would consistently return to a discussion of Shakespeare's work over the course of his lifetime, framing himself and Shakespeare as masculine rivals within the public area of dramatic writing. Dryden described Shakespeare as having belonged to an "unpolish'd Age", and viewed himself as being capable of updating Shakespeare's work for a historical era which was more gentlemanly and refined. In my discussion of the relationship of influence between Dryden and Shakespeare, I provide an analysis of Dryden's 1679 adaptation of *Troilus and Cressida*. In this play, Dryden uses the hypermasculine Trojan War setting of Shakespeare's play in order to explore questions of homosociality, masculine identity, and the relationships of inheritance between fathers and sons. Following Shakespeare's own interrogation of masculinity, the adaptation reveals the mercantile and ultimately destructive nature of a homosocial sexual economy predicated on the commodification of women like Cressida. Dryden diverges from Shakespeare, however, in his depiction of the heroic character Hector, who is reformed in order to represent a more balanced and, for Dryden, more modern masculinity, the character being able to embody both a masculinized form of militarism and a feminized form of domesticity.

Chapter three explores the concept of the "body politic" as a dramatic metaphor during the Exclusion Crisis of the late 1670s and early 1680s. During this period, a series of political debates regarding the nature of sovereign authority were being played out publicly within the

spaces of London theatres. This chapter takes as its subject matter the work of John Crowne, who during this period composed two plays adapted from Shakespeare's *Henry VI* trilogy, *The Misery of Civil-War* and *Henry the Sixth, The First Part* (1680-81). Beginning in 1679, Crowne had been in the process of petitioning the English government on behalf of his father for a tract of land in North America. Through an overview of the documents submitted to the government by Crowne over the course of his life, I demonstrate that Crowne had a personal investment in defending the sovereign right of the Stuart monarchs that he was petitioning. In his two royalist adaptations, Crowne expands upon Shakespeare's metaphor of the body politic in order to explore questions of state governance in material bodily terms. In the bodily economy of Crowne's plays, weaknesses in rulership manifest themselves as intrinsic physical weaknesses, dysfunctional bodies becoming a source of political dysfunction. In the narrative that Crowne constructs over the course of his two plays, the politically and physically "weak" King Henry fails to embody the role of authoritarian patriarch, allowing his country to fall into a state of civil war and internal conflict.

My fourth and final chapter examines the way in which the voice functioned as a gender signifier within Restoration drama. This chapter examines the career of actor and playwright Colley Cibber, who in 1700 staged his own adaptation of *Richard III* while performing in the title role. Throughout his writing and work for the stage, Cibber would consistently return to a discussion of the voice as a key element in the performance of masculine roles on stage. In his autobiographical account of his early career as an actor, Cibber describes how he had been denied the role of stage "Hero", in part due to the limitations of his voice. In being positioned outside of normative stage masculinity, Cibber instead crafts alternative masculine roles for himself, particularly in his performances of fops and villains. In the figure of Shakespeare's

Richard, Cibber finds a character whose performative abilities allow him to transcend the limitations imposed upon his material body. I provide an analysis of the ways that the voice functions within Cibber's adaptation of Shakespeare's play, and argue that Cibber's Richard is a character who uses oral performance as a means of redefining his own personal identity.

In tracing the narrative of masculinity as it was represented in Restoration drama, I demonstrate how theatrical performance and, in the particular context of my subject matter, the performance of Shakespeare's plays allowed for Restoration authors, performers, and audience members to engage in a complex consideration of the ideological stakes of gender identity. While the authors that I study differ in their approaches to masculinity, their political motivations, and their relationships to Shakespeare and his work, they are all unified in their use of the stage as a means of enacting, contemplating, and reifying different modes of gender performance. While the theatre could be used to reinforce patriarchal notions of masculinity and naturalized gender codes, it could also generate transgressive possibilities for the understanding of gender as a performative construct. The theatres of the Restoration were spaces of experimentation in which masculinity could be continually interrogated, re-evaluated, and reinvented by way of performance.

CHAPTER ONE

“All You Shall See of Her is Perfect Man”: The Legibility of Gender and the Limits of Masculinity in John Dryden and William Davenant’s *The Tempest*

On Gender and “Impersonation”

In an early study of the arrival of female performers on the English stage entitled *All the King’s Ladies* (1958), critic John Harold Wilson discusses what he terms the “female impersonators” who were performing women’s roles in the early days of the Restoration. Wilson unfavourably compares these boy performers with their female counterparts as follows:

As creators of character there can be little doubt that the new actresses were superior to their juvenile predecessors. . . . [It] is inconceivable that a boy, no matter how talented, could compete with such gifted mature women as the great Mary Betterton, the famous Elizabeth Barry, or the accomplished Anne Bracegirdle. The stage life of the female impersonator was usually short, and his interpretation of a character could never be more than superficially correct. (90)

In his claims regarding the careers of boy actors, Wilson is making a fundamental assumption about the way in which gender was performed and interpreted on stage within the theatres of the Restoration. Since the boy actor is only an “impersonator” of a woman, rather than a “real” woman, his performance remains “superficial”, presenting femininity only on the surface of the body while his underlying gender remains inescapably male. Because the boy actor is fundamentally incapable of maturing into a “real” adult woman, his performances of female characters are interpretively incomplete—not “correct”. The disappearance of the boy actor from English theatrical practice was, for Wilson, an inevitable obsolescence that was merely an extension of the otherwise short “stage life” of these performers.

In establishing a governing binary between the “real” gendered body of the performer and the “impersonated” gender of the on-stage performance, Wilson, though he is writing in the twentieth century, reproduces a reading of gender that has, in fact, long-standing precedent in the discourses surrounding English theatre. In his 1582 antitheatrical tract *Plays Confuted in Five Actions*, Stephen Gosson establishes a similar binary between actor and role when discussing boy actors performing as women on stage:

The proof is evident, the consequent is necessary, that in stage plays for a boy to put on the attire, the gesture, the passions of a woman; for a mean person to take upon him the title of a prince, with counterfeit port and train; is by outward signs to show themselves otherwise then they are, and so within the compass of a lie. (102)

As with Wilson, Gosson claims that the boy actor is participating in a superficial act of impersonation when he performs on stage as a woman. Like an actor who temporarily pretends to be royal in adopting the role of a “prince”, the boy performing as a woman is engaged in a sustained “lie”. Although he outwardly recreates the recognizable “signs” of femininity in both “attire” and “gesture”, the boy actor’s performance is inherently counterfeit because of what he is inwardly. The “lie” of the actor’s performance externally contradicts the implicit “truth” of his bodily gender. While Gosson dismisses the theatre in its entirety, Wilson finds that this contradiction was historically resolved once the “outward” displays of femininity being performed on stage were enacted by “real” women.

It would be easy to dismiss Wilson, with his lurid and often sexualized descriptions of the early performances of Restoration actresses, as a critic whose work is now bordering on obsolescence, and whose ideas have long been deconstructed by the feminist scholarship of

subsequent years.¹¹ The most incisive critique of Wilson comes from Katharine Eisaman Maus who, in her article “Playhouse Flesh and Blood” (1979), describes how Wilson’s claims regarding boy actors are grounded in assumptions of the lack of competency of boy actors, as well as the purported naturalistic goals of theatre. As Maus states, the “[female] parts written by Shakespeare, Webster, Ford, Middleton, and others suggest no mean estimate by the playwrights of the boys’ abilities; Elizabethan and Jacobean audiences applauded male Juliets, Rosalinds, and Cleopatras” (595-596).¹² Despite the responses of critics such as Maus, however, Wilson’s fundamental assumptions regarding the “female impersonators” of the English stage have often

¹¹ See, for example, Wilson’s highly exaggerated and eroticized retelling of Samuel Pepys’s first account of actresses performing at the Theatre Royal: “When a woman shortly appeared on the stage, Pepys had to look twice to make sure it was not Kynaston in disguise. But there was no doubt about it; it was truly a woman, a lusty young wench, very handsome in flowing gown and laced petticoats, with her bosom and shoulders gleaming in the candlelight. One by one three more women appeared. The roles they played were small, and they were far from being polished performers, but they were women and their physical allure was undeniable” (2-3). Wilson troublingly fixates on the sexualized body of the on-stage actress who, unlike the boy performer Edward Kynaston, was “truly a woman”. Pepys original account of this 1661 performance quite modestly states, “I to the Theatre, where was acted *Beggars bush*—it being very well done; and here the first time that ever I saw Women come upon the stage” (2:3).

¹² In her study of early-modern boy actors, Tracey Sederberg additionally unpacks longstanding assumptions regarding the relationship between the “impersonated” gender of performance and the “true” gender of performers. Sederberg argues that the criticisms made by early modern antitheatricalists such as Stephen Gosson “presuppose a familiar concept of representation as the husk, or appearance, and truth as the kernel, or real, the danger lying in representation’s seductive occlusion of truth” (63). This conceptual binary emerges as a result of a “dominant epistemology . . . that sought to inscribe gender on the individual body not as representation but as ontology” (64). The boy actor’s performance of femininity disrupts ontological gender categories by dramatizing “a moment of rupture, when knowledge and visibility are at odds, when difference cannot be defined solely by recourse to the visual” (68). Maus similarly claims that “antitheatricalists . . . conceive of an inner, ‘real’ self, which is too often profoundly private, and of an outer self which, though it should express the reality within, too often conceals or distorts it” (“Playhouse Flesh and Blood” 607). Maus states that the “histrionic” nature of the theatre “is threatening because it alienates appearances from a real state of affairs” (607). See also Roberta Barker, “‘Not One Thing Exactly’: Gender, Performance and Critical Debates over the Early Modern Boy Actress,” *Literature Compass* 6, no. 2 (2009): 460-481.

gone unchallenged in much of the critical work discussing the seventeenth-century shift in practice from boy performers to “real” female actresses. Jacqueline Pearson, for example, in her important study of women’s contributions to Restoration theatre entitled *The Prostituted Muse* (1988), quite concisely expresses ideas similar to Wilson’s in her discussion of the new influence of actresses in Restoration theatre: “The introduction of actresses must have affected the drama of the period profoundly. Love and marriage and adultery could be enacted with a frankness and realism impossible in a theatre where all performers were male” (26). For Pearson, a new level of “realism” is achieved in theatre when the gender of an actor’s body aligns with the gender that they are performing on stage.

Even more recently, in Kate Aughterson and Ailsa Grant Ferguson’s collection on *Shakespeare and Gender* (2020), the authors make the following claim regarding the boy performers of the early modern era:

Moreover, with no *actual* female bodies on stage, Shakespeare and his contemporaries could only ever ventriloquize women’s voices through male actors (and indeed, in terms of public drama at this time, created by male writers); women are still, in effect, dumb in the public theatre until the Restoration. This effects an “institutionalised practice of female impersonation” . . . via which recognized archetypes of female behaviour (and any performative attempts to subvert them) are still only acts of “impersonation”, at risk of tipping into a parody, rather than a representation, of early modern womanhood. (35)¹³

¹³ The authors’ quotation on “female impersonation” is drawn from Dymphna Callaghan’s *Shakespeare Without Women* (2000), in which Callaghan claims that “the institutionalized practise of female impersonation . . . epitomizes the process of substitution inherent in dramatic representation at the same time as it signals the exclusions on which the dramatic signification of difference is founded” (7). Callaghan makes the argument that “the female body, while not literally present on the Renaissance stage, was constantly and often scabrously constructed in masculine discourses in ways that reinforced larger patriarchal institutions and practises” (30).

As with Wilson, Aughterson and Ferguson characterize the boy actors who performed as women in early modern theatres as female “impersonators”. Since these boy actors do not possess “*actual* female bodies”, they are fatalistically only ever able to function at the level of “impersonation” when embodying women on stage. In discussing boy actors, these critics have placed a disproportionate emphasis on the failures of this particular form of gender embodiment as opposed to other forms of dramatic “impersonation”. The argument that has been made by these critics is one that naturalizes gender at the level of the performer’s body. An individual’s proficiency in performing a particular set of gender codes is determined by the gender that has been assigned to that individual’s “real” body. In describing the “realism” that came with women now being able to perform in female roles, these critics are, at the same time, reinforcing the idea that masculinity exists as a neutral and ahistorical category. Since male actors had always been able to perform in male roles, the performance of masculinity on stage must implicitly have remained stable over time. For these critics, the process of dramatic “impersonation” seems to vanish when a male actor is performing in a male role: to describe these actors as “male impersonators” would be redundant, as male roles had always been performed by “real” men. The suspicion expressed by these critics only arises in cases when an actor’s performance on stage does not align with their assigned off-stage gender.

In this chapter, I argue that this naturalized association between the “off-stage” gender of a performer and the “on-stage” gender being performed was something that was actively constructed and consistently reinforced within the London patent theatres of the Restoration. The purpose of this chapter will be to examine the changing conditions of gender performance over the course of the 1660s, the first decade following the Restoration of King Charles to the English throne. The transition in theatrical practice that was carried out over this decade—a transition

that marked the end of boy actors and instead privileged having both men and women on stage—motivated a larger shift in the way in which gender was read and understood on stage. In the first section of this chapter, I provide a brief account of the often overlooked history of the male actors who were performing in women’s roles during the first year of the Restoration. Rather than being subject to an immediate and inevitable disappearance, the shift from boy performers to actresses occurred gradually, with male and female actors performing in women’s roles concurrently in the early months of 1661.

The second section of this chapter examines the ways in which the introduction of professional actresses was framed within the drama of the Restoration, as well as within the legislation governing London’s two patent playhouses. I argue that the shift away from boy performers to “real” women in female roles was accompanied by a comprehensive naturalization of gender on stage, by which the posited “true” gender of the *performer* took precedence over the “fictional” gender of the *performance*. Playwrights helped to facilitate this process of naturalization by constructing a “back-stage” sexual body for the performer, a referent which provided the basis for the performer’s “true” gender. Restoration audiences’ fascination with the “real” actor behind the performance was inherently gendered, and was often connected with a desire to “uncover” the “real” sexual bodies of female performers.

In order to explore the effect that this naturalization of gender had on performances of masculinity, the third section of this chapter will turn to an analysis of Dryden and Davenant’s adaptation of Shakespeare’s *Tempest*. Dryden and Davenant’s play, one of the earliest and most frequently revived adaptations of Shakespeare’s work written during the Restoration, uses the supernatural island setting of Shakespeare’s *Tempest* as a space for staging a series of scenes in which gendered bodies are identified and misidentified by the various characters of the play. In

the character of Hippolito, a breeches role performed by actress Jane Long, Dryden and Davenant create a character who is gradually socialized into normative masculinity, and must come to terms with the physical and social limitations that regulate his “male” body. I argue that Dryden and Davenant, while having this character eventually conform to a normative model for socially-acceptable masculinity, at the same time dramatize the means by which the character’s gender identity is shaped by the regulatory social codes of the European society that he eventually comes to join.

The Last Boy Actresses

At the return of Charles II to England on 29 May 1660, there were, in London, several performance groups who had been struggling to operate under the strict, though often inconsistently enforced, theatrical regulations of the Interregnum.¹⁴ The make-up of these groups is at least partially known. One group of older, largely pre-Commonwealth performers included the actors Michael Mohun, Robert Shatterell, William Cartwright, William Wintershall, Walter Clunn, Charles Hart, and Nicholas Burt. This group, operating autonomously out the Red Bull theatre as late as October of 1660, would be consolidated under the management of Thomas Killigrew as the King’s Company.¹⁵ A second acting group, consisting mostly of younger actors

¹⁴ The struggles of the Interregnum acting companies are documented in detail by Leslie Hotson in the first chapter of *The Commonwealth and Restoration Stage* (3-59).

¹⁵ These actors signed their names in an agreement with Master of Revels Henry Herbert dated 14 August 1660. While this group is often identified with their eventual “manager” Killigrew, they had been working independently in their dealings with Herbert between August and October of 1660. Following the August contract between Herbert and the actors, Herbert would address the group directly, in an order dated 13 October 1660, as “M^r. Michael Mohan and y^e rest of y^e Acto^{rs}” (Bawcutt 235). For transcriptions of these documents, see N. W. Bawcutt’s *The Control and Censorship of Caroline Drama* (225-26, 234-235).

operating out of John Rhodes's Cockpit theatre, included Thomas Betterton, Thomas Sheppey, Robert Nokes, James Nokes, Thomas Lovell, John Moseley, Cave Underhill, Robert Turner, and Thomas Lilleston;—this group would eventually form an agreement with William Davenant to become the Duke's Company.¹⁶ Additional companies, potentially those under the management of William Beeston and George Jolly, were performing in the City during the first year of the Restoration, while strolling companies would operate outside of London and Westminster.¹⁷

In carrying forward pre-Interregnum traditions of performance, these all-male groups would initially retain the practice of boy actors playing in female roles. Of the two main companies, the boy actors of the Rhodes-Cockpit company are more clearly known, as they were explicitly identified by John Downes in his overview of Restoration theatre history *Roscius Anglicanus* (1708). In discussing this company, Downes writes that “These six commonly Acted Womens Parts. Mr. Kynaston. James Nokes. Mr. Angel. William Betterton. Mr. Mosely. Mr. Flويد.” (18). Edward Kynaston (bap. 1643-1712), the most well-documented of the Restoration boy actors, would swap companies and be performing under Killigrew's management by early 1661.¹⁸ James Nokes (d. 1696) and Edward Angel (d. 1673) would continue with the Duke's

¹⁶ The articles of agreement between Davenant and this acting group, signed of 5 November 1660, are now held by the British Library, Add. Charter 9295. See also Bawcutt, 236-240.

¹⁷ Pepys, for example, sees an unknown acting troupe performing at the Red Bull on 23 March 1661, after the King's company had relocated to their Vere Street theatre. Pepys makes note of the relative poverty of this group, writing that “the clothes are very poore and the actors but common fellows” (2:58). *The London Stage* speculates that this group was under Jolly's management (1:26, 28). For an in-depth summary of Jolly's attempts at theatre management, see Hotson 167-196.

¹⁸ Pepys gives an account of Kynaston performing with the Rhodes-Cockpit company on 18 August 1660, then would make note of Kynaston's performance with the King's Company on 7 January 1661 (1:224, 2:7). See also the *Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers, and Other Stage Personnel in London, 1660-1800* (9:79-85).

Company under Davenant into adulthood, eventually both building careers as successful comic actors.¹⁹ William Betterton (1644-1661), the younger brother of actor Thomas Betterton, died at a young age when he, according to Downes, “was Drown’d in Swimming at *Wallingford*” (19). Less is known of the actors John Moseley (fl. 1659-1661) and “Mr *Floid*” outside of Downes’s statement that the two performers “commonly Acted the Part of a Bawd and Whore” (19).²⁰

The identities of the boy actors of the group that would become the King’s Company are more obscure. Wilson erroneously claims that the company “had no young impersonators at all and therefore badly needed women” (5). Pepys had seen this company perform multiple times prior to “the first time that ever [he] saw women” on 3 January 1661, meaning that any plays he had seen prior to this had included male actors performing in female roles (2:3). While actors Nicholas Burt, Charles Hart, and Walter Clunn had begun their careers as boy actors playing women’s parts in the pre-Commonwealth theatre, they had since moved on to male roles according to contemporary cast lists.²¹ There is, however, a document dating from the 1661-1662 theatre season that identifies a number of the company’s boy performers. A copy of Thomas Heywood’s *The Royall King, or The Loyall Subject* (1637) held by the Folger Library includes a

¹⁹ A summary of the careers of these actors can be found in the *Biographical Dictionary* (1:83-85, 11:40-43).

²⁰ Much of the existing biographical information on Betterton, Floid, and Moseley can be found in the *Biographical Dictionary* (2:101-102, 5:314, 10:329).

²¹ James Wright records these actors’ careers in his *Historia Histrionica* (1699): “Tis very true, *Hart* and *Clun*, were bred up Boys at the *Blackfriars*; and Acted Womens Parts, *Hart* was *Robinson*’s Boy or Apprentice: He Acted the Dutchess in the Tragedy of *the Cardinal*, which was the first Part that gave him Reputation. *Cartwright*, and *Wintershal* belong’d to the private House in *Salisbury-Court*, *Burt* was a Boy first under *Shank* at the *Black-friers*, then under *Beeston* at the *Cockpit*; and *Mohun*, and *Shatterel* were in the same Condition with him, at the last Place. There *Burt* used to Play the principal Women’s Parts, in particular *Clariana* in *Love’s Cruelty*” (3). While these actors did not play women’s roles during the Restoration, they were, up until the end of the seventeenth century, connected with a tradition of cross-gender performance.

handwritten cast list for the play corresponding to the members of the King's Company prior to 24 September 1662 (*London Stage* 1:37).²² This document records a mixed gender cast, and identifies both boy actors and women performing in female roles. The cast list gives "Handcock" (Thomas Hancock) in the role of "The Princesse", "Watson" (Marmaduke Watson) as "Isabella", "Weauer" (Elizabeth Weaver) as "Margaret", along with the actor "Dyke" as "A Bawd" and "Dynion" (John Benion) as one of "Two Courtezans". Though the exact dating of this cast list is unknown, it does suggest that Thomas Hancock (fl. 1661-1676) and Marmaduke Watson (fl. 1660-1697), both of whom would have continued careers with the King's Company in the next few decades of the Restoration, had begun their careers as boy actors performing women's roles.²³

In his article examining the surviving records surrounding boy actors of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, David Kathman describes the ambiguity of the term "boy" as it was applied to adolescent and young adult performers: "many theatre historians have assumed that a 'boy' must refer to a male with an unbroken voice who has not yet reached puberty, and is thus no older than about fourteen" (221). Kathman, however, finds that, up until to the Restoration, "female roles on the English stage . . . were played by adolescent boys, no younger than twelve and no older than twenty-one or twenty-two, with a median of around sixteen or seventeen"

²² Folger Library, STC 13364, copy 3. A transcription of the cast list is included in the *London Stage*, 1:37-38. The date of this performance must be before the fall of 1662, when Elizabeth Weaver left the theatre.

²³ See also the *Biographical Dictionary*, 7:68 and 15:300-301. The birth and death dates of Hancock and Watson are unknown. Little is known of the further careers of Benion and Dyke (*Biographical Dictionary* 2:31 and 4:538).

(220).²⁴ The two actors whose ages are most well-known, Kynaston and William Betterton, would have been seventeen and sixteen respectively in 1660, falling exactly within the median age of boy actors identified by Kathman. Though the birth year of Edward Angel is unknown, Kathman finds that Angel was bound as an apprentice to John Rhodes on 15 October 1656, two years later than Kynaston, who was bound to Rhodes on 5 July 1654 (243). Assuming that both boy apprentices were bound at around the same age, Angel would then be younger than Kynaston by roughly two years, placing him within the age range identified by Kathman.²⁵ Kathman, however, does find one “notable (and comic) exception” of a handwritten cast list possibly corresponding to 1660 that identifies the 40-year-old William Wintershall in the role of Evadne in *The Maid’s Tragedy* (244). While it is possible, as Kathman argues, that “adults sometimes played female roles in those early days of re-establishing the professional theatre” due to a scarcity of boy performers, the actors whom Downes identifies as having “commonly” performed the parts of women fall within an age range consistent with practices of the earlier seventeenth century (244).

If the tradition of employing boy actors in women’s roles was a normative practice within English theatre at the beginning of the Restoration, how was it that this practice had almost entirely disappeared from the stage by the later years of the 1660s? The transition away from boy actresses was initiated in the first year of the Restoration by Thomas Killigrew and William

²⁴ Kathman states that the “youngest boys” of this age range “seem to have played only minor parts, but boys across the entire rest of the age range can be found playing demanding lead female roles” (245).

²⁵ Kathman states that the twelve to twenty-two age range for boy actors “corresponds closely to the typical age range for London apprentices”, as early modern theatres mostly employed boys who were apprenticed (220). Kynaston was apprenticed at around age thirteen, which is close to the lower age limit identified by Kathman. The fact that Kynaston and Angel were hired to act after being apprenticed suggests a continuity with pre-Interregnum theatrical practice.

Davenant as the two aspiring theatre managers attempted to legally monopolize theatrical performance within the City of London.²⁶ On 21 August 1660, Killigrew and Davenant received a grant from the King setting forth the terms by which the two men could establish their theatre companies in London. The grant opens by stating that the King has been “giuen to vnderstand that Certaine persons In and about Our Citty of London or the Suburbs thereof, Doe frequently assemble for the performing and Acting of Playes and Enterludes”:

. . . which said playes, As wee are Informed doe Containe much Matter of Prophanation and Scurrility, soe that such Kind of Entertainments, which if well Mannaged might serue as Morrall Instructions In Humane life, As the same are now vsed doe for the most part tende to the Debauchinge of the Manners of Such as are present at them, and are very Scandalous & offensive, to all pious and well disposed persons. . . . [We] are assured that if the Evill & Scandall In the Playes that now are or haue bin acted, were taken away, the same might serue as Innocent and Harmlesse diuertisements for many of our Subiects, And Haueing Experience of the Art and skill of our Trusty and welbeloued Thomas Killegrew esq^r. one of the Groomes of our Bedchamber and of S^r. William Dauenant Knight for the purposse hereafter menconed, Doe hereby giue & Grante vnto the said Thomas Killegrew and S^r. William Dauenant full power & authority to Erect two Companies, of Players Consistinge respectiue of such persons, As they shall chuse and appoint. . . (Bawcutt 227)²⁷

²⁶ The chronology of events in this section follows that established by Judith Milhous and Robert Hume in their *Register of English Theatrical Documents, 1660-1737* (see, in particular, 1-37), as well as Bawcutt's *Control and Censorship of Caroline Drama* (88-108).

²⁷ Though the original grant is no longer extant, Bawcutt here transcribes a copy of the grant that was made for Henry Herbert, and is included among his personal papers (226-228). Herbert's copy is held by the British Library, Add. MS 19256, fol. 47.

The language of this grant assigns to Killigrew and Davenant the task of carrying out a comprehensive moral reform of London drama. Killigrew and Davenant, the grant states, will be responsible for bringing an end to the “Scandalous & offensive” performances going on in the city,—performances which “Debauch” the “Manners” of their viewers—and will instead reform these performances into “Morrall Instructions In Humane life” or “Innocent and Harmlesse diuertisements”.

The language of this grant was strategically beneficial to the goals of Killigrew and Davenant in monopolizing theatrical performances in London. In the first place, the grant allowed the two men to act independently of Sir Henry Herbert, who, as Master of Revels, believed himself to be in charge of the revision and censorship of all plays being performed, and who had already, in 1660, been attempting to exact licensing fees from the companies operating in the City.²⁸ The grant also gave Killigrew and Davenant the ability to shut down unauthorized playing companies in an attempt to coerce the existing London companies into working under their management. In a letter from Henry Herbert to Mohun’s company of actors dated 13 October 1660, Herbert mentions the “Late Restrainte” of the company due to the “seuerall complaints . . . made against you to the Kinges most excellent Maiesty by M^r. Killigrew and S^r. William Dauenant” (Bawcutt 234). Herbert’s letter suggests that Killigrew and Davenant had used their authority as state-appointed moral censors to shut down the company’s performances on the basis that they had been acting in “Scandalous” plays. That same month, October of 1660, Mohun’s company would appeal directly to the King for legal protection against both

²⁸ On 14 August 1660, Mohun’s troupe signs an agreement with Herbert “to pay or cause to be paid to the said S^r Henry Herbert his deputy or agent for euer^y new play forty shillings & for euer^y reuiued play twenty shillings as fees aunciently belonging to the master of the Revells” (Bawcutt 225).

Killigrew's legal suppression and Herbert's demands for licensing fees. Mohun's company writes that, in response to complaints of "Scandalous Plaies, raising the Price, and acknowledging noe Authority", Thomas Killigrew, on the basis of his royally issued "Grante", had "supprest vs vntill wee had by covenant obleiged our selues to Act with Woemen a new Theatre and Habitts according to our Scaenes" (Bawcutt 235). In attempting to move Mohun's company into a "new Theatre" under his management, Killigrew had insisted that the company begin to "Act with Woemen" in their dramatic performances. A quick way of shutting down Mohun's all-male acting troupe would be to designate their current practices of cross-gender performance as "Scandalous & offensive": the actors identified this as a point of contention between themselves and Killigrew. Killigrew could now, on the basis of his royally-issued grant, dictate the terms as to what forms of gender performance were and were not considered acceptable within London theatres.

The tradition of boy performers in women's roles would be more explicitly identified as a "Scandalous & offensive" practice in a second grant addressed to Thomas Killigrew on 25 April 1662. On this date, a royal patent was issued to Killigrew further establishing the legal framework of his and William Davenant's theatrical monopoly in London.²⁹ The patent sets out a series of provisions regarding how Killigrew and Davenant's acting companies were expected to behave when adapting the works of pre-Restoration playwrights for London audiences. This document mirrors the language of the earlier 1660 grant, expressing a concern that "many plays formerly acted do contain several profane, obscene and scurrilous passages, and the women's parts therein have been acted by men in the habit of women, at which some have taken offence"

²⁹ This document is included in a patent roll held at the National Archives (C 66/3013). The modernized transcription cited here comes from *Restoration and Georgian England, 1660-1788*, ed. David Thomas (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 16-18.

(17). Killigrew and Davenant are once again tasked with a moral reform of the theatre, and are given command “that from henceforth no new play shall be acted . . . containing any passages offensive to piety and good manners, nor any old or revived play containing any such offensive passages as aforesaid, until the same shall be corrected and purged by the said master or governors of the said respective companies from all such offensive and scandalous passages” (17-18). In addressing the potential for “offence” brought about by the practice of having boy actors perform in “women’s parts”, the patents “give leave that all the women’s parts to be acted in either of the said two companies for the time to come may be performed by women so long as their recreations, which by reason of the abuses aforesaid were scandalous and offensive, may by such reformation be esteemed not only harmless delight, but useful and instructive representations of human life” (18). Once again, Killigrew and Davenant are made responsible for shifting theatrical practice from the “scandalous and offensive” to “harmless delight”, or “Innocent and Harmlesse diuertisements”.

This regulatory patent sets forth an ideological statement—one which possessed the authority of royal license—as to what forms of gender performance would and would not be considered acceptable to present to Restoration audiences. Men are not understood to be acceptable candidates for performing “women’s parts”; the practice of having “men in the habit of women” is placed alongside the “obscene and scurrilous” textual passages that must be “purged” so as not to “offend” audience sensibilities. Women are granted the ability to perform in these parts only on the condition that their performances help to bring about the project of theatrical “reformation” proposed in both of these documents, transforming what could be “scandalous and offensive” about these roles into something that is “harmless” and “instructive”. In order to bring the theatre closer in line with a more pragmatic, or “useful”, mimetic

representation of “human life”, the patent demands both a textual and a performative change in the representation of gender in English drama. Female roles are to be written for and performed by women actors following a specific set of moral and ideological guidelines, and pre-Restoration plays are to be adapted into this new theatrical context. Implicit in this new configuration is the relegation of male actors to “men’s parts”. For the stage to properly represent “human life” to its audiences, it must rely on a naturalized alignment of female performers with “women’s parts” and male performers with “men’s parts”.

The introduction of women to “women’s parts” on stage would occur between the dates of these two documents. The earliest accounts of public performances by actresses in London theatres date from December of 1660. Thomas Jordan’s prologue “to introduce the first Woman that came to Act on the Stage in the Tragedy, call’d *The Moor of Venice*” corresponds with a performance by the King’s Company on 8 December 1660 (*London Stage* 1:22). On December 15, Andrew Newport, in one of his frequent summaries of the news in England, writes to Sir Richard Leveson, “Upon our stages we have women-actors, as beyond sea” (158). London acting companies were now beginning to follow the practices of French theatres, practices which the court of Charles II had witnessed first-hand when exiled during the Interregnum. The next month, on 3 January 1661, Pepys witnesses “women come upon the stage” for the first time during a performance of *The Beggar’s Bush* (2:3). While Pepys’s comments indicate that women were acting with the King’s Company by this point, this date did not mark an immediate break from the boy actor tradition. Later that same week, on January 7, Pepys would return to the King’s Company’s Vere Street theatre and make note of Edward Kynaston’s performance in Ben Jonson’s *Epicæne*: “Among other things here, Kinaston the boy hath the good turn to appear in three shapes: 1, as a poor woman in ordinary clothes to please Morose; then in fine clothes as a

gallant, and in them was clearly the prettiest woman in the whole house—and lastly, as a man; and then likewise did appear the handsomest man in the house” (2:7). In documenting the complex gender layering of Ben Jonson’s play, Pepys describes how Kynaston could still engage in a sustained performance of femininity and appear as the “prettiest woman” in the theatre. Additional performances by boy actors took place in the first months of 1661. When Pepys, for example, records a performance of *The Scornful Lady* on 12 February 1661 as being “now done by a woman”, this implies that the performance he had seen of the same play on January 4 was done instead by a boy actor as the female lead (2:6, 12). Additionally, the fact that Pepys makes note of a performance of *Argalus and Parthenia* on 28 October 1661 “where a woman acted Parthenia” implies that the performances he had seen of the play on January 31 and February 5 of that year were done with a boy actor in the title role (2:27, 31, 203).

There is little evidence that would suggest that English theatregoers like Pepys believed boy performers to be thoroughly insufficient in comparison to their female counterparts. Pepys’s account of Kynaston’s versatility as a performer in *Epicæne*, and his ability to appear both as the “prettiest woman” and “handsomest man” in the theatre, suggests that the legibility of on-stage performances of gender was not necessarily tied to the gender of the actor’s body. Kynaston’s performances of gender were not read as “impersonations”, or interpretive failures as Wilson has suggested, but rather as appealing embodiments of both “woman” and “man”.³⁰ In his account of the career of boy performers, John Downes writes that Kynaston “made a Compleat Female

³⁰ In discussing Kynaston’s performance, Elizabeth Howe claims that the “casting of Kynaston in this way implies a final effort to extract as much entertainment value as possible from his ability to impersonate women, now that actresses were beginning to supersede him and his kind. The transvestite convention, instead of being the accepted theatrical norm that it had been in the Renaissance, had become a curiosity” (25). Howe’s language mirrors that of Wilson: Kynaston’s “impersonation” of a woman is read as an anomalous “curiosity” on the Restoration stage rather than as a viable performance of femininity.

Stage Beauty, performing his Parts so well . . . that it has since been Disputable among the Judicious, whether any Woman that succeeded him so Sensibly touch'd the Audience as he” (19). Kynaston was, in Downes’s terms, “Compleat” in his embodiment of “Female” roles. What is true, however, is that the management and legislating governing the two patent theatres was increasingly pushing for a naturalized alignment between the on-stage “parts” of a performer and that performer’s off-stage bodily gender. By the later years of the 1660s, the casting of boy actors in female roles had vanished from normal theatre practice, and would, as we shall see in the next section, be referenced only as an anomaly that belonged to the previous historical era.

While one form of cross-gender performance was being restricted, however, new experiments in gender performance were beginning to take place on the Restoration stage. On 19 September 1668, Pepys would again attend a performance of Jonson’s *Epicæne*, though this time with actress Mary Knep performing in what had previously been Kynaston’s role (9:310).³¹ In discussing Knep’s performance of the “prettiest woman” who is revealed to be “handsomest man”, a perplexed Montague Summers, in 1928, writes that “it is incomprehensible how the title-rôle should have been assigned to a woman. The *dénouement* can but have fallen absolutely flat” (104). In the next sections of this chapter, I will argue that, rather than finding such layered performances “incomprehensible”, Restoration audiences embraced the new possibilities for gender performance that actresses brought to the stage in the first decade of the Restoration. These actresses would, however, at the same time face a new set of challenges, as their off-stage gendered body would become the object of voyeuristic fixation within the era’s popular drama.

³¹ The cast of this play is confirmed by John Downes, who in *Roscius Anglicanus* includes a King’s Company cast list for the play in which “Mrs. Knep” is named in the role of “Epicene” (4). *The London Stage* speculates that Knep could have been performing this role as early as December of 1666 (1:98-99).

“Pray Where’s the Difference?”

At the 1667 premiere of John Dryden’s *Secret Love, or The Maiden Queen*, the character Florimel, played by the actress Nell Gwyn, would enter onto the stage of the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane dressed entirely “*in Mans Habit*”. Florimel delivers the following speech to herself, commenting upon her ability to effectively perform masculinity:

Save you *Monsieur Florimell*; Faith me thinks you are a very *janty* fellow, *poudré* & *ajusté* as well as the best of ’em. I can manage the little Comb,—set my Hat, shake my Garniture, toss about my empty Noddle, walk with a courant slurr, and at every step peck down my Head:—if I should be mistaken for some Courtier now, pray where’s the difference? (V.i.7-13)

Florimel’s speech raises an important question about how sexual difference was read on the Restoration stage. If Florimel could reproduce perfectly the mannerisms of a young coxcomb through a series of performed gestures, could present herself as male so effectively that she could be “mistaken” for a man, was there really any sort of fundamental “difference” between herself and a “real” Courtier? While this speech may serve as an attempt to convince the audience of the effectiveness of Florimel’s disguise within the narrative of the play, accounts of the play’s performance praised Nell Gwyn’s ability to fully embody a masculine role. When Samuel Pepys attended a performance of *Secret Love* on March 2 of 1667, he expressed his admiration for Gwyn’s performance, recording in his diary that “so great performance of a comical part was never, I believe, in the world before as Nell doth this, both as a mad girle and then, most and best of all, when she comes in like a young gallant; and hath the motions and carriage of a spark the most that ever I saw any man have” (8:91). Pepys was so impressed by the “comical part done by Nell”, that he believed he would never be able to “see the like done again by man or woman”

(8:91).³² If Gwyn could outmatch any “man or woman” in her performance as a young gallant, could embody the role of the spark as well as “any man” might have, then where was the “difference”? How exactly did audiences read and respond to gender difference on the Restoration stage? How did women’s performances of gender on stage differ from the performances of male actors in comparable roles?

Florimel’s question of “difference” had been taken up several years earlier during a 1664 production of Thomas Killigrew’s play *The Parson’s Wedding*. This production, staged at Drury Lane by the King’s Company, eschewed male performers entirely, and was instead, as Pepys records on 4 October 1664, “acted all by women” (5:289).³³ During the play’s Epilogue, one of the company’s actresses came onto the stage to comment upon the production’s casting:

We have this day, expell’d our Men the Stage.

Why cannot we as well perform their Parts?

No, t’would not take: the tender Lady’s hearts

Would then their former charity give o’re:

The Madams in disguise would steal no more

³² The strength of Gwyn’s performance, along with that of Rebecca Marshall in the titular role of the “Maiden Queen”, helped to solidify *Secret Love* as a favorite for Pepys. On May 24 of the same year, Pepys would again attend a performance of the play, “which, though I have often seen, yet pleases me infinitely, it being impossible, I think, ever to have the Queen’s part, which is very good and passionate, and Floramell’s part, which is the most Comickall that ever was made for woman, ever done better then they two are by young Marshall and Nelly” (8:235). Though Pepys’s views as an individual do not represent those of his fellow theatregoers, the frequency of revivals for *Secret Love* during this period testifies to the popular success of the play, and of Gwyn’s original performance.

³³ See also Pepys’s entry for 11 October 1664: “My wife this morning went, being invited, to my Lady Sandwich, and I alone at home at dinner, till by and by Luellin comes and dines with me. He tells me what a bawdy loose play this *parsons wedding* is, that is acted by nothing but women at the Kings house—and I am glad of it” (5:294).

To th' young Actors Chambers in mask'd Faces,

To leave Love off'rings of Points and Laces.

Nor can we Act their Parts: Alas! too soon

You'd find the cheat in th' empty Pantaloon. (ll. 12-20)

An interesting question emerges from the epilogue to Killigrew's play: if women could perform male "Parts" as well as men, what was it that prevented men from being "expell'd" from the stage with greater frequency? If professional actresses could supplant male actors in female roles, why could they not also supplant male actors in male roles? The epilogue answers this question by directing the audience's attention away from the actress's on-stage performance towards her off-stage body. Killigrew's epilogue constructs a backstage narrative of female erotic desire, telling of the "Madams", or female spectators, who go in disguise to "young Actors chambers" in order to make their "off'rings" of love. In comparison to the "young Actor", however, the actress-in-breeches is described as being fundamentally incapable of satisfying the female spectator's erotic interest. The actress's body becomes insufficiently masculine once her "Parts" are revealed; the absent male genitals of the "empty Pantaloon" make apparent the sexual difference of the actress and reveal her as incapable of effectively "Acting" male. The material bodily difference of actresses is expressed not only in their "Pantaloons", but also in their "tender Lady's hearts", whose intrinsic "charity" prevents them from sustaining their performances of male roles.

Killigrew's epilogue details a substitution of "Parts" for "Parts": while women may be able to perform the theatrical "Parts" that men play on stage, they are inherently incapable of

supplementing the male genital “parts” that they are shown to lack.³⁴ This substitution is carried out through the construction of a backstage narrative by which the actress’s body is uncovered and her gender is materialized. The epilogue details how the off-stage reality of the Restoration differed from the earlier “Age” of English theatre when boy actors performed women’s roles:

When boys play’d women’s parts, you’d think the Stage,
 Was innocent in that untempting Age.
 No: for your amorous Fathers then, like you,
 Amongst those Boys had Play-house Misses too:
 They set those bearded Beauties on their laps,
 Men gave ’em Kisses, and the Ladies Claps.
 But they, poor hearts, could not supply our room;
 They went but Females to the Tying-room:
 While we, in kindness to our selves, and you,
 Can hold out Women to our Lodgings too. (ll. 1-10)

While certainly making a joke at the expense of the supposed “bearded Beauties” of the early modern stage, Killigrew’s epilogue seems to suggest that the voyeuristic lechery that drew pre-Interregnum “amorous Fathers” to the theatre was not necessarily grounded in the bodies of the actors performing the “women’s parts”. Although their femininity existed only from the space of the “Stage” to that of the “Tying-room”, the “Play-house Misses” of the English theatre became objects of erotic desire and were celebrated for their performances as women, receiving both

³⁴ The language used by Killigrew has precedent in Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*, where Viola draws attention to what she “lacks” as a man: “A little thing would make me tell them how much I lack of a man” (3.4.268-269).

men's "Kisses" and Ladies' "Claps".³⁵ What differed in the new playhouses of the Restoration was how far a performer's gender could follow them off the stage. The actresses of the King's Company were not just women up to the point of the "Tyring-room", but could remain as women as far as their private "Lodgings" as well.

The proposal of an off-stage and private sexual reality leads to a far more invasive process by which the performer's body is gendered. The process of gendering a body on stage extended beyond the space of the theatre itself; the naturalized "real" gender of the off-stage performer would become the point of reference by which the "fictional" on-stage performance of gender would be made legible. In her work on Restoration prologues and epilogues, Diana Solomon argues that paratexts delivered by actresses often adopted a state of "Betweenness" in which the actress, inhabiting an intermediary position between the character that she had been performing on stage and her "real" public identity, "could simultaneously perform and reflect on her character" (22). Among other types of prologues and epilogues, Solomon identifies what she calls "Female Exposed" paratexts, which "[featured] the actress investigating her body as simultaneously object and agent . . . [as] both a sexual spectacle and a critic of the ideology that made her so" (42).³⁶ I would argue further that the "exposure" of the female body that is facilitated by these paratexts served also as a means of confirming the "truth" of the actress's gender. While the actress remains in a liminal space between her "real" and "fictional" identities,

³⁵ As Lori Leigh has stated, the "Ladies Claps" stood in not only for "applause", but also for "venereal disease—perhaps both, depending on how [the epilogue] is interpreted" (85). For Leigh's analysis of this passage alongside other prologues and epilogues of the Restoration, see Leigh, *Shakespeare and the Embodied Heroine* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 83-87.

³⁶ These paratexts were distinct from what Solomon identifies as "Male Exposed" paratexts, which focused less on the gendered body of the male speaker and instead "developed and nuanced a player's acting reputation" (52). See Solomon, *Prologues and Epilogues of Restoration Theater* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2013).

a continuity is performatively established between her “public” and “private” gendered body. Killigrew’s epilogue, for example, promised audience members a comprehensive access to the private female bodies of the actresses that appeared on stage. The epilogue follows the actress away from the stage in its attempt to locate the underlying gender of her body. The reported “kindness” that actresses could offer Restoration audiences carried with it the implicit suggestion that interested audience members could themselves follow actresses back to their “Lodgings” to receive sexual favours. The image of the actress-as-prostitute would become a common point of reference in the prologues and epilogues of the Restoration. By 1676, for example, the epilogue of Thomas Shadwell’s *The Libertine* would promise that “behind our Scenes . . . Some of our Women shall be kind to you, / And promise free ingress and egress too” (ll. 36-40). In another performance, Elizabeth Boutell, in the epilogue to John Corye’s 1672 play *The Generous Enemies*, would tell her audience that “’Tis worth your Money that such Legs appear; / These are not to be seen so cheap elsewhere” (ll. 21-22). These references would again function to direct audience attention towards the off-stage sexual body of the actress.³⁷ Audiences were reassured that the women they were seeing on stage were in fact “real” women behind the scenes of the theatrical productions that they were watching.

³⁷ In the recent collection *Performing Restoration Shakespeare*, Fiona Ritchie discusses the contradictory ways that the uncovering of women’s legs through breeches roles provided actresses with a greater amount of agency on stage, while also exposing them to a more intense voyeuristic objectification: “Paradoxically, the wearing of male dress directed attention to the female body of the actress as the breeches costume revealed her legs, usually covered by long and voluminous skirts. But women dressed in male attire were able to engage in a broader range of physical activities (for example, sword fighting), as their movement was not so conscripted as it was by their usual feminine garments” (81). See Ritchie, “Cross-Dressing in Restoration Shakespeare: *Twelfth Night* and *The Tempest*,” in *Performing Restoration Shakespeare*, ed. Winkler, Fretz, and Schoch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 79-96.

At the same time that the actress's body was being naturalized as recognizably "feminine", the male actor's body was being gradually naturalized as recognizably "masculine". By 1677, the epilogue to Nathaniel Lee's *Rival Queens* could threaten to bring back the "sort of Toys / Known to black Fryars, a Tribe of choopping Boys": "If once they come, they'l quickly spoil your sport; . . . The panting Breasts, white Hands and little Feet / No more shall your pall'd thoughts with pleasure meet" (ll. 16-23). The epilogue threatens to replace the underlying female body of the actress with the male body of the boy actor, a body that would be incapable of providing audiences with the same erotic "pleasure". As the epilogue goes on to state, "The Woman in Boys Cloaths, all Boy shall be, / And never raise your thoughts above the Knee" (ll. 24-25). Unlike John Downes's description of Edward Kynaston as a "Compleat Female Stage Beauty", the boy actors of the English stage were now identified as "all Boy", not being able to "raise" the erotic attention of audiences. As with the actress's body, the boy actor's body is invasively uncovered in order to expose his off-stage gender. This moment of imagined exposure is used to establish a palpable material difference between the bodies of boys and actresses.

A discussion of the material difference between the bodies of actresses and boy actors had been brought onto the stage several years earlier in the form of a prologue by playwright Thomas Jordan that had, by its title, reportedly been used "to introduce the first Woman that came to Act on the Stage in the Tragedy, call'd *The Moor of Venice*" (21).³⁸ In Jordan's prologue, a member of the King's Company informs the audience that a "Woman playes to day, mistake me not, / No Man in Gown, or Page in Petty-Coat; / A Woman to my knowledge" (ll. 3-5). The speaker, sure of the performer's gender because he has "[seen] the Lady drest", sets out

³⁸ *The London Stage* dates this production as 8 December 1660 (1:22). Elizabeth Howe identifies Anne Marshall as the "most likely candidate" for the actress who performed as Desdemona in this production, and who was being introduced in this prologue (24).

to defend the actress's virtue against those members of the audience who "will be censuring" her presence on the stage (ll. 2, 8):

'Tis possible a vertuous woman may
 Abhor all sorts of looseness, and yet play;
 Play on the Stage, where all eyes are upon her . . .
 But Gentlemen you that as judges sit
 In the Star-Chamber of the house the Pit;
 Have modest thoughts of her; pray do not run
 To give her visits when the Play is done,
 With dam me, your most humble Servant Lady,
 She knows these things as well as you it may be . . . (ll. 9-24)

Although the speaker operates under the pretence of defending the actress as a "vertuous woman", the prologue's overall function is to instead draw the audience's attention to the sexual body of the woman that they are about to see on stage. As Fiona Ritchie has argued, the speaker's request for the "Gentlemen" of the audience not to "visit" the actress after the performance "could have the effect of encouraging rather than prohibiting, suggesting to them that they too can go backstage and have 'knowledge' of the actress" (6).³⁹ Furthermore, the "knowledge" the speaker shares with the audience is not only a sexual "knowledge", but also an apparent "knowledge" of the true gender of the actress underlying the performance. The speaker is able to claim that the newly introduced actress is not a disguised "Man in Gown" because he has seen the "Lady drest" backstage, the speaker publicly giving account of the private

³⁹ For an extended analysis of Jordan's prologue to *Othello*, see Ritchie, *Women and Shakespeare in the Eighteenth Century*, 3-9.

uncovered female body of the actress. The speaker's "knowledge" of the actress's body is empirically verifiable by the "Gentlemen" of the audience, whose visits the actress will herself "know" the meaning of. Jordan's epilogue to the same performance reiterates the prologue's appeal to the actress's off-stage body, asking the audience, "how d'ye like her, come what is't ye drive at, / She's the same thing in publick as in private" (ll. 1-2). Unlike the boy actors who preceded her on stage, the actress's femininity follows her off-stage and remains bound to her "private" body.

The newly arrived female body of the actress is, in Jordan's prologue, placed in contrast with the male bodies of the "Men in Gowns" who had been performing in female roles. The speaker gives a disparaging account of the abilities of male actors to effectively perform as women:

Our women are defective, and so siz'd
 You'd think they were some of the Guard disguiz'd;
 For (to speak truth) men act, that are between
 Forty and fifty, Wenches of fifteen;
 With bone so large, and nerve so incomplyant,
 When you call *Desdemona*, enter Giant . . . (ll. 29-34)

Jordan's prologue attempts to instill an image of naturalized physical difference between male and female bodies in the minds of its audience. Male actors are deemed "defective" for female roles because their very bodies are "incomplyant" to the roles they are meant to be performing. Jordan appeals to a discrepancy in "size" between men and women: men appear as "Giants" in comparison to the women that are supposed to be embodying on stage. The claim that men of "forty and fifty" were performing as "Wenches of fifteen" was certainly an exaggeration;

Kynaston, for example, was roughly only seventeen in 1660. The prologue is instead inviting its audience to accept a model of gender difference grounded in the material body by claiming that a “disguiz’d” male body and “real” female body should be readily distinguishable to any spectator.

The prologue goes on to claim that the theatre company will, in preparation for the arrival of the actress, “purge” from the stage “every thing that is unclean, / Lascivious, scurrilous, impious or obscene” (ll. 35-36). Employing the same language that had been used in the royal grants issued to Killigrew and Davenant, the prologue claims that the arrival of the actress will occasion a reform of the theatre, one that involves the “purging” of that which is “obscene” or “scurrilous” from English drama. The prologue’s fixation on the actress’s sexual body, however, demonstrates that theatre companies were more interested in exploiting the suggestive potential of the actress’s off-stage female body than in preserving the “virtuousness” of female players. What is being “purged” from theatrical practice, then, is the possibility that female roles can be effectively embodied in drama by male performers. In the space of the Restoration theatre, femininity is no longer something that is performatively mobilized on stage, but rather becomes inextricably bound to the “real” female actress through an invasive uncovering of her private off-stage body. At the same time, the “disguiz’d” masculinity of the “Man in Gown” inescapably reveals itself from behind the actor’s performance, and becomes the mark of his insufficiency as a “fictional” woman. By the terms set out by Jordan’s prologue, the introduction of female performers to the stage became an occasion for the reinforcement of essentialized notions of gender difference between male and female performers.

“O Brave New World...”

As with Thomas Jordan’s prologue to *Othello*, the opening prologue to William Davenant and John Dryden’s 1667 adaptation of *The Tempest* draws its audience’s attention towards the “real” female body of the Restoration actress. In its first performance on 7 November 1667, the play’s prologue would inform its audience that, because of a “dearth of Youths” among their players, the Company had been “forc’d t’employ / One of our Women to present a Boy”:

And that’s a transformation you will say
 Exceeding all the Magick in the Play.
 Let none expect in the last Act to find,
 Her Sex transform’d from man to Woman-kind.
 What e’re she was before the Play began,
 All you shall see of her is perfect man.
 Or if your fancy will be farther led,
 To find her Woman, it must be abed. (Prologue 29-38)

The “Boy” being introduced in this prologue is the newly-added character Hippolito, a male character introduced by Dryden and Davenant who would be performed in breeches by the actress Jane Long. While the prologue informs its audience that the character Hippolito will remain a “perfect man” throughout the performance, it goes on to direct its audience’s attention towards the female body lying behind Long’s performance of maleness. If any members of the audience are tempted to discover the true “Sex” of the actress, they are invited to “find her Woman” sexually, or “abed”. Within the confines of the play’s narrative, however, the actress’s performance of masculinity would be sustained, a “transformation” in gender brought about by way of a performative “Magick”.

The addition of the character Hippolito to Shakespeare's *Tempest* is foregrounded not only in the play's prologue, but also in the introductory preface by John Dryden printed alongside the play in 1670.⁴⁰ In his preface, Dryden would give an account of the inspiration behind the additions that he and his collaborator Davenant had made to Shakespeare's play:

Sir *William D'avenant*, as he was a man of quick and piercing imagination, soon found that somewhat might be added to the Design of *Shakespear*, of which neither *Fletcher* nor *Suckling* had ever thought: and therefore to put the last hand to it, he design'd the Counterpart to *Shakespear*'s Plot, namely that of a Man who had never seen a Woman; that by this means those two Characters of Innocence and Love might the more illustrate and commend each other. This excellent contrivance he was pleas'd to communicate to me, and to desire my assistance in it. I confess that from the very first moment it so pleas'd me, that I never writ any thing with more delight. (4)

As Dryden explains, Hippolito, the "Man who had never seen a Woman", had been a "Counterpart" created to reflect the narrative of Shakespeare's Miranda, a woman who has never seen a young man. In keeping with the play's pattern of neoclassical doubling, Dryden's theme of "Innocence and Love" would also be expanded upon through the addition of Dorinda, Miranda's sister, who has also never seen a man other than her own father Prospero.

Dryden and Davenant's additions to Shakespeare's play function to shift the focus of the narrative away from Prospero's magical authority over the island setting of the play, and onto the romantic encounters between the play's younger characters. In the plot of the Dryden-Davenant adaptation, Prospero has been expelled from Milan by his usurping brother Antonio, taking with him not only his two daughters Miranda and Dorinda, but also the Duke of Mantua's infant son

⁴⁰ Dryden's preface is dated 1 December 1669 ("Preface to the *Enchanted Island*" 5).

Hippolito “Whose father dying bequeath’d him to my care” (2.4.3). While on the island, Prospero hides Hippolito away from the two young girls, raising him separately due to an astrological prediction that Prospero has about Hippolito’s fate: “By calculations of his birth / I saw death threat’ning him, if, till some time were / Past, he should behold the face of any Woman” (6-8). Over the course of the play, the “Characters of Innocence” are cautiously introduced into each other’s company, and are gradually socialized into understanding their roles as “men” and “women”. Although Prospero gives each of these characters a set of guidelines as to how they should approach the opposite gender, Prospero’s plans for the young characters go awry when Hippolito is nearly killed in an unforeseen duel with Ferdinand. Hippolito survives, however, and the young characters are paired off in a series of hopeful marriages. In the play’s final scene, it is the newly added Hippolito, and not Miranda, who express wonder at the “brave new World” of the shipwrecked Italians that he eventually comes to join (5.2.138).

The changes made by Dryden and Davenant to Shakespeare’s original *Tempest* have long drawn scorn from critics of the play. Early twentieth-century critics such as Hazleton Spencer saw the Restoration *Tempest* as little more than “genteel smut”, and claimed that “[one] aim and one aim alone animated its authors: to pander” (201, 203).⁴¹ Maximillian Novak, while defending the play as “a *Tempest* reshaped to suit a view of man’s relation to the universe compatible with the age”, argues that Dryden and Davenant “shaped a play that is more amusing

⁴¹ Critics as early as Walter Scott would criticize Dryden and Davenant’s added “smut”. Scott wrote that “Miranda’s simplicity is converted into indelicacy, and Dorinda talks the language of prostitution before she has ever seen a man” (qtd. in Novak 330). Charles Lamb similarly would complain that “the impure ears of that age would never have sate out to hear so much innocence of love as is contained in the sweet courtship of Ferdinand and Miranda” (“On the Tragedies” 48). Later twentieth-century critics like Elizabeth Howe would also claim that the play’s primary focus is its sexual humour, Howe stating that “Miranda’s purity and ignorance of the male sex become a huge suggestive joke, her naiveté merely an opportunity for innuendo” (63).

than Shakespeare's, but only at the cost of reducing the spiritual dimension of Shakespeare's drama" (342, 339-340).⁴² The loss of the "spiritual dimension" of the play is, for Novak, tied to Dryden and Davenant's more comprehensive "demythifying of Prospero": Prospero is reduced "to a very human and a very severe judge; the Shakespearean themes of forgiveness, grace, and redemption are replaced by the hocus-pocus of weapon salves and the off-color buffoonery of the sailors. [...] The magical effects within the play are not reduced, but the magic of the play has disappeared" (340).⁴³

While mourning the "Shakespearean themes" that have been lost from the Dryden-Davenant adaptation, Novak furthermore finds it "surprising . . . that [the authors'] rendering of Hippolito is so limited in scope":

Although Hippolito may be seen as contributing another dimension to Shakespeare's concept of freedom, since like Ariel and Caliban he is seeking to expand his experience of his world, the particular nature of his experience within the play is limited to an awareness of the existence of women and a desire to test his courage against another man—in short, limited to love and honor. (332)

Although perhaps less dismissive than Spencer, Novak suggests that Dryden and Davenant have lowered the overall tone of their Shakespearean source material. The addition of Hippolito fails to expand upon Shakespeare's original "concept of freedom"; unlike the "Shakespearean

⁴² Novak's claim that the play had been reshaped to be "compatible with its age" is similar to William Hazlitt's earlier characterization of the play. Hazlitt wrote that, for Dryden and Davenant, "it was thought fit and necessary . . . to modernize the original play, and to disfigure its simple and beautiful structure, by loading it with the common-place, clap-trap sentiments, artificial contrasts of situation and character, and all the heavy tinsel and affected formality which Dryden had borrowed from the French school" ("A View of the English Stage" 64).

⁴³ Novak's mention of "magical salves" is in reference to a scene in the play discussed below in which Hippolito's stab wound is healed by way of a magical salve prepared by Ariel.

themes” of “forgiveness, grace, and redemption”, Dryden and Davenant use the figure of Hippolito to explore the presumably lesser, or more “limited”, themes of “love and honor”. For Novak, Dryden’s purported exploration of “Innocence and Love” is, when compared with the “spiritual dimension” of Shakespeare’s play, limited in “scope”.

While Novak focuses his criticism on what has “disappeared” from the play, other critics have explored in greater depth the ways in which Dryden and Davenant’s alterations to Shakespeare’s play were reflective of the shifting social and political dynamics of the early Restoration. For Katharine Eisaman Maus, Prospero’s waning power over the island would reflect the “lost monarchical privilege enjoyed by the early Stuarts”, his role as the “father-king” becoming gradually more politically “anachronistic” for Restoration audiences as the century continued (“Arcadia Lost” 140). Following the work of Maus, Michael Dobson has argued that the play’s shifting power dynamics represent a movement away from a model of “patriarchal monarchy”, and towards a newly developing model of the “patriarchal family” (43). For Dobson, the play puts forth the “story of how a man and woman in a state of nature (or at least a state of total ignorance) come to deduce the ‘naturalness’ of patriarchal monogamy” (45-46). Several critics have examined the way in which the figure of Hippolito fits within the “patriarchal” dynamics of the play, often with a particular focus of the female identity of the actress underlying the “male” breeches role. Laura Rosenthal reads Hippolito primarily as a female body within the context of the play; Rosenthal argues that the Hippolito’s “[socially] inappropriate female desire” almost brings about the character’s death, and that the character gradually “learns to contain his (her) enormous sexual appetite” (208). Lori Leigh, on the other hand, draws attention to a series of slippages between the character’s “male” and “female” characteristics,

and argues that Hippolito “seemingly moves through the play with a fluid rather than fixed gender, operating as both male and female and exploring desire through both genders” (95-96).

The figure of Hippolito seems to exist at the very limits of legible masculinity. In moments such as the prologue, the play directs the audience’s attention away from Hippolito’s on-stage male identity and, as several critics have pointed out, onto the female body of the actress. Within the narrative of the play, however, Hippolito is gradually taught to recognize gender difference, and to identify himself as a “man” who desires “women”. My purpose for the rest of this chapter will be to examine how Dryden and Davenant’s adaptation takes up the questions of sexual difference and the legibility of gendered bodies. Dryden and Davenant’s play stages a series of scenes in which male and female bodies are identified and misidentified by characters who have not yet been socialized into normative gender codes. These characters learn to navigate a new heterogeneity of gender, while at the same time learning to identify themselves as either “men” or “women”. Over the course of the play’s narrative, Hippolito comes to recognize not only the limitations of his social identity as a “man”, but also the limitations of his own male body. By the end of the play, in order to integrate into normative society, Hippolito is taught that he must conform to a socially acceptable model of “male” behaviour in order to remain a “perfect man”.

Beginning in the earliest scenes of the play, Dryden and Davenant foreground visual observation as a means of learning and interpretation. When Prospero enters onto the stage in the second scene of the play and asks his daughter, “*Miranda!* where’s your Sister?”, Miranda responds by telling her father that she left Dorinda “looking from the pointed Rock, at the walks end, on the huge beat of Waters” (1.2.1-3). Dorinda’s “looking”, or her visual curiosity in witnessing the spectacle of the storm that opens the play, becomes one of the character’s earliest

traits that the audience is introduced to. When Dorinda herself first enters onto the stage later on in the scene, she gives an account of the “huge great Creature” she has seen in the storm:

This floating Ram did bear his Horns above;
 All ty'd with Ribbands, ruffling in the wind,
 Sometimes he nodded down his head a while,
 And then the Waves did heave him to the Moon;
 He clamb'ring to the top of all the Billows,
 And then again he curtsy'd down so low,
 I could not see him: till, at last, all side-long
 With a great crack his belly burst in pieces. (1.2.300-311)

In attempting to make sense of this “Creature”, which Miranda identifies as “the Ship” that has been wrecked in the storm (301), Dorinda brings to life the body of the inanimate ship, relating its movements to that which she already knows. The ship is personified as having nodded its “head”, clamoured, and curtsied against the oncoming waves. The ship appears to possess the animal body of a “floating Ram” with a distinguishable “head” and “belly”. The “body” of the ship that the audience sees on stage in the opening scene is defamiliarized, and is reconfigured according to Dorinda’s own system of understanding.

Dorinda’s strategies of reading unknown bodies are put to use once again when the two sisters first see the men Hippolito and Ferdinand. As with the “body” of the ship, the play’s audience is made to re-evaluate the male body through the eyes of Dorinda and Miranda. The discourse of animality is brought up by Prospero as he describes the unknown “man” Hippolito to his daughters: Prospero warns Miranda and Dorinda that, “The curled Lyon, and the rugged

Bear / Are not so dreadful as that man” (2.4.97-98).⁴⁴ Prospero’s statements on the animality of “man” prompt Dorinda to fear that the “man will catch us else, we have but two legs, / And he perhaps has four” (2.4.116-117). Dorinda and Miranda eventually learn, however, to differentiate the “dreadful” unknown creature that is “man” from other unknown “Creatures” such as the ship (gendered as a “him”) through their observation of the male body of Hippolito. Upon first seeing the unknown Hippolito, the two sisters are surprised that he possesses a physical body comparable to their own—that he “walks about like one of us” and “has legs as we have too” (2.5.1-2).⁴⁵ After further interacting with Hippolito, Dorinda gives the following account of her meeting with the newly discovered “man”:

At first it star’d upon me and seem’d wild,
 And then I trembled; yet it look’d so lovely, that when
 I would have fled away, my feet seem’d fasten’d to the ground;
 Then it drew near, and with amazement askt
 To touch my hand; which, as a ransom for my life,
 I gave: but when he had it, with a furious gripe
 He put it to his mouth so eagerly, I was afraid he
 Would have swallow’d it. (3.1.104-111)

⁴⁴ Prospero uses his daughters’ ignorance of men as an opportunity for comic innuendo. When asked whether or not men “run wild about the Woods”, Prospero tells his daughters, “they are wild within Doors, in Chambers, / And in Closets . . . You must not trust them, Child: no woman can come / Neer ’em but she feels a pain full nine Months” (2.4.106-112).

⁴⁵ Lori Leigh argues that Miranda and Dorinda, in their account of Hippolito’s “legs”, are drawing attention to the “female” body of the actress in breeches, and are here “making a metatheatrical reference to those legs being the same as theirs, or in other words, female legs” (91-92).

In her initial interaction with Hippolito, Dorinda fears that the “man” will slip back into the monstrous animality that had earlier been suggested to her by Prospero. Hippolito is initially seen as something that is “wild”, and that might devour her by “swallowing” her hand. The encounter between Dorinda and Hippolito, however, not only allows Dorinda to recognize Hippolito’s humanity, but also allows her to recognize Hippolito’s identity as a “man”: over the course of Dorinda’s speech, Hippolito changes from an “it” into a “he”.⁴⁶

This shift in pronouns is mirrored later on in the play when Prospero introduces Miranda to Ferdinand from a distance. When Miranda asks Prospero whether or not Ferdinand is “a Spirit”, Prospero explains that, “it eats and sleeps, and has such senses as we have. This young Gallant, whom thou see’st, was in the wrack; were he not somewhat stain’d with grief (beauty’s worst Cancker) thou might’st call him a goodly person” (3.5.5-9). At the same time that Prospero identifies Ferdinand as a “person”, he also identifies him as a man: Ferdinand is, like Hippolito, transformed from an “it” into a “he”. After instructing Miranda to “Advance the fringed Curtains of [her] Eyes” and look upon Ferdinand (3.5.1), Prospero directs his daughter’s process of “looking” by encouraging her to read the body before her as a male “he”. Through a scene of metatheatrical spectatorship,—Miranda’s eyelids become the “fringed Curtains” of the stage—Prospero introduces Miranda to the logic of socialized gender by instructing her on how to identify the bodies that appear before her on stage.

The visual exchanges of the play function not only as acts of gendering, but also as the means by which characters come to explore their own gender identities. In their initial encounter,

⁴⁶ Lisanna Calvi has pointed out this shift in pronouns in her article on *The Tempest*, writing that “Hippolito transforms from a creature (‘it’) into a man (‘he’)” (162). See Calvi, “‘Suppos’d to be rais’d by Magick’, or *The Tempest* ‘made fit’,” in *Revisiting the Tempest: The Capacity to Signify*, ed. Calvi and Silvia Bigliazzi (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 151-170.

Hippolito and Dorinda hesitantly identify themselves as “man” and “woman”. When asked by Hippolito, “what art thou?”, Dorinda explains, “Alas I know not; but I'm told I am a Woman” (2.5.40-42). When subsequently asked “pray tell me what you are” by Dorinda, Hippolito similarly explains “I must confess, I was inform'd I am a man, / But if I fright you, I shall wish I were some other Creature” (2.5.51-54). Though the characters identify themselves as “Woman” and “man”, those identities seem to be built upon the uncertain foundation of what they have been “told” or “inform'd” of by Prospero. As the play goes on, Hippolito continues to express anxiety over the certainty of his male identity; when Ferdinand asks Hippolito to tell him “what [he is]”, Hippolito informs him that he “well hop'd I was a man, but by your ignorance / Of what I am, I fear it is not so” (3.6.10-14). Although Ferdinand reassures Hippolito by telling him that there is “no doubt” that he is a man (17), Hippolito is not yet certain of his male identity within the newly heterogeneous gendered world into which he has been introduced.

Although these characters identify themselves as “men” and “women”, the exact limits as to what constitutes masculinity and femininity remain uncertain early on in the play's narrative. In fact, the young characters of the island think about gender much more in terms of similarity than of difference. When first observing Hippolito and hearing him talk, Dorinda exclaims, “Heark! it talks, sure this is not it my Father meant, / For this is just like one of us” (2.5.10-11). Though taught by Prospero to believe in a palpable difference between themselves and bestial “men”, Dorinda's first remarks are on the similarities between her own “female” body and the “male” body of Hippolito. Furthermore, at the first moment that Hippolito sees the new “woman” Dorinda, he asks, “What thing is that? sure 'tis some Infant of the Sun, dress'd in his Fathers gayest Beams, and comes to play with Birds: my sight is dazl'd, and yet I find I'm loth to shut my Eyes” (34-37). In his first moments seeing a woman, Hippolito initially identifies her

using male pronouns: “*his* Fathers gayest Beams”. Hippolito is initially taught by Prospero to imagine women as “something between young men and Angels” (2.4.45); in following these terms by characterizing Dorinda as an Angel-like “Infant of the Sun”, Hippolito initially identifies “women” using the same terms that he would use to identify “men”, the two groups existing on a comparable spectrum of the human and the divine.

Having not yet been socialized into normative gender codes, the young characters of the island struggle to grasp the nebulous social and physical boundaries of gender. In the first act of the play, Dorinda and Miranda have the following discussion about the new possibility of meeting the young “men” that Prospero has spoken of:

Dor. Methinks indeed it would be finer, if we two
Had two young Fathers.

Mir. No Sister, no, if they were young, my Father
Said that we must call them Brothers.

Dor. But pray how does it come that we two are not Brothers then, and have not
Beards like him?

Mir. Now I confess you pose me. (1.2.324-330)

Dorinda and Miranda conceptualize these new “men” in relation to the only point of reference that they have for maleness: their “Father”. Though they know that the new men, or “Brothers”, will be “young” in comparison to Prospero, the two “young” women begin to question why they are not identifiable as “Brothers” themselves. For the two sisters, the physical trait of “Beards” is not yet something that is inherently tied to gender difference: if a man walks about on “two legs” as women do, then why do women not grow beards as men do? The physical identifier of the “Beard” has, for the sisters, not yet become an essentialized masculine trait.

For Hippolito as well, the figure of the “Father” is used as a means of thinking through social codes of gender. After Hippolito is first introduced to Ferdinand, Ferdinand tells him the story of his shipwreck and his lost father Alonzo. After Ferdinand tells him that “’twas sad to lose a Father so”, Hippolito responds, “I, and an only Father too, for sure you said / You had but one” (3.6.2-4). When Ferdinand asks Hippolito “Have you a Father?”, Hippolito responds, “I was told I had one, and that he was a man, yet I have bin so much deceived, I dare not tell’t you for a truth” (20-22). In his uncertainty about social roles, Hippolito expresses a possibility of a multiplicity of “Fathers” who are not necessarily “men”. Hippolito has been “told” that he has one Father who was a “man”, though he is not certain about whether or not this information is true. Simply because Ferdinand has one male Father, it does not necessarily follow that everyone has one Father, or that all Fathers are men. Though the socialized Ferdinand views Hippolito as being “wondrous simple” (5), maleness is in no way logically tied to fatherhood for the not-yet-socialized Hippolito. For Hippolito, the social role of “Father” is not yet something that is exclusively or normatively male.

Hippolito continues to raise questions about the boundaries of normatively “male” behavior when discussing the concept of monogamy with Ferdinand. After he is told by Ferdinand that there are “more fair Women . . . besides [Dorinda]”, Hippolito claims that he “will have all of that kind, if there be a hundred of ’em” (3.6.49-53). When Ferdinand attempts to explain to Hippolito that he “must be ty’d to one”, Hippolito replies by saying “Sir, I find it is against my Nature. / I must love where I like, and I believe I may like all, / All that are fair” (57-62). In defending his own desire for polygamy, Hippolito presents monogamy as an arbitrary social rule with no grounding in “Nature”. In following the impulses of his own “natural” desires, he is able to imagine a social order in which he is free to “love” whomever he desires.

Hippolito's continued defence of polygamy throughout the play, however, exposes not only the arbitrariness of social monogamy, but also the arbitrariness of appeals to "Natural" gender roles. Later on in the play, when Ferdinand "requests" Hippolito not to love Miranda, Hippolito again appeals to his own "Natural" impulses, stating that he "must love all who are fair; for, to tell / You a secret, Sir, which I have lately found / Within my self, they all are made for me" (4.1.267-269). In following the "natural" desires of his body, or in searching "within his self", Hippolito claims that he is capable of loving "all that are fair". The "secret . . . within [his] self" that Hippolito claims to have discovered, however, is that women are "all made for [him]", existing as an egotistical reflection of his own desires.⁴⁷ Hippolito attempts to establish his own polygamous social order by presenting it as the "Natural" result of his own self-reflection.

In order to be integrated into the "brave new World" of the newly-arrived Italians, however, Hippolito must learn to reject polygamy and accept his normative role as "husband" to Dorinda. The issues of sexual transgression and social boundaries are addressed elsewhere in the play by way of the subplot involving Caliban's interactions with the shipwrecked sailors. Dryden and Davenant retain Caliban's North African origins that Shakespeare provides the character with by way of his mother Sycorax. In speaking with Ariel, Prospero recounts the story of "This damn'd Witch *Sycorax* for mischiefs manifold, and sorceries too terrible to enter humane hearing, from *Argier* thou knowst was banisht" (1.2.86-88). The adaptation, however, expands upon the origins of the newly-arrived Italians: following their shipwreck, Gonzalo explains that

⁴⁷ Though Laura Rosenthal argues that Hippolito represents an unregulated "female desire" (208), Hippolito does not extend his defence of sexual freedom and polygamy to Dorinda and Miranda. When asked by Dorinda "how if I should change and like that man [i.e. Ferdinand]? / Would you be willing to permit that change?", Hippolito responds by saying "No, for you lik'd me first" (4.1.215-217). Dorinda's response, "So you did me" (218), exposes the disproportionate amount of sexual freedom that Hippolito allows himself in comparison to Dorinda.

Alonzo and Antonio “have made amends to Heav’n, / By your late Voyage into *Portugal*, / Where, in defence of Christianity, / Your valour has repuls’d the *Moors* of *Spain*” (2.1.27-30).

The island setting of the play is thus put at the center of a Mediterranean conflict over the boundaries of European Christendom; over the course of the island’s history, the Christian European Prospero has displaced the North African Sycorax and imposed his own rule of law over the island and its inhabitants Caliban and Ariel.

In existing outside of the boundaries of European Christendom, Caliban and his newly-added sister Sycorax are described as possessing monstrous and racialized abject bodies. Caliban is often described rather as the “Monster of the Isle”, or something between a “man” and a “fish”, while his sister Sycorax is identified as a “Monster”, and is variously named by Trinculo as “My dear Blobber-lips” and “Queen Slobber-Chops” (2.3.161-162, 3.3.12, 130). In her examination of the concept of monstrosity entitled *Embodying the Monster*, Margrit Shildrick discusses the ways in which monstrous “others” often destabilize the limits of the human body. Shildrick writes:

It is not simply that monsters—strangers in general—disrupt the usual rules of interaction in that their cultural distance may be offset by physical proximity, but that they may not be outside at all. [...] In seeking confirmation of our own secure subjecthood in what we are not, what we see mirrored in the monster are the leaks and flows, the vulnerabilities in our own embodied being. Monsters, then, are deeply disturbing; neither good nor evil, inside nor outside, not self or other. On the contrary, they are always liminal, refusing to stay in place, transgressive and transformative. They disrupt both internal and external order, and overturn the distinctions that set out the limits of the human subject (13).

In the Dryden and Davenant *Tempest*, the figures of Caliban and Sycorax—the “Monsters of the Isle”—remain “always liminal”, as they are denied a place in the European social order established by the island’s “human” subjects. While the previously unsocialized Hippolito comes to be able to recognize himself as legibly “male” by the end of the play, the transgressive bodies of Caliban and Sycorax instead exist at the limits of legibility when it comes to their gender.

The female “monstrous” figure of Sycorax, for example, is characterized as hermaphroditic, and was performed on-stage throughout the eighteenth century by a male performer.⁴⁸ Unlike the earlier female performances of Kynaston, the male-to-female performance of Sycorax is presented as a comic example of a “monstrous” body. The disruptive nature of Sycorax’s gender hybridity is expressed in the following exchange after Sycorax has become “Queen” to Trincalo:

Calib. And he shall get thee a young *Sycorax*. Wilt thou not, my Lord?

Trinc. Indeed I know not how, they do no such thing in my Country.

Syc. I’le shew thee how: thou shalt get me twenty *Sycoraxes*; and I’le get thee twenty *Calibans*.

Trinc. Nay, if they are got, she must do’t all her self, that’s certain. (3.3.37-44)

Sycorax not only proposes that she will “get” children herself by Trincalo, but also proposes a reciprocal impregnation by which Trincalo will “get” children by her. Trincalo rejects Sycorax’s sexual proposition, characterizing her as a monstrous hermaphroditic figure who can “get” children “all her self”. While Trincalo declares himself “Espous’d” to the “lawful Inheritrix of

⁴⁸ Surviving cast lists from eighteenth-century productions of the play indicate that the part of Sycorax was frequently played by a male performer. The earliest surviving casting information for Sycorax indicates that a male actor “Cross” played the role during a performance of the play on July 29, 1708 (see *The London Stage* 2:174).

this Island” Sycorax, he does so in order to “claim lawful Title to this Island” (3.3.119-122). As Bridget Orr has argued, Dryden and Davenant present issues of imperial contact “in a comic key, attempting to resolve them through the invocation of a discourse of savagery which effectively displaces the rights of indigenous and creole peoples under natural or common law by denying their humanity” (194). Trincalo thus denies the “humanity” of Caliban and Sycorax in order to facilitate an act of displacement; Trincalo engages with Sycorax only insofar as he can establish his own European empire over the island. Sycorax and Caliban are ultimately denied a place in the European social order that is established by the end of the play. The sexual transgressions of the two characters culminate in an incestuous union: Trincalo finds Sycorax “upon a sweet Bed of Nettles, singing Tory, Rory, and Ranthum, Scanthum, with her own natural Brother” (4.2.108-109).⁴⁹ Because of their continued transgression and liminal bodies, Caliban and Sycorax appear, as Shildrick writes, “deeply disturbing” to the European characters of the play.

In order to be integrated into the normative European society established by the shipwrecked Italians, Hippolito must come to reject his own sexually transgressive desires. Orr has argued that, for Restoration audiences, Hippolito’s overactive desire could potentially “be understood as an effect of his barbarous upbringing, symptomatic of the degeneration widely regarded as consequent on removal from the centers of refinement” (195). In order to move out of the liminal position occupied by Caliban and Sycorax, Hippolito must come to follow the

⁴⁹ In her discussion of the Dryden and Davenant’s *Tempest*, Elizabeth Maddock Dillon argues that the play is “concerned with sexual reproduction in the New World, or, one might say, the play is concerned with the transportation of Europeans to and regeneration of European society in the New World at the most basic, biological level—that is, at the level of bodily production” (105). The incestuous union of Caliban and Sycorax contrasts with the acceptably exogamous unions of the European characters in the play’s final scene. For Dillon’s analysis of the Dryden-Davenant adaptation, see Dillon, *New World Drama: The Performative Commons in the Atlantic World, 1649-1849* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 104-111.

example of socialized “refinement” set forth for him by Ferdinand. He does so not only by eventually accepting the value of monogamy, but also by coming to understand the limits of his own body. Prior to his duel with Ferdinand, Hippolito struggles to understand the concept of his own physical mortality. After Ferdinand tells Hippolito that he must not love Miranda “till [he is] dead”, Hippolito asks, “How dead? what’s that? but whatsoe’re it be / I long to have her” (4.1.252-254). When Ferdinand proposes a duel over Dorinda and Miranda, Hippolito accepts his challenge, stating that “ev’ry day I’le fight for two more with you” (334). Without an understanding of the meaning of “death”, Hippolito believes himself to be capable of fighting “ev’ry day” against Ferdinand’s attempts to restrain his desire. In discussing the “Swords” that he and Ferdinand will be fighting with, Hippolito explains, “This is brave sport, / But we have no Swords growing in our World” (314-315). The masculine violence of the “Sword” that Ferdinand introduces is not yet a part of Hippolito’s island “World”.

The limits of Hippolito’s own body are presented to him once he enters into masculine contention with Ferdinand. Before dueling with Ferdinand, Hippolito states that he “[means] to fight with all the men I meet, and / When they are dead, their Women shall be mine” (4.1.225-226). In his desire to keep “all” women for himself, Hippolito places himself in competition with “all” men. In his duel with Ferdinand, however, Hippolito comes to recognize with his own social and physical limitations. After nearly being killed in the duel, Hippolito is told by Dorinda that his “hurt . . . was justly sent from Heaven / For wishing to have any more but me” (5.2.43-44). Hippolito agrees, stating “Indeed I think it was, but I repent it: the fault / Was only in my blood; for now ’tis gone, I find / I do not love so many” (45-47). The “hurt” that is enacted upon his body serves as a “just” lesson by which Hippolito learns to accept a monogamous relationship. Hippolito’s body, having been purged of “blood”, has also been purged of

transgressive desire. Later in the same scene, after Miranda enters on stage to heal Hippolito, Hippolito tells her “I find that if you please I can love still a little” (64). After Miranda warns him that she “cannot be unconstant, nor shou’d you”, Hippolito exclaims “O my wound pains me” (65-66). Hippolito’s bodily injury, or his “wound”, serves as a physical reminder not only of his mortality, but also of the monogamous role that he learns to adopt. Hippolito’s own material body is coerced into accepting a socially-appointed “appropriate” masculine role.

The play’s Restoration audience, however, would have been able to identify a discrepancy between the “material body” of the on-stage actress playing Hippolito and the “socially-appointed” male role that the character comes to accept. Indeed, the play at no point operates under the pretense that the “on-stage” character Hippolito truly possesses an “off-stage” male body. Critics such as Lori Leigh have made note of multiple “metatheatrical references” to Hippolito’s underlying “female” body that appear throughout the play (95). Dryden and Davenant’s play draws upon the audience’s own knowledge of Hippolito’s “off-stage” female body—a knowledge established, in part, by way of the act of uncovering that takes place in the play’s introductory prologue—and uses it as an opportunity for sexual innuendo. Hippolito’s interactions with Ferdinand, for example, often take on an erotic tone, as when Ferdinand is explaining sword-fighting to Hippolito and tells him that he “must stand thus, and push against me, / While I push at you, till one of us fall dead” (4.1.312-313). Similarly, in the play’s final scene, Hippolito asks Ferdinand to “teach me quickly how Men and Women in your World make love” (5.2.194-195).⁵⁰ While Hippolito’s education in male sexuality is part of his process of

⁵⁰ Lisanna Calvi has furthermore suggested that the “weapon-salve” scene in which Hippolito is healed acts as an erotic sexual metaphor: “the characters’ innocent references to the healing of pain and their gestural performance that intimates naughty, if emblematic, caressing . . . [displays] one of those apparent and witty contrasts between the idea [of sex] and its representation on stage that were pleasurable for the Restoration audience” (166). For the phallic

socialization, the comic suggestion of erotic intimacy between the two characters certainly plays upon the audience's ability to recognize the bodies of Ferdinand and Hippolito as "Man" and "Woman" capable of together participating in the heterosocial process of "making love".

If the play's audience, as indicated by these comic moments of gender slippage, remained always aware of the female body underlying the performance of Hippolito, the following question must then arise: how would a Restoration audience interpret a narrative in which a female body is gradually socialized into normative masculinity? How does the performer's "off-stage" female body shape the audience's interpretation of Hippolito as "perfect man"? In discussing the subversive potential of breeches roles on the Restoration stage, critic Diana Solomon writes that, "[recognizable] within the breeches part is the female character, the new male figure she is attempting, and the actress herself. The performativity present in the mingling of gendered attire and behavior makes space for a comedy of possibility, one that confirms gender regulations yet also challenges them through the fact of the woman performing comedy" (71). For Solomon, the "mingling" of gendered significations entailed in the breeches role opens up a space of "possibility" on stage in which the regulatory norms of gender can be both "confirmed" and "challenged". Bound together, or "recognizable", within the travesty role of Hippolito are the female actress, the male character, and the masculinity that the character comes to emulate. The play follows the character through various stages of gender embodiment and identification—from self-doubt and denial to eventual recognition and acceptance—and presents each stage to the audience for comic re-evaluation. From the early misrecognitions of Dorinda and Hippolito to the later misunderstandings regarding social traditions of monogamy, much of

implications of swordplay in the text, see also Leigh 90; and Murray, *Restoration Shakespeare*, 78.

the play's humour depends upon the audience's ability to recognize the social conventions governing normative gender and to view those conventions, at least for a moment, as open to ridicule and subversion. While the play is not necessarily critical of the normative masculinity that Hippolito comes to adopt,—it is an identity, the play suggests, that is more socially acceptable than that of Caliban or Sycorax—it reveals to its audience, at the very least, the ways in which Hippolito's masculinity is shaped by regulatory social forces that are not necessarily dependent upon the character's, or the performer's, “natural” or “real” body.

“Old *Shakespear*'s Honour'd Dust”

Since the focus of this adaptation of *The Tempest* has shifted away from Shakespeare's Prospero and onto the newly developed younger characters of the island, the final moments of the play focus not on the drowning of Prospero's magical “Books”, but instead on the “Promises of blooming Spring” and the future of the newly married young couples (5.2.263). Dryden and Davenant's thematic change suggests that they were less concerned with upholding the authority of Shakespeare's text than they were with exploring the dramatic possibilities of Shakespeare's island setting.⁵¹ The adaptation's prologue, in attempting to establish a continuity with Shakespeare's work, sets forth the following relationship between adaptation and original text: “As when a Tree's cut down the secret root / Lives under ground, and thence new Branches shoot; / So from old *Shakespear*'s honour'd dust, this day / Springs up and buds a new reviving Play” (Prologue 1-4). Just as the playwrights choose to focus on the youth of Hippolito rather

⁵¹ While Pepys, as a contemporary audience member, was able to identify *The Tempest* as “an old play of Shakespeares”, he did not make any further references to Shakespeare's original text in his nine accounts of the play (8:521). See also Pepys diary entries for November 13 and December 12 of 1667 (8:527, 576); January 6, February 3, March 25, April 30, and May 11 of 1668 (9:12, 48, 133, 179, 195); and January 21 of 1669 (9:422).

than the experience of Prospero, Dryden and Davenant here present their work as the newly-born “Branches” and “buds” emerging from the fallen “Tree” of Shakespeare’s legacy. For these authors, Shakespeare’s work provided an authoritative “root” which they could expand upon and give new life to within their own contemporary Restoration context.

As we will see in future chapters, adapters such as John Dryden would go on to develop an increasingly nuanced relationship with Shakespeare’s work, while continuing to engage with and, occasionally, expand upon Shakespeare’s approach to masculinity and gender identity. As Dryden and Davenant did with *The Tempest*, playwrights would turn to Shakespearean texts as a means of navigating the rapidly shifting gendered context of the brave new world of the Restoration stage. Over the course of the 1660s, the conditions for gender performance in London theatres had undergone a transformation. As English theatrical practice shifted away from a tradition of boy actors in women’s roles, the “real” off-stage body of the actor had taken precedence over the “fictional” on-stage performance as the naturalized site for gender identification in drama. However, as we have seen with the figure of Hippolito, authors and performers could subversively play upon the relationship between an actor’s on-stage and off-stage identities in ways that could expose the performative nature of gender roles. Through this subversive approach, Restoration playwrights were able to explore new possibilities in how masculinity could be enacted and interrogated within the space of the theatre.

CHAPTER TWO

Betwixt Man and Man: Homosociality and Shakespeare's Legacy in John Dryden's *Troilus and Cressida*

"Where are the Successours to my Name?"

In the prologue to John Dryden's 1679 adaptation of *Troilus and Cressida*, the ghost of Shakespeare is brought onto the stage in order to reprimand the tastes of Restoration audiences. Shakespeare's ghost, performed on stage by Thomas Betterton in the Duke's Company's performance of the play, would give an account of how he, "Untaught, unpractis'd, in a barbarous Age, . . . found not, but created first the Stage".⁵²

And, if I drain'd no *Greek* or *Latin* store,
'Twas, that my own abundance gave me move.
On foreign trade I needed not rely,
Like fruitfull *Britain*, rich without supply.
In this my rough-drawn Play, you shall behold
Some Master-strokes, so manly and so bold,
That he, who meant to alter, found 'em such,
He shook; and thought it Sacrilege to touch.
Now, where are the Successours to my name?
What bring they to fill out a Poets fame?
Weak, short-liv'd issues of a feeble Age;
Scarce living to be Christen'd on the Stage! (ll. 7-20)

⁵² Michael Dobson records that this appearance by the Shakespeare's ghost is the "first of Shakespeare's many posthumous personal appearances on the stage, the first of many occasions on which he is deduced from his own *oeuvre* as a dramatic character in order to authorize the revival of one of his plays" (74).

In his speech to the audience, Dryden's Shakespeare delivers a nationalist defence of an English literary tradition against the "foreign trade" of classical literature. Although Shakespeare was "untaught" in terms of classical learning, his "abundant" creativity mirrors the abundant riches of the "fruitfull" British Empire. Shakespeare's skills as an author are described in gendered terms. Shakespeare's writing is revered for being "so manly and so bold", despite his original play being "rough-drawn". While positioning himself as a patriarch of English literature, this fictional Shakespeare calls upon the "Successours to his name", or the inheritors of his literary legacy. This call for "Successours" draws upon the language of birth and fertility: while Shakespeare's work proves "fruitfull", the "issue" produced by Restoration authors proves to be "short-liv'd", hardly "Christen'd" before disappearing from the stage. The "feeble Age" of the Restoration, Shakespeare's ghost implies, is incapable of reaching the same level of masculine virility as his own earlier "barbarous Age".

The use of Betterton in the role of Shakespeare's ghost connects Dryden's 1679 adaptation with a lineage of performance that could be traced back to Shakespeare himself. In *Roscius Anglicanus*, John Downes gives an account of the training that Thomas Betterton had received from William Davenant in preparation for a production of *Hamlet* in the early 1660s: "*Hamlet* being Perform'd by *Mr. Betterton*, Sir *William* [Davenant] (having seen *Mr. Taylor* of the *Black-Fryars* Company Act it, who being Instructed by the Author *Mr. Shaksepeur* [sic]) taught *Mr. Betterton* in every Particle of it; which by his exact Performance of it, gain'd him Esteem and Reputation, Superlative to all other Plays" (21). Downes elsewhere recounts a similar lineage for one of Davenant's productions of *Henry VIII*: "The part of the King was so right and justly done by *Mr. Betterton*, he being Instructed in it by Sir *William*, who had it from Old *Mr. Lowen*, that had his Instructions from *Mr. Shakespear* himself, that I dare and will aver,

none can, or will come near him in this Age, in the performance of that part” (24).⁵³ By bringing Betterton onto the stage as Shakespeare, Dryden is bringing together two different historical “Ages”: the current “Age” of Restoration theatre that Davenant had helped to shape, and the “barbarous Age” in which Shakespeare’s plays were first performed.

In describing Shakespeare as an “Untaught, unpractis’d” author without skills in “*Greek* or *Latin*”, Dryden is responding to neoclassical critics of the Restoration who were dismissive of Shakespeare’s playwriting due to the author’s limited classical education. For Restoration critics, Shakespeare’s image had been shaped by Ben Jonson’s statement in the First Folio that the author knew “*small Latine, and lesse Greeke*” (“To the memory of my beloued” l. 31). In the year before Dryden’s *Troilus and Cressida* was first staged, critic Thomas Rymer had published *The Tragedies of The Last Age Consider’d and Examin’d* (1678), in which he includes Shakespeare among a number of pre-Interregnum English authors whose work is unfavourably compared with “the *ancient* Poets . . . the *Fathers* of Knowledg [sic], and *Interpreters* of the Gods” (7). Rymer argues that English drama would have benefitted from a closer adherence to classical Greek and Roman drama: “had our Authors began with Tragedy, as *Sophocles* and *Euripides* left it; had they either built on the same foundation, or after their *model*; we might e’re this day have seen Poetry in greater perfection, and boasted such *Monuments* of wit as *Greece* or *Rome* never knew in all their *glory*” (11). While Rymer views “*ancient*” authors like Sophocles and Euripides as the “*Fathers*” of ideal dramatic practice, Dryden, in his prologue, suggests an

⁵³ *The London Stage* speculates that the version of *Hamlet* described by Downes corresponds with a 24 August 1661 performance by the Duke’s Company at Lincoln’s Inn Fields, the first known performance of the play during the Restoration (1:32). Following Gerald Eades Bentley, Milhous and Hume doubt the veracity of the *Hamlet* anecdote, as “Shakespeare and Burbage were dead before Joseph Taylor joined the King’s Men in 1619” (Milhous, Hume, eds., *Roscius Anglicanus*, 51-52n138). The *Henry VIII* anecdote, however, seems to be more plausible (55n151). See also Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, 2:597.

alternative model of paternity for Restoration playwrights. Dryden transforms Shakespeare into the patriarch of an English theatrical tradition, a tradition which Dryden himself may then inherit as one of Shakespeare's "Successours".

The alignment of Shakespeare with a patriarchal model of literary authority was not an inevitable outcome of the discourses surrounding Shakespeare's work in the early decades of the Restoration. In the preface to her 1673 play *The Dutch Lover*, Aphra Behn would address neoclassical critics such as Rymer who viewed "Learning" as necessary to writing drama in a defence of Shakespeare's accomplishments as a playwright: "Plays have no great room for that which is men's great advantage over women, that is Learning; We all well know that the immortal Shakespeare's Plays (who was not guilty of much more of this than often falls to women's share) have better pleas'd the world than Johnson's works" (2-3). For Behn, Shakespeare's example is not only evidence of the arbitrariness of appeals to "Learning", but is also evidence that male authors do not hold an exclusive authority over success within the world of the theatre. Although men maintained a privileged access to education, Shakespeare's accomplishments, achieved outside of the hegemonic authority of "Learning", demonstrate that those who had limited access to education may equally "please the world" with their writing. In a 1664 essay, Margaret Cavendish would also defend Shakespeare against neoclassical critics. Cavendish describes Shakespeare's creative talents, focusing on his ability to represent a wide variety of characters from different backgrounds:

Shakespear did not want Wit, to Express to the Life all Sorts of Persons, of what Quality, Profession, Degree, Breeding, or Birth soever; nor did he want Wit to Express the Divers, and Different Humours, or Natures, or Several Passions in Mankind; and so Well he hath Express'd in his Playes all Sorts of Persons, as one would think he had been Transformed

into every one of those Persons he hath Described . . . one would think he was Really himself the Clown or Jester he Feigns, so one would think, he was also the King, and Privy Counsellor . . . nay, one would think that he had been Metamorphosed from a Man to a Woman, for who could Describe *Cleopatra* Better than he hath done, and many other Females of his own Creating . . .? (12-13)

In this characterization, Cavendish defines Shakespeare by his ability to transform himself across background, class, and even gender boundaries. For Cavendish, Shakespeare's identity as an author was, by way of his own creative ability, one that is inherently fluid and open to transformative self-redefinition.⁵⁴

If Shakespeare was capable of inhabiting such a multiplicity of class and gender positions, and could act as the symbol and example of a democratization of the stage, how then did he come to represent, in the context of the *Troilus and Cressida* prologue, a more exclusively patriarchal ideal of authorship? In the following chapter, I will be examining John Dryden's complex relationship with the figure of Shakespeare, and the ways in which Dryden approached Shakespeare's work as a means of thinking through historical shifts in English masculinity and authorial identity. As both a dramatic theorist and theatre practitioner, Dryden would, over the course of his lifetime, continually return to a discussion of Shakespeare's work in the prefaces, prologues, epilogues, and essays that were printed alongside his dramatic works. Dryden's critical writings would not only allow the author to engage, often in ambivalent ways, with his literary influences, but would also allow him repeated opportunities for redefining his own

⁵⁴ In her book on *Women and Shakespeare in the Eighteenth Century*, Fiona Ritchie argues that Behn and Cavendish were part of a greater number of women in the long eighteenth century who "found in Shakespeare an inspiration to enter the literary sphere or the theatre world and contributed to the process of his canonization in distinct and important ways" (2). For additional analysis of Cavendish's work on Shakespeare, see Ritchie, *Women and Shakespeare*, 13-16.

identity as an author. In her book entitled *Men's Work* (2001), Linda Zionkowski has explored the ways that Dryden, by way of the various acts of self-refashioning within his critical works, was able “to restore (or manufacture) a cohesive class and gender identity that he believed had been compromised by years of writing for the stage” (68). Through her analysis, Zionkowski demonstrates that Dryden’s approaches to literary criticism were shaped by anxieties surrounding the public perception of his own masculinity.⁵⁵ Marcie Frank, in her book on *Gender, Theatre, and the Origins of Criticism* (2003), has examined the ways that Dryden invokes a genealogical model of inheritance when discussing his relationship to Shakespeare. In documenting Dryden’s relationship to his “literary precursors”, Frank argues that Dryden attempts to achieve a “reconciliation between the native and the classical that can be reiterated, critiqued and improved upon”, a reconciliation which “[serves] to consolidate a native literary tradition that is rooted in but is also an amelioration of the classical tradition—a native (national) classicism that forms a patrimony and a genealogy” (16).⁵⁶ Frank argues that Dryden creates a newly inclusive mode of “classicism” that elevates English authors into a literary genealogy of influence connecting back to a classical tradition.

⁵⁵ Zionkowski explains that, as a playwright and public persona, Dryden was satirically critiqued by figures like Thomas Shadwell and the Earl of Rochester for “[overstepping] the limitations of his class and [aspiring] to the verse forms, social freedoms, and sexual license appropriate only to aristocrats and gentlemen who could afford to live for pleasure” (71). Dryden, in his later life, grew more invested in print work rather than theatre, which “enabled him to distance himself from the carnival atmosphere of the playhouse and the ambiguous constructions of status and sexuality that it fostered, while securing an authoritative position as a professional writer within the emergent literary marketplace” (68). See Zionkowski, *Men's Work*, 67-96.

⁵⁶ In his efforts to “[retool] an aristocratic concept of genealogy in order to assess and disseminate literary culture”, Dryden is, as Frank argues, “laying the groundwork for a historicism that will ultimately describe a native literary tradition” (16). For an extended discussion of the relationship of influence between Dryden and Shakespeare, see Frank, *Gender, Theatre, and the Origins of Criticism*, 64-90.

I will be building upon the work of these critics by examining how Dryden positions Shakespeare within networks of male homosociality and patriarchal authority. For Dryden, Shakespeare's talents as a dramatist were, in part, grounded in his ability to effectively portray social relationships "betwixt man and man", as he states in the prefatory essay to *Troilus and Cressida*. The process of adapting Shakespeare's work allowed Dryden to engage with the social conditions of masculinity in his own time, as well as the way in which these conditions had changed in the time between Shakespeare's lifetime and his own. In the first section of this chapter, I will examine the critical work on the topic of literary authority written by both Dryden and his *Tempest* collaborator William Davenant. For Davenant and Dryden, the laws governing poetic imitation and literary authority were ideological, and were closely tied to the ongoing political project of maintaining the symbolic authority of the English monarchy. For these authors, the "sacred name" of Shakespeare became synonymous with a distinctly English national tradition of literature, one that served as a model for the current generation of English playwrights. For Davenant, the process of literary "Imitation" was key to maintaining hierarchical models of power, both social and political. Dryden, however, approached the topic of literary authority with much more ambivalence. While Shakespeare is named the "Father of our Dramatick Poets", his works, for Dryden, belonged to an "unpolish'd Age" and could be refined by contemporary authors. Dryden sought to approach Shakespeare not strictly as a "father", but as an equal contender in what Dryden conceived of as the masculine arena of authorship. By comparing his own historical era to that of Shakespeare, Dryden is comparing contending forms of masculinity in order to present his own age as more "refined", and to present himself as participating in a "refinement" of Shakespeare's writing.

In the second section of this chapter, I will turn to an analysis of Dryden's 1679 adaptation of Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*. Extending the ideas expressed in his critical writings, Dryden uses Shakespeare's Trojan War setting to explore political and cultural systems of male homosociality. Just as he had described Shakespeare authorial masculinity as belonging to a now outdated "barbarous Age", Dryden depicts the hypermasculine militarism of the Greek and Trojan soldiers as being ultimately destructive, as it is the cause of Dryden's newly added tragic conclusion. Dryden, however, attempts to create a more refined masculinity in his representation of the Trojan hero Hector. The figure of Hector is able to act as both a masculine warrior and a maternal caretaker, and possesses a more balanced form of masculinity than Dryden's fictionalized patriarch Shakespeare. By way of this figure, Dryden is able to insert his own vision of a refined Restoration masculinity into the world of Shakespeare's play.

Drops from Shakespeare's Pen

In the prologue to their adaptation of Shakespeare's *Tempest*, John Dryden and William Davenant construct a "Tree" of literary inheritance, one that establishes a continuity between pre-Interregnum and post-Restoration theatrical traditions. In proposing to once again create life—or revive new "buds" and "Branches"—from "old *Shakespear*'s honour'd dust", Davenant and Dryden position Shakespeare as a source of knowledge and a teacher to his Jacobean contemporaries John Fletcher and Ben Jonson:

Shakespear, who (taught by none) did first impart
 To *Fletcher* Wit, to labouring *Johnson* Art.
 He Monarch-like gave those his subjects law,
 And is that Nature which they paint and draw.

Fletcher reach'd that which on his heights did grow,

Whilst *Johnson* crept and gather'd all below. . .

. . . If they have since out-writ all other men,

'Tis with the drops which fell from *Shakespear's* Pen. (ll. 5-14)

In this prologue, the “Wit” and “Art” of Fletcher and Jonson are extensions of Shakespeare’s original genius, and “grow” like branches from Shakespeare’s “heights” or like roots that creep “below”. Shakespeare, himself “taught by none”, functions as the paternal source of literary inspiration to “all other men”. The “drops” from Shakespeare’s phallic “Pen” engender the work of succeeding playwrights, who act as an extension of Shakespeare’s artistic legacy.⁵⁷

The legacy of Shakespeare is extended too by the adapters themselves: as Dryden goes on to explain in his 1669 preface to the adaptation, *The Tempest* “was originally *Shakespear's*: a Poet for whom [Davenant] had particularly high veneration, and whom he first taught me to admire” (3). Just as Shakespeare had “first imparted” his artistry to Fletcher and Jonson, Davenant “first taught” Dryden to appreciate Shakespeare’s work, further extending Shakespeare’s legacy into Dryden’s present age. For Davenant himself, the idea of carrying on Shakespeare’s legacy was perhaps not merely symbolic. In an account given in his *Brief Lives*, John Aubrey records how Davenant would circulate the rumour that Shakespeare was his true father:

Mr. William Shakespeare was wont to goe into Warwickshire once a yeare, and did

commonly in his journey lye at this house in Oxon. where he was exceedingly respected.

⁵⁷ In discussing Dryden’s work, David Brume Kramer writes that, “to Dryden the pen is always a sexual instrument, even when historical accident constricts the manner in which he may wield it, or even deprives him of its use” (117). See also Michael Dobson, *The Making of the National Poet*, 40-41.

. . . Now Sir William would sometimes when he was pleasant over a glasse of wine with his most intimate friends e.g: Sam. Butler (author of *Hudibras*) etc: say, that it seemed to him that he writt with the very spirit that Shakespeare [did], and was contented enough to be thought his Son: he would tell them the story as above (in which way his mother had a very light report. . .) (1:140)

In Davenant's self-perpetuated myth, Shakespeare's paternity is made literal. Shakespeare's "spirit" is passed on, and becomes the source of Davenant's own writing. Davenant's patrilineal bond with Shakespeare is established at the cost of his mother's reputation; Davenant elevates his literary "father" while disparaging his biological "mother". Following Davenant, Dryden positions himself at the end of a tradition of patrilineal inheritance, one in which there is an implicit continuity between his own work and that of Shakespeare.

The design of Davenant and Dryden's proposed literary genealogy mirrors the structure of the newly restored English monarchy. The "secret root" of the Stuart monarchy had itself been brought back to life with the return of Charles II and was, like Shakespeare's work, now being celebrated on the English stage. In the Davenant-Dryden prologue, "Monarch-like" Shakespeare dictates the laws of artistry to Fletcher and Jonson, the "subjects" of his authority; "*Shakespear's* pow'r is sacred as a King's", the prologue goes on to tell us (l. 24). In this system, literary authority, as with monarchic authority, functions as an exclusionary power, and is only available to those who descend from a particular lineage. This monarchic order emerges from "Nature", as though the hierarchical model of monarchy is a "natural" mode of governance.

Questions of how authors should approach poetic and political authority had been taken up in the previous decade by William Davenant in the preface to his epic poem *Gondibert*, first published in 1650 while the author was living in exile in Paris. In attempting to justify his

decision to model his English epic after the classical epics of Homer and Virgil, Davenant sets out in his preface to “take notice of those quarrels, which the Living have with the Dead”—primarily the “quarrel” as to how far contemporary authors should model their work after their classical predecessors (1). While Davenant himself believes Homer to be “like the eminent Sea-mark, by which they have in former Ages steer’d”, and argues that Homer “ought not to be removed from that eminence, lest Posterity should presumptuously mistake their course”, he acknowledges authors who value poetic innovation rather than imitation:

...some (sharply observing how [Homer’s] Successours have proceeded no farther than a perfection of imitating him) say, that as Sea-marks are chiefly usefull to Coasters, and serve not those who have the ambition of Discoverers, that love to sayl in untry’d Seas; so he hath rather prov’d a Guide for those, whose satisfied Wit will not venture beyond the track of others; than to them, who affect a new and remote way of thinking; who esteem it a deficiency and meanness of mind, to stay and depend upon the authority of example. (1)

In the debate between those who depend upon the “authority” and “example” of classical poets and those who seek to “venture beyond” the achievements of previous authors, Davenant goes on to state that he, rather than sail the “untry’d Seas” of innovation, instead “thought fit to follow the rule of Coasting Maps, where the Shelves and Rocks are describ’d as well as the safe Channel; the care being equal how to avoid as to proceed” (14). Davenant declares his intention to follow the model set forth to him by classical authors, who act as the “Maps” that govern and give order to the dangerous “Seas” of poetic ambition.

In defending his decision to adhere to a classical model of poetics, Davenant presents “Imitation” as a fundamental part of the “natural” laws governing the historical evolution of

human society. “Language” itself, for Davenant, “(which is the onely Creature of Man’s creation) hath like a Plant, seasons of flourishing and decay; like Plants is remov’d from one soyl to another, and by being so transplanted, doth often gather vigour and increase” (6). The human “creation” of language is subject to an evolutionary “flourishing and decay” and can be shaped, as a plant “transplanted” into new soil, by changes in its environment. The rules governing the “flourishing and decay” of language, however, are for Davenant the same rules governing the world of “Nature”. Davenant goes on to describe how, although “[while] we imitate others, we can no more excel them, than he that sayls by others Maps can make a new discovery”, “Imitation” itself often plays a regulatory role in the natural world:

...to Imitation, Nature (which is the onely visible power, and operation of God) perhaps doth needfully encline us, to keep us from excesses. For though every man be capable of worthiness and unworthiness (as they are defined by Opinion) yet no man is built strong enough to bear the extremities of either, without unloading himself upon others shoulders, even to the weariness of many. If courage be worthiness, yet where it is overgrown into extreams, it becomes as wilde and hurtfull as ambition; and so what was revered for protection, grows to be abhorr’d for oppression: If *Learning* (which is not Knowledge, but a continu’d Sayling by fantastick and uncertain winds towards it) be worthiness, yet it hath bounds in all Philosophers; and Nature that measur’d those bounds, seems not so partial, as to allow it in any one a much larger extent than in another: as if in our fleshly building, she consider’d the furniture and the room, alike, and together. . . . Therefore we may conclude, that Nature, for the safety of mankind, hath as well (by dulling and stopping our progress with the constant humour of imitation) given

limits to courage and to learning, to wickedness and to errour, as it hath ordain'd the shelves before the shore, to restrain the rage and excesses of the Sea. (7-8)

In Davenant's description, "Imitation" is part of a natural tendency towards moderation that, "for the safety of mankind", prevents humanity from falling into dangerous "extremities" and "extreams". As opposed to unbounded "progress", "Imitation" ensures that human nature remains within certain ordained limits, preventing "courage" from slipping into "ambition" and the course of human history from slipping into "wickedness" and "errour". Since the "fleshly building" of the human body itself is only capable of enduring so much in the way of "extremities", Davenant concludes that there must be a "natural" law of moderation governing all elements of human behavior.

As the preface continues, "Imitation" stands in contrast with "*inspiration*, a dangerous word". Davenant points to a history of classical poets whose "well dissembling of Inspiration begot them reverence then, equal to that which was paid to Laws; so these, who now profess the same fury, may perhaps by such authentick example pretend authoritie over the people" (24). What is "dangerous" about inspiration, for Davenant, is its democratization of authority and its capacity to place the power of "Law" into the hands of the individual. Indeed, "Imitation" is closely tied to the hierarchical model of governance that the Royalist Davenant advocates for in his preface. In discussing the effect of poetry on public morality, Davenant writes that it is not "needfull that Heroick Poesie should be levell'd to the reach of Common men: for if the examples it presents prevail upon their Chiefs, the delight of Imitation (which we hope we have prov'd to be as effectual to good as to evil) will rectifie by the rules, which those Chiefs establish of their own lives, the lives of all that behold them" (13). Davenant applies his natural model of "Imitation" to a model of social governance; "Common men" are prevailed upon to follow the

rules set forth by their ‘Chiefs’ through a “delight of Imitation”. For Davenant, power functions through a top-down model by which those without authority follow those with authority through a natural inclination towards imitation.⁵⁸

In his defence of classical “authority”, Davenant argues that literary “Fame” can act as a means by which authors can pass on their knowledge to succeeding generations of artists.

Davenant claims that “Men are chiefly provok’d to the toyl of compiling Books, by love of Fame, and often by officiousness of Conscience, but seldom with expectation of Riches” (28). The motivation to achieve “Fame” is, for Davenant, not strictly self-serving, as it has its effects on future authors:

Fame being (when belonging to the Living) that which is more gravely call’d, a steddly and necessary reputation; and without it, hereditary Power, or acquir’d greatness can never quietly govern the World. ’Tis of the dead a musical glory, in which God, the Authour of excellent goodness, vouchsafes to take a continual share; . . . Admiration (whose Eyes are ever weak) stands still, and at gaze upon great things acted far off; but when they are near, walks slightly away as from familiar objects. Fame is to our Sons a solid Inheritance, and not usefull to remote Posterity; and to our Reason, ’tis the first, though but a little taste of Eternity. (28-29)

⁵⁸ For Davenant, this form of governance functions best when power is concentrated in a single monarch-like figure. Continuing the “Sailing” metaphor that runs throughout the preface, Davenant writes, “me thinks Government resembles a Ship, where though *Divines, Leaders of Armies, States-men, and Judges* are the trusted Pilots; yet it moves by the means of winds, as uncertain as the breath of Opinion; and is laden with the People; a Freight much looser, and more dangerous than any other living Stowage; being as troublesom in fair weather, as Horses in a Storm. And how can these Pilots stedily maintain their course to the Land of Peace and Plentie, since they are often divided at the Helm?” (38-39).

As with a monarchic government, the continued reverence of literary “Fame” acts as a means of maintaining a system of “hereditary Power”. In achieving “Fame”, authors may be capable of passing on a “solid Inheritance” to their “Sons”. As with the *Tempest* prologue, literary achievement is constructed as a system of patrilineal inheritance, by which succeeding generations follow the model set forth by their poetic predecessors. The more distant that poetic achievements are historically, the greater “Admiration” works to transform those achievements into “musical glory”.

The question of literary “Inheritance” would be addressed once again—though this time from within a different set of political circumstances—by John Dryden in his 1668 *Essay of Dramatick Poesie*.⁵⁹ In the first decade of the Restoration, the return of Charles II to the English throne and the revival of English theatre meant that a new generation of poets and playwrights would engage with the examples set forth for them by earlier authors. While Davenant had, in 1650, been primarily concerned with defending ancient forms of “authority” while aligning himself with an ousted monarch, Dryden—writing from a post-Restoration perspective—was instead concerned with defending the works of contemporary English poets and playwrights. The *Essay*, the purpose of which, Dryden explains, “was chiefly to vindicate the honour of our *English Writers*, from the censure of those who unjustly prefer the *French* before them” (7), is organized as a series of debates between fictionalized versions of Dryden and his literary

⁵⁹ George Watson sees Davenant’s *Gondibert* preface as a precursor to Dryden’s approach to critical essays: “Davenant’s idea of writing serious and extended criticism in prefatorial form looks strikingly like a premonition of the stratagem Dryden was to adopt a dozen years later—especially as Davenant uses the preface, like Dryden after him, for critical self-justification” (26).

contemporaries.⁶⁰ The question of poetic “Imitation” is raised in the *Essay*’s first debate between the characters Crites and Eugenius as to what extent present authors should “imitate the Antients”. Crites argues that the achievements of classical authors far exceed those of their modern successors:

Those Ancients have been faithful Imitators and wise Observers of that Nature which is so torn and ill represented in our Plays, they have handed down to us a perfect resemblance of her; which we, like ill Copyers, neglecting to look on, have rendred monstrous and disfigur’d. . . . I must remember you that all the Rules by which we practise the *Drama* at this day, (either such as relate to the justness and symmetry of the Plot; or the Episodical Ornaments, such as Descriptions, Narrations, and other Beauties, which are not essential to the Play;) were delivered to us from the Observations which *Aristotle* made, of those Poets, which either liv’d before him, or were his Contemporaries. (16-17)

For Crites, the “Ancients”, who were themselves “faithful Imitators” of nature, set forth the Aristotelian “Rules” of drama that contemporary playwrights continue to follow. As opposed to the “perfect resemblance” of nature that exists in classical drama, contemporary English drama is instead a faulty “Copy” that fails to adhere to the “justness and symmetry” of an Aristotelian model.

In defending the work of modern playwrights, the character Eugenius responds to Crites with the claim that he “cannot think so contemptibly of the Age in which I live, or so dishonourably of my own Countrey, as not to judge we equal the Ancients in most kinds of

⁶⁰ James Anderson Winn identifies the *Essay*’s characters as “Dryden (Neander), Sir Robert Howard (Crites), Charles Sackville, Lord Buckhurst (Eugenius), and Sir Charles Sedley (Lisideius)” (162).

Poesie, and in some surpass them” (12). Instead of presenting literary history as a devolution away from a “perfect” classical model, Eugenius instead depicts a historical process of evolution by which authors are capable of achieving a “new” level of perfection:

. . . we own all the helps we have from them, and want neither veneration nor gratitude while we acknowledge that to overcome them we must make use of the advantages we have receiv’d from them; but to these assistances we have joyned our own industry; for (had we sate down with a dull imitation of them) we might then have lost somewhat of the old perfection, but never acquir’d any that was new. . . . I deny not what you urge of Arts and Sciences, that they have flourish’d in some ages more then others; but your instance in Philosophy makes for me: for if Natural Causes be more known now then in the time of *Aristotle*, because more studied, it follows that Poesie and other Arts may with the same pains arrive still neerer to perfection. . . (21-22)

Rather than moving away from the “old perfection” of a classical drama, the “Arts” may instead move towards a new state of “perfection” in which the “receiv’d” advantages of a classical model may be expanded upon through the “industry” or work of contemporary authors. Since there is a potential for the discovery of new knowledge in the “Arts”, as there is with the “Sciences”, Restoration authors have the potential to contribute to the historical development and evolution of drama rather than being caught in a state of “dull imitation”. Rather than strictly following Davenant’s model of poetic “Imitation”, Dryden suggests the possibility of innovation among contemporary authors.

In the second debate of the *Essay*, the discussion moves on to a comparison of the French and English national traditions of drama. In this discussion of the merits of French and English theatre, the character Lysideius argues in favor of French theatre’s close adherence to a

neoclassical understanding of Aristotelian unities. During this debate, the works of Shakespeare are used by Lysideius as an example of English theatre's deviation from the classical unity of time:

. . . if you consider the Historical Playes of *Shakespeare*, they are rather so many Chronicles of Kings, or the business many times of thirty or forty years, crampt into a representation of two hours and an half, which is not to imitate or paint Nature, but rather to draw her in miniature, to take her in little; to look upon her through the wrong end of a Perspective, and receive her Images not onely much less, but infinitely more imperfect then the life: this, instead of making a Play delightful, renders it ridiculous. (36)

In Lysideius's criticism, Shakespeare himself becomes emblematic of the supposed "imperfections" of English theatre in its deviations from the classical unities. In compressing a period of years into a few hours, Shakespeare warps the "natural" flow of time and renders what should be a "delightful" mimetic imitation of reality into something "ridiculous".

In response to Lysideius's criticism of Shakespeare and of English theatre, the figure of Neander, Dryden's own stand-in in the *Essay*, offers a defence of Shakespeare's work. After discussing the merits of English playwright Ben Jonson, Neander states that it will be "necessary to speak somewhat of *Shakespeare* and *Fletcher*, [Jonson's] Rivalls in Poesie; and one of them, in my opinion, at least his equal, perhaps his superiour" (55). For Neander, Jonson's potential "superiour" is Shakespeare, as he goes on to explain:

To begin then with *Shakespeare*; he was the man who of all Modern, and perhaps Ancient Poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the Images of Nature were still present to him, and he drew them not laboriously, but luckily: when he describes any thing, you more than see it, you feel it too. Those who accuse him to have

wanted learning, give him the greater commendation: he was naturally learn'd; he needed not the spectacles of Books to read Nature; he look'd inwards, and found her there. I cannot say he is every where alike; were he so, I should do him injury to compare him with the greatest of Mankind. He is many times flat, insipid; his Comick wit degenerating into clenches, his serious swelling into Bombast. But he is alwayes great, when some great occasion is presented to him: no man can say he ever had a fit subject for his wit, and did not then raise himself as high above the rest of Poets. (55-56)

Although Shakespeare “wanted learning”, and is said to be inconsistent in his “Comick” writing, the author’s “comprehensive soul” allows him to “look inwards” for literary inspiration. In contrast with Jonson, whose knowledge is drawn from classical authority, Shakespeare’s knowledge is drawn from his own comprehension of “Nature”.⁶¹ As Neander goes on to explain, while Jonson was “the more correct Poet”, Shakespeare was “the greater wit”: “*Shakespeare* was the *Homer*, or Father of our Dramatick Poets; *Johnson* was the *Virgil*, the pattern of elaborate writing; I admire [Jonson], but I love *Shakespeare*” (58). In being positioned as the “Father” of English dramatists, Shakespeare comes to represent an English dramatic tradition that is both worthy of imitation and capable of innovation. Neander’s defence establishes a nationalist tradition of English drama: Shakespeare stands in for the capacity of English dramatists to

⁶¹ The contrast between Shakespeare’s “natural” talent and Jonson’s learning had been discussed as early as 1645 in John Milton’s poem “L’Allegro”:

Then to the well-trod stage anon,
If *Jonsons* learned Sock be on,
Or sweetest *Shakespear* fancies childe,
Warble his native Wood-notes wilde,
And ever against eating Cares,
Lap me in soft *Lydian* Aires... (ll. 131-136)

Unlike the “learned” Jonson, Shakespeare exists within a sensuous and idyllic pastoral scene.

achieve literary greatness outside of a classical model of drama, while at the same time acting as a Homer-like figure whose achievements parallel those of classical authors.

Despite the fact that Dryden expresses a “love” for Shakespeare’s writing by way of Neander, Shakespeare did not escape Dryden’s criticism. The paternal legacy of Shakespeare could prove to be limiting rather than inspirational. As Neander goes on to explain in Dryden’s *Essay*, the achievements of the previous generation of English playwrights had the potential to make writing more difficult for the current generation of playwrights:

We acknowledge them our Fathers in wit, but they have ruin’d their Estates themselves before they came to their childrens hands. There is scarce an Humour, a Character, or any kind of Plot, which they have not us’d: all comes sullied or wasted to us: and were they to entertain this Age, they could not make so plenteous treatments out of such decay’d Fortunes. This therefore will be a good Argument to us either not to write at all, or to attempt some other way. (73)

The literary “children” of previous generations, who inherit their “Fathers” “Estates” and “Fortunes”, need to contend with the fact that every variety of “Plot”, “Humour”, and “Character” has already been represented by earlier English dramatists. In order to contend with this legacy, Neander seeks “some other way” to approach dramatic writing—in this case advocating for a rhymed verse rather than a blank-verse drama.

In his later critical writing, Dryden would go on to express an ambivalence towards the literary inheritance set forth to him by his historical “Father” Shakespeare. In a 1672 essay included alongside the published version of his play *The Conquest of Granada*, Dryden, rather than expressing admiration for the “natural” learning of Shakespeare, would instead find fault with the author’s “imperfections and failings”: “let any man who understands *English*, read

diligently the works of *Shakespear* and *Fletcher*; and I dare undertake that he will find, in every page either some Solecism of Speech, or some notorious flaw in Sence: and yet these men are reverenc'd when we are not forgiven" (205). In going on to examine the "flaws" contained within Shakespeare's work, Dryden characterizes Shakespeare as follows:

Shakespear, who many times has written better than any Poet, in any Language, is yet so far from writing Wit always, or expressing that Wit according to the Dignity of the Subject, that he writes in many places, below the dullest Writer of ours, or of any precedent Age. Never did any Author precipitate himself from such heights of thought to so low expressions, as he often does. He is the very *Janus* of Poets; he wears, almost every where two faces: and you have scarce begun to admire the one, e're you despise the other. (212-213)

The internal contradictions within Shakespeare, in which "heights of thought" are mixed with "low expressions", is, for Dryden, symptomatic of the limitations of the historical period to which Shakespeare belonged. In discussing the differences in English writing between Shakespeare's era and his own era, Dryden writes that "an Alteration is lately made in [our Language] or since the Writers of the last Age (in which I comprehend *Shakespear*, *Fletcher* and *Jonson*) is manifest. Any man who reads those excellent Poets, and compares their language with what is now written, will see it almost in every line" (204-205).⁶² This historical shift in language is, for Dryden, the result of the social and political shift that came about as a result of the Restoration of Charles II. As Dryden explains:

⁶² Dryden's focus on the historical refinement of language is expressed again in the epilogue to the play, where Dryden states that "Wit's now arriv'd to a more high degree; / Our native Language more refin'd and free. / Our Ladies and our men now speak more wit" (ll. 23-25).

That the wit of this Age is much more Courtly, may easily be prov'd by viewing the Characters of Gentlemen which were written in the last. . . . I have always acknowledg'd the wit of our Predecessors, with all the veneration which becomes me, but, I am sure, their wit was not that of Gentlemen, there was ever somewhat that was ill-bred and Clownish in it: and which confest the conversation of the Authors. (215)

The differences between the current “Age” and that of Shakespeare are drawn out through a comparison of each generation’s “Gentlemen” characters. For Dryden, English authors of previous generations lack the “wit” of Gentlemen, and instead remain “ill-bred” and “Clownish”. For Dryden, the historical shift from pre- to post-Interregnum drama was not just a shift in language, but a greater shift in the overall character of the English “Gentleman”.⁶³

The shift towards a “more courtly” age was brought about, Dryden claims, by a new proximity between poets and the court:

In the Age, wherein those Poets liv'd, there was less of gallantry than in ours; neither did they keep the best company of theirs. Their fortune has been much like that of *Epicurus*, in the retirement of his Gardens: to live almost unknown, and to be celebrated after their decease. I cannot find that any of them were conversant in Courts, except *Ben. Jonson*: and his genius lay not so much that way, as to make an improvement by it. greatness was not, then, so easy of access, nor conversation so free as now it is. [...] In short, they were

⁶³ The belief that the Restoration benefitted from being a “more Courtly” age was reiterated into the eighteenth century, with critic John Dennis claiming in 1725 that: “At The Restoration The Theaters were in the Hands of Gentlemen, who had Done particular services to the Crown, and who were peculiarly qualifd for the Discharge of that Important Trust. They had Honour, learning, breeding, Discernment, Integrity, Impartiality and generosity. Their chief aim was to see that the Town was well entertaind and The Drama improvd” (“The Causes of the Decay and Defects of Dramatick Poetry” 278). Following Dryden, Dennis claims that Restoration drama was shaped—and even “improvd”—by “Gentlemen” who were close to the “Crown”.

unlucky to have been bred in an unpolish'd Age, and more unlucky to live to a refin'd one. (215-216)

The refinement of the English language is here directly tied to a new proximity between poets and the court of Charles II. In keeping Davenant's model of "Imitation", Dryden presents the language of the arts as following the language of the monarch, the "conversation" of the court shaping the language of poetry.⁶⁴ For Dryden, however, this historical shift offered the possibility for new poetic innovations away from the "unpolish'd Age" of Shakespeare.

Despite his ambivalence towards Shakespeare, Dryden would, after 1676, go on to follow the model of Shakespeare more closely in his dramatic writing. In the prologue of his 1675 play *Aureng-Zebe*, Dryden expresses a dissatisfaction with the rhyming verse format that he had been employing in his early tragedies. In this prologue, Dryden claims to have "[grown] weary of his long-lov'd Mistris, Rhyme" and dismisses his own work as a "laborious Trifle of a Play" (ll. 8, 4). He goes on to compare his own style unfavorably to that of Shakespeare:

. . . a secret shame,
Invades his breast at *Shakespear's* sacred name:
Aw'd when he hears his Godlike *Romans* rage,
He, in a just despair, would quit the Stage;
And to an Age less polish'd, more unskill'd,
Does with disdain the foremost Honours yield" (ll. 13-18)

⁶⁴ Dryden's celebration of Charles's influence is tied to his Royalist ideology: "At his return, [Charles II] found a Nation lost as much in Barbarism as in Rebellion, and as the excellency of his Nature forgave the one, so the excellency of his manners reform'd the other. The desire of imitating so great a pattern, first waken'd the dull and heavy spirits of the English, from their natural reserv'dness" (173-174).

At the end of the prologue, Dryden presents himself as being “betwixt two Ages cast, / The first of this, and hindmost of the last” (ll. 21-22). Dryden’s new celebration of the “unskill’d”, “less polish’d” age of Shakespeare would mark a shift in career away from rhymed verse heroic tragedies to blank verse tragedies. Following *Aureng-Zebe*, Dryden’s next play would be the blank verse *All for Love* in 1677, in which he claimed to have “dis-incumber’d [himself] from Rhyme” in order to “imitate the Divine *Shakespeare*” (18). Rather than strictly acting as a critic of Shakespeare’s “unpolish’d Age”, Dryden would instead go on to act as a mediator “betwixt two Ages”, adapting the language of Shakespeare for Restoration audiences.

Dryden’s most comprehensive re-evaluation of Shakespeare’s work would come a few years later in the preface to his adaptation of Shakespeare’s *Troilus and Cressida*, published in 1679. In his work adapting Shakespeare, Dryden proposes that he will be refining Shakespeare’s “unpolish’d” language for Restoration audiences. “[Shakespeare’s] whole stile” in *Troilus and Cressida*, Dryden claims, “is so pester’d with Figurative expressions, that it is as affected as it is obscure . . . [yet] because the Play was *Shakespear*’s and that there appear’d in some places of it, the admirable Genius of the Author; I undertook to remove that heap of Rubbish, under which many excellent thoughts lay wholly bury’d” (225-226). In pursuing his analysis of Shakespeare’s “stile” in order to differentiate what is “Genius” from what is “Rubbish”, Dryden sets out in his preface to compare the authors “*Shakespear* and *Fletcher* in their Plots; namely that we ought to follow them so far only, as they have Copy’d the excellencies of those who invented and brought to perfection Dramatic Poetry” (233). Dryden sets up his comparison between Fletcher and Shakespeare in explicitly gendered terms. On explaining the difference between the two authors, Dryden claims that “*Shakespear* generally moves more terror, and *Fletcher* more compassion: For the first had a more Masculine, a bolder and more fiery Genius; the Second a more soft and

Womanish” (233). He continues this comparison between the “Masculine” style of Shakespeare and the “Womanish” style of Fletcher as follows:

...the excellency of [Shakespeare] was . . . in the more manly passions; *Fletcher*’s in the softer: *Shakespear* writ better betwixt man and man; *Fletcher*, betwixt man and woman: consequently, the one describ’d friendship better; the other love. . . . Friendship is both a virtue, and a Passion essentially; love is a passion only in its nature, and is not a virtue but by Accident: good nature makes Friendship; but effeminacy Love. *Shakespear* had an Universal mind, which comprehended all Characters and Passions; *Fletcher* a more confin’d, and limited. (247)

Since the “virtue” of Friendship is privileged over the “not a virtue but by accident” love, Shakespeare’s “more Masculine” and “more manly” Universal mind, for Dryden, triumphs over Fletcher’s “Womanish” and “more confin’d” understanding.

Dryden criticizes Fletcher not only for his inability to adhere to classical dramatic unities, but also for the murky and ambiguous characterizations that could be found in his plays. While criticizing Fletcher’s plays, Dryden writes that “when *Philaster* wounds *Arethusa* and the Boy; and *Perigot* his Mistress in the *Faithfull Shepherdess*, both these are contrary to the character of Manhood: Nor is *Valentinian* manag’d much better, for though *Fletcher* has taken his Picture truly, and shown him as he was, an effeminate voluptuous man, yet he has forgotten that he was an Emperor, and has given him none of those Royal marks, which ought to appear in a lawfull Successor to the Throne” (239). Shakespeare, however, “having ascrib’d to *Henry the Fourth* the character of a King, and of a Father, gives him the perfect manners of each Relation, when either he transacts with his Son, or with his Subjects” (238). In this comparison, Dryden implies that part of Shakespeare’s talent lies in his ability to clearly distinguish between the masculine roles

of “Father” and “King”. It is Shakespeare who is able to depict the “perfect manners” of royal masculinity in his depiction of King Henry’s social “transactions”.

In his praise of Shakespeare’s talent of writing “betwixt man and man”, Dryden expresses a privileging of homosocial relationships that manifests itself in his creation of a patrilineal literary genealogy. “[All] excellent Arts,” Dryden writes, “and particularly that of Poetry, have been invented and brought to perfection by men of a transcendent Genius; and that therefore they who practice afterwards the same Arts, are oblig’d to tread in their footsteps, and to search in their Writings the foundation of them” (232). Dryden, as the writer who is searching for the foundation of “a transcendent Genius” within the writings of his predecessors, positions himself at the end of a line of great “men”, his very engagement with those men being key to his role as literary inheritor. He characterizes his own intervention into this constructed lineage by paraphrasing the Greek philosopher Longinus: “[He] who undertakes to imitate . . . enters into the lists like a new wrestler, to dispute the prize with the former Champion” (228). Dryden frames his role as literary “imitator” as one of masculine contention. In adapting and rewriting Shakespeare’s works, Dryden is like a wrestler, physically grappling with the former artistic “Champions”. Dryden had employed a similar metaphor the previous year in his 1678 preface to *All for Love*, writing: “The death of *Antony* and *Cleopatra*, is a Subject which has been treated by the greatest Wits of our Nation, after *Shakespeare*; and by all so variously, that their example has given me the confidence to try my self in this Bowe of *Ulysses* amongst the Crowd of Suitors; and, withal, to take my own measures, in aiming at the Mark” (10). Dryden describes himself as, by way of his adaptation of the Antony and Cleopatra narrative, participating in a form of sexual competition between male authors—the playwrights who “after *Shakespeare*”

have attempted to depict the story of Antony and Cleopatra are like the Suitors of Penelope competing with Ulysses.⁶⁵

The metaphor of literary inspiration as a form of physical contention would continue to appear in Dryden's discussions of Shakespeare throughout his career. In a 1694 dedicatory poem to the portrait artist Godfrey Kneller, Dryden would once again place both himself and Shakespeare in a Homeric classical setting, this time as Greek soldiers in the Trojan War:

Shakespear thy Gift, I place before my sight;
 With awe, I ask his Blessing e're I write;
 With Reverence look on his Majestick Face;
 Proud to be less; but of his Godlike Race.
 His Soul Inspires me, while thy Praise I write,
 And I like *Teucer*, under *Ajax* Fight;
 Bids thee through me, be bold; with dauntless breast
 Contemn the bad and Emulate the best.
 Like his, thy Criticks in th' attempt are lost:
 When most they rail, know then they envy most.
 [...] Some other Hand perhaps may reach a Face;
 But none like thee, a finish'd Figure place:
 None of this Age, for that's enough for thee,

⁶⁵ Marcie Frank reads a degree of irony in Dryden's metaphor of the "Suitors": "a closer look brings to light a peculiar failure that the classical analogy builds in: as we know from Homer, no one else can wield Ulysses' bow. Moreover, if Shakespeare is Ulysses, who is the Penelope to whom the best writer will have literary or sexual access? According to the analogy, none of the succeeding wits can successfully vie with Shakespeare for the body of his unnamed 'wife'" (77). Though he depicts himself as entering into competition with Shakespeare, Dryden's analogy suggests an admission that he will be unable to surpass Shakespeare's version of the play.

The first of these Inferiour Times to be;
 Not to contend with Heroes Memory.
 Due Honours to those mighty Names we grant,
 But Shrubs may live beneath the lofty Plant:
 Sons may succeed their greater Parents gone;
 Such is thy Lott; and such I wish my own. ("To Sir Godfrey Kneller" ll. 73-123)

In positioning himself as "Son" to "Parent" Shakespeare, Dryden symbolically follows the model of paternal lineage that Davenant himself may have claimed in earnest. Unlike Davenant's illegitimate parentage, however, Dryden attempts to legitimize himself as one of Shakespeare's "Godlike Race". The "buds" and "Branches" planted in the *Tempest* prologue have now grown into "Shrubs" living underneath the "lofty Plant" of Shakespeare's legacy. However, unlike the "wrestlers" or "Suitors" of previous metaphors, Dryden here instead creates a scene of mutual coexistence between himself and Shakespeare: in his metaphorical Trojan War, Dryden can fight alongside Shakespeare "like *Teucer*", the archer protected by Ajax's shield. Though stating that his own times are "Inferiour" to Shakespeare's, Dryden proposes "Not to contend with Heroes Memory", but instead to give "Due Honours" to preceding literary "Heroes". In this model of succession, Shakespeare and Dryden are not themselves competing with each other, but can instead work together in the metaphorical "War" of literary history.

As we will see in the next section, Dryden would use the setting of the Trojan War as a space for exploring issues of masculine identity, paternal influence and responsibility, and, in Dryden's terms, the relationships "betwixt man and man" that were so central to Shakespeare's work. By examining Dryden's use of the Trojan War narrative in his *Troilus and Cressida* adaptation, we can see how Dryden both reused and reshaped depictions of masculinity present

within Shakespeare's work, and how he directly engages with the predecessor that often figured as a literary "Parent" in his critical works.

"Come to my Arms, thou Manlier Virtue!"

In adapting Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* for his own age, Dryden, in his preface, outlines the structural changes that he has made in order to draw out the "excellent thoughts" beneath the original text's "heap of Rubbish":

I new model'd the Plot; threw out many unnecessary persons; improv'd those Characters which were begun, and left unfinish'd; as *Hector*, *Troilus*, *Pandarus* and *Thersites*; and added that of *Andromache*. After this, I made with no small trouble, an Order and Connexion of all the Scenes; . . . I have so order'd them that there is a coherence of 'em with one another, and a dependence on the main design: no leaping from *Troy* to the *Grecian* Tents, and thence back again in the same Act; but a due proportion of time allow'd for every motion. (226)

In an attempt to contain Shakespeare within the bounds of neoclassical drama, Dryden sets out to focus the plot of *Troilus and Cressida* by more closely following the Aristotelian unities of place and action. Dryden's most significant change to Shakespeare's plot is made in the resolution to the narrative of Troilus and Cressida's romance. Unlike Shakespeare's Cressida, who, according to Dryden, "is false, and is not punish'd", Dryden's Cressida instead "must dissemble love to *Diomedes*" in order to escape the Greek camp with her father Calchas (226; 4.2.254). Troilus witnesses this dissembling, and mistakenly believes Cressida to have been unfaithful. When Troilus accuses her of being false, Cressida stabs herself as proof of her loyalty. Troilus kills Diomedes, and is then killed in a fight with Achilles.

In wanting to implement “order” and “coherence” in Shakespeare’s original narrative, Dryden is attempting to stabilize a notoriously unstable text.⁶⁶ Critics of Dryden’s play have explored the author’s motivations in adapting Shakespeare’s play for Restoration audiences. Critics such as Paulina Kewes, following the preface’s “heap of Rubbish” comments, view Dryden as attempting to assert his own authorial superiority over Shakespeare’s text: “The novelty of his adaptation, as it is defined in the preface, amounts primarily to the correction of the imperfections of the Shakespearean source. . . . His main objective was to show his own plays to be improvements upon largely obsolete or . . . structurally flawed originals, and to claim authorship by virtue of the amount of labour involved in the rewriting” (59-60).⁶⁷ Barbara Bowen views Dryden as motivated by a desire to stabilize the play’s indeterminate genre alignment: “Dryden began with the conviction that *Troilus* was a tragedy, and almost all his changes stem from the choice of genre” (35).

Other critics have examined the ways in which Dryden’s Royalist politics shaped his adaptation in the lead up to the Exclusion Crisis. As Susan J. Owen summarizes, the “Tory message” of Dryden’s play is that “the king’s sovereignty must be respected above all else. . . . [Dryden] alters Shakespeare to draw out the theme that respect for royal rule must be enforced by authoritarian means if necessary” (124). For Michael Dobson, Dryden revives Shakespeare in

⁶⁶ For the editorial history of Shakespeare’s *Troilus and Cressida*, see David Bevington, Introduction, 17-19. For a discussion of Dryden’s potential source texts, see Maximillian Novak, “Commentary on *Troilus and Cressida*”, 509-510. Novak describes Dryden as the “first ‘editor’ to divide *Troilus and Cressida* into acts and scenes and to provide stage directions. Though Dryden’s changes are seldom credited in variorum editions of Shakespeare’s play, later editors of Shakespeare, from Rowe onward, followed many of his suggestions” (517).

⁶⁷ Hazleton Spencer would go so far as to claim that Dryden’s play was superior to Shakespeare’s original: “Concerning the play as a whole I venture the opinion that structurally it is superior to Shakespeare’s. [...] I am even willing to hazard further, that in some respects Dryden’s version is better, as an actable play, than Shakespeare’s” (231, 237).

order to pass off his Royalist polemic as Shakespeare's own writing: "the prologue dramatizes the adaptor's Oedipal relation to this 'awful ghost' in a manner which carefully distracts attention from the political content of the adaptation which is to follow. Indeed Dryden deliberately gives the misleading impression that his anxiety of influence has prevented him from altering Shakespeare's play at all" (75). In picking up on the "Oedipal" aspects of Dryden's prologue, Jennifer Brady views Dryden as being caught up in a more ambivalent and anxious position in relation to his Shakespeare's legacy, writing that "Dryden depicts himself as caught in a kind of no man's land. . . . The extraordinary Prologue captures Dryden's sense of dislocation, as he surveys his possible place in a literary history he is simultaneously inventing: if he is the premier writer of his age, he brings up the rear of the 'last' generation, both the last Jacobean and a writer transfixed by his own sense of belatedness" (187).⁶⁸ For Marcie Frank, Dryden's work adapting Shakespeare was more constructive than "Oedipal", as it provided the author with an opportunity to "access a vernacular classical tradition through Shakespeare" (32). Frank argues Dryden's elevation of the virtue of "fidelity" in *Cressida* mirrors Dryden's own "faithfulness" to Shakespeare and to a natively English tradition of drama (85).

Dryden's recurrent engagement with issues of patrilineal succession and inheritance, consistent with the critical material discussed in the first section of this chapter, are part of Dryden's broader concerns with the ways that relationships between men govern social order, and are governed by social circumstance. Critics of Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* have

⁶⁸ Brady's Freudian analysis of Dryden's "Oedipal struggle" occasionally extends into biographical speculation: "A short man . . . Dryden is a dwarf swamped by a literary giant's hand-me-downs" (189, 194). For an extended analysis of the Oedipal elements of Shakespeare's original text, see Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 42-63; and Emil Roy, "War and Manliness in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*," *Comparative Drama* 7, no. 2 (1973): 107-120.

identified the original author's exploration of homosociality within the militaristic setting of the Greek and Trojan camps. Bruce R. Smith argues that Shakespeare's play examines "the concatenation of aggression, male bonding, and homoerotic desire" (59), while Eric Mallin claims that "the play as a whole [...] moves along the patent or submerged axis of homoeroticism, the dedication to male intercourse" (50).⁶⁹ Mallin writes that *Troilus and Cressida* includes "the only openly conducted homosexual relationship in the Shakespearean canon" (47)—the relationship between Achilles and Patroclus, which Dryden retains in his play.⁷⁰ Linda Charnes views the play as exposing the ways in which the seemingly "heroic" men of the play form social bonds and gain social capital through the exchange of women's bodies: "My point is not . . . That we are here in the presence of homosexuality . . . But rather that we are in the presence of male heterosexual desire, in the form of a desire to consolidate partnership with authoritative males in and through the bodies of women" (92-93). For Charnes, this is part of Shakespeare's critique of the myth of masculine "heroism" associated with the Trojan War narrative. Charnes writes that the play "betrays the awareness that all notions of heroism, of 'true' honor and glory, are in their very moments of conception always located in the past, always 'originally' conceived of as irretrievably lost" (72).⁷¹ Lars Engle furthermore claims that

⁶⁹ For further discussion of the homoeroticism of Shakespeare's play, see Smith, *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 59-61, 197-199; and Mallin, *Inscribing the Time* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 44-53.

⁷⁰ Though he eliminates the suggestion that Patroclus is Achilles's "masculine whore" (Shakespeare 5.1.16), Dryden maintains the original suggestion that Achilles "in his Tent, / Lyes mocking our designs, with him Patroclus / Upon a lazy Bed": see Dryden 1.1.59-67; Shakespeare 1.3.145-147.

⁷¹ For Shakespeare's attempt to demystify the Trojan War narrative, see also Heather James: "The Troy legend presents Shakespeare with the means to philosophize and exacerbate that disillusionment: to seek out a critique of representation on the ground of Troy is to unsettle Western culture at its putative foundation. In inhabiting the myth of origins but defying its

Shakespeare is critiquing both a mythical masculine heroism and a homosocial economy founded on the circulation of women's bodies: "In *Troilus and Cressida* an ancient code of values is radically demystified by being viewed through the lens of a market economy. . . . To retell the story of Troy as that of 'a whore and a cuckold' is to foreground anxieties not only of male homosocial rivalry and mutual humiliation, but also of possession and circulation, the penetration of love and war by the market" (150). Charnes and Engle argue that Shakespeare critiques the homosocial network of the Greek and Trojan camps, a network that is founded on the exploitation and trafficking of women like Cressida.

While Dryden was the first of Shakespeare's critics to pick up on this theme of homosociality, the author, as we will see, reshapes Shakespeare's original themes following his own concerns. Like Shakespeare, Dryden uses the masculinist and militaristic setting of the Trojan War in order to interrogate different forms of classically "heroic" masculinity, as well as to explore the effects and consequences of homosocial relationships—the relationships "betwixt man and man" that Dryden believed were at the core of Shakespeare's work. As in Shakespeare, the homosocial economy of the play's Trojan setting is predicated on the exchange and commodification of women like Cressida; it is this system that creates the circumstances of the play's final tragic ending. If Shakespeare, however, had been attempting to demystify a certain form of ancient heroic masculinity, Dryden is attempting to reintroduce into Shakespeare's world a new idealized form of masculinity for the now more "polish'd Age" of the Restoration. While Shakespeare had a style characterized as "so manly and so bold", Dryden attempts to explore a balance between the "more manly" passions of Shakespeare and the "softer" passions of Fletcher

authority, the play enters into a paralyzing struggle with cultural needs for authoritative origin and purposeful direction" (91).

in the figure of Hector, a character who is positioned between both a masculinized militarism and a feminized domesticity. Following the historical shift of the Restoration, a strict adherence to the “more manly” passions of Shakespeare was no longer viable, and it is an overreliance on masculine “honour” that leads Hector to his eventual death.

In Dryden’s play, the figure of Troilus lives within a Trojan world in which masculinity is often aligned with militaristic acts of violence. In not participating in the ongoing war with the Greeks, Troilus views himself as lacking the “manly courage” that often acts as the governing principle of Trojan society (2.1.9). When asked by Aeneas, “How now, Prince *Troilus*; why not in the battle?”, Troilus responds, “Because not there. This Womans answer suites me; / For Womannish it is to be from thence” (1.2.83-85). Similarly, Troilus gives the following explanation to Pandarus as to why he is not part of the military battle against the Greeks:

The *Greeks* are strong, and skillful to their strength,
Fierce to their skill, and to their feirceness wary;
But I am weaker then a Womans tear,
Tamer then sleep, fonder then Ignorance:
And Artless as unpractic’d Infancy. (1.2.6-10)

As masculinity is defined through participation in the ongoing war, Troilus views himself as “Womannish” in being away from the ongoing “battle”; Troilus equates frailty and femininity in claiming to be “weaker then a Womans tear”. Troilus establishes a distance between the masculine world of the military and the feminine domestic world of Troy in which he lives. Troilus attempts to distance himself from his own feminine characteristics later in the play in a scene where Hector tells Troilus that Cressida will be exchanged for the prisoner Calchas. When Hector tells Troilus not to “grieve beyond a man” at his separation from Cressida, Troilus

answers by saying, “I wo’not be a woman” (3.2.252-253). Troilus is anxious to distance himself from anything that would lead him to be characterized as a “woman”.

Troilus’s contempt for the “Womannish” aspects of himself quickly translates into a more explicit misogyny once Cressida’s fidelity is brought into question. After seeing Cressida interacting with Diomedes from a distance, Troilus begins to contemplate whether he should believe Cressida to be false:

Let it not be believ’d for womanhood:

Think we had Mothers, do not give advantage

To biting Satyr, apt without a theme,

For defamation, to square all the sex

By *Cressid*’s rule; rather think this not *Cressida*. (4.2.321-325)

Troilus’s suspicions of Cressida extend to all “womanhood” in his imagination; Troilus identifies as a collective monolithic male “we” in opposition to a collective monolithic “womanhood”. He appeals to his “Mother” in defence of womanhood, but this seems not to be convincing as he feels it necessary to deny that this was Cressida altogether. Troilus displays a contempt for that which is feminine, attempting to distance himself from femininity and align himself with the masculine military world as the play goes on.

The separation between masculine and feminine behaviour is not, however, as thorough as Troilus would like to claim. Although Hector coaches his brother in how to grieve as a “man”, Hector himself, the hero of the Trojans, is positioned between his masculine militarism and a more maternal domestic identity. In a scene original to Dryden’s play, Hector is brought together with both his father Priam and son Astyanax when Andromache and Astyanax appear at a Trojan

war-council meeting. In this scene, Priam delivers a speech to Hector as to how Astyanax will become “An *Hector* one day”:

But you must let him live to be a *Hector*.
 And who shall make him such when you are gone?
 Who shall instruct his tenderness in arms,
 Or give his childhood lessons of the war?
 Who shall defend the promise of his youth
 And make it bear in Manhood? the young Sappling
 Is shrowded long beneath the Mother tree
 Before it be transplanted from its Earth,
 And trust it self for growth. (2.1.121-130)

In Priam’s metaphor of parenthood, Hector is placed in the position of the “Mother tree” to Astyanax’s “young Sappling”. Like the metaphor of the “lofty Plant” that Dryden would use to describe Shakespeare, Hector is the maternal “tree” that shelters the growth of Astyanax’s “Sappling” and allows it to “bear in Manhood”. While Susan Owen makes the claim that Dryden is, in his play, suggesting “that ‘effeminacy’ or excessive preoccupation with women and love are incompatible with affairs of state” (168), Priam here is proposing a form of effeminacy that is compatible with Hector’s heroism and his own governance. Priam has himself implicitly embodied this maternal presence, as his own son has, quite literally, “lived to be a *Hector*”. In being “gone” away in conflict with the Greeks, Hector is unable to fulfill this maternal role for his son and is instead drawn into the world of masculine violence. Dryden includes moments within the play where Hector follows through with enacting this maternal role, such as when he promises to “tell [Troilus] my news, in terms so mild, / So tender, and so fearful to offend / As

Mothers use to sooth their froward Babes” (3.2.254-256).⁷² Unlike Troilus’s anti-feminine misogyny, Hector here actively takes up a feminized role, describing himself as a maternal figure in his interactions with his brother.

Hector, however, is ultimately drawn into and destroyed by masculine violence by the end of the play. The militaristic world of the Trojan War functions through the suppression of the feminine in both the men and women who participate in its violence. In order to become a participant in Hector’s militaristic world, the more literally “maternal” figure Andromache subsumes her own femininity within a more masculine identity. In defending Hector’s decision to fight against the Greeks, Andromache gives the following speech:

I would be worthy to be *Hectors* wife:
 And had I been a Man, as my Soul’s one,
 I had aspir’d a nobler name, his friend.
 How I love *Hector*, (need I say I love him?)
 I am not but in him:
 But when I see him arming for his Honour,
 His Country and his Gods, that martial fire

⁷² Hector is not the only man of the play to use the language of birth and maternity. Ulysses uses a gardening metaphor similar to Priam’s in his description of how:

I have conceiv’d an embryo in my brain:
 Be you my time to bring it to some shape.
 [...] The seeded pride,
 That has to this maturity blown up
 In rank *Achilles*, must or now be cropt,
 Or shedding, breed a nursery of like ill,
 To overtop us all. (2.3.1-8)

Ulysses contrasts his own well-developed “embryo” of an idea with Achilles’s poorly-nurtured “pride”. See also Dryden 1.1.1-56, where Agamemnon, while speaking with the Greek camp, discusses the “Idea of the thought / Which gave it Birth; [...] you *Grecian* Chiefs, / With sickly Eyes do you behold our labours” (5-7).

That mounts his courage, kindles ev'n to me:
 And when the *Trojan* Matrons wait him out
 With pray'rs, and meet with blessings his return;
 The pride of Virtue, beats within my breast,
 To wipe away the sweat and dust of War:
 And dress my Heroe, glorious in his wounds. (2.1.143-155)

In her speech, Andromache states that she possesses a man's "Soul", and aspires to a "nobler" relationship with Hector than just being his wife. Andromache places male "friendship" as being of greater, or more "noble", significance than heterosexual marriage. In keeping with this framework, Hector follows up this speech by telling Andromache, "Come to my Arms, thou manlier Virtue come; / Thou better Name than wife!" (156-157). For Hector and Andromache, their relationship is "better" than marriage in that it more closely resembles a relationship between men. Andromache's commitment to the militaristic ideals of "Honour" and "Virtue" extends beyond the commitment shown by other "*Trojan* Matrons", who simply provide "prayers" and "blessings". Andromache experiences a full internal transformation: Hector's "martial fire" kindles inside of her, and her pride for Hector's accomplishments "beats within her breast". Andromache's own masculine identity is, however, limited in that she is "not but in [Hector]"; she goes so far as to entirely contain her state of being within her husband's identity.

When Andromache is perceived as feminine later on in the play, she is reprimanded for it by her husband Hector. After Andromache cries while telling Hector about a prophetic dream she has had about his death, Hector tells her:

I have struggling in my manly Soul
 To see those modest tears, asham'd to fall,

And witness any part of woman in thee!
 And now I fear, lest thou should'st think it fear,
 If thus dissuaded, I refuse to fight,
 And stay inglorious in thy arms at home. (5.1.80-85)

In contrast to Hector's celebration of Andromache's "manlier Virtue", Hector is shocked to see "any part of woman" in his wife. Hector's own "manly soul" is threatened by the potential of dissuasion, and the "inglorious" notion of staying at home within the feminine domestic sphere. Hector's commitment to his militaristic "honour" prevents him from heeding his wife's warning:

My honour stands engag'd to meet *Achilles*:
 What will the *Grecians* think; or what will he,
 Or what will *Troy*; or what wilt thou thy self,
 When once this ague fit of fear is ore;
 If I should lose my honour for a dream? (67-71)

In attempting to preserve his "honour", Hector foregrounds the perspectives of the men he will be fighting with, the soldiers of "*Troy*", as well as the men he will be fighting against, the "*Grecians*" and "*Achilles*", rather than that of his wife. Dryden's Hector and Andromache act in keeping with Patroclus's statement, taken from Shakespeare's original text, that "A woman impudent and mannish grown / Is not more loath'd than an effeminate man / In time of action" (4.3.38-40).⁷³ In the play's various acts of gender transgression, effeminization is punished, while masculinization is celebrated within the militaristic world of the Greek and Trojan camps. It is Hector's excessive concern with his "honour", however, and his inability to trust his wife's

⁷³ For the parallel passage in the original play, see Shakespeare 3.3.210-212.

judgement, that leads him to his death; Hector ignores Andromache's warnings and goes on to be killed in battle.

The punishment of the feminine is enacted more explicitly in Cressida's narrative within the play. As part of the homosocial economy that is established within Troy, Cressida often is made to act as an exchange object in mercantile interactions between men. This is first evident in Pandarus's treatment of his niece in attempting to secure her marriage with Troilus. In discussing Cressida with Troilus, Pandarus gives the following description of Cressida's body: "show me such another piece of Womans flesh; take her limb by limb, I say no more" (1.2.65-66). Pandarus enumerates Cressida's "limbs" and "flesh" for Troilus, symbolically butchering Cressida's body for Troilus's consumption. Pandarus attempts to convince his niece to pursue Troilus by giving Troilus the following praise: "wou'd I were a Lady for his sake. I would not answer for my Maidenhead,——No, *Hector* is not a better man than *Troilus*" (1.2.134-136). Cressida becomes the stand in for a homosocial bond between Pandarus and Troilus, Pandarus here expressing his own fantasy of a sexual bonding between men.⁷⁴ Cressida becomes more literally an object of exchange when she is traded as a prisoner to the Greek camp for her father Calchas. After this trade, Cressida is once again made to participate in Calchas's plan to "dissemble love to *Diomedes*". One of the very few intentional acts that Cressida performs in Dryden's play is her suicide to justify her fidelity to Troilus. As Jean Marsden writes, Cressida's suicide "[allows] her to remain an exemplary pathetic heroine, chaste and silent forever" (51). The only female role of the play besides Andromache, Cressida's final silence represents the tragic suppression of the feminine as a consequence of masculine violence.

⁷⁴ Dryden's Pandarus is more explicitly homoerotic than Shakespeare's, who instead says, "I would my heart were in her body. No, *Hector* is not a better man than *Troilus*" (1.2.72-73).

As the final act of Dryden's adaptation unfolds, the audience is made to witness the tragic deaths of Hector, Cressida, then finally Troilus. Before his death, Troilus, in mourning Cressida's suicide, once again expresses a misogynist contempt for the feminine part of himself: "she dy'd for me; / And like a woman, I lament for her" (5.2.282-283). While Troilus has attempted to align himself with masculine militarism of the Trojan army, it is instead Cressida who has "dy'd for [Troilus]" on the battlefield, leaving Troilus in the position of a "lamenting" widow. The femininity that has been suppressed by the Greeks and Trojans re-emerges one final time in Troilus's own body as he is grieving. As Hector had earlier suggested, the male bodies of the Trojan soldiers were capable of inhabiting and enacting feminine roles, and were not necessarily strictly tools of masculine violence. Over the course of the play, the audience is able to witness how the suppression of a more feminized form of masculinity ultimately leads to conflict and social collapse. While the ghost of Shakespeare might have identified the Restoration as a "feeble Age" in the play's prologue, Dryden's "Age" had, at the very least, allowed the author to craft a form of masculinity that was more balanced than the hypermasculine identity that is enforced within the world of the play.

Obedience to the King

While Dryden's *Troilus and Cressida* proves a critique of an excessive adherence to masculinist systems of social order, the final lines of the play suggest that hypermasculine factional conflict may be resolved through a return to a patriarchal model of political authority. After the violent conflict between the Greeks and Trojan dies down following Troilus's death, Ulysses comes onto the stage to deliver the final lines:

Now peacefull order has resum'd the reynes,

Old time looks young, and Nature seems renew'd:

Then, since from homebred Factions ruine springs,

Let Subjects learn obedience to their Kings. (5.2.323-326)

As we have seen in the chapter, Dryden's reinforcement of a patriarchal model of kingship, in which "Subjects" must remain obedient to "Kings", comes from a Royalist ideological position. Dryden's invocation of "homebred Factions" would have brought to mind not only the factions of the English Civil War that had taken place earlier in the century, but also the current political factions involved in the crisis of succession that had been playing out in 1679. In his claim that factionalism drives a state to "ruine", Dryden is making a Royalist assertion that an "obedience" to a monarch is the best way of ensuring peace. In the next chapter, I will be examining how the patriarchal authority of the Stuart monarchy had become a subject of contention during the Exclusion Crisis of the late 1670s and early 1680s. During this period, Restoration playwrights would participate in ongoing political debates as to how far "Kings" could enact power over their "Subjects" in order to maintain civil order. As we shall see, the works of Shakespeare would once again be adapted into this cultural context, and would form the basis of a dramatic renegotiation of it meant to embody the role of a "King".

CHAPTER THREE

Royal Bodies and Zealous Subjects in John Crowne's *Henry VI* Plays

That thence the *Royal Actor* borne
 The *Tragick Scaffold* might adorn;
 While round the armed Bands
 Did clap their bloody hands.
He nothing common did or mean
 Upon that memorable Scene:
 But with his keener Eye
 The Axes edge did try:
 Nor call'd the *Gods* with vulgar spight
 To vindicate his helpless Right,
 But bow'd his comely Head
 Down as upon a Bed.

(Andrew Marvell, "An Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland", 1650)

Performing the Body Politic

The public execution of Charles I on 30 January 1649 made clear to the people of England that the body of their monarch could be rendered shockingly vulnerable. The King's execution was carried out on a scaffold constructed outside of the Banqueting House at Whitehall, the location which Royalist historian Richard Perrinchief would call the "Theatre of His Murther" (219). Having long been practicing at the role of royal martyr, Charles was prepared for his performance that day, as Peter Heylin records: "No sooner had he done his Devotions, but he is hurried to White-Hall, out of the Banqueting-house, whereof a way was forced to a Scaffold on which he was to act the last part of his Tragedy in the sight of the people" (151). Prior to his beheading, Charles would deliver his final lines to his confidant, the Bishop William Juxon: "*I go from a Corruptible to an Incorruptible Crown, where no disturbance can be, no disturbance in the world*" (Perrinchief 221). The King's reported final words on the "Crown" waiting for him after his death would be adapted into verse for the frontispiece of the hagiographical *Eikon Basilike*, a text circulated by Royalists shortly after the King's execution:

That *splendid*, but yet *toilsome Crown*,
 Regardlessly I *trample* down.
 With joie I take this *Crown of thorn*,
 Though *sharp*, yet *easie to be born*.
 That *heav'nly Crown*, already mine,
 I view with *eies* of faith divine. (*Eikon Basilike*, Frontispiece)

In the first-person narrative established in this prefatory poem, a fictionalized Charles describes how he, by way of his death, has undergone a transformation of identity. In the theatrical spectacle of his execution, Charles performatively changes into a Christ-like figure, exchanging his material “toilsome Crown” for a more heavenly “Crown of thorn”.

Following the execution of Charles in 1649, Royalist historians attempted to counteract the Parliamentarians’ victory over monarchical authority by casting the King as a Christian martyr, one whose authority would remain unassailable in heaven. In Perrinchief’s account, the King’s beheaded body is further broken apart into a series of saint-like relics and distributed amongst the attending audience:

Some washed their hands in the Royal Blood, others dipt their staves in it; and that they might indulge their insatiate Covetousness as well as their boundless Inhumanity, they sold the chips of the Block, and the sands that were discoloured with His Blood, and exposed His very Hairs to sale: which the Spectators purchased for different uses. Some did it to preserve the Reliques of so Glorious a Prince, whom they so dearly loved. Others hoped that they would be as means of Cure for that disease which our English Kings (through the Indulgence of Heaven) by Their touch did usually heal: and it was reported

that these Reliques experienced failed not of the effect. And some out of a brutish malice would have them as spoils and trophies of their hatred to their Lawful Sovereign. (222)

For Perrinchief, the King's dead body becomes disturbing democratized, as it is distributed freely among the English citizens who "dearly loved" the King, as well as those who hated "their Lawful Sovereign". A fragmentary state—divided into what Dryden termed "homebred Factions"—could be seen reflected in the King's now fragmentary body.

Other authors such as the Earl of Clarendon, Edward Hyde, would alternatively attempt to emphasize the King's bodily unassailability, even in death:

This unparalleled murder and parricide was committed upon the thirtieth of January, in the year, according to the account used in England, 1648 [i.e. January 1649, Old Style], in the forty and ninth year of his age, and when he had such excellent health, and so great vigour of body, that when his murderers caused him to be opened, (which they did, and were some of them present at it with great curiosity,) they confessed and declared, "that no man had ever all his vital parts so perfect and unhurt: and that he seemed to be of so admirable a composition and constitution, that he would probably have lived as long as nature could subsist." (241)⁷⁵

⁷⁵ A similar account of Charles's bodily dissection is given in Perrinchief: "Afterwards they delivered the body to be unbowelled to an infamous *Empirick* of the Faction, together with the rude *Chirurgions* of the Army (not permitting the *King's* own Physicians to this Office) who were all most implacable enemies to His Majesty, and commanded them to *search* (which was as much as to bid them so report) *whether they could not find in it Symptomes of the French disease, or some evidences of Frigidity, and natural impotency*: that so they might have some colour to slander Him who was eminent for *Chastity*; or to make His Seed infamous. But this wicked design was prevented by a *Physician* of great Integrity and Skill, who intruding himself among them at the Dissection, by his Presence and Authority kept the obsequious Wretches from gratifying their Opprobrious Masters. And the same *Physician* also published that Nature had tempered the Royal Body to a longer life than commonly is granted to other men" (223).

In his account, Clarendon attempts to mythically restore the King's body to perfect health. Even in death, Clarendon claims, Charles's body possessed an almost superhuman intrinsic superiority over the bodies of others, a Royalist metaphor for Charles's internal purity and incorruptibility.

While the concept of the "body politic" had been a long-standing metaphor in English political discourse, the execution of Charles would motivate a re-evaluation in how English writers approached the idea of authoritative "bodies". Perhaps most notably, Thomas Hobbes would explore the concept of the state as a metaphorical body in his 1651 treatise *Leviathan*, published during the Civil War while Hobbes was living in Paris. In this treatise, Hobbes describes the state as an "artificial animal" constructed in imitation of a human body:

For seeing life is but a motion of limbs, the beginning whereof is in some principal part within; why may we not say, that all *automata* (engines that move themselves by springs and wheels as doth a watch) have an artificial life? For what is the *heart*, but a *spring*; and the *nerves*, but so many *strings*; and the *joints*, but so many *wheels*, giving motion to the whole body, such as was intended by the artificer? *Art* goes yet further, imitating that rational and most excellent work of nature, *man*. For by art is created that great LEVIATHAN called a COMMONWEALTH, or STATE, (in Latin CIVITAS) which is but an artificial man; [...] and in which, the *sovereignty* is an artificial *soul*, as giving life and motion to the whole body; The *magistrates*, and other *officers* of judicature and execution, artificial *joints*; *reward* and *punishment* (by which fastened to the seat of the sovereignty, every joint and member is moved to perform his duty) are the *nerves*, that do the same in the body natural . . . (7)

Just as the human body operates mechanically under the control of the "soul", so too do the mechanisms of state power—of legal "reward" and "punishment"—operate mechanically within

a commonwealth under the control of “sovereignty”.⁷⁶ For Hobbes, this sovereignty is created through a collective investment of power into the hands of an individual or group of individuals:

The only way to erect such a common power . . . is, to confer all their power and strength upon one man, or upon one assembly of men, that may reduce all their wills, by plurality of voices, unto one will: which is as much as to say, to appoint one man, or assembly of men, to bear their person . . . and therein to submit their wills, every one to his will, and their judgements, to his judgment. This is more than consent, or concord; it is a real unity of them all, in one and the same person, made by covenant of every man with every man, in such manner, as if every man should say to every man, *I authorize and give up my right of governing myself, to this man, or to this assembly of men, on this condition, that thou give up thy right to him, and authorize all his actions in like manner*. This done, the multitude so united in one person, is called a COMMONWEALTH . . . (114)

Though presumably built upon the “consent” of a commonwealth’s citizens, the ideal state for Hobbes is founded upon the total “giving up” of each individual’s autonomy and capacity for self-governance into the hands of “one man”, “one person”, and “one will”.

After describing this singular and concentrated model of authority, Hobbes goes on to address concerns that this “one man” at the centre of sovereign authority might be self-serving or

⁷⁶ Several critics have drawn attention to Hobbes’s description of the body as an “artificial” construct. Elsewhere in *Leviathan*, Hobbes suggests that there is a performative aspect to personhood: “The word person is Latin: . . . as *persona* in Latin signifies the *disguise*, or *outward appearance* of a man, counterfeited on the stage . . . So that a *person*, is the same that an *actor* is, both on the stage and in common conversation; and to *personate*, is to *act*, or *represent* himself, or another; and he that acteth another, is said to bear his person, or act in his name” (106-107). Mónica Brito Vieira argues that, for Hobbes, “Persons are constructs, products of human creative industry, which are simultaneously constrained and enabled by complex social scripts and normative expectations put into play by our social and political interaction” (96). See Vieira, *The Elements of Representations in Hobbes*, 75-144; and Horst Bredekamp, *Leviathan: Body Politic as Visual Strategy in the Work of Thomas Hobbes*, 45-60.

corruptible: the concern that “if the public interest chance to cross the private, he prefers the private” (124). Hobbes addresses these concerns as follows:

Now in monarchy, the private interest is the same with the public. The riches, power, and honour of a monarch arise only from the riches, strength, and reputation of his subjects. For no king can be rich, nor glorious, nor secure; whose subjects are either poor, or contemptible, or too weak through want, or dissension, to maintain a war against their enemies: whereas in a democracy, or aristocracy, the public prosperity confers not so much to the private fortune of one that is corrupt, or ambitious, as doth many times a perfidious advice, a treacherous action, or a civil war. (124-125)

Hobbes here makes the suggestion that a monarch does not in fact possess a “private” self in the same way that any other subject of a nation would. The monarch’s “private” self is entirely “public”: their individual possessions are the possessions of the commonwealth, and thus their interests are most closely aligned with the common good. Living alongside the exiled English court in Paris during the Interregnum, Hobbes here is advocating for the restoration of sovereign power into the hands of a singular monarch.⁷⁷

This “Restoration” would, of course, soon come with the return of the second King Charles to the English throne in 1660. Following Charles II’s return, Royalist ideology would be

⁷⁷ Hobbes ideals are expressed elsewhere by Royalist political theorists. In terms similar to Hobbes, Robert Filmer states in *Patriarcha* that “The Bodies of [a monarch’s] Subjects do him Service in War, and their Goods supply his present wants, therefore if not out of Affection to his people, yet out of Natural Love to Himself, every Tyrant desires to preserve the Lives, and protect the Goods of his Subjects, which cannot be done but by Justice, and if it be not done, the Princes Loss is the greatest” (69). Because of this mutual interest, Filmer states that a monarch “must remember, That the profit of every man in particular, and of all together in general, is not always One and the same; and that the Publick is to be preferred before the Private” (79). Filmer’s text was written during the Interregnum (Filmer died in 1653), but was not published until 1680, just in time for the political debates of the Exclusion Crisis.

on the ascendancy, with a Stuart monarch once again ruling over the English court.⁷⁸ The political security of the Stuart royal family's claim to monarchic authority would again be shaken, however, by the late 1670s, when conflict between Royalists and Parliamentarians would reach a point of crisis. The Exclusion Crisis in English parliament was brought on by a number of ongoing political scandals during the 1670s. Following the revelation in 1678 of the Popish Plot, an anti-Catholic conspiracy fabricated by Titus Oates, Whig politicians led by the Earl of Shaftesbury would introduce into the House of Commons an Exclusion Bill (15 May 1679) designed to prevent the Catholic James, Duke of York, from inheriting the English throne from his brother, Charles. Whigs such as Shaftesbury contended that they were protecting England from a Catholic takeover, as well as from arbitrary monarchic rule. The crisis would be exacerbated when the King enacted his arbitrary power by dissolving Parliament three times in 1679, then again in 1681. At this time, the Royalist Tories often followed their Interregnum predecessors in defending the "Divine" right of monarchic authority.

In this political moment, playwrights would bring the political dynamics surrounding the Exclusion Crisis into the drama of London theatres. Among these playwrights was the author John Crowne, who would write two adaptations of Shakespeare's *Henry VI* plays during the Crisis: *The Misery of Civil War* (1680) and *Henry the Sixth, The First Part* (1681). Due to the various contradictory accounts that we have of the author's life, Crowne's political alignment during the Exclusion Crisis has been the subject of critical debate. In 1719, John Dennis remembered Crowne as having been patronized by the King himself: "Mr. *Crown* being tyr'd with the Fatigue of Writing, and shock'd by the Uncertainty of Theatrical Success, and desirous

⁷⁸ For a discussion of Charles II's approach to performing his own "body politic" see Joseph Roach, *It* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 30-36.

to shelter himself from the Resentments of those numerous Enemies which he had made by his *City Politicks*, made his Application immediately to the King himself; and desir'd his Majesty to establish him in some Office, that might be a Security to him for Life" (405). In the dedication to his play *The English Fryar* (1690), Crowne gives an account of the reasons why he entered into court patronage: "I had much bread from the Princely bounty of King Charles, and claims to more from his justice for a great province of vast value given in his reign to the French; half of which was my father's rightful property and mine, as his heir. This fixt me in a dependence on that Court, for I could have my compensation no where else" (19). The "great province" mentioned here by Crowne, the province which Crowne believed he had a claim to, was the province of Nova Scotia, which Crowne's father co-held as a patentee under the Cromwell government beginning in 1656. As we shall go on to see, Crowne's often Royalist rhetoric in the time surrounding the Exclusion Crisis was tied to his ongoing attempts to petition the English government, on behalf of both himself and his father, for what he believed to be his "rightful" claim to property in North America.

This chapter will explore the ways in which the playwright John Crowne chose to engage with and represent royal sovereignty, particularly in the period surrounding and directly following the Exclusion Crisis. Beginning in 1679, John Crowne submitted a series of petitions to the English government seeking compensation for his father's loss of the province of Nova Scotia. These documents, discussed in the first part of the chapter, display Crowne's direct investment in the mobilization of royal authority. In presenting himself as a "Dutifull and Zealous Subject" of the Stuart monarchs, Crowne hoped to win royal favour in order to guarantee his own financial security over the course of his lifetime. Alongside his initial petitions, Crowne's two adaptations of Shakespeare's *Henry VI* plays, discussed in the second

part of the chapter, brought to life questions surrounding the efficacy and limitations of monarchic power. Crowne's plays use the metaphor of the body politic to explore issues of sovereignty in material bodily terms. In these adaptations, Crowne takes a strongly Royalist stance, advocating for the suppression of rebellious bodies and the imposition of a more centralized authoritarian monarchy.

The chronology of Crowne's petitions to the government established in this chapter follows that set forth by the author's biographer, Arthur Franklin White, in his 1922 *John Crowne: His Life and Dramatic Works*. In his overview of the Crowne family's transactions with the state, White was drawing from the *Calendar of State Papers Colonial* series, a set of indexes, published beginning in 1899, containing descriptions and summaries of the documents held in the collected State Papers of the British government from 1573 to 1739.⁷⁹ In doing so, White was working from the *Calendar's* summaries of documents, rather than the original documents themselves. This chapter will discuss the existing records of John Crowne's petitions held by the UK National Archives, many of which have now been digitized. These primary documents provide additional context to Crowne's appeals, particularly his knowledge of the ongoing wars between the New England colonies and the Wampanoag and Narragansett Indigenous communities. This chapter will focus particularly on the petitions carried out by John Crowne during his lifetime, rather than on the various appeals made by John's father William Crowne, both in England and Massachusetts, which White considers in greater depth. The intent of this chapter is not to replace White's biographical overview of the author and his family. Rather, this

⁷⁹ For White's discussion of John Crowne's life, as well as the Crowne family and their various claims to land ownership in New England, see particularly White, *The Life of John Crowne*, 7-52. Shivaji Sengupta has also uncovered additional documents related to William Crowne's presence in New England. See Sengupta, "Biographical Notes of John Crowne," *Restoration* 6, no. 1 (1982): 26-30.

chapter will consider how John Crowne's petitions reflect his understanding of authority and sovereign power, and will examine how this understanding shaped his work adapting Shakespeare for the Restoration stage.

John Crowne's Colonial Petitions, 1679-1701

Baptised in 1641, John Crowne moved with his father to Nova Scotia in 1657, where he stayed until 1660. While chronicling the Crowne family's presence in the colonies of New England, Arthur Franklin White makes the claim that "it is difficult to see that [John] Crowne's three years in America had any permanent effect upon him. His works show no recollections of this period of his life" (28). Despite White's claims, Crowne's close contemporaries associated the author with his early time spent in the New England colonies. In his account of Crowne's life, John Dennis believed the author to have been born there: "Mr. CROWN was bred under his Father, an Independant Minister, in that part of *Northern America*, which is called *Nova Scotia*" (404). While this misconception was corrected by later biographers, Dennis's mistake shows that Crowne was closely associated with a North American origin.⁸⁰ The Crowne family's initial claims to Nova Scotia had come about in 1656 when John's father William—not an "Independant Minister" as Dennis had recorded, but rather a Colonel in the English military with Parliamentary ties—was approached by Sir Thomas Temple and the French Huguenot Charles de Saint-Étienne de la Tour for funding in order to purchase the joint deed to the province. A patent to the three was approved on 29 May 1656, and later issued on August 9. On September 20 of the same year, De la Tour gave up his portion of the patent, leaving the title to William

⁸⁰ For a discussion of John Crowne's birth date and location, see White 23-24.

Crowne and Thomas Temple.⁸¹ John Crowne would later make note of this patent to Temple and his father, writing that De la Tour had “made over all his right, and title, in all the aforesaid lands, both Nova Scotia, and Penobscot, to Thomas Temple, and William Crowne Esquiers, and their heires for ever” (CO 5/860, 6). The transfer of this deed “for ever” to the heirs of Crowne and Temple would become a consistent point of reference in John Crowne’s appeals over his lifetime.

In a memorial made in 1698, John Crowne provides an account of the interactions between his father and Temple while in Nova Scotia:

Not long after their arrivall, the said Thomas Temple and William Crowne divided their lands. And William Crowne by a deed under his hand and Seale, made over to y^e said Thomas Temple and his heires for ever, all Nova Scotia, as it is limited in the said deed⁸² And the said Thomas Temple, by his deed, bearing date y^e twelfe of September 1657, made over to y^e said William Crowne, and his heires for ever, all his right and title in Penobscot, and in all the lands and Islands, lying without y^e bounds of Nova Scotia; from the river Machias in y^e East, to the said Musconcus bordering on Pemaquid. They also signed and sealed interchangeably⁸³ bonds of twenty thousand, to bind each other to performance of Articles. (CO 5/860, 6)

While the exact terms of the agreement between Temple and William Crowne are obscure in the documents surrounding the case, John Crowne here records that the two had made a division of

⁸¹ The chronology of these events is discussed in CO 5/860, as well as the other documents surrounding Crowne’s later appeals beginning in 1697. These documents are named in the *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, 1574-1660*, 441, 447, and 453.

⁸² “deed” is a superscript insertion.

⁸³ “interchangeably” is a superscript insertion.

property, with Temple taking the deed of Nova Scotia and Crowne taking ownership of Penobscot, located in New England. In 1660, Temple and Crowne returned to England to make sure that their claims in North America were valid under the newly restored Charles's rule. John Crowne records the appeal as having been successful: "Then the said Thomas Temple and William Crowne, came over, and proving their title to the aforesaid lands, before the King, and the Lords and others, of his Majestys Privy Council; they were adjudged to be rightfull proprietors, and were permitted to returne, and repossesse their lands" (CO 5/860, 7). William Crowne did return to North America in the early 1660s, though his son John remained in London. Any claims of Crowne and Temple to Nova Scotia would, however, be negated in the 1667 Treaty of Breda, when the province was declared to be French territory in the ongoing Anglo-Dutch Wars.⁸⁴

1667 did not mark the end, however, to the attempts by the Crownes to secure land grants from the English government. On 24 January 1679, John Crowne went on to submit a petition to the King and Privy Council "in the behalfe of his Father William Crown Esq^r. now resident in New England and late Proprietor in part of Nova Scotia and Acady in America". The full text of this petition is given below, as it sets the pattern that Crowne's various appeals would follow for the remainder of his life:

Sheweth That in the yeare 1621 S^r. William Alexander Lord of Menstrie Principall
Secretary of State for the Kingdome of Scotland obtained from your Ma^{ty}. Royall

⁸⁴ John Crowne records the treaty's date as 1668: "Thus it continued till y^e date 1668; when at y^e treaty of Bredah, y^e French prevailed wth King Charles to surrender up Nova Scotia. And accordingly, a commission was sent under the great Seale of England to S^r Thomas Temple, empouring and requiring him to deliver it" (CO 5/860, 7).

Grandfather of ever blessed memory a Grant of all that Country called New Scotland and Acady.

That whereas the said Lord Alexander in the yeare 1631 did for divers good causes and consideracōns give and grant the said Country to S^r. Claud S^t. Stephen Lord de la Tour and his heires to be held of the Crowne of Scotland. After which S^r. Charles S^t. Stephen son to the said Sr. Claud de la Tour did in the yeare 1656 make over all his right and [...] ⁸⁵ Country to the S^r. Thomas Temple and yo^r. Pet^s. father for the sume of three thousand [three hundred] and seventy pounds and other considerable rents and acknowledgements, according to [...] the said S^r. Thomas Temple and William Crown did enjoy the said Country untill the year [...] time it was your Ma^{ts}. Royall will and Pleasure for reasons of State to deliver [...] unto the French, Whereby the Pet^r. and his family have sustained almost utter ruine, which neverthelesse for almost twelve yeares they have humbly and patiently Submitted unto, never presuming to importune your Ma^{tie}. For any compensacōn or subsistance. But now there hapening to be in your Ma^{ts}. disposall a small tract of Land in New England⁸⁶ called Mounthope lately in the possession of certain Indians since destroyed in Warr by your Ma^{ts}. Subjects which at present remaines desolate and uninhabited.

The Pet^r. therefore most humbly prayes your Ma^{tie}. to bestow the said Small Tract of Land upon the Pet^r. for the support of his Parents and family, who by the losse of their Estates are reduced to extreame want, And although y^e value of the said Land is in no

⁸⁵ The transcribed document (CO 1/43, 52) is damaged in two places, in the centre and at the bottom of the page.

⁸⁶ “in New England” is a superscript insertion.

way equivalent to y^e damage Sustained [by the] Pet^r. and his Father upon yo^r. Ma^{ts}.

surrender of his said Propriety, Yet they shall [...] and dutyfull acknowledgement receive

y^e same as a full compens[ation...] losses, and as a most gracious testimony of your Ma^{ts}.

accustomed Royall [...] and Bounty. (CO 1/43, 52)

The above document sets forth Crowne's strategy in the various petitions that he would make to the court and government councils. Crowne traces a lineage of inheritance from Nova Scotia's initial colonization under King James to the exchange of Nova Scotia with the French. As a result of this loss, Crowne claims that he and his family have been driven to "almost utter ruine" and "extreame want", all while never appealing for "compensacōn or subsistance". This 1679 appeal makes a particular request for the Crownes to be granted an area of land known as Mounthope (later Mount Hope) in New England.

The inciting motivation for Crowne's appeal for this particular tract of land is that "certain Indians" in possession of the land had been "since destroyed in Warr".⁸⁷ Additional details on the history of Mounthope and the "Warr" can be found in the subsequent records that document the consideration of Crowne's petition by the Committee of Trade and Foreign Plantations. In their meeting on 29 January 1679, The Committee made an agreement to issue letters to the New England colonies on the subject of Crowne's appeal for Mounthope, though

⁸⁷ The summary of this document included in the *Calendar of State Papers Colonial* conspicuously omits reference to the "certain Indians since destroyed in Warr": "In 1621, Sir William Alexander, Lord of Menstrie, Principal Secretary of State for Scotland, obtained from James I. a grant of New Scotland and Acady: in 1631 Lord Alexander granted this country to Sir Claud St. Stephen, Lord de la Tour, who in 1656 made over his right for 3,370 *l.* to the petitioner's father and Sir Thomas Temple, who enjoyed the same till it was delivered to the French, whereby petitioner and his family have sustained almost utter ruin, to which for almost 12 years they have patiently submitted, never presuming to importune the King for compensation. There now being at the King's disposal a small tract of land in New England called Mounthope at present desolate and uninhabited, prays the King to bestow the same on him for the support of his parents and family" (*Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, 1677-80*, 319).

naming the petitioner as William Crowne: “Whereas M^r. William Crown has by Petition sett forth unto His Ma^{tie}. in Council the great losses he has sustained by His Ma^{tie}’s. Surrender of Nova Scotia and Acady And therefore praying a compensation by a Grant of the Lands of Mounthope in New England And their Lo^{ps}. upon a reference made unto them being desirous to bee informed of all things concerning the said Mounthope” (CO 5/903, 318). A letter to the colony of New Plymouth was issued on February 12, though this letter names John Crowne as the petitioner, as he is named in the colony’s response later that year.⁸⁸ In a response dated 1 July 1679, the New Plymouth council would reply with the following account of how Mounthope had come to be part of the colony’s territory:

May it therefore Please y^r. Sacred Majesty: after our humble acknowledgement of that favour to give us leave to make this free & plain declaration of the Matter according to truth: The lands of Mounthope as their Lordships rightly Informed did belonge to Sachem Phillip the Grand Rebell to yo^r Majesty: & first & principle disturber of the peace of these yo^r [Colonies]⁸⁹ & is Clearly & unquestionably wthin the patent Grant made by yo^r Royall predecesors to this yo^r Most Ancient [Colony] of New Plymouth (wthin which none might purchase or any way obtayne lands of the Natives but our [selves] such as the Authority of this Colony allowed) & these lands wth some others were (as there Honors also [Report...] Conquered by the joynt forces of yo^r Subjects of y^e Masachusets Conecticut & New Plymouth: by the Expençe of more then one Hundred thousand Pounds; besides an

⁸⁸ “By the Same Letter yo^r. Majesty Graciously pleases to lett us know that M^r Jn^o. Crown hath petitioned yo^r. Majesty to grant him the lands of [Mount] Hope in New England; in Compensation of loss his father Sustained by Rendition of Nova Scotia to the french” (CO 1/43, 64).

⁸⁹ Right side of the document (CO 1/43, 64) is damaged.

Inestimable damage Sustained by particular Plantations & persons; & which was yett of greater valew by the loss of the lives of Many Hundreds of our Bretheren Childeren & Choyse friends; The Profits of the warr (Excepting a few Prisoners taken in the latter End thereof) was only land; & this Colony haveing Been theire full Proportion both in forces & Charge; [...] being the Seate of the warr Suffered More in Proportion then any; had Mounthope wth a small [Ragged...] of land more adjoyning to it for our Part of Profit... (CO 1/43, 64)⁹⁰

The Council would give an account of their recent war against “Sachem Phillip the Grand Rebell”, and would themselves lay claim to their right over the lands in question.

Alongside the above letter, the New Plymouth council included a copy of an earlier letter, dated 12 June 1677, that they believed to have been lost in transit to England.⁹¹ This letter, recorded in the Committee’s entry book as the “Lett^r. from New Plymouth about the Indian Warr”, gives additional details on the history of “Sachem Phillip the Grand Rebell”:

Philip a proud and ambitious Sachim and one of the most Potent in these parts began the mischiefe in this Colony to hich together with the enemies successe by divine permission; and Our great suffering by their unmanly Treacheries in the beginning of the Warr, gave occasion to somewhat take not right measures, but judge of things by events only to pass hard sensures upon us untill better informed, for wee can and do solemnly protest before God and to your Ma^{tie}. that it was ever Our care and endeavour to live friendly and

⁹⁰ A copy of this letter is recorded also in CO 5/904, 17-22.

⁹¹ “Wee now plainely perceive that wee have been greatly abused by Miscarriage of letters [...] yo^r. Majesty: both frō the Collony & particularly frō yo^r serv^t our Govern^r beareing Date the twelfth of June 1677 Coppys whereof wee are bold to Transmit wth these & hope wee shall find out the Originall themselves” (CO 1/43, 64).

inoffensively by them; wee possess not one foot of their Lands, but what wee obtained by lawfull Purchase from them, Wee suffered not our people to purchase or any way obtaine from them such Lands as Wee know they could not well spare, and where our English Plantacõns were: near any body of the Indians our People did frequently Fence their Fields for them, that Our Cattle might not [...] them; and on complaint of trespasse or injury from the English, justice was Speedily and impartially granted them, yet most Treacherously they fell upon our most remote & weakest Plantations; everywhere committing the greatest outrages upon those that had been the most kind to them; the fire once kindled in a few days, it was East and West almost through all New England by which and by confession of Prisoners taken, it appears the Plott was generall against all the English; Wee shall not give your Ma^{tie}. the trouble of a particular account of the Warr, because wee presume it will bee presented to yo^r view in M^r. Hubbards Printed Narrative;⁹² only Wee would informe your Ma^{tie}., that as Wee began not a Warr with them: so neither have wee nor the Confederate Colonys failed to improve our utmost abilities to maintaine Your Ma^{ties}. interest and our own ag^t their unjust and insolent intensions, wherein it pleased God to so own our righteous cause and blesse our endeavours that (Excepting a small party that are farr Eastward) our Enemies are fully subdued, and are mostly destroyed or sent away into Servitude... (CO 5/904, 5-9).

The “Indian Warr” documented here is a reference to what would become known among New England settlers as “King Philip’s War”, which took place between 1675 and 1678. “King Philip”, or the “Sachem Philip” recorded in the New Plymouth letters, refers to Metacomet, the

⁹² “Mr. Hubbard” was William Hubbard, whose *History of the Troubles with the Indians in New England* was published in Boston in 1677.

leader of the Wampanoag people who had adopted the name “King Philip” in his interactions with English colonists.⁹³ This conflict had begun as a result of the continued encroachment by the New Plymouth colony westward into the territory of the Wampanoag and neighboring Indigenous communities. By the middle of the seventeenth century, there had been an increased push within the United Colonies towards the takeover of Indigenous lands. The summer of 1676 in particular saw a campaign of violent displacement carried out by the English colonies (Brooks 312). While Metacomet and other Indigenous leaders were able to organize a sustained resistance against the colonial military, the United Colonies overwhelmed the Indigenous coalition, causing many from the Wampanoag and Narragansett communities to be “destroyed or sent away into Servitude”, as is documented in the 1677 letter from New Plymouth. As is described in the above documents, the New Plymouth colonists viewed their cause as having been supported by divine will, as “it pleased God to so own our righteous cause”.

When the letter from the New Plymouth colony was read by the Committee of Trade and Foreign Plantations on 30 October 1679, the Committee ruled against Crowne’s petition for Mounthope and in favour of the colony: “their Lo^{ps}. in consideration of the great sufferings of

⁹³ Lisa Brooks argues that, by designating the conflict “King Philip’s War” and declaring the conflict finished with the death of Metacomet, the “colonial ministers and magistrates [of New England] sought to contain Indigenous resistance within narratives that would justify their replacement”: “Naming the conflict ‘King Philip’s War’ created an impression of finality. The Indigenous ‘rebellion’ had been squashed with the death of Philip, the subjugation complete, titles cleared. This act of naming contained the ‘war’ from an ongoing, multifaceted Indigenous resistance, led by an uncontrollable network of Indigenous leaders and families, to a rebellion, an event that could be contained within one year, by a single persuasive insurgent, who had taken his exit and vanished” (6, 8). For an extended discussion of this conflict, see Brooks, *Our Beloved Kin: A New History of King Philip’s War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018); James D. Drake, *King Philip’s War: Civil War in New England, 1675-1676* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999); Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip’s War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Vintage, 1999); and Daniel R. Mandell, *King Philip’s War: Colonial Expansion, Native Resistance, and the End of Indian Sovereignty* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2010).

this Colony during their late Warrs with the Indians of whom this tract of Land was⁹⁴ conquered by them, and for divers other reasons alleged in the said letter, agree to Report their opinions, That this Colony bee continued in the possession of the said Lands of Mounthope” (CO 391/3, 84).⁹⁵ A week later on November 6, John Crowne attended the Committee’s meeting to appeal their decision, but to little success: “M^r. Crown is called in and desires their Lo^{ps} to consider the Loss hee hath sustained by the Surrender of Nova Scotia, and that hee may receive some compensation out of the Lands of Mounthope. And, after his being withdrawn, their Lo^{ps} doe not think fit to Report that any part of those Lands bee taken from the Colony of New Plimouth, whatever pretensions M^r. Crown may have to His Ma^{tie}’s Favor upon some other occasion” (CO 391/3, 88).

While the exact extent of the “pretensions” held by Crowne to the King’s favour are unknown, Crowne’s dramatic works of the 1670s provide evidence for a number of potential connections to the court and royal family. Possibly on the recommendation of Elkanah Settle, Crowne was commissioned to write the masque *Calisto* to be performed at court in 1674. The masque was dedicated to the Duke of York’s daughter Mary, later Queen Mary II, Crowne writing in his dedication that, “Being unexpectedly called out of my Obscurity, to the glory of serving your Highness, (and indeed the whole Court) in an entertainment so considerable as this; my fears and amazements were such as (I believe) shepherds and herdsmen had of old, when

⁹⁴ “was” is a superscript insertion.

⁹⁵ This decision was not simply motivated by benevolence; the English government profited from the colony’s possession of these lands: “It is agreed that the Colony of New Plimouth bee obliged to pay His Ma^{ty} an yearly acknowledgement of seaven Skins for the seaven thousand acres to bee granted to them, or fourteen marks for the same, those Lands appearing to have been taken by conquest from King Philip, having never before been in possession by the English” (CO 391/3, 88).

from their flocks and herds they were call'd to prophesie to Kings" (232).⁹⁶ In an additional address to the reader, Crowne states that his play "appeared not so contemptible, but it attained the felicity for which it was made, to afford some delight to his Royal mind, to whose pleasure all our endeavors ought to be, and this more particularly was devoted. And of this I have full assurance, by the best, and to me most pleasing testimony of it, that of his most princely bounty" (239). In his 1676 play *The Country Wit*, Crowne mentions, in his dedication to the Earl of Middlesex, that he has been "honour'd with the King's favour" (17). Crowne here expresses similar pretensions to the "King's favour" here in his published works that he had attempted to make use of in his appeals for Mounthope.

In early 1680, Crowne would attempt to make a more direct appeal to "His Ma^{tie}'s Favor" by directing a new petition to the King, this time requesting a different "Tract of Land called Boston necke", rather than Mounthope:

Sheweth That your Ma^{tie}. having been pleased to bestow on Plimouth Colony in New England (upon their humble addresses) that tract of Land lying there called Mounthope which your Pet^r. had humbly begg'd of your Ma^{tie}. to compensate the exceeding greate losses sustained by your Pet^{rs}. father and himselfe, by your Ma^{ts}. surrendry of Nova Scotia to the French, the moyety of which was their proper Estate, your Pet^r. does and ever shall with all humility submitt himselfe to your Ma^{ts}. Royall pleasure. But where as there still remaines great quantities of conquered Land, much more then will reimburse the New England People the charges they have been at in their warrs with the Indians if the money they have gained by the Sale of many thousands of Indians be added, as your

⁹⁶ On 15 December 1674, John Evelyn saw the princesses Mary and Anne attending a performance of *Calisto* at court (*London Stage* 1:226).

Pet^r. can prove, And the new England People having been great gainers by your Pet^{rs}.

fathers Estate when he enjoyed it may well afford him some Livelyhood amongst them.

(CO 1/44, no. 24).⁹⁷

This petition was forwarded from the Court at Whitehall to the Committee of Trade and Foreign Plantations on 4 February 1680, with an additional message from the Earl of Sunderland declaring the approval of the King: “His Ma^{ty}. being graciously disposed to give the pet^r. some marke of his Favour, is pleased to referre the consideracōn of this his humble Suit to the r^t. hum^{ble}. the L^{ds}. of the Co^mittee for trade & Forreine plantacōns to report what his ma^{ty}. may fitly doe in it for the pet^{rs}. gratificacōn, whereupon his ma^{ty}. will declare his further pleasure” (CO 1/44, no. 24). This endorsement motivated the Committee to reconsider the documents related to the case on 2 March 1680, though the Committee maintained their decision against any property being transferred to the Crownes (CO 391/3, 138-141).

After this point, Crowne made no petitions for two decades, the death of his father in 1682 possibly severing his direct connection to North America. In 1697, however, Crowne renewed his appeals to the Committee of Trade and Plantations after being “Inform’d that the R^t. Hono^{ble}. the Earle of Bellemount is Co^missioned by his Matie to be governour, not only of New England, but of Nova Scotia, and has Orders to secure it within his Maties Dominion”. Crowne would submit a petition, once again giving a lineage of his inheritance to Nova Scotia and writing that he “does most humbly beseech your Honours, that you will lett it be inserted in his Lord^{pps}. Instructions, that his Lord^{pp}. give all just and convenient countenance, and encouragement to your Pet^r., That your Pet^r. may Recover his Estate; and Planters may readily settle there; which they will be fearfull to do, without leave from your Pet^r., his Title being so

⁹⁷ A copy of this petition is recorded in CO 5/904, 35-36.

Antient, and very well known in New England” (CO 5/859, 242). The document was received by the Committee on 17 April 1697, and read in council a few days later on April 19. Over the next few years, Crowne would submit a series of memorial accounts documenting his claims to various parts of New England, particularly the territory of Penobscot.⁹⁸ In these later petitions, Crowne began to target Thomas Temple as having been the one responsible for depriving the Crownes of their New England property. Crowne’s claim was that Thomas Temple, having been requested to give over the deed of Nova Scotia to the French following the Treaty of Breda in 1667, intentionally misrepresented the borders of the territory to include William Crowne’s estate of Penobscot:

S^r Thomas Temple knew very well; that Penobscot, and the aforesaid lands belonging to it were no part of Nova Scotia but they being the said William Crownes estate, he out of

⁹⁸ The documents of Crowne’s petitions appear in the following chronology: on 4 January 1698 a memorial of Crowne’s is read “concerning the English title, to Penobscot, and other lands adjacent” (CO 5/860, 5-8). This was soon followed by a second petition received and read on 16 March 1698 (CO 5/860, 25). On 18 January 1699, Crowne attended the Committee’s meeting and “gave their Lordships some account of his Title to Penobscote in America, and being desired to draw it up in writing, he promised to do it accordingly” (CO 391/11). Crowne’s memorial was received by the Committee the next day, and read February 10 (CO 5/860, 109-112). Crowne’s appeals were renewed again in 1700 when he submits a petition directly to the King, which is forwarded to the Committee of Trade and Plantations with the King’s endorsement on June 17, received by the Committee July 1, and read by the Committee July 26 (CO 5/861, 324-325). At the reading of this petition, Crowne was sent notice to attend a Committee meeting later that week, which he did on July 30, promising to deliver an account of his title (CO 391/13, 128). Crowne’s account was received August 8 and read the next day, and again on August 19 (CO 5/862, 1-3; CO 391/13, 148). Crowne’s title was read and considered again on November 20, after which he was ordered “to bring an Extract of y^e. Boundaries exprest in each of those several Writings, in order to the better clearing of all doubts thereupon” (CO 391/13, 250; CO 5/862, 65-70). Crowne’s account of “Boundaries of Nova Scotia and Penobscot” was received and read shortly after on November 26. A summary of Crowne’s petitions was drafted by the Committee over the 21 and 22 of January 1701, then forwarded to the Secretary of State James Vernon on January 23 (CO 391/13, 322, 324; CO 5/909, 349, 370). Beyond this point it is unknown how Vernon responded to Crowne’s petition, though none of the requested lands in North America were ever restored to him.

envy and hatred to William Crowne, and to impoverish, and totally disable him, from taking his advantages at law against him, when he was out of his government, for all the notorious wrongs he had done him, whilst he was in it; the said Sir⁹⁹ Thomas Temple, presum'd to go beyond his commission, and deliver up Penobscot to the French.

When King Charles was inform'd of what S^r Thomas Temple had done, he was extremely displeas'd with it; and wou'd not consent to it. (CO 5/860, 7)

Crowne seems to have gone so far as to claim that Thomas Temple had spent time in the Tower of London due to the King's displeasure, though the Committee was skeptical of this claim.¹⁰⁰

In 1700, Crowne again found success in petitioning to royal favour, this time the favour of King William III. In a petition "To the King's most Excellent Maj^{tie}.", Crowne once again sets forth the history of his claims and his patience as a loyal subject to royal authority:

And Whereas neither your Pet^{rs}. Father, nor himself ever had any compensation for the Loss of 'em, and your Pet^r. has alwayes been a dutifull and Zealous Subject of your Maj^{ties}., your Pet^r. doth most humbly beseech your Maj^{tie}., out of your Royal goodness and charity, to bestow something upon him for his present Support, and to enable him to beare the expence, which the pursuit of his right will require, which at present he is not able to maintain. (CO 5/861, 325)

On 17 June 1700, this petition would be forwarded to the Committee of Trade and Plantations with a note from Edward Villiers, the Earl of Jersey, making note of the King's approval: "The

⁹⁹ "Sir" is a superscript insertion.

¹⁰⁰ "M^r Crown presented to the Board a Deduction of his Title to Penobscot, which was read: And whereas it is therein said that S^r. Thomas Temple was committed to the Tower for having exceeded his Commission in the Delivery of that Country to the French, M^r Crown was Directed to lay before the Board a Copy of that Committm^t. in Order to the proof of that matter of Fact" (CO 391/13, 250).

King is pleased to direct, That the enclosed Petition of John Crowne Esq^r. be referred to Your Lordships, that You may examine the Petitioner's Title to the Lands he claimes in Nova Scotia in America, and report Your opinion thereupon" (CO 5/861, 324). With this prompting, the Committee would continue to consider Crowne's requests over the next few years. While no approval was ever made for Crowne's New England appeals, White finds a payment of 50 pounds that was issued to Crowne from the English Treasury in 1703, though whether or not this payment is directly tied to Crowne's appeals is unknown (49-50).

The narrative that Crowne establishes in his petitions is one that is designed to legitimize and elevate the individual authority of the "King" over the English state and its colonies. Attempting to bypass the bureaucracy of the government Committees that he had been dealing with, Crowne proposes that the King should be able to act out of his own "Royal goodness and charity" in satisfying the needs of a "dutifull and Zealous Subject". Though Crowne alludes to Metacomet and the Wampanoag people in his petitions of 1679 and 1680, he afterwards erases any Indigenous presence with the story that he constructs: Nova Scotia is, at the narrative's origin, "within his Maties Dominion", only becoming French through the meddling of Thomas Temple. The King, Crowne proposes, has the ability to restore at least a portion of this previously English territory to its "rightful" claimant. Though he remained unsuccessful in achieving the goals of his petitions, Crowne remained committed to his hope that the King could intervene on his behalf and enact direct control over the affairs of state.

"The Crown of *England* is not made of Clay"

During the time of his first petitions to the government between 1679 and 1680, John Crowne was also in the process of arranging an ambitious two-part adaptation of Shakespeare's

early history plays. Crowne's play *The Misery of Civil-War*, an adaptation of the fourth and fifth acts of Shakespeare's *2 Henry VI* and the entirety of *3 Henry VI*, was published in the early months of 1680, closely coinciding with the time of his appeal to "His Ma^{tie}'s Favor" for the proprietorship of Boston Neck.¹⁰¹ 1681 would bring the publication of a second adaptation from Crowne, *Henry the Sixth, The First Part*, this time covering the first three acts of *2 Henry VI*.¹⁰² Alongside this play, *The Misery of Civil-War* would be republished in 1681, this time under the title *Henry the Sixth, the Second Part*.¹⁰³ In adapting Shakespeare's *Henry VI* plays for the Restoration stage, Crowne remained evasive when discussing his source material.¹⁰⁴ *The Misery of Civil-War* prologue claims that the play is an entirely original work by Crowne, and that "by his feeble Skill 'tis built alone, / The Divine *Shakespear* did not lay one Stone" (Prologue 21-22). The prologue of *Henry the Sixth, The First Part* more openly acknowledges the author's Shakespearean source, with the prologue's speaker stating that "we bring old gather'd Herbs, 'tis

¹⁰¹ *The London Stage* places the first performance of the play in February 1680; Narcissus Luttrell's purchase of a copy of the play on March 22 of that year "suggests that the premiere occurred not later than February" (1:283). White additionally finds evidence of the play being advertised in the Easter-season *Term Catalogue*, placing the date of publication between February and March of 1680 (White 108 and n172; Arber 1:394).

¹⁰² *The London Stage* places this play in April 1681, citing Luttrell's purchase of the play on May 31 of that year (295). White finds the play being advertised in the 1681 Michaelmas term (June to November) (White 114-115 and n206; Arber 1:462). Matthew Wikander mistakenly claims that the "play was suppressed before it could be performed" (114). Both plays were published "As ... Acted at the Duke's Theatre" and include cast lists corresponding to the performers of the Duke's Company. Crowne's statement that "ere [the play] liv'd long, it was stifled by command" would suggest that the play did "live" on stage, if only briefly (*The English Friar* 19).

¹⁰³ *The London Stage* suggests the possibility of a revival of *Misery of Civil-War* to coincide with this republication, though the suppression of *The First Part* in 1681 makes it unlikely that the *Second Part* was attempted (1:300).

¹⁰⁴ For a catalogue of Crowne's parallels with Shakespeare in these two plays, see White 109-110 and 116. For a discussion of Crowne's source texts, see Murray, *Shakespeare Adaptations*, 490 and 522.

true, / But such as in sweet *Shakespears* Garden grew. / And all his Plants immortal you esteem,
 / Your Mouthes are never out of taste with him” (Prologue 27-30). The same play’s epilogue casts that author as “he who did reform this Play”, and states that “Not that a Barb that’s come of *Shackspears* breed, / Can e’re want Mettle, Courage, Shape, or Speed; / But you have Poetry so long rides Post, / That your delight in Riding now is lost” (Epilogue 2, 7-10). Though the prologue and epilogue antithetically present the audience as being either “never out of taste” with Shakespeare or having lost their “delight” in Shakespeare’s tired poetry, both present Crowne as a cultivator of Shakespeare’s work. Crowne selectively draws from Shakespeare’s “Garden” to please the tastes of his audience, and is able to instill new life into the “Barb” horse of Shakespeare’s work.

Crowne expands upon this cultivation metaphor in the dedication of *Henry the Sixth, The First Part*, written to Sir Charles Sedley. In this dedication, Crowne makes the claim that his use of Shakespeare’s name was only a pretext in support of his own original work:

For this reason I use your Name to guide that share of it is in this Play through the Press,
 as I did *Shakespear*’s to support it on the Stage. I called it in the Prologue *Shakespear*’s Play, though he has no Title to the 40th part of it. The Text I took out of his Second Part of *Henry the Sixth*, but as most Texts are serv’d, I left it as soon as I could. For though *Shakespear* be generally very delightful, he is not so always. His Volumn is all up-hill and down, *Paradise* was never more pleasant than some parts of it, nor *Ireland*¹⁰⁵ and

¹⁰⁵ It is possible that the word “*Ireland*” printed here in the text is a mistranscription or compositing error for the word “*Iceland*”, or “*Iseland*”, often spelled with a long “s”. Not only does “*Iceland*” more closely coincide with “*Greenland*” and the arctic geography described here, but Crowne’s use of the term “Pigmies” might suggest an imagined arctic community. In *America* (1671), John Ogilby cites from the “*Journal of Mr. Henry Hudson*” and discusses Hudson’s expedition to Novaya Zemlya (or “Nova Zembla” here): “It should seem to have beery a receiv’d Opinion from the first Discovery of *Nova Zembla*, that it was inhabited by *Pygmies*, it

Greenland colder, and more uninhabitable then others. And I have undertaken to cultivate one of the most barren Places in it. The Trees are all Shrubs, and the Men Pigmies, nothing has any Spirit, or shape; the Cardinal is duller then ever Priest was. (“To Sir Charles Sidley [sic] Baronet”).

In this passage, Crowne describes the process of adaptation as a project of colonization: Crowne takes it upon himself to “cultivate” the sometimes “uninhabitable” and “barren” landscape of Shakespeare’s work. Crowne seeks to replace the “Pigmies” of Shakespeare’s text with newly developed characters of his own creation. In his dedication, Crowne stakes a claim of ownership over the *Henry VI* narrative, relegating Shakespeare to only a “40th part” of the text. The literary empire that Shakespeare had supposedly neglected now flourishes under Crowne’s authorial control. While Dryden had characterized English authors as “Shrubs . . . beneath the lofty Plant” of Shakespeare’s legacy, Crowne instead implies that his own “Garden” exceeds Shakespeare’s “barren” literary terrain.

In discussing Crowne’s work adapting Shakespeare, critics have examined the ways in which the politics of Crowne’s plays reflect the ongoing on- and off-stage debates surrounding the Exclusion Crisis. *The Misery of Civil-War* is generally regarded as unambiguously royalist Tory propaganda, with Hazleton Spencer going so far as to say that, with Crowne, “there was never a more servile flatterer of royalty” (298). The anti-Catholicism within *The First Part*, however, has motivated some critics to consider a more politically ambivalent Crowne. Nancy

being several times, in the *Journals* of some Voyages, mention’d particularly by the Name of *The Land of Pygmies*, but upon what certain Ground cannot in the least be discover’d” (671-672). For a further discussion of this imagined community, see Kirsten A. Seaver, “‘Pygmies’ of the Far North,” *Journal of World History* 19, no. 1 (2008): 63-87. The play’s only modern editor, Barbara Murray, passes by this line without commentary (See Murray, *Shakespeare Adaptations*, 275 and 514).

Klein Maguire views Crowne as adapting to the “fluidity of party identity” between his two plays, and argues that Crowne “[chooses] legitimacy, the Stuart right to the throne, in the first adaptation but equivocates about the advisability of a Catholic king in the second” (70). Maguire identifies “both Whig and Tory sympathies” within Crowne’s plays, with a particular “anti-James sentiment” that “seeps through” the 1681 *First Part* (70, 90). Susan Owen finds a “vigorously royalist” Crowne in *Misery of Civil-War*, while claiming *The First Part* to be “an apparent adaptation to Whiggism” (63). Owen identifies *The First Part*’s Gloucester as a “Whiggish” hero mirroring the murdered Edmundbury Godfrey, and states that “the spectacle of Gloucester’s martyrdom . . . shows what happens if weak kingship allows popery to gain power at court” (91-92). Barbara Murray speculates that Crowne may have been attempting to appeal to anti-Catholic sentiments in his audience, stating that “Crowne might have hoped that the strongly anti-Catholic strand in his play would have touched a popular chord” (*Shakespeare Adaptations* lx).

In discussing his motivation for playwriting in the dedication of *Henry the Sixth, The First Part*, Crowne addresses a potential source for his anti-Catholic sentiment. Crowne identifies his dedicatee Sedley as a defender of “Truth, Liberty, and Property”, while mourning his own loss of “Property” elsewhere:

I have so deeply felt, what the loss of Property is, that I cannot but honour the Defenders of it, though their defence comes too late to me. I may appear vain in my complaint, but People will Groan when they are in pain; my Father, and by consequence my self, his Heir, was stript long since (by the advice of some ill great Men, who sacrifice both private and publick Interest to their own) of the Moity of a Province so considerable, the *French Crown* thought it worth contending for, many Years. And if that fortunate

Kingdom strove for it, you may imagine they got it. I have great hopes of a speedy reparation from the great Justice Clemency and Goodness of his Majesty. But this loss made me run into that Madness, call'd Poetry, and inhabit that Bedlam, call'd a Stage.

("To Sir Charles Sidley Baronet")

Here in his dedication, Crowne adopts the same rhetorical strategies that he uses throughout his appeals to royal favour. Crowne frames himself as the long-suffering victim of French encroachment, subject to the "pain" of having been "stript" of his inheritance. Crowne depicts himself as writing for the stage out of financial necessity, a necessity rooted in the loss of his considerable "Province" to the French. Crowne creates a personal drama in which the Catholic "*French Crown*" intrudes upon the English "Liberty" defended by Sedley. Although Owen sees the above passage as an expression of how "Crowne's patience has worn thin" with the Stuart court, Crowne makes a point of expressing his "hopes" in Charles's "Justice Clemency and Goodness", still holding on to the possibility of a "reparation" in his favour (87).

Reading a sudden shift in the politics of these two plays has led critics into expressions of confusion and uncertainty regarding Crowne's motivations as a playwright.¹⁰⁶ Looking ahead in Crowne's career only adds to the confusion: 1682 finds a "virulently Tory" Crowne writing *The City Politiques*, a satirical attack on Whiggish politics in the city of London (Owen 100). Crowne is cast as a figure of rapidly shifting political alignment, appearing as a devout Tory in *The Misery of Civil-War*, then as a Whig sympathiser in *The First Part*, then as a Tory propagandist once again in *City Politiques* over the span of three years. This characterization of Crowne is, of

¹⁰⁶ Owen, for example, states that "it is as unsurprising that the play offended the authorities as it is extraordinary and striking that Crowne should have given his 'aversions' such free reign" (95). Maguire adopts a speculative tone, writing that, "[p]erhaps in 1680-81, Crowne imagined that James might abdicate in favor of the devoutly Anglican Princess Mary, Crowne's one-time patroness" (91).

course, not entirely unfounded. Following the Pope-burning processions of 1679 and 1680, any anti-Catholic sentiment represented in the public space of the theatre could not be dismissed as apolitical.¹⁰⁷ Sir Charles Sedley, the dedicatee of *The First Part* and, in Crowne's terms, the defender of "Truth, Liberty, and Property" in England, was a moderate Whig at the time of the play's publication, indicating some ties on Crowne's part to Whiggish politics. Crowne himself would retroactively claim to have been aligned with Whig politics during this period in his 1690 dedication to *The English Friar*. Following the statement on his "dependence" on the court of Charles II, Crowne goes on to talk about his "aversions" to that same court:

...yet my aversions to some things I saw acted there by great men, carried me against my interest to expose Popery and Popish courts in a tragedy of mine, call'd, The Murder of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester [*Henry the Sixth, The First Part*], which pleas'd the best men of England, but displeas'd the worst; for ere it liv'd long, it was stifled by command.
(19)

In 1690, with William and Mary now on the English throne, Crowne could safely claim to have been an opponent to the "Popish court" of James II, overturned in the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Yet his own anti-Whig satire *The City Politiques* had been performed at that very same "court" during James's reign on 16 November 1685 (*London Stage* 1:344). While *The First Part* was indeed "stifled" by the Revels office, *The City Politiques* would also be suppressed in 1682 before its first performance due to the restrictions against the representation of contemporary

¹⁰⁷ For more on the Pope burnings and other anti-Catholic demonstrations in London, see Tim Harris, *London Crowds in the Reign of Charles II*, 103-106.

political content (*London Stage* 1:310).¹⁰⁸ Remembering Crowne in 1719, John Dennis would claim that *The City Politiques* was only restored through the King's intervention:

But after he had writ it, he met with very great Difficulties in getting it acted. *Bennet* Lord *Arlington*, who was then Lord Chamberlain of the King's Houshold, and who had secretly espous'd the Whigs, who were at that time powerful in Parliament, in order to support himself against the Favour and Power of the Lord Treasurer *Danby*, who was his declared Enemy, us'd all his Authority to suppress it. . . . till Mr. *Crown* at last was forc'd to have Recourse to the King himself, and to engage him to give his absolute Command to the Lord Chamberlain for the acting of it; which Command the King was pleas'd to give in his own Person. (405)

Though Dennis's account is anecdotal, it at the very least demonstrates that Crowne's association with the "Popish courts" of Charles and James continued throughout the 1680s. While some critics speculate that Crowne was courting Whiggish favour with *Henry the Sixth* in 1681, he apparently was not afraid of making powerful Whig enemies the following year with *The City Politiques*, reinstated and performed in January of 1683 (*London Stage* 1:318).

The critical uncertainty regarding Crowne's politics is further motivated, in part, by a tendency to consider these plays in their order of publication, rather than in their narrative order. Critics of Crowne's work have almost exclusively approached these plays by considering *The Misery of Civil-War* first, then *Henry the Sixth*, *The First Part* second.¹⁰⁹ While the order in

¹⁰⁸ On the actions of the Revels office, see also *London Stage* 1:xix, lxii-lxv.

¹⁰⁹ See, for example, Arthur Franklin White, *John Crowne: His Life and Dramatic Works*, 107-114 and 114-118; Susan J. Owen, *Restoration Theatre and Crisis*, 76-82 and 84-95; Nancy Klein Maguire, "Factionary Politics: John Crowne's *Henry VI*," in *Culture and Society in the Stuart Restoration*, edited by Gerald Maclean (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 70-92; Barbara A. Murray, *Shakespeare Adaptations from the Restoration*, xxxix-xlix and lix-lxviii.

which these plays were written is unknown, the publication of these two plays in 1681 as the *First Part* and *Second Part* of *Henry the Sixth* suggests a design by Crowne for the two plays to be read together as one work. This would not be the first two-part project that Crowne would attempt for the stage: he had previously written the two-part *Destruction of Jerusalem*, staged over a week in January of 1677 (*London Stage* 1:253-254). Taken as the first and second part of a single work, Crowne's two *Henry* plays present a narrative in which a Catholic conspiracy—Cardinal Beauford's plan to murder Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester—creates a crisis of authority that drives the country of England into a factional conflict resulting in civil war. The effects of this civil war are rendered in spectacular acts of violence committed not only within the court, but against the citizens of the English state. While the initial conspiracy is resolved with the death of the Cardinal in *The First Part*, the *Second Part* of Crowne's adaptation makes clear that the responsibility for civil war lies ultimately in the monarch Henry's permissiveness with his political opponents. Unlike Charles, who was quick to shut down parliament during the first years of the Exclusion Crisis, Henry's failure as a monarch lies in his leniency with democratic principles and in his inability to enforce his own royal authority.

The remainder of this section will explore Crowne's representation of monarchic authority in his two adaptations of Shakespeare's *Henry VI* plays. As we have seen in the previous section, John Crowne remained personally invested throughout his lifetime in issues surrounding the mobilization of royal authority and the consequences of a monarch's will. In his two adaptations, Crowne explores the question of royal sovereignty through his use of a common dramatic metaphor: that of the body politic. Like Thomas Hobbes or the hagiographers of Charles I before him, Crowne uses the image of the King's body as a representative metaphor for state governance. The fictionalized King Henry's weaknesses as a monarch, for Crowne,

manifest themselves as intrinsic bodily weaknesses. Over the course of his two plays, Crowne presents a narrative in which a monarch's inability to enact control over an unruly body politic constitutes a failure to embody the masculine authoritarianism necessary to kingship.

In the fifth and final act of *The Misery of Civil-War*, the deposed and imprisoned King Henry is visited, in a scene original to Crowne's adaptation, by the ghost of Richard II and several singing "Spirits", all of whom explain to Henry that he is being punished for his grandfather Henry IV's usurpation of Richard. In doing so, one of the Spirits sets forth the fundamental principles for the Divine Right of English monarchs:

The Crown of *England* is not made of Clay
 The Common people, so can ne're be crumbled
 Into that dirt, 'tis not compos'd if it [sic]:
 Nor made of Iron, the Sword, so cannot rust;
 But of unmingled solid lasting Gold,
 Of Antient Rights, and 'tis the gift of Heav'n,
 Therefore to Heaven only can be forfeited,
 Therefore 'tis call'd Imperial and Sacred,
 And therefore carefully rail'd in by Laws;
 And torn will be his sacrilegious hand,
 Who has no Right to it, and yet dares reach it,
 And dares presumptuously pretend a Right,
 Because he stands upon the peoples heads . . . (68)

The English "Crown" does not possess the same material weaknesses or potential mutability of "Iron" or "Clay". The "lasting Gold" of the crown is something that is immaterial and bestowed

from above by “Heav’n”, rather than being based upon the dangerously precarious and democratic support-from-below of the “peoples heads”. In the reality of the two plays, however, the authority of Kingship proves to be something that is troublingly unstable. In the final scene of *The First Part*, Queen Margaret warns Henry that:

...Men like Buildings

Fall to the Ground, if never Fire burn in e’m

To harden e’m; King’s a Royal Building,

That shou’d have no soft Clay in it at all.

Adversity has always reign’d upon you,

And made you soft; but yield not, Sir, to Rebels. (69)¹¹⁰

Here also, Henry is warned against building the foundation of a monarchy upon “soft Clay”: the Queen attempts to stoke the masculine “Fire” inside of Henry in an attempt to “harden” him from a softness brought on by adversity.¹¹¹

Henry’s “softness” as a monarch, however, is the trait that comes to define him over the course of the two plays. Henry’s supposed weakness as a ruler is consistently described as an

¹¹⁰ While this passage is original to Crowne, the metaphor of the body as “Clay” does appear in Shakespeare *Henry VI* plays. In *1 Henry VI*, an aging Mortimer states that his “feet, whose strengthless stay is numb, / [are] Unable to support this lump of clay” (2.5.13-14). Elsewhere, in *2 Henry VI*, Cardinal Beauford commands York to take up arms and “temper clay with blood of Englishmen” (3.1.311).

¹¹¹ Elsewhere in the plays, “clay” is presented as something that is dangerously manipulable: In discussing his “trusty assistants” who will help in the murder of Humphry, Cardinal Beauford states that he “always [has] store of soft Clay prepar’d, / Which I can mould into what shape I please” (*First Part* 49). In castigating the “Traytour Warwick” for joining Plantagenet against Henry, Young Clifford tells Warwick that, “by the same law, / Thou tramplest on thy King, a sawcy Groom / May set his dirty foot upon thy jaws, / And tell thee they were made both of one Clay” (*Misery* 13). Warwick’s usurpation threateningly suggests that the King, Warwick, and a “sawcy Groom” might be made of the same “Clay”.

inherent bodily weakness. In comparing Henry to his father and predecessor, Warwick criticizes the king by telling him that that:

Your Father *Henry* [Henry V] was a Wall of steel
Through which there was no passing to the throne,
But you are only a soft silken Curtain,
Which with my hand or breath I'll put aside... (*Misery* 13)

Henry is again described in terms of his “softness”, as a “silken Curtain” incapable of embodying the “Wall of steel” represented by his father.¹¹² Warwick continues, stating that Henry is made “of such poor thin soft stuff / The Crown sinks down in him, and is not seen” (13). Later on in the play, Henry’s ally Clifford acknowledges that Henry’s “soft sway made way for his destruction” (44). In similar terms, Queen Margaret reprimands Henry as both “soft King *Henry*” and “weak floating Water, / Driven by the breath of Rebels any way” (*First Part* 9; *Misery* 26). Henry himself acknowledges his own weakness in comparison to his father, stating that “My Childish hand, not able to support / My Fathers Sword, dropt the victorious point, / And let fall all the Lawrels that adorn’d it” (*Misery* 9). The metaphor of the patriarchal “Sword” introduced by Henry becomes explicitly phallic in Edward Plantagenet’s comment that “Both the fair Kingdom, and the fair Queen lye / Sick of the impotence of a Weak King” (12). Because of his attested weakness, both as a man and as a monarch, Henry is unable to fulfill the role of the body politic that Edward later puts forth: “A Crown upon my Head, my chiefest Enemy / Under my Feet, and Beauty in my Armes” (53).

¹¹² Unfavorable comparisons with Henry V come also from Suffolk in *The First Part*, who states that Henry “is indeed no more but a King’s Ghost, / That walks in night; it has been night in *England* / E’r since that Glorious Sun, his Father, set” (10). As with Warwick’s soft “Curtain”, Henry is here described by Suffolk as an impalpable “ghostly” presence when compared to the “Glorious Sun” of his father.

Just as the private body of the King is made to represent a public political dispute, so too elsewhere are public conflicts described in physical bodily terms. Continuing the body politic metaphor, Henry addresses his enemies by telling them “[that] you can never tear me from the Throne, / But you will set a thousand Veins a bleeding” (25). The “Veins” of the English people become an extension of Henry’s own body: the violence of “tearing” Henry from the throne becomes a more diffuse violence beyond Henry’s own individual body. The body politic is expressed in comic terms in *Misery of Civil-War*’s opening scene depicting the Jack Cade rebels. In discussing their ambition to overturn the “Lords” of England, Cade gives the following speech to his company of rebels:

I'll tell thee *Tom* the Cobler, here's my shoe;
 Dost thou believe my shoe, if it had wit,
 Wou'd carry me up and down all day i'th dirt;
 Or dost thou think my Breeches wou'd be sat on,
 Or Doublet cloath my Back, and by that means
 Be often cudgell'd, if they had any wit;
 No, if they had any wit, they would be Caps. (4)¹¹³

Cade proposes to his company, which includes “*Tom* the Cobler” as well as a “*Taylour*” and a “*Butcher*”, a democratic rearrangement of the current way that the body politic is organized. In representing the abused “shoe”, “Breeches”, and “Doublet”, Cade and his rebels seek to displace Lords as the “Caps” adorning the “head” of state sovereignty. As Cade goes on to say, he and his followers seek to be “all Caps” (4). Cade, however, finds that the outfit of political power cannot

¹¹³ In his opening scene of the Cade rebellion, Crowne combines elements of 2 *Henry VI*, Act 4, Scenes 2 (29-176), 3 (1-16), and 6 (1-13). The clothing imagery of “Breeches” and “Caps”, however, is original to Crowne.

be dismantled and reassembled so easily; the “Head of the notorious Rebel *Cade*” is presented to Henry later in the first act (9).

The boundaries between the public and private bodies of monarchs are further blurred with Henry’s eventual successor, Edward Plantagenet. When Edward claims the English crown following the defeat of Henry, he insists on the fundamental humanity of “Kings”, stating that, “When a King’s crown’d, he is not deified, / When he puts on the Royal Robes, he does not / Therefore put of th’ Infirmities of man” (41). The human “infirmities” of Edward, however, suggest the potential for an intrinsic “softness” similar to that which had been attributed to Henry. Edward claims that, while “[a] King is a strong Tower on a high Rock, / And it is dangerous to storm him openly”, his own “heart to beauty always lies too open” (39). Unlike the impenetrable fortress of monarchic authority, Edward possesses an inherent vulnerability in his openness to “beauty”. And it is a fixation on “beauty” that becomes the primary concern of Edward’s kingship within the narrative of the play. In his attempts to coerce the widowed Lady Gray into becoming his mistress, Edward expresses his private sexual desires in public political terms, telling Lady Gray, “Hold, Madam, for I must have one word more, / I must impose a Tax upon this Land . . . It is an easie Tax, no more but Love” (51). Edward attempts to assert his royal will over Lady Gray by describing her private body as taxable property. Her individual agency is subsumed into Edward’s configuration of subjects as property governed by the state. Edward contemplates his own desire to seduce Lady Gray as follows:

Why may not this fair Lady be a Queen?

But she’s a Subject, *England* will not like it.

And th’ *English* Nation, like the Sea it governs,

Is bold and turbulent, and easily mov’d,

And always beats against the shore, that bounds it.

What? is the people free, and not the King?

Not free where every Slave is free, his bed?

Yes, so it is, it seems, and *English* fury

Will easily with any wind be rais'd,

To dash the Palaces, and Beds of Kings. (50-51)¹¹⁴

In this speech, Edward comes up against the idea introduced by Hobbes concerning the private identities of Kings. In becoming King, Edward's privacy, or freedom in his own "bed", is eroded, as his romantic decisions inevitably have consequences on a national scale. The "Beds of Kings" are subject to "*English* fury", and the King becomes subject to the will of his citizens. Yet the concept of the King as a "subject" once again becomes something that is dangerously democratizing.¹¹⁵ While Edward contemplates making one of his own "Subjects" his Queen, he realizes that he too is made subject to the people of England, who potentially "will not like" his decisions. While the "*English* Nation . . . governs" the sea that it is surrounded by, that same sea

¹¹⁴ While these lines are Crowne's, a comparison between monarch and "slave" is made by Margaret in *1 Henry VI*: "To be a queen in bondage is more vile / Than is a slave in base servility; / For princes should be free" (5.5.68-69). While Margaret mourns the restriction of her agency in her impending marriage to Henry, Edward mourns the loss of his privacy and sexual freedom.

¹¹⁵ In the final act of *The Misery of Civil-War*, Henry argues that an equivalency between "Kings" and "Subjects" leads into a state of anarchic violence:

Then Kings are Subjects, and all Subjects Kings:
And by that Law that Subjects may destroy
Their Kings for want of Virtue, other Subjects
May think those Subjects Rogues, and cut their throats.
Thus *Babel* might be builded, but no Kingdom. (58)

Slipping too far into a state of chiasmic equivalency between "Kings" and "Subjects", for Crowne, leads into the sort of indiscriminate violence associated with the play's scenes of civil war.

pushes back “against the shore” and “bounds” the power of that nation. Edward here recognizes a reciprocal relationship of power between himself and the people over whom he supposedly has sovereignty.

The discourse of dysfunctional royal bodies that runs throughout the adaptations is expressed perhaps most overtly in Crowne’s depiction of the figure of Richard, the brother of Edward who will later become King Richard III. Throughout *The Misery of Civil-War*, Richard’s physical body is made to act as an indicator of his moral character. King Henry uses unambiguously moral terms when stating that Richard “bears about him what is more deform’d / Than humane shape can be, his wickedness”, while the Queen tells Richard “I will not do thee so much good to kill thee. / Thy Soul cannot be worse than where it is” (12).¹¹⁶ Richard is described as an almost allegorical physical representation of the concept of “wickedness”.¹¹⁷ Richard’s own brother Edward continues this discourse when discussing the character’s “Hellish” nature:

He is a Hell at whose foul front appears,
 Ill manners, and ill nature, and ill shape,
 Like a three-headed Dog, that barks at all things
 That dare come near him, specially at beauty;

¹¹⁶ Crowne’s language mirrors the ideas expressed by Henry in *3 Henry VI*: “Thy mother felt more than a mother’s pain, / And yet brought forth less than a mother’s hope: / To wit, an indigested and deformed lump, / Not like the fruit of such a goodly tree” (5.6.49-52). Richard’s prodigious birth, for Henry, acts as evidence of the character’s moral deviation from the “goodly tree” of his royal lineage. See also Clifford’s statement in *2 Henry VI*: “Hence, heap of wrath, foul indigested lump, / As crooked in thy manners as thy shape” (5.1.155-156).

¹¹⁷ Richard’s embodied “wickedness” has its roots in the “Vice” stock character from earlier English morality plays. For recent re-evaluations of Shakespeare’s depictions of Richard, particularly within the context of disability studies, see Sonya Freeman Loftis, *Shakespeare and Disability Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021); and Katherine Schaap Williams, *Unfixable Forms: Disability, Performance, and the Early Modern Theatre* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2021), 25-54.

But has within a thousand ugly Hagg
 His Soul embraces, bloody cruelty,
 Lean envy, and insatiable Ambition.
 And he has this advantage over me,
 His Mistresses are Devils, and so invisible. (22)

In adding the above lines to his Shakespearean source material, Crowne greatly expands upon the language of deformity surrounding Richard's body. Since Richard is unable to have human "Mistresses", as Edward himself does, Edward describes Richard as "embracing" instead with "ill manners, ill nature, and ill shape".¹¹⁸ For Edward, it is Richard's "foul front" that breeds these various "illnesses", his moral corruption being grounded in a corruption of his physical body. As Edward later more concisely puts it, "Heaven to his crooked shape has bent his soul. / He was design'd for mischief, and thrust forward / Unfinish'd in the World" (71). Richard's ambitious soul is, for Henry, a direct consequence of his "crooked shape".

Richard himself goes on to contemplate this discourse of embodied evil when describing his own body. Richard reflects upon the play's concern with material bodies, and is led to consider "Of what strange stuff so different from my Brothers / Am I made?" (47).¹¹⁹ In discussing his plans for revenging his father's death, Richard describes his own physical condition as follows:

I will dung this Orchard

¹¹⁸ Richard is, in fact, confronted with a real "Mistress" in *The Misery of Civil-War*, who gives birth to a "little tawny Bastard" described as having the same "Faults" as Richard (40).

¹¹⁹ In expanding the role of Richard, Crowne may also be drawing elements from Shakespeare's *Richard III*, which opens with Richard contemplating the differences between himself and his brothers (1.1.1-40). See also *3 Henry VI*, 3.2.124-145.

With the blood of those that planted it,
 I have a Spirit in this crooked Trunck
 Stands like a keeper in a hollow Tree,
 Ready with bended bow to shoot fat Deer,
 And down goe's thou, thy *Henry*, all thy Race.
 I'll not leave killing, 'till I've built my Father
 A monument of Bones and Skulls of Enemies
 That shall o'erlook th' *Aegyptian Pyramids*. (37)

Crowne picks up on Richard's original discussion of his "misshaped trunk" in 3 *Henry VI*, and expands it into the conceit of Richard as a hunter within a "hollow Tree" (3.2.170).¹²⁰ Richard notably does not describe his body and "Spirit" as being united in an expression of a single evil, but rather describes his "Spirit" as a separate entity to his body. Richard's body and "Spirit" are not inextricably bound to one another as they are in Edward's description, but are rather described as a hunter hiding inside of a hollow tree, or "crooked Trunck". That being said, the image is still one of violence emerging from an interior selfhood, like the arrow ready to kill a deer. Beyond his own "hollow Tree", Richard promises to grow a new "Orchard" fertilized by the blood of Henry and his supporters.¹²¹ In his promises of violence, Richard embraces his role

¹²⁰ "And whiles I live, t'account this world but hell, / Until my misshaped trunk that bears this head / Be round impalèd with a glorious crown" (3 *Henry VI* 3.2.169-171). Shakespeare's Richard describes himself "like one lost in a thorny wood, / That rends the thorns and is rent with the thorns, / Seeking a way and straying from the way" (174-176). Unlike the Richard of 3 *Henry VI*, who is lost within a "thorny wood" of confusion, Crowne's Richard stands ready to act against the "fat Deer" Henry.

¹²¹ In *The First Part*, Henry himself is described as a dysfunctional "Tree" by Suffolk: "Yet all this Love and Beauty which cou'd make / The sapless trunk of a dead Tree to bud, / Can put no warmth into the frozen King" (33). Unlike Crowne himself, who has successfully cultivated

as emblem of moral and physical corruption, and, in his final scenes of the play, alludes to future violence against his brother, his nephews, and anyone blocking his own way to the crown.

It is this allusion to future violence and turmoil that causes the play's ending, in which the now king Edward discourses on the "unshaken Rock" of Divine Right, to strike an ironic chord. Edward states: "I believe I'm safe; *England*, by this time, / Has had enough of Rebels, and Usurpers", but we know that rebellion and usurpation are far from over in the course of English history (71). Crowne, at the end of his play, invokes the memory of recent historical violence and civil war. Henry has warned the audience that "the greatest Tyrant / Is to be chose before the least Rebellion", and Edward IV, in the play's closing, advises listeners to "learn, 'tis better / Obeying their Kings, the Fathers of their Country, / Than run and wast their Fortune and their Liberties, / And do the drudgeries of proud Usurpers" (44, 71). Crowne presents to us a series of English Kings—Henry VI, Edward IV, and the future Richard III—whose dubious control over their own bodies is made to represent their failings as "Fathers of their Country". It is only in the total suppression of any "Rebellion", either private or public, that a King may enact control over an unruly body politic.

The Body of the King

Who possesses authority over the private body of a King? Over the course of Crowne's two adaptations, the fictionalized King Henry is punished not only for being unable to regulate his state, but also for being unable to regulate his body. Hobbes, however, had asserted that the King's "private" identity was determined entirely by the public concerns of a commonwealth.

Shakespeare's "Garden", the various "Kings" of the play have been unable to care for their metaphorical plants, and have thus followed an improper model of governance.

Crowne's Edward, on becoming King, felt that the presence of the "*English* nation" extended into his very "bed". The execution of Charles I had shown that the coherence of a King's body was a thoroughly public concern. While Parliamentarians had dismembered Charles's body in 1649, Royalists attempted afterwards to hagiographically restore the King's body into a state of heavenly incorruptibility. Like Hobbes's "artificial" commonwealth, the body of the King was, in the context of these debates, an "artificial" construct, one that could be discursively broken down and reassembled in service of an ideological objective.

I will end this chapter by discussing the body of one additional "King": Metacomet, "King Philip", or "Sachem Phillip the Grand Rebell" as he had been identified in the documents surrounding Crowne's appeals. On 12 August 1676, a company of Plymouth soldiers led by Benjamin Church tracked down and shot Metacomet in a location near Mount Hope, or "Mounthope", the very territory that Crowne had named in his petitions to the government. Following the killing, Metacomet's body was beheaded, drawn and quartered, and publicly displayed as a sign of the victory of the Colonies over the Wampanoag "Rebels" (Drake 156-157). In this act of violence, Metacomet's body had been translated into an ideological symbol, one that signified the displacement of local Indigenous communities by the New England colonists. In acts like these, a body is never just a body, but is rather a symbolic configuration of parts that can be invested or divested with agency according to state power. Crowne's condemnation of "the least Rebellion" in favour of "the greatest Tyrant" carried implications extending far beyond the London playhouses in which his plays were performed. By way of his intense devotion to a Royalist position, Crowne gives assent to the tyranny of the state in violently upholding a commonwealth without rebellion.

CHAPTER FOUR

Stage Heroe: Gendering the Voice in Colley Cibber's Richard III

The Voice of the Hero

In the year 1740, an anonymously-written satirical biography on theatre manager and Poet Laureate Colley Cibber was published, entitled *The Laureat: or, the Right Side of Colley Cibber, Esq.* The book's title page promised "some *Anecdotes* of the *Laureat*, which [Cibber] (*thro' an Excess of Modesty*) omitted" from his own autobiography, the *Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber* published earlier that year. In writing on Cibber's various accomplishments and—more pertinent to the author's interests—failures throughout his career as an actor and playwright, the author of *The Laureat* gives an account of Cibber's particular inability to find success while performing in tragedies:

...tho' our Heroe cou'd never succeed either as an Author or an Actor in the Buskin, yet he coveted it above all Things; he wou'd often provide himself with the whole *Apparatus* of the *Stage Heroe*; he shou'd stretch out, and strut and adorn himself with the *purple Robe*, the *Plume* and the *Truncheon*; but alas, all wou'd not do; he had a burlesque Contraction of his Muscles in Distress, which turn'd every Word he utter'd into Ridicule, and the People were affected with a Passion quite the contrary to that which he attempted to excite. Thus he was, as I have hinted, extremely fond of performing in Tragedy, as Eunuchs, they say, are of the fair Sex, tho' it was not in his Power to write or pronounce a Line. (109-110)

The author of *The Laureat* characterizes Cibber as being fundamentally incapable of embodying the role of the male tragic "*Stage Heroe*". Although donning the accoutrements, or "*Apparatus*", of the male tragic hero,—the "*Robe*", the "*Plume*", and the "*Truncheon*"—Cibber's performance

becomes parodic due to the “Contractions” of his physical body. Cibber’s body becomes an object of “Ridicule”—a “burlesque” of the tragic role that he is meant to be performing. Cibber’s body becomes like that of the castrated “Eunuch”, unable to effectively fulfill its masculine role.

Perhaps immortalized as a subject of Alexander Pope’s satire in *The Dunciad*, the actor and theatre manager Colley Cibber often found himself as the target of satirical attacks, with many of his critics fixating on his physical body and his voice while performing. *The Laureat* gives the following description of Cibber’s appearance: “He was in Stature of the middle Size, his Complexion fair, inclinable to the Sandy, his Legs somewhat of the thickest, his Shape a little clumsy, not irregular, and his Voice rather shrill than loud or articulate, and crack’d extremely, when he endeavour’d to raise it” (103). Discoursing further upon the “disagreeable Voice and Action of the Performer”, the author of *The Laureat* would describe a performance of Cibber’s adaptation of Shakespeare’s *Richard III*, in which Cibber was performing the title role:

...this same Mender of *Shakespear* chose the principal Part, viz. *the King*, for himself; and accordingly being invested with the purple Robe, he screamed thro’ four Acts without Dignity or Decency. The Audience ill-pleas’d with the Farce, accompany’d him with a Smile of Contempt; but in the fifth Act, he degenerated all at once into Sir *Novelty*; and when in the Heat dismounted, our Comic-Tragedian came on the Stage, really breathless, and in a seeming Panick, screaming out this Line thus—*A Harse, a Harse, my Kingdom for a Harse*. This highly delighted some, and disgusted others of his Auditors; and when he was kill’d by *Richmond*, one might plainly perceive that the good People were not better pleas’d that so execrable a Tyrant was destroy’d, than that so execrable an Actor was silent. (103)

In this performance, the figure of Richard the King is transformed instead into the comic fop Sir Novelty Fashion, a role performed by Cibber in his play *Love's Last Shift*. Cibber's mixture of "Comic" and "Tragic" on stage reduces the performance, for the author, into a "Farce", prompting a mixture of "delight" and "disgust" from the Audience. Cibber fails to please his audience with his "screamed" lines, the audience approving of Cibber only when he is "silent" at the end of the performance.

Cibber's supposed inability to balance comic and tragic elements of performance was a common theme among his critics. In a 1734 review in *The Prompter*, Aaron Hill would further criticize Cibber's version of Richard, claiming that Cibber's performance slipped into the comic foppish roles that the actor was known to play:

When the dreadfully collected Calmness of Cruelty, the apprehensive Tyrannic Sagacity, which shou'd be visible in *Richard the Third*, is so unequally represented, by the same unseasonable Grimaces, the same Low, Mincing, *Curtails of Magnanimity*:—When, instead of Forecast, and disturb'd Reflection, we see a Succession of Comic Shruggings; and, in Place of Menaces, and Majestic Transports, the distorted *Heavings* of an *unjointed Caterpillar*; what Less can be concluded, by the most Partial of his Rational Friends, but, that *Personal Foibles*, and *absurd Ideas*, are desirable Blessings, to a *Comic Actor*; and, that we often mistake, for the Excellence of a Play's *Judgment*, what is, in Truth, but the Imperfection of his *Nature*? (*Prompter*, 19 November 1734)

In Hill's account, it is Cibber's imperfect "Nature" that keeps him from succeeding in tragic roles, and relegates him to being a "Comic Actor". Hill would present a deeply unflattering image of Cibber on stage: "In his Face, was a contracted King of *passive*, yet *protruded*, Sharpness, like a Pig, half roasted:—And a *Voice*, not unlike *his own*, might have been borrow'd

from the same suffering Animal, while in a Condition, a little less desperate”. Cibber’s voice and appearance were, Hill argues, aspects of the actor’s “Nature” that made him fit for comic roles only: “Nature Herself *limits Parts*, to a Player, by the Voice, the Figure, and Conception. In Every One of these Three, she meant Mr. *Cibber* for a Comedian. It is not possible to *look* at Him, without acknowledging this remarkable *Talent*; and confessing,—He was *born* to be *laugh’d at*” (*Prompter*, 19 November 1734). For Hill, Cibber was an object of ridicule, one whose successes on the stage stemmed from his “Natural” susceptibility to being laughed at.¹²²

While critics of Cibber viewed his performance of *Richard* as an attempt, and failure, to embody the role of a normative tragic male hero, Cibber expressed a self-awareness regarding his performative abilities in his autobiographical *Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber* (1740). “The first thing”, Cibber writes, “that enters into the head of a young actor is that of being a hero”:

In this ambition I was soon snubbed by the insufficiency of my voice, to which might be added, an uninformed, meagre person (though then not ill made) with a dismal, pale complexion. Under these disadvantages I had but a melancholy prospect of ever playing a lover with Mrs Bracegirdle, which I had flattered my hopes that my youth might one day have recommended me to. (127)¹²³

¹²² These critical accounts of Cibber’s performances would shape twentieth-century interpretations of the actor. In his article on Cibber’s *Richard III*, Albert E. Kalson writes that “[because] he seems to have been naturally awkward in addition to being lean and lanky, [Cibber] apparently moved in a disjointed way bound to provoke titters on his entrance. Once the audience caught sight of what must have been a face forever in motion, twitching and grimacing, open mirth must often have resulted” (44).

¹²³ Citations from Cibber’s *Apology* follow David Roberts’s recently published critical edition of the text, which extensively modernizes the spelling and punctuation of the original 1740 edition. See David Roberts, ed., *An Apology for the Life of Mr Colley Cibber*, by Colley Cibber (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2022).

In this account, Cibber himself describes his “insufficiency” in being able to embody the role of “hero” or “lover” that he had initially aspired to in his youth. Like his critics, Cibber claims his failure to be cast in the role of tragic “hero” was tied not only to his physical appearance—his “meagre person” and “pale complexion”—but also to his “voice”. Cibber’s voice, and its effects on his theatrical career, emerges as the subject of discussion multiple times throughout the apology, Cibber going on to state that “my want of a strong and full voice soon cut short my hopes of making any valuable figure in tragedy” (150). In their discussions of what it means to embody the figure of the “*Stage Heroe*”, Colley Cibber and his critics cite the voice as a legible gender signifier on the Restoration stage. The actor’s voice did not simply operate as an indicator of binary gender categories—of what constitutes a “male” or “female” voice in the space of the theatre—but rather had the capacity to signify a range of conventional masculine identities within English drama. Cibber’s voice, variously described as “shrill” and “crack’d” by his critics, constitutes a failure on Cibber’s part to achieve the “strong and full” vocal requirements for the role of “hero”. Rather than being discouraged from pursuing his “hopes” of becoming an actor, however, Cibber, in his *Apology*, goes on to explain how he would use his unique vocal abilities to cultivate alternative masculinities for himself over the course of his career.

Due to the inherently transient and often inaccessible nature of vocal performance, critics have often struggled to address the question of how the voice would have functioned as a gender signifier in early modern drama. The auditory conditions of pre-Interregnum dramatic practice, particularly in the open-air space of London’s Globe Theatre (1599-1613), have been well documented by scholars of Shakespeare’s work. In his foundational study of sound on the Shakespearean stage, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England* (1999), Bruce R. Smith examines the ways in which early modern theatres functioned “as instruments for the production

and reception of sound”, instruments which “ask to be thought about in different ways than theaters as frames for the mounting and viewing spectacle” (207).¹²⁴ Smith argues in favour of an analysis that “encompasses brain-to-tongue-to-air-to-ear-to-brain communication”, the type of communication upon which theatrical practice is founded (18). The “voice” is created in this transitory space between performer and listener, signalling the material existence of a speaker, yet at the same time existing as an “*effect*” separate from that speaker’s material body (222).¹²⁵ Smith’s analysis here suggests that, within early modern theatres, the identity of a voice was not rigidly defined by the body it was emerging from, but was rather constructed in the intermediary space between actor and listener: anti-theatricalist Stephen Gosson, for example, could claim that the boy actors of the Shakespearean stage were able to put on “not the apparel only, but the gait, the gestures, the voice, and the passions of a woman” (101-102). Gosson here suggests that a woman’s “voice” could be adopted by a boy actor in a similar way to a woman’s “apparel”.

When discussing the ways that spectators might have read gender difference on the early modern stage, Smith makes the claim that audience members would have been able to identify boy actors in women’s roles due to the fundamental “interchangeability of boys’ and women’s voices” (226). Smith argues that the performance of gender difference was dependent upon the “aural contrast between boys’ voices and men’s voices”:

¹²⁴ For Smith’s discussion of the acoustic design of early modern theatres, and particularly of the Globe Theatre and Blackfriars, see Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England*, 206-217.

¹²⁵ Smith describes the voice’s liminal status between materiality and immateriality as follows: “What we understand by ‘voice’ is, after all, not a *thing* but an *effect*. The thing-ness of voice consists of (1) the body tissues of lungs, larynx, and mouth, (2) moving molecules of air, and (3) the cartilage, flesh, bones, and nerves of the ear. The effect of voice, for speakers and listeners alike, is something more than the sum of these material parts” (222).

...for the pitch of each phoneme, adult male voices would resonate across the full range of harmonics above the fundamental, while boys' voices would ring out closer to the fundamental. These differences in harmonics would accentuate the natural tendency for lower-frequency sounds to be heard as filling the ambient space, in contrast to higher-frequency sounds, which tend to be heard as more localized in space [...]. In effect, speech sounds gendered as male would pervade the wooden O, filling it from side to side; speech sounds gendered as female would be heard as isolated effects within this male matrix. (229)

Smith here makes the argument that voices gendered as male—the voices of adult men—were carried through the space of the theatre in a different way than voices gendered as female—the voices of boy actors. This creates a sonic binary in which “speech sounds gendered as male” and “speech sounds gendered as female” are perceived in different ways within the aural “matrix” the theatre. There are, however, exceptions in early modern performance that might trouble such a straightforward sonic gender binary. Where in this “matrix”, for example, would we place the voice of a boy actor performing the role of a boy? This boy player would be performing a male role, yet would be speaking in the register of “speech sounds gendered as female”. We might also consider the all-boys' companies at Blackfriars that had been gaining popularity in London during Shakespeare's lifetime: where in Smith's matrix would we place a boy actor performing

the role of an adult man?¹²⁶ As listeners, early modern spectators must necessarily have allowed for a degree of flexibility in ascribing gender to voice.¹²⁷

Building upon the work done by Smith, Gina Bloom, in her book *Voice in Motion* (2007), has examined the ways in which vocal gender was shaped and created within the space of the theatre. In discussing how masculinity might have been constructed on the early modern stage, Bloom makes the claim that, “[to] understand the role of the voice in cultural and dramatic performances of masculinity—that is, to listen for masculinity—we must recognize a historical difference between early modern and contemporary representations of the relation between gender and voice” (23). Bloom asserts that the performance of masculinity is something that is shaped by historical circumstances, and that the representational relationship “between gender and voice” is something that has shifted over time. Extending Bloom’s argument, Cibber’s discussion of the voice as a gender signifier in drama not only expresses the ways that the performance of masculinity had shifted since the days of Shakespeare, but also exposes the conditions of gender performance during Cibber’s own career. Wes Folkerth, in his book *The Sound of Shakespeare* (2002), furthermore argues in favour of an attentive critical “listening” to

¹²⁶ For Smith, these all-boy performances threatened to descend into aural chaos: “audiences would have heard an aural discrepancy between speakers and speeches that was not unlike the visual discrepancy they saw between boys’ supposedly innocent bodies and the often lewd adults they were impersonating. . . . All in all, one can imagine a piping, squawking, chattering effect” (235).

¹²⁷ Citing the “squeaking Cleopatra boy” of *Antony and Cleopatra* (5.2.216) Dymrna Callaghan notably rejects the possibility of such gender flexibility in early modern vocal performance, claiming that, “while clothes lend gender a certain malleability and visibility (they can be put on, taken off, hidden, or revealed), there is far less flexibility in the vocal dimension of performance” (52). For Callaghan, the bodies of boy actors are inescapably male, and so the embodied trait of the voice inevitably betrays the “real” gender of the performer. Gina Bloom, however, argues against this essentialized reading of the voice, stating that Callaghan’s “conclusion about the stage’s ideological conservatism is based on a limited definition of how the voice works in theatrical space” (22).

early-modern playtexts: “[reading] Shakespeare’s plays, which were written for performance in the theatre, requires that we listen to them with the awareness that they are less a species of writing in which a single objectifiable meaning or argument is advanced, than something more akin to a variety of musical notation from which a protensive experience (one extending in time) is meant to be reproduced” (9). Folkerth argues that the meaning of playtexts does not simply exist objectively on the printed page, but is rather something that is constructed in time by the performers who “reproduce” that text. In listening to these dramatic texts, we may be able to come to an understanding of the meanings that were created by the texts’ performers.

In this chapter, I will be examining the ways that the voice functioned as a gender signifier throughout the dramatic career of actor Colley Cibber. In his work and writing on theatrical performance, Cibber would consistently return to a discussion of the voice as a locus for identifying and characterizing different forms of masculinity on stage. The first part of this chapter will explore Cibber’s account of his own career in his autobiographical *Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber* (1740). As part of his discussion of Restoration theatre history in the *Apology*, Cibber defines what he believes to be the dominant masculinity of the dramatic “Hero”, primarily as embodied by the actor Thomas Betterton. While describing his alienation from normative forms of masculinity in Restoration drama, in part due to his “voice”, Cibber explains how he was able to establish himself as an actor by focusing on the performance of alternative masculinities. The second part of the chapter will examine Cibber’s adaptation of Shakespeare’s *Richard III* (1700), a play which Cibber performed in as the title character. Like Cibber himself, the character of Richard in Cibber’s adaptation is deeply invested in oral performance as a means of self-actualization, using his vocal performative abilities to transcend the limitations placed

upon his material body. It is Richard's embrace of a non-normative masculinity that generates the theatrical spectacle of Cibber's drama.

The "Well-Governed Voice of an Actor"

In giving an account of his life as a young actor on the Restoration stage, Colley Cibber, in his autobiographical *Apology*, comes up against one of the fundamental challenges of documenting and studying theatrical performance. When describing the careers of his acting contemporaries, Cibber mourns the inherent transience of an actor's performance on stage:

Pity it is that the momentary beauties flowing from an harmonious elocution cannot, like those of poetry, be their own record! That the animated graces of the player can live no longer than the instant breath and motion that presents them; or, at best, can but faintly glimmer through the memory or imperfect attestation of a few surviving spectators. (76)

Elaine M. McGirr, in her book on Cibber, cites from this passage to explore how this sort of transience has led to critical misjudgements of Cibber and his work: "The patchiness and partiality of records and the ephemeral nature of performance may help explain why an actor's persona rather than his practice has received the lion's share of critical attention. The 'imperfect Attestation of a few surviving Spectators' encourages slippage between actor and role" (23-24).¹²⁸ Unlike the art of literature, or "poetry", the artistry of an actor cannot, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, act as its own "record", and can only ever be passed down to us through "imperfect" subjective sources which may distort an actor's public persona. For Cibber, the voice of the actor—the "harmonious elocution" brought forth through the "breath and

¹²⁸ For McGirr's discussion of Cibber's acting career, see McGirr, *Partial Histories: A Reappraisal of Colley Cibber*, 23-65.

motion” of the performer—becomes a synecdoche for the history of the acting profession as a whole. Like the spoken word, a performer’s career on the stage can only be reconstructed imperfectly by those who carry with them the memory of what that performer said or did while they were on stage. Cibber, however, seeks in his *Apology* to record his own “memory” of his stage contemporaries, promising to provide his readers a “*Theatrical History of my Own Time, from my first appearance on the stage to my last exit*” (14). In this passage on theatrical ephemerality, it is the voice of a performer that is foregrounded in Cibber’s memories of the Restoration stage.

How exactly, then, did Cibber conceive of the voice as part of theatrical performance? For Cibber, the artistry of an actor had the capacity to instill life into an author’s “poetry”. In attempting to reconstruct the performances of Restoration actors by providing quotations from various plays, Cibber concludes that, “with whatever strength of Nature we see the poet show at once the philosopher and the hero, yet the image of the actor’s excellence will be still imperfect to you unless language could put colours in our words to paint the voice with” (79). Simply reading the text of a play once again, for Cibber, leads to an “imperfect” experience. An actor’s “voice” is a tool for artistry likened to a paintbrush, painting in the “colours” of words by way of the actor’s “language”. The actor’s art here is again described as primarily vocal, the actor’s voice being the focal means of performance. Throughout the *Apology*, Cibber consistently emphasizes the voice as a dominant factor in determining the qualities of an actor: “For so strong—so very near indispensable—is that one article of voice in the forming a good tragedian, that an actor may want any other qualification whatsoever, and yet have a better chance for applause than he will ever have with all the skill in the world if his voice is not equal to it” (150).

It is the voice, above all else, that Cibber identifies as a determining factor in the career of a performer.

It is in keeping with this edict on the voice that Cibber describes how his own vocal “insufficiency” led to his “melancholy prospects” in achieving certain acting roles during his career. In imagining himself as the stage “lover with Mrs [Anne] Bracegirdle”, Cibber is drawing a comparison between himself and actor Thomas Betterton, who Cibber performed alongside in the United Company in the early 1690s. In his account of the careers of Restoration performers, Cibber uses Betterton as the exemplary model of a great tragic male actor. In his discussion of Betterton’s career, Cibber writes that “Betterton was an actor as Shakespeare was an author: both without competitors” (76). For Cibber, Betterton and Shakespeare were “formed for the mutual assistance and illustration of each other’s genius! How Shakespeare wrote, all men who have a taste for Nature may read and know—but with what higher rapture would he still be read, could they conceive how Betterton played him! Then might they know, the one was born alone to speak what the other only knew to write!” (76). Cibber here again foregrounds the importance of performance for dramatic texts: Betterton’s performance elevates the text to a higher level of “rapture” for the prospective reader. Author and actor exist in a mutually beneficial relationship in order to bring out “each other’s genius”.

In discussing Betterton’s exemplary acting skills, Cibber draws particular attention to the actor’s controlled vocal performance. This can be seen in Cibber’s description of Betterton’s performance in the lead role of *Hamlet* in the scene where Hamlet first witnesses his father’s ghost:

For you may observe that in this beautiful speech the passion never rises beyond an almost breathless astonishment, or an impatience limited by filial reverence, to enquire

into the suspected wrongs that may have raised him from his peaceful tomb! And a desire to know what a spirit so seemingly distressed might wish or enjoin a sorrowful son to execute towards his future quiet in the grave! This was the light into which Betterton threw this scene, which he opened with a pause of mute amazement! Then, rising slowly to a solemn, trembling voice, he made the Ghost equally terrible to the spectator as to himself! And in the descriptive part of the natural emotions which the ghastly vision gave him, the boldness of his expostulation was still governed by decency: manly but not braving, his voice never rising into that seeming outrage or wild defiance of what he naturally revered. But alas! To preserve this medium between mouthing and meaning too little, to keep the attention more pleasingly awake by a tempered spirit than by mere vehemence of voice, is of all the masterstrokes of an actor the most difficult to reach. In this, none yet have equalled Betterton. (77)

Key to the performance of Hamlet in this scene, for Cibber, is Betterton's control over his "voice". Cibber gives an auditory account of Betterton's performance: the actor begins in "mute amazement", then speaks in a "solemn, trembling voice". Betterton's "voice" never rises to outrage, or an excess "vehemence of voice", but instead attains a "medium between mouthing and meaning too little". Betterton's "expostulations" remain "manly but not braving"; this is in contrast with other performances of Hamlet in which the actor "has thrown himself into all the straining vociferation requisite to express rage and fury, and the house has thundered with applause, though the misguided actor was all the while (as Shakespeare terms it) tearing a passion into rags" (77). Betterton's abilities as an actor contrast with the "unskilful actor, who imagined all the merit of delivering those blazing rants lay only in the strength and strained exertion of the voice" (81). Cibber claims that these "unskilful" performers are encouraged by

uncritical listeners in their audiences: “While the million are so apt to be transported when the drum of their ear is so roundly rattled—while they take the life of elocution to lie in the strength of the lungs—it is no wonder the actor whose end is applause should be also tempted at this easy rate to excite it” (78). In his criticism of his audience’s undiscerning “applause” for unskilled actors, Cibber here conceives of an audience as a group of auditors, or a set of ear “drums” that are acted upon by a performer.¹²⁹ Betterton’s “manliness” is tied to his vocal control, as he does not rise into the “rage and fury” of the “misguided” or “unskilful actor”.

Cibber’s description of Betterton’s physical body comes only after his description of Betterton’s vocal abilities. Cibber writes that “the person of this excellent actor was suitable to his voice. More manly than sweet, not exceeding the middle stature; inclining to the corpulent; of a serious and penetrating aspect; his limbs nearer the athletic than the delicate proportion” (87). Due to the auditory focus of Cibber’s *Apology*, readers of Cibber’s text get to “hear” Betterton before “seeing” him. Betterton’s “manly” body is described as being “suitable to” his voice, and not the other way around: the actor’s physical appearance becomes almost a consequence of his vocal identity. Cibber continues to emphasize the actor’s voice as his primary artistic tool. Cibber draws a comparison between the voice of the actor and that of the professional singer:

The voice of a singer is not more strictly tied to time and tune than that of an actor in theatrical elocution. The least syllable too long, or too slightly dwelt upon in a period,

¹²⁹ Writing in 1740, Cibber makes the claim that English theatrical performance had become less auditory since the early Restoration due in part to the changing designs of the playhouses: “the area or platform of the old stage projected about four foot forwarder, in a semi-oval figure, parallel to the benches of the pit. . . . [When] the actors were in possession of that forwarder space to advance upon, the voice was then more in the centre of the house, so that the most distant ear had scarce the least doubt or difficulty in hearing what fell from the weakest utterance” (267-268). In these earlier theatres, the voice was literally “centred” in dramatic performance.

depreciates it to nothing; which very syllable if rightly touched shall, like the heightening stroke of light from a master's pencil, give life and spirit to the whole. I never heard a line in tragedy come from Betterton wherein my judgment, my ear, and my imagination were not fully satisfied... (83)

As with the description of the actor's voice as a paintbrush, the voice of the actor here again becomes the key tool for their artistry: like the artist's "pencil", the actor's "voice" is the instrument that gives "life and spirit" to a performance. Cibber again emphasizes the auditory, depicting himself as a listener to Betterton's performance rather than a viewer: he "never *heard* a line" from Betterton that displeased him. Cibber extends his comparison between actors and vocalists in his description of a performance by Betterton as Alexander in Nathaniel Lee's *The Rival Queens*: "When these flowing numbers came from the mouth of a Betterton, the multitude no more desired sense to them than our musical connoisseurs think it essential in the celebrate[d] airs of an Italian opera. Does not this prove that there is very near as much enchantment in the well-governed voice of an actor as in the sweet pipe of an eunuch?" (80). In once again discussing Betterton's "well-governed voice", Cibber draws a comparison between the actor's voice and that of the "eunuch", or Italian castrato.¹³⁰ The author of *The Laureat* would pejoratively term Cibber a "Eunuch" in reference to his failed performances as a masculine tragic hero. Here, however, the figure of the eunuch becomes an example for a skilled, or "well-governed", vocal performance. While the *Laureat* author focuses on the limitations of the eunuch's physical body,—the assumption that a eunuch could not consummate a heterosexual

¹³⁰ Cibber goes on to discuss how music such as that of the Italian opera, which had become popular in London over the course of the eighteenth century, had the power to almost "enchant" its listeners. Cibber describes music and sound as a "language" that audiences are then capable of engaging with in meaningful ways (84).

relationship—Cibber instead focuses on the eunuch’s performative abilities, or the “sweet pipe” of the castrato’s voice. In presenting the liminal masculinity of the eunuch alongside the normative masculinity of Betterton, and in suggest that it is vocal control above anything that determines an actor’s skill, Cibber begins to make space for his own liminal masculinity on stage beside actors like Betterton.

Though “snubbed” from heroic roles due to his “insufficiency” of voice, Cibber, in his *Apology*, goes on to describe how he found success elsewhere by pursuing alternative masculine roles. In recounting the narrative of his own career, Cibber tells his readers that, “as you find by the setting out of my history that I always intended myself the hero of it, it may be necessary to let you know me in my obscurity as well as in my higher light, when I became one of the theatrical triumvirate” (126).¹³¹ By way of his own autobiography, Cibber is able to create an alternative form of “heroism” for himself as an actor-turned-manager who has found success in a theatrical career. In the narrative of his early acting in the 1690s, Cibber describes how he was able to find success by pursuing two sorts of roles—those of the “villain” and the “fop”. Cibber describes how he first found success in the comic role of Fondlewife in William Congreve’s *The Old Bachelor* (1693). Finding that “[there] were few or no parts of the same kind to be had”, Cibber sought to represent “a good portrait of foppery then in fashion” by writing his own comedy *Love’s Last Shift* in 1696 (142, 145). The foppish role of Sir Novelty Fashion that Cibber created for himself was soon followed up with the role of Lord Foppington in John Vanbrugh’s *The Relapse*, performed later in the same year.

¹³¹ In 1708, Cibber, alongside Richard Estcourt and Robert Wilks, became one of three managers of Drury Lane, making up the “theatrical triumvirate” (Roberts 126n1).

Though finding early success in comedy, Cibber states that his “want of a strong and full voice soon cut short my hopes of making any valuable figure in tragedy” (151). Despite this, Cibber goes on to give an “account for my having been, notwithstanding, so often seen in some particular characters in tragedy as Iago, Wolsey, Syphax, Richard the Third, *etc.*” (151).¹³² Cibber explains that, after being excluded from the roles of tragic “heroes” due to his voice, he found success instead performing the roles of tragic villains:

But it may be farther observed that in the characters I have named, where there is so much close-meditated mischief, deceit, pride, insolence or cruelty, they cannot have the least cast or proffer of the amiable in them; consequently, there can be no great demand for that harmonious sound or pleasing, round melody of voice which in the softer sentiments of love, the wailings of distressful virtue, or in the throws and swellings of honour and ambition, may be needful to recommend them to our pity or admiration—so that, again, my want of that requisite voice might less disqualify me for the vicious than the virtuous character. This too many have been a more favourable reason for my having been chosen for them. A yet farther consideration that inclined me to them was that they are generally better written, thicker sown with sensible reflections, and come by so much nearer to common life and Nature than characters of admiration, as vice is more the practice of mankind than virtue. (151-152)

Lacking the “harmonious sound” or “melody of voice” required for the normative stage hero,—a hero expressing sentiments of love, virtue, honour, or pity—Cibber instead embraces the disharmony of tragic villainy. It is outside of normative heroism that Cibber finds roles that he

¹³² Syphax is the villain of Joseph Addison’s *Cato*, a role first performed by Cibber in 1713. The remaining three roles are Shakespearean: Iago of *Othello*, Wolsey of *Henry VIII*, and Richard of *Richard III*.

claims are “better written”, and closer to a more realistic form of “vice”. In his critique of Cibber’s abilities as an actor, Aaron Hill had suggested that Cibber’s “Nature” limited him only to comic performances. Cibber could use the performative skills cultivated in his comic roles to imitate a different sort of “Nature”: the villainy that exists in “common life”.

In pursuing the roles of stage villains, Cibber makes the claim that he had modeled his performances after the actor Samuel Sandford, who had specialized in villain roles. Just as he had done with Betterton’s acting style, Cibber includes his own analysis of Sandford’s acting career:

Sandford might properly be termed the Spagnolet¹³³ of the theatre, an excellent actor in disagreeable characters. For as the chief pieces of that famous painter were of human nature in pain and agony, so Sandford (upon the stage) was generally as flagitious as a Creon, a Maligni, an Iago, or a Machiavel, could make him. . . .¹³⁴ But poor Sandford was not the stage villain by choice but from necessity. For, having a low and crooked person, such bodily defects were too strong to be admitted into great or amiable characters; so that whenever, in any new or revived play, there was a hateful or mischievous person, Sandford was sure to have no competitor for it. Nor indeed (as we are not to suppose a villain or traitor can be shown for our imitation, or not for our abhorrence) can it be doubted, but the less comely the actor’s person, the fitter he may be to perform them. (96)

Cibber’s description reveals the fundamentally exclusionary nature of Restoration casting. Due to his physical appearance, Sandford is “from necessity” forced into playing villain roles due to

¹³³ “Spagnolet” refers to the artist José de Ribera, “a Spanish painter celebrated for his realistic and often menacing *chiaroscuro* portraits” (Roberts 96n28).

¹³⁴ Sandford performed Creon in Dryden and Lee’s *Oedipus*, Maligni in Thomas Porter’s *The Villain*, and Machiavel in Lee’s *Caesar Borgia* (see Roberts 96n29).

the perceived ties between an actor's body and their morality. Cibber draws an implicit parallel between himself and Sandford: both actors have not been "admitted" into the roles of "great or amiable characters". Cibber goes on to explain how, despite the restrictive nature of his casting, Sandford found success on stage by way of his performative abilities:

This actor, in his manner of speaking, varied very much from those I have already mentioned. His voice had an acute and piercing tone which struck every syllable of his words distinctly upon the ear. He had likewise a peculiar skill in his look, of marking out to an audience whatever he judged worth their more than ordinary notice. When he delivered a command, he would sometimes give it more force by seeming to slight the ornament of harmony. In Dryden's plays of rhyme, he as little as possible glutted the ear with the jingle of it, rather choosing (when the sense would permit him) to lose it than to value it. (100)

In Sandford, Cibber finds a model for a purposefully disharmonious form of vocal performance. Unlike Betterton's "harmonious elocution", Sandford rejects the "ornament of harmony" in language, even in his delivery of Dryden's rhyming verse. This disharmonious style is, however, still effective on Sandford's listening audiences, described twice here as disembodied "ears". Along with the power of his "look" to influence audience attention, Sandford's "acute and piercing" voice is able to "distinctly" convey meaning to his audiences.

Cibber would attempt to reproduce elements of Sandford's acting style in his own performance of *Richard III*. Cibber describes his own approach to the character as follows:

When I first brought *Richard the Third* (with such alterations as I thought not improper) to the stage, Sandford was engaged in the company then acting under King William's Licence in Lincoln's Inn Fields; otherwise you cannot but suppose my interest must have

offered him that part. What encouraged me, therefore, to attempt it myself at the Theatre Royal was that I imagined I knew how Sandford would have spoken every line of it. If, therefore, in any part of it I succeeded, let the merit be given to him; and how far I succeeded in that light, those only can be judges who remember him. (101)

Though Cibber may be somewhat disingenuous in his claim that he would have given the title role of *Richard* to Sandford—Cibber, as author of the adaptation, specifically tailored the role of the title character to his own strengths—he describes how his characterization of Richard was influenced by Sandford’s performative style. It is Sandford’s performance of villainy that had “encouraged” Cibber to attempt to embody the role himself, and it is Sandford’s speech, his vocal delivery, that Cibber claims to be closely imitating. Cibber, as an auditor of Sandford’s performances, imagines how Sandford “would have *spoken* every line”, and delivers his own lines accordingly. Over the course of the *Apology*, Cibber provides an account of how his version of Shakespeare’s *Richard* had emerged as part of his own theatrical memory: it is those who “remember” Sandford’s performances who can act as the best “judges” of Cibber’s own work. Cibber modeled his performance of Richard after an actor who, like himself, had been barred from playing in the roles of “great or amiable characters”, and had instead cultivated a career of performing villains. Cibber’s on-stage models for masculine performance, his early career and the limitations that he faced as an actor, and his theories regarding the voice as the primary tool for an actor’s artistry, are here all at once bound together in the voice of the character Richard.

“Let Hell make crooked my mind to answer it...”

In the preface of the 1700 published edition of his adaptation of *Richard III*, Cibber provides his readers with an interpretive apparatus for approaching his work as an adaptor of Shakespeare’s text:

Tho’ there was no great danger of the Readers mistaking any of my lines for *Shakespear’s*; yet, to satisfie the curious, and unwilling to assume more praise than is really my due, I have caus’d those that are intirely *Shakespear’s* to be Printed in this *Italick Character*; and those lines with this mark (‘) before ’em, are generally his thoughts, in the best dress I could afford ’em: What is not so mark’d, or in a different Character is intirely my own. I have done my best to imitate his Style, and manner of thinking: If I have fail’d, I have still this comfort, that our best living Author in his imitation of *Shakespear’s* Style only writ Great and Masterly (379).

Like the “best living Author” Dryden before him, Cibber declares that he will be matching his authorial “Style” to that of Shakespeare. But avoiding Dryden and Crowne’s tendencies to obfuscate their borrowings from Shakespeare, Cibber here proposes at least some degree of transparency in his adaptive work. A reader of Cibber’s printed play would be able to at least partially identify which passages of text were entirely Shakespearean due to their being italicized.¹³⁵ Cibber, however, does not disclose which source texts he is drawing from: rather than simply being an adapted script of Shakespeare’s *Richard III*, Cibber’s *Richard* includes narrative elements of Shakespeare’s *Henry VI* plays, while also borrowing language from other

¹³⁵ Of the play’s modern editors, Christopher Spencer (1965) and Sandra Clark (1996) retain Cibber’s italics and quotation indicators from the 1700 first edition of the play. Timothy Viator and William Burling’s edition in *The Plays of Colley Cibber* (2002) eliminates Cibber’s apparatus, while also regularizing the text and spelling of the play.

Shakespeare scripts, such as *2 Henry IV* and *Richard II*.¹³⁶ Furthermore, when the play is being spoken on stage, the same contextual indicators differentiating original text from adapted text did not exist. Shakespeare's language and Cibber's language become inextricably bound together in the voices of the play's performers.

It was Cibber's decision to include elements of Shakespeare's *Henry VI* plays that resulted in his play being partially censored by the Revels office in its first performance.

In his preface to the play, Cibber writes:

This Play came upon the Stage with a very Unusual disadvantage, the whole first Act being Intirely left out in the Presentation. . . . I did not spare for intreaties; but all the reason I could get for its being refus'd was, that *Henry* the Sixth being a Character Unfortunate and Pitied, wou'd put the Audience in mind of the late *King James*: Now, I confess, I never thought of him in the Writing it, which possibly might proceed from there not being any likeness between 'em. (379)

Cibber's inclusion of the Henry VI murder scene in the adaptation's first act, originally from Shakespeare's *3 Henry VI*, proved objectionable to the Revels office for the same reason that Crowne's *Henry* had been suppressed nearly twenty years earlier. The narrative of Crowne's play had, in a sense, become a reality: the Stuart monarch James had been deposed in the 1688 Glorious Revolution, and a sympathetic portrayal of a deposed king might suggest Jacobite sympathies. Cibber would recount this suppression once again in his 1740 *Apology*, writing that he had appealed to the Revels office "for the small indulgence of a speech or two, that the other four acts might limp on with a little less absurdity":

¹³⁶ Christopher Spencer and Scott Colley, in their studies of Cibber's text, have identified the sources and extent of Cibber's borrowings (Spencer 415-421, Colley 25-35). Sandra Clark, in her edition of the text, includes annotations documenting parallel passages (383-458).

He [the Master of Revels]¹³⁷ had an objection to the whole act, and the reason he gave for it was that the distresses of Henry the Sixth, who is killed by Richard in the first act, would put weak people too much in mind of King James. . . . by the loss of so considerable a limb, may one not modestly suppose it was robbed of at least a fifth part of that favour it afterwards met with? (185)

Cibber characterizes his expunged text as a body that has lost a “limb”, and is thus at a disadvantage in “limping” out onto the stage. Cibber constructs a parallel between *Richard* the play and Richard the character: in the narrative that he constructs of his own on-stage career, Cibber represents himself and his play as being at an embodied disadvantage when entering into the theatre.

How, then, did Cibber’s *Richard* fare in its “limping” premiere in 1700?¹³⁸ Taking Cibber’s detractors as factual sources, critic Hazleton Spencer is dismissive of Cibber’s attempt at adapting Shakespearean tragedy: “Cibber was not a tragedian, and his attempts to write outside the borders of comedy are as absurd as some of his contemporaries found his acting when it strayed beyond them” (338). Albert Kalson similarly labels Cibber’s adaptation a “decided failure”, writing that “Cibber’s portrayal of England’s most notorious monarch was too comic to be convincing” (42). Kalson, however, does not seem to recognize the inherent contradiction between his judgment of Cibber’s “failure” and his follow-up statement that Cibber “unknowingly manufactured one of the greatest box-office attractions in the history of the

¹³⁷ Charles Killigrew, the son of theatre manager Thomas Killigrew, was acting as the Master of the Revels at this time (Roberts 184n30).

¹³⁸ While the *London Stage* dates the initial performance of the play as December 1699, Milhous and Hume find evidence to suggest an early 1700 premiere. See *London Stage*, 1:521-522; Milhous and Hume, *Dating Play Premieres*, 398. For a discussion of the play’s dating, see also Viator and Burling, 327-329.

theatre” (42). Indeed, Cibber’s play would prove to be one of the most frequently staged adaptations of Shakespeare, with a longevity reaching into the twentieth century.¹³⁹ Viator and Burling identify “nearly eighty performances of the play during Cibber’s acting career”, with the play being revived almost annually at Drury Lane between 1713 and 1728 (331). Despite any accounts of Cibber’s “Nature” as a fundamentally comic actor, *Richard* proved to be a successful star vehicle for Cibber in a tragic role.

Other critics have examined the play within the context of Cibber’s career and the ways that the actor approached the performance of masculinity. Recent critical interest has often focused on Cibber’s approach to the figure of the fop in plays such as *Love’s Last Shift* or *The Relapse*. Laura Rosenthal has argued that Cibber “built his career at the crossroads of the ‘Grub Street version of imitation’ and gender performances outside of dominant masculinity. This explosive combination catapulted him into both fame and infamy; he became an object of ridicule and fascination for the contradictions he exposed” (164). In cultivating performances “outside of dominant masculinity”, Cibber became victim to the sort of ridicule seen in texts like *The Laureat*. In her discussion of Cibber’s representation of himself in both the *Apology* and his dramatic work, Kristina Straub claims that Cibber continually “turns his abject acceptance of a compromised masculinity into a rhetorical weapon”: by way of his various means of self-fashioning, Cibber “abjectly puts on the compromised masculinity attributed to him and other actors—but with a difference. When Cibber makes a spectacle of himself, as he frequently does,

¹³⁹ It was Cibber’s version of *Richard* that David Garrick would perform in the 1741 debut that would establish him as a famous leading actor and Shakespearean. Following Garrick’s example, subsequent actors such as John Philip Kemble and Edmund Kean would perform the role as adapted by Cibber. Cibber’s text would be the dominant stage version of the play, up until Samuel Phelps’s 1845 revival of Shakespeare’s original text. Laurence Olivier’s 1955 version of *Richard III* notably includes elements of Cibber’s text. For a complete performance history of Cibber’s play, see Viator and Burling, 330-332.

he retains a self-consciousness that becomes a central part of the show” (44, 40).¹⁴⁰ Straub characterizes Cibber as self-consciously engaging with non-normative representations of masculinity as a means of responding to his detractors.

Building upon Straub’s discussion of Cibber’s public identity, Julia Fawcett analyzes Cibber’s adaptation of *Richard III* within the context of his approach to disability, writing that, for Cibber, “the disabled body becomes not an obstacle to but rather an entry into the status of subject for the spectacular celebrity struggling for the right to self-description” (952). Fawcett argues that Cibber’s characterization of Richard “defies the increasingly rigid codifications by which the eighteenth-century body was read and classified, thus clearing the way for him to define and describe himself” (951). For Fawcett, the character of Richard provides Cibber with a means of grappling with his own identity within the public venue of the theatre.¹⁴¹ While Straub and Fawcett have drawn attention to the way that Cibber’s *body* functions as a locus for the actor’s non-normative masculinity, for the remainder of this chapter I will be examining how the *voice* functions as a key aspect of gender performance within Cibber’s adaptation of *Richard III*.

¹⁴⁰ Straub’s argument is rooted in her discussion of the gendered dynamics of celebrity and spectatorship. Straub claims that, in the long eighteenth century, the “problematic nature of the actor as a male who put himself on display was constructed, whichever way the argument went, in terms of gender, class, and racial or ethnic difference, terms that reinforced a sexuality which was defined as ‘deviate’” (25). In her analysis of the *Apology*, Straub writes that the “‘feminine’ narcissism of the actor is transformed by Cibber’s rhetoric into an odd kind of candor. This self-consciously performed relaxation of control over self-image converts the trope of the actor as a ‘feminine’, narcissistic spectacle into a rhetorical gesture of control” (41). Straub argues that Cibber embraces the “feminine” associations of male stage performance as a means of gaining control over his own “self-image”.

¹⁴¹ More recently, Katherine Schaap Williams has considered Cibber’s approach to Richard’s disability in an overview of early modern performances of the character: “Disability acts as an explanatory device for the character and—read through Cibber’s theory of the role—impetus of the actor’s own body. . . . Cibber employs deformity to emphasize the affective experience of disability disqualification, a characterization that dwells in the sentimentalizing register of pity” (46). See Williams, *Unfixable Forms*, 44-46.

As with the *Apology*, the voice of the performer is at the forefront of Cibber's Shakespearean adaptation. In Richard, Cibber finds a character who has been positioned outside of normative masculine roles due to his physical body. Acting as the primary "performer" within the world of the play, Cibber's Richard uses his voice as his primary tool for manipulation and for achieving his desired role as King.

In the first act of Cibber's adaptation, the deposed and imprisoned King Henry contemplates the public spectacle of his own royal life. The play opens in a metatheatrical moment in which Lord Stanley and a Lieutenant guard stand as an "unseen" audience observing the King's private soliloquies (I.i.46).¹⁴² While discussing the ongoing civil conflict for the English throne, Henry delivers the following lines:

For what is in this World but Grief and Care?
 What Noise, and Bustle do Kings make to find it?
 When Life's but a short Chace, our Game content
 Which most pursued is most compell'd to fly;
 And he that mounts him on the swiftest Hope,
 Shall often Run his Courser to a stand,
 While the poor Peasant from some distant Hill
 Undanger'd, and at Ease views all the Sport,
 And sees Content take shelter in his Cottage. (52-60)

¹⁴² Before the deposed King arrives on stage, the Lieutenant tells a servant to "Let no Stranger into the Garden: / I wou'd not have him star'd at" (I.i.4-5). The Lieutenant warns of the same theatrical power of seeing a deposed monarch that the Revels office had identified in their censoring of the play.

Henry sets forth the terms of a theatrical metaphor that will be carried throughout the rest of the play. Unlike the imagined “Peasant” who remains safe as a spectator while “viewing” the sport of Kings, Henry is inescapably caught within the public theatre of royal life.¹⁴³ In entering into the world of the play, the audience, like the “Peasant”, will become witness to the “Noise” and “Bustle” made by on-stage “Kings”. Henry’s horse-riding metaphor of the “Courser” foreshadows the death scene of the play’s central performer Richard, who, in his life on stage, will go on to generate the most “Noise” within the world of the play.

Within the public spectacle of the ongoing civil war, spoken language functions as a tool for violence. As the first scene of the play continues, a messenger arrives and tells the imprisoned Henry the story of his son’s death at the hands of the now King Edward and his brothers Richard and Clarence. The messenger recounts to Henry how, “After the Fight, *Edward* in Triumph ask’d / To see the Captive Prince”:

...the Prince was brought,
Whom *Edward* roughly Chid for bearing Arms,
Asking what Reparation he cou’d make
For having stirr’d his Subjects to Rebellion?
Your Son impatient of such Taunts, reply’d,
Bow like a Subject, Proud Ambitious *York*!
While I now speaking with my Father’s Mouth,
Propose the self same Rebel Words to thee,

¹⁴³ This passage has its origin in Henry’s speech from 3 *Henry VI*, which begins: “For what is in this world but grief and woe? / O God! Methinks it were a happy life, / To be no better than a homely swain” (2.5.20-22). Cibber revises Henry’s escapist pastoral fantasy, transforming the idealized “swain” into the spectating “Peasant” who remains at an inviolable distance from Henry’s public life.

Which, Traytor, thou wou'dst have me answer to:
 From these, more Words arose, till in the End
 King *Edward* swell'd with what th'unhappy Prince
 At such a time too freely spoke, his Gauntlet
 In his young Face with Indignation struck:
 At which Crook'd *Richard, Clarence*, and the rest
 Buried their fatal Daggers in his Heart . . . (166-181)

At hearing this story, Henry mourns that, “O had'st thou stabb'd at every Words deliverance, / Sharp Ponyards in my Flesh, while this was told / Thy Wounds had giv'n less Anguish than thy Words” (185-187). Drawing from act two and act five of *3 Henry VI*, Cibber brings together two passages from Shakespeare in which “Words” are explicitly tied to weapons of violence.¹⁴⁴ The ongoing civil conflict plays out through an exchange of “Words”: adopting his “Father's Mouth”, the Prince speaks “Rebel Words” in answer to the rebellious words which had been spoken by Edward. It is the exchange of “more Words” that leads to the first act of violence committed by Edward against the Prince. Henry claims that the messenger's “Words” are more potent tools of violence against him than any weapons that could simply injure his “Flesh”.

While this account introduces the character Richard as a perpetrator of physical violence—the messenger informs us that, during the Prince's killing, “the first Wound Duke *Richard* gave (190)—Richard himself soon arrives on stage in the first act and becomes a participant in the ongoing dialogues of violence. Richard's arrival into the world of the play is framed as that of a stage actor. At the arrival of the messenger in the play's first scene, Henry

¹⁴⁴ The messenger is recounting a scene that the audience witnesses first-hand in *3 Henry VI* (5.5.12-21). Henry's words at his son's death are originally the words of Richard in *3 Henry VI*, who is recounting the death of his father Plantagenet (2.1.96-100).

metatheatrically comments of the “Tragedy” that is about to occur, stating that “this Prologue lets me in / To a most fatal Tragedy to come” (162-163). When it is speculated that Richard is on his way to the Tower of London where Henry is being held, Henry expresses his apprehension, saying of Richard that “Ills but thought by him are half perform’d” (225). When the “performer” Richard does arrive at the Tower, Henry explicitly identifies him as an actor, asking “What Bloody Scene has *Roscius* now to Act?” (I.iii.15).¹⁴⁵ Richard “acts” by recounting to Henry the killing of his son, prompting Henry to respond, “kill me with thy weapon, not with words, / My breast can better brook thy Daggers point, / Than can my ears that piercing story” (30-32). Richard’s “words” become his initial weapon against Henry’s listening “ears”, language again being identified by Henry as a more “piercing” means of violence than “Dagger” or “Ponyards”.

The confrontation between Richard and Henry shifts towards a dialogue on the nature of Richard’s physical body. Before being killed, Henry explains that Richard’s prodigious birth acted as an indication that Richard was “born to Massacre Mankind”: “The Owl shriek’d at thy Birth: an Evil sign. / The night Crow cry’d, foreboding luckless time . . . Teeth hadst thou in thy head when thou wert born, / Which plainly said, Thou cam’st to bite Mankind” (40-54). In his semiotic analysis of the “signs” surrounding Richard’s birth, Henry claims that Richard’s material body speaks for itself as an indication of Richard’s inherent villainy. Richard’s body at birth “plainly says” that Richard will be an enemy to “Mankind”.¹⁴⁶ Richard’s mouth is singled out as a tool for violence, Richard being born to “bite” with his inset teeth. Richard, however,

¹⁴⁵ Clark identifies Roscius as “Quintus Roscius Gallus (d. 62 BC), the most famous Roman actor” (520).

¹⁴⁶ For Henry, bodies can be read as legible texts. On seeing the messenger sent to deliver the news of his son’s death, Henry states, “His Brows the Title Page / That speaks the Nature of a Tragick Volume” (I.i.126-127).

provides an alternative analysis of the circumstances of his birth. After killing Henry, Richard addresses the audience directly:

Indeed 'tis true, what *Henry* told me of,
 For I have often heard my Mother say,
 I came into the World with my Legs forward:
 The Midwife wonder'd, and the Women cry'd,
 Good Heaven bless us, he is born with Teeth;
 And so I was, which was plainly signified,
 That I should snarl and bite, and play the Dog.
 Then since the Heavens have shap'd my body so,
 Let Hell make crooked my mind to answer it . . . (I.iii.69-77)

In discussing the “signification” of his own body, Richard describes his own villainy as a role that he has been led into performing. Because of the circumstances of his prodigious birth, Richard comes to believe that he “should . . . play the Dog”: Richard becomes a “player” who is forced into a dehumanizing animalistic role. The “often”-repeated narrative of Richard’s birth is initially constructed by the midwives who speak the omen into existence—Richard quotes their “cry” of “Good Heaven bless us”.¹⁴⁷ Richard describes how these external circumstances have shaped his own sense of self. Richard tells us that he has been assigned a villain’s role at birth: just as Heaven has “shap’d” his body, the stories surrounding his birth have shaped his “mind” to correspond with the “crooked” identity that has been ascribed to him.

¹⁴⁷ Richard’s mother, the Duchess of York, continues to repeat this narrative surrounding Richard’s birth in her later appearance in the play, when she tells Richard that “A grievous burthen was thy Birth to me; / Tetchy and way-ward was thy Infancy” (IV.iv.34-35).

In a revised version of the opening monologue of Shakespeare's *Richard III*, Richard furthermore discourses on how his physical body has shaped his identity. Richard begins by describing how he is unlike his brother Edward, who "Capers nimbly in a Ladies Chamber / To the Lascivious Pleasing of a Lute":

I that am not shaped for sportive tricks,
 I that am curtailed of Man's fair proportion,
 Deform'd, Unfinish'd, sent before my time
 Into this breathing World scarce half made up,
 And that so lamely and unfashionable
 That Dogs bark at me as I halt by 'em;
 Why I, in this weak, this piping time of Peace,
 Have no delight to pass away my hours,
 Unless to see my shadow in the Sun,
 And descant on my own deformity:
 —Then since this Earth affords no joy to me,
 But to Command, to Check, and to Orebear such,
 As are of Happier Person than my self,
 Why then to me this restless World's but Hell,
 Till the mishapen trunks aspiring head
 Be circled in a glorious Diadem . . . (I.ii.7-24)

Richard sets forth the story of how his physical body, variously described as "Deform'd", "Unfinish'd" and "scarce half made up", has caused his life to be a "Hell" devoid of "delight" and "joy". Altering the language of his source material, Cibber changes Shakespeare's original

line “curtail’d of this fair proportion” to “curtailed of *Man*’s fair proportion” (1.1.18). Just as Henry had described him as an enemy to “Mankind”, Richard is here placed outside of what it means to be a “Man”. Richard describes himself as being incapable of the same “tricks” and “Capers” that his brother performs in fulfilling the role of masculine lover.¹⁴⁸ Unlike Shakespeare’s Richard, however, who is fatalistically “determined to prove a villain”, Cibber’s Richard ends his speech by aspiring for the “glorious Diadem” of kingship in a passage drawn from *3 Henry VI* (*Richard III* 1.1.30; *3 Henry VI* 3.2.169-171). Cibber’s Richard suggests the possibility that he will be capable of performing roles other than “villain”. In a parallel to Cibber’s description of his own career, Richard—after being denied the masculine role of “Lover”—seeks an alternative path towards the role of “King”. In a later act, Richard will go on to comment on his own perceived villainy, asking the audience, “Why were Laws made, but that we’re Rogues by Nature? . . . Ev’n all Mankind to some lov’d Ills incline, / Great Men chuse Greater Sins – Ambition’s mine” (III.i.164-178). Just as Cibber defends the roles of stage “villains” in being more “natural” and true to life, Richard defends his own villainy as an expression of the roguish “Nature” inherent in all “Mankind”. Richard, like Cibber in his *Apology*, characterizes himself as an actor who embraces a theatrical approach to the performance of masculinity.

Over the course of the play, Richard uses his vocal performative abilities to help him achieve his path to kingship. Richard’s capacity for manipulative speech is brought to the forefront of the play in his attempted seduction of Lady Ann. Before speaking to her, Richard

¹⁴⁸ By stating that Edward “Capers nimbly in a Ladies Chamber” during a “weak” and “piping time of Peace”, Richard additionally effeminizes his brother, associating him with a feminized sexual world (I.ii.7, 15). While Edward’s masculinity thrives in a time of “Peace”, it is Richard’s alternative masculinity which will thrive in a time of conflict.

privately contemplates his skills in influencing others through his use of language: “’Tis true, my Form perhaps, will little move her, / But I’ve a Tongue shall wheadle with the Devil” (II.i.60-61). Richard sets out to employ his “Tongue” in order to transcend the limitations placed upon his physical “Form”.¹⁴⁹ Richard’s “Tongue” becomes the subject of discussion between Richard and Ann. With an underlying sexual suggestion, Richard speaks to Ann of the “keen encounter of [their] Tongues” in dialogue with each other (129). Richard disingenuously suggests that his “Tongue” is not entirely under his control, stating that “My Tongue could never learn sweet smoothing Words, / But now thy Beauty is propos’d my Fee / My proud Heart sues, and prompts my Tongue to speak” (163-165). Ann responds by asking, “Is there a Tongue on Earth can speak for thee?”, while going on to question Richard’s “false” Tongue (166, 220-221). Richard attempts to direct Ann’s own capacity for speaking, prompting her to deliver “a word to pardon or condemn me” (205). Ann ends the scene by complying with Richard’s attempted ventriloquism, telling him, “since you teach me how to flatter you, / Imagine I have said Farewell already” (249-250). In finding a degree of success in his manipulation, Richard celebrates by stating, “I do mistake my Person all this while! / Upon my life! she finds, altho I cannot, / My self to be a marvellous proper Man” (268-270). Through the abilities of his “Tongue” in directing the actions of others, Richard finds himself in the role of “proper Man” as the potential future lover to Ann. Despite expressing his incredulity and believing himself not to be “shaped for sportive tricks”, Richard has, by way of this scene of seduction, effectively been

¹⁴⁹ Richard continually contrasts his skills in aural manipulation with his professed weakness on the level of the visual. After beginning to suspect Buckingham later in the play, Richard states that he will “henceforth deal with shorter sighted Fools, / None are for me that look into my Deeds, / With thinking Eyes” (IV.ii.34-36). Richard, ascribed a villain’s role due to the visual appearance of his physical form, expresses an anxiety that incisive viewers will see through the illusions that he creates in language.

able to perform the masculine role of “Lover”. The scene prompts Richard to reconsider his own potential for eroticism, Richard stating that he will “entertain a score or two of Taylors / To study fashions and adorn my body” (271-272). Richard views the “Lover” as a new role that he is able to take on, like an actor putting on a new costume.

Though Richard is able to become King and find success in the “Noise” of public royal life, he does run into limitations in what his “Tongue” can perform. In carrying out his widespread campaign of manipulation, Richard runs the risk of performing for unresponsive audiences. Buckingham warns Richard of the risks of an unreceptive public when he recounts an “Oration” that had delivered to the “Citizens” of London in which he “urged of them that lov’d their Countries good / To do you right, and cry, Long live King *Richard*” (III.ii.84-86). The citizens, however, remain silent: “each like Statues fix’d / Speechless and Pale, star’d in his fellows Face” (88-89). Richard reprimands these citizens as “Tongueless Blocks”, as he has been unable to make them speak in the way that he wants them to (105). The security of Richard’s power is furthermore threatened by the possibility that his victims will speak back to him and enact their own verbal control within the world of the play. Following Richard’s plot to kill the two princes in the Tower, the boys’ mother Queen Elizabeth confronts Richard, telling him, “I have wrongs will speak / Without a Tongue” (IV.iv.41-42). Elizabeth claims that the “wrongs” committed by Richard themselves “speak” louder than Richard himself is capable of doing. Following this confrontation, Richard’s mother, the Duchess of York, curses her son, imploring that “Heaven at his latest hour / Be Deaf to Him as he is now to me” (53-54). The Duchess’s curse seeks to cut off Richard’s agency at the level of the auditory, the primary level on which his manipulations operate.

The Duchess of York's curse is, of course, brought to fruition; in the final battle of the play, Richard's cries for "a Horse" go unheard and unfulfilled (V.viii.15). In the play's final scenes, Richard finds himself overwhelmed in by the noises of the ongoing conflict. The night before his death, Richard himself becomes a listener attending to the sounds of his war camp: Richard gives an account of the "hum of either Army", the "secret whispers" of the "fixt Centinels", the "clink of hammers" of the "Armourers", and horses' "high and boastful neighings, / Piercing the nights dull Ear" (V.v.11-17). It is this night that Richard is visited by the ghosts of his victims, who tell Richard to "let that wild despair which now does prey / Upon thy mangled thoughts, allarm the World" (56-57). The "allarm" let out by the ghosts overwhelms Richard when he is forced to remain a silent sleeping listener. The ghosts' message has a profound effect on Richard's physical body: Richard states that "Cold drops of sweat hang on my trembling Flesh, / My blood grows chilly, and I freeze with horror" (62-63). When stripped of his agency to speak, Richard is unable to transcend his "Flesh" in the ways that he had been able to throughout the play.

In the final scene of Cibber's adaptation, Richard's lifelong performance comes to an end following his duel with Richmond. After Richard has been killed, Richmond seeks to find meaning in Richard's narrative by stating, "Farewel, *Richard*, and from thy dreadful end / May future Kings from Tyranny be warn'd . . . How might thy Fame have grac'd our *English Annals*: / But as thou art, how fair a Page thou'st blotted" (V.ix.21-26). Richmond conceives of Richard's life as a "blot" in a printed text—the historical "*English Annals*"—that acts as a textual sign warning future kings against the dangers of excessive "Tyranny". Unlike Richmond's print metaphor, however, Richard, in the lines before his death, characteristically conceives of his life as a theatrical performance:

Now let the World no longer be a Stage
 To feed contention in a lingring Act:
 But let one spirit of the first-born *Cain*
 Reign in all bosoms, that each heart being set
 On bloody Actions, the rude Scene may end,
 And darkness be the Burier of the Dead. (15-20)

In Richard's final lines, Cibber once again draws from the metatheatrical language of Shakespeare's history plays, these lines having their origin in a speech by the Earl of Northumberland from Shakespeare's *2 Henry IV* (1.1.155-160). Richard conceives of himself as the central performer in the "Stage" play of life: in his death, Richard asks to be buried in "darkness" as his "Act" and "Scene" come to an end. Richard unifies the remaining living in the single spirit of "*Cain*", calling back to the fundamentally evil human "Nature" that he believed to be universal. Unlike Richmond, who identifies Richard as a stable signifier for royal "Tyranny", Richard claims to have been an actor who has performed his role, and now disappears off-stage into darkness. And, within the space of the theatre, Richard's conception of his own life is quite literally true: it is Cibber's performance of Richard that has driven the narrative of the play, and at Richard's death the play must come to an end.

Earlier on in the play, Richard had already begun to reflect upon what sort of historical legacy he would leave behind. In planning the murders of his two nephews, Richard is suddenly confronted with his own guilt:

. . . Nature too,
 As if she knew me Womanish, and Weak,
 Tugs at my Heart-Strings with complaining Cries,

To talk me from my Purpose –
 And then the thought of what Mens Tongues will say,
 Of what their Hearts must think; To have no Creature
 Love me Living, nor my Memory when Dead.
 Shall future Ages, when these Childrens Tale
 Is told, drop Tears in pity of their hapless Fate,
 And read with Detestation the Misdeeds of *Richard*,
 The crook-back Tyrant, Cruel, Barbarous,
 And Bloody – will they not say too,
 That to possess the Crown, nor Laws Divine
 Nor Human stopt my way – Why let 'em say it;
 They can't but say I had the Crown;
 I was not Fool as well as Villain. (IV.iii.21-36)

Richard's contemplation reveals the tensions at the core of his performance of masculine identity. Richard's material body is here placed outside of the realm of masculinity, and is instead feminized and described as "Womanish". Richard identifies that it will be "Mens Tongues" that will define the historical narrative of his life as that of a "crook-back Tyrant". Lacking control over what those "Tongues" will say, Richard at least claims that he has the ability to choose which roles to embody: the King, the Villain, but never the "Fool". Though Cibber himself had been often characterized as a "Fool" by his detractors, he was able to find success on stage as both "King" and "Villain" in the form of Richard. Often maligned for being outside of the boundaries of normative masculinity, Cibber instead created non-normative

masculine roles for himself, and in doing so created an enduring theatrical spectacle in the form of the character Richard.

Colley Cibber, Drag King

Despite Cibber's continued success in the role of Richard over the course of his lifetime, Cibber's critics would describe the actor as parodically exposing the "*Apparatus of the Stage Heroe*" when attempting to perform in tragedies. Because of his "burlesque" attempts at tragic roles, which consisted of "Comic Shruggings" and "distorted *Heavings*", the audience was able to recognize, or so these critics claim, that the Hero's costume of "*Robe*", "*Plume*", and "*Truncheon*" was a poor fit to Cibber's identity as an actor. Cibber's tragic performances, for his critics, only worked to demonstrate how the actor's body, behaviour, and voice were unsuitable to the masculine role of the "*Stage Heroe*". In concluding this chapter, however, I hope to propose an alternative reading of Cibber's on-stage performances of masculinity.

In *Female Masculinity*, Jack Halberstam has defined the drag king as someone who "performs masculinity (often parodically) and makes the exposure of the theatricality of masculinity into the mainstay of her act" (232). As Jennifer Drouin has additionally argued, drag artists enact an "intentional exposure of normativity" in drawing attention to the performative nature of gender roles (23). In performing as Richard, Cibber embraces what Julia Fawcett terms an "overexpressive" form of performance, one which "seems in many ways excessive" as it "employs costumes, gestures, or words that deliberately draw attention to themselves" (952). In this chapter, I have argued that Cibber's understanding of his own masculinity was a key part of this "overexpressive" role. Cibber's Richard intentionally draws attention to himself as a theatrical performer as he embodies various masculine roles: Richard considers various "fashions

to adorn [his] body” and outfits himself accordingly (II.i.273). Richard, like Cibber himself in the *Apology*, openly discusses normative masculinity, its exclusionary nature, and the ways in which he is and is not able to embody certain male roles. This “exposure of normativity” was “intentional”, as Cibber gives an account of his motivations over the course of his autobiography. In the first chapter of this dissertation, I have argued that Restoration audiences were able to understand and enjoy complex and transgressive performances of masculinity in the drama of their era. Here, once again, a layered performance of various masculinities was a key part of the dramatic appeal of Cibber’s text. In this sense, Cibber’s Richard is a “King” performing drag, intentionally demonstrating the ways that masculinity was a performative category.

CONCLUSION

Epilogue: Beyond the Stage

Over the course of this dissertation, my purpose has been to expand upon the current scholarship on gender performance within Restoration drama. I have argued that masculinity is a performative category, one that Restoration performers and playwrights were able to engage with in a variety of compelling ways. Experimenting with gender roles, and with the ways these roles could be enacted on stage, was a consistent feature of the popular drama of this time. I believe that the approach that I have taken to theatrical gender performance has wide-ranging implications for the study of theatre in both the long eighteenth century and in Shakespeare's own time. My first chapter examines how, in the time following the transition from male actors in women's roles to actresses performing as women on stage, the off-stage gendered body of the performer became the focal point by which on-stage gender performances were made legible. By invasively uncovering the performer's body, theatre companies promised their audiences a voyeuristic access to the private bodies of "real" women. My readings of Restoration texts, however, suggest that Restoration audiences were capable of understanding gender as something that was performatively deployed, rather than something that was limited by an individual's material body. As with Hippolito in the Dryden-Davenant *Tempest*, Restoration actors and actresses were able to participate in layered gender performances that challenged normative constructions of masculinity.

My second chapter considers masculinity within the context of authorship and male homosocial networks. In his critical works discussing Shakespeare, John Dryden understood masculinity as a socially constructed and historically contingent category, one that had changed between Shakespeare's period and his own. By adapting *Troilus and Cressida*, Dryden sought to

depict a viable form of masculinity for his own time, one that stood in contrast with Shakespeare's more "barbarous Age". My third chapter discusses the political stakes of masculinity within theatrical representations of kingship and monarchic authority during the Exclusion Crisis. In his adaptations of Shakespeare's *Henry VI* plays, John Crowne advocated for a strong and unified "body politic", one that could enact control over other unruly bodies. As a "Dutifull and Zealous Subject", Crowne believed that a strong monarch, ruling with arbitrary power, could potentially provide him with the land that he was petitioning for in North America. My final chapter explores Colley Cibber's alternative approach to "Kingship" by way of his adaptation of *Richard III*. In the character of Richard, Cibber found a role through which he could explore an alternative form of masculinity beyond the normative "Stage Heroe". In doing so, Cibber was able to expose the ways in which normative masculinity was a constructed identity, and something that could be subverted by way of performance. Here, in my conclusion, I hope to suggest ways that the ideas introduced within my work might be carried forward as research on this dynamic and transitional moment of theatre history continues.

I have been careful in this dissertation to keep my claims regarding gender performance within the space of the theatre. While I have predominantly examined masculinity as it was constructed by way of dramatic performance, my work joins a growing body of scholarship which has re-evaluated the ways that early modern and eighteenth-century cultures thought about gender identity. It is only in recent years that scholars have begun to consider the possibilities for transgender and gender non-conforming identities as they might have existed in the early modern era and long eighteenth century.¹⁵⁰ For a relevant example, we need look no further than the

¹⁵⁰ For relevant texts which open up possibilities for queer and trans readings of these historical eras, see Susan Sniader Lanser, *The Sexuality of History: Modernity and the Sapphic, 1565-1830* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014); and Greta LaFleur, Masha Raskolnikov, and Anna

recent critical work surrounding Charlotte Charke, the daughter of Colley Cibber who was herself a professional performer and author.¹⁵¹ Over the course of her lifetime, Charke not only frequently acted on stage in breeches and male roles, but also adopted the identity of “Mr. Brown” in her private life. In her 1755 autobiography, Charke gives an account of her earliest performance of masculinity at “but four Years of Age”:

Having, even then, a passionate Fondness for a Perriwig, I crawl’d out of Bed one Summer’s Morning at *Twickenham* . . . and, taking it into my small Pate, that by Dint of a Wig and a Waistcoat, I should be the perfect Representative of my Sire, I crept softly into the Servants-Hall, where I had the Night before espied all Things in Order. . . . By the Help of a long Broom, I took down a Waistcoat of my Brother’s, and an enormous bushy Tie-wig of my Father’s, which entirely enclos’d my Head and Body, with the Knots of the Ties thumping my little Heels as I march’d along, with slow and solemn Pace. The Covert of Hair in which I was conceal’d, with the Weight of a monstrous Belt and large Silver-hilted Sword, that I could scarce drag along, was a vast Impediment in my Procession: And, what still added to the other Inconveniencies I labour’d under, was whelming myself under one of my Father’s large Beaver-hats, laden with Lace, as thick and broad as a Brickbat. (17-18)

Klosowska, eds., *Trans Historical: Gender Plurality Before the Modern* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2021).

¹⁵¹ See in particular Jade Higa, “Charlotte Charke’s Gun: Queering Material Culture and Gender Performance,” *ABO: Interactive Journal for Women in the Arts, 1640-1830* 7, no. 1 (2017): 1-12; and Jesse Jack, “Reclaiming a Transgender History: The Intertextual Life of Charlotte Charke,” *English* 70, no. 268 (2021): 47-65. Julia Fawcett gives a compelling reading of the relationship between Charke and Cibber in Chapter 2 of *Spectacular Disappearances* (61-97). Following these critics, I use she/her pronouns when describing Charke, as these are the pronouns she uses when referring to herself in her autobiographical *Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Charlotte Charke* (1755).

In this early experience embodying masculinity, Charke attempts to appear as the “perfect Representative” of her father, Cibber. In doing so, Charke adopts a number of the elements of the “*Apparatus of the Stage Heroe*”, including the “Sword” and excessively-heavy “Wig”. By literally immersing herself in her father’s theatrical form of masculinity, Charke is able to begin exploring her own capacity for performing as male.

Prior to the interventions of trans studies, critical discussions of Charke’s career had often characterized Charke as a “cross-dressing” actress, or a fundamentally female body that takes on the clothing of a man.¹⁵² Jesse Jack, however, in a recent analysis of Charke’s autobiography, makes the argument that “Charke’s ‘multiplicitous’ and layered selves, as well as the disruptions of binary distinctions like real and constructed, being and performing, that such poly-vocalities detail, evoke the intertextual embodiment of trans persons as well as such persons’ struggles to be authorized as ‘authentic’ and ‘real’”. Jack explains that Charke “refuses to stabilize her identity in relation to hegemonic identity categories, operating at various intervals throughout the *Narrative* in a wide range of roles, both masculine and feminine” (49-50). In other words, Charke performatively adopts a variety of gender “roles” in a way that disrupts an essentialized interpretation of an underlying “real” gendered body. In the first chapter of my dissertation, I have criticized the trend in early modern theatre scholarship of naturalizing the boy actor’s body as intrinsically male. The offsetting of gender from the individual material body of a performer can be extended off the stage into our readings of all gender embodiments during this period, be they public or private. Additional work can be done on the degree to which the culture of the

¹⁵² See, for example, Kristina Straub, “The Guilty Pleasures of Female Theatrical Cross-Dressing And the Autobiography of Charlotte Charke,” in *Introducing Charlotte Charke: Actress, Author, Enigma*, ed. Philip E. Baruth (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 107-133; and Cheryl Wanko, “The Eighteenth-Century Actress and the Construction of Gender: Lavinia Fenton and Charlotte Charke,” *Literature Criticism from 1400 to 1800* 148 (2008): 106-115.

long eighteenth century adhered to a stable binaristic understanding of “male” and “female” as mutually exclusive categories. Dryden’s desire, for example, to balance an identity that is inclusive of male and female gender traits—as discussed in my second chapter above—may suggest that the author was attempting to conceive of a non-binary approach to gender identity.

Further consideration may also be given to the intersectional interplay between masculinity and other categories of embodiment as they were performed in drama. In my third and fourth chapters above, I have cited a number of critics who have recently considered the figure of Shakespeare’s Richard III within the context of the growing field of disability studies. These critics join a developing body of scholarship which has provided a clearer vision of the historical context surrounding Shakespeare’s approach to disability within his work.¹⁵³ These studies, however, have primarily focused on disability as it was understood during Shakespeare’s lifetime, and only rarely extend into the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. As with masculinity, disability has not been a stable ahistorical identity, and its performance in drama has shifted over the course of history. Due to the popularity and extended stage life of his adaptation of *Richard III*, Cibber’s influence on the performance of disability within the eighteenth century warrants further critical study.

I would like to finally suggest that further research can be done in exploring the personal and ideological ties between Restoration playwrights writing in London and the ongoing project of English colonialism that was being carried out during this century. In my third chapter, I have focused on a single case study: that of John Crowne and his continued interest in securing a grant

¹⁵³ For recent publications, see Genevieve Love, *Early Modern Theatre and the Figure of Disability* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018); Lindsey Row-Heyveld, *Dissembling Disability in Early Modern English Drama* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); and Leslie C. Dunn, ed., *Performing Disability in Early Modern English Drama* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).

for land in Nova Scotia and New England. Recent work by critics has explored William Davenant's investment in English imperialism as Treasurer of Virginia under Oliver Cromwell.¹⁵⁴ Critics have also continued to research Aphra Behn's potential personal connections to European colonies, as well as her approach to representing colonial violence in her writing.¹⁵⁵ While these various studies, including my own, have approached colonialism within the context of the lives of individual authors, it is worth considering whether the London theatre community had a greater holistic investment in the profits of English colonialism.¹⁵⁶ The wealth of the English state, and of its monarch Charles II, directly funded the development of drama in London during this time. Thanks to the archival efforts of the UK National Archives, the documents surrounding British imperial endeavours during this century are now more accessible than ever. I believe that further study will help to reveal that, for Restoration playwrights and theatre companies, dramatic performance was never something that was politically or ideologically neutral.

¹⁵⁴ See Judy H. Park, "The Limits of Empire in Davenant's *The Siege of Rhodes*," *Mediterranean Studies* 24, no. 1 (2016): 47-76; and Lauren Working, "'Not as a Poet, but a Pionier': Fancy and the Colonial Gaze in William Davenant's *Madagascar* (1638)," *Renaissance Studies* 37, no. 3 (2023): 319-344.

¹⁵⁵ See, for example, Karen Britland, "'A Poor Gentlewoman That Cannot Take Mercenary Courses for Her Bread': Aphra Behn's Sister and the Influence of Colonialism in Late Seventeenth-Century London," *The Seventeenth Century* 38, no. 1 (2023): 131-153.

¹⁵⁶ Elizabeth Maddock Dillon has begun exploring these ties between London theatres and English colonialism, extending her analysis from 1649 to 1849. See Dillon, *New World Drama* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014).

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